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# Unit 2 Opener

The opener pages are designed to assess, through a variety of questioning techniques, the young people's prior knowledge and understanding of the key faith concepts presented in each unit of the student book. Processing these pages should not take more than ten or fifteen minutes.

## USING ILLUSTRATIONS

Pictures help stimulate the religious imagination. The first opener page contains pictures that illustrate some of the important concepts presented in this unit of the text.

- Have the young people look at and think about the three pictures to gain insight into the mysteries of faith portrayed by the pictures.
- Invite volunteers to describe what each picture says to them about the faith of the Church.
- Ask several volunteers to share a response to the question at the bottom of the page.

## UNIT TWO Worship and Sacraments



How does the Church celebrate the presence of the Risen Lord in our midst?

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## Teaching Tip

**Begin with Prayerful Reflection.** Spend a few moments in prayerful reflection as you prepare for the teaching of Unit Two of *Church and Sacraments*. Recall that at Baptism we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who guides and helps us live as adopted sons and daughters of God the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to kindle in your heart a zeal for living the Gospel and to strengthen you with courage and wisdom to witness to the difference that living the Gospel has made in your life—and the difference it will make for the young people in your class.

## Getting Ready

### Liturgy and the Sacraments

*What do you already know about the signs and symbolic actions of the sacraments?*

Sacraments of Christian Initiation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sacraments of Healing

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sacraments at the Service of Communion

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Faith Vocabulary

*Put an X next to the faith vocabulary terms that you know. Put a ? next to the faith vocabulary terms that you need to know more about.*

- ☐ Paschal Mystery
- ☐ liturgical year
- ☐ sacraments
- ☐ Baptism
- ☐ Confirmation
- ☐ Eucharist
- ☐ Blessed Sacrament
- ☐ Reconciliation
- ☐ Anointing of the Sick
- ☐ Holy Orders
- ☐ Matrimony

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### Questions I Have

*What questions about the sacraments and the worship of the Church do you hope these chapters will answer?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### A Scripture Story



Jesus and Nicodemus

*What do you know about the Gospel account of Jesus' meeting with Nicodemus?*

## Teaching Tip

**Reviewing Catholic Social Principles.** The basic themes of the social teachings of the Catholic Church are summarized on page 143 of the text. Review these principles prior to presenting the second unit of the text. These teachings will provide concrete statements and ways we are to live the Gospel. *From the Ground Up* (Washington, D.C.: NCEA, 1999) is a good resource for suggestions of a variety of ways to implement these principles.

## GETTING READY

The second opener page invites the young people to reflect on key faith concepts presented in this unit of the text and to identify questions they wish to have answered.

### Liturgy and the Sacraments

Brainstorm brief answers to the question in the box labeled "Liturgy and the Sacraments." List the responses on the board.

### Faith Vocabulary

This section is a quick assessment of the young people's familiarity with some of the faith words used in this unit of the text. During the review at the end of this unit, the young people will be asked to return to this page and once again share their understanding of the words.

### Questions I Have

This section encourages the young people to reflect on the sacraments and the worship of the Church. Have the young people do the activity privately. Then invite volunteers to write their questions on a chart you have prepared in advance. As you work through the text, always refer back to the chart and integrate the responses to the questions into your lessons as appropriate.

### A Scripture Story

This section encourages the young people to reflect on the Gospel story of Jesus and Nicodemus. Have the young people share what they know about the story and its significance in Jesus' work of salvation.



# Give Thanks to the Lord

## CHAPTER BACKGROUND

### The Paschal Mystery of Christ

The final events of Jesus' earthly life are the essence of God's plan of salvation for humankind. These events are the heart of the Gospel message which the Church proclaims each and every time we celebrate the Eucharist: "Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the savior of the world."

Jesus suffered, died, and was buried; he was raised from death, ascended to heaven, and took his place at the Father's right hand. These saving events, the Paschal Mystery of Christ, occurred once and for all—for all people of all time (see Romans 6:10).

While the Paschal Mystery took place in time, it transcends time. By his Passion, Jesus Christ identified with the pain and sorrow of all people throughout all of history—past, present, and future. By his death, Jesus destroyed death and sin. By his glorious Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus Christ restored all humanity to eternal life. He will come again in glory at the end of time.

Historical events, such as the storming of the Bastille during the

French Revolution or the fall of the Berlin wall, are events of the past whose effects are felt now and will be felt in the future. On the other hand, the saving events of Christ's Paschal Mystery are made present in the celebration of the sacraments. In the liturgy of the Church, Christ acts in our midst through the Church. Joining with him we are made sharers in his Paschal Mystery.

### The Sacraments of the Church

The seven sacraments are tangible and efficacious signs, real words and real actions. Through them the Holy Spirit awakens in us the realization that God is actively present in our midst, making us sharers in the gift of salvation in Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.

Christ is always present and active in his Church. In the sacramental celebrations of the Church, Christ is present in the priest, in the worshipping assembly, and in the proclamation of the

Scriptures. He is present in a unique way in the celebration of the Eucharist—he is truly and really present under the appearances of bread and wine.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words and actions of the priest, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The [P]aschal [M]ystery is celebrated and made present in the liturgy of the Church, and its saving effects are communicated . . . through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church.<sup>1</sup>



## FOR REFLECTION

*How have I encountered Christ in the Church's liturgy? How has that changed the way I actively participate in the liturgy?*

*What can I do to awaken the young people's faith in Christ present with the Church in the celebration of the liturgy?*

## Catechist to Catechist

### The Prayer Life of the Church

Liturgical prayer is the public, communal prayer of the Church. It is different from personal private prayer and devotional prayer. Liturgical prayer is the principal form of prayer that we use whenever we gather as the Body of Christ.

The Church has a rich tradition of liturgical prayer, which includes the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, blessings, and other rites. It is reasonable to expect that your students are familiar with the sacraments. However, they may not have experienced the other prayer forms. Perhaps you could arrange for your students to participate in the Liturgy of the Hours at your parish or another nearby parish.

### The Sacraments

Saint Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) wrote: “A soul cannot live without loving for it was created to love.” Her words can help us see the deeper meaning of the sacraments. Each sacrament in its own way joins us to Christ and his saving work, here and now. Help the students understand that the sacraments help us to do what we were created to do—to love God and others as Jesus commanded us to love.



## The Church Teaches . . .

Throughout the year the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ. Through our participation in the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, we are made sharers in the Paschal Mystery. The Church at the Second Vatican Council taught:

Holy Mother Church believes that it is for her to celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection. . . . In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ. *CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY* 102

That is why *Faith First* provides the students and their families the opportunity to reflect on the major seasons of the liturgical year each and every year.

### See the Catechism . . .

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the liturgy and the liturgical year, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1113–1144, 1153–1155, and 1163–1173.

## CATECHIST PRAYER

*Lord God, you have made your  
presence known to me in many ways.  
I praise and worship you as one  
God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

Footnote references may be found on p. 238.

Now . . . turn the page and let's get organized!

# LESSON PLANNER

## FOCUS

To discover how the Church, through the liturgy and sacraments, responds to the presence of God in our daily lives

## Engage

Page 63

### Focus

To assess the students' knowledge and understanding of keeping God at the center of their lives

## Pray Together

### Discussion

How does the liturgy help you keep God at the center of your life?

## Teach and Apply

Pages 64–68

### Focus

To discover how God's work of salvation is made present to us through the Trinity, the liturgy of the Church, and the sacraments

## Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

### Scripture

Psalm 119:105

### Did you know?

The mission of God

### Faith Connection

Write a verse that gives thanks to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## Connect

Pages 69–71

### Focus

To explain how the Church and its members demonstrate an awareness of God's presence in their lives

## Our Church Makes a Difference

Identify ways in which sacramentals make us aware of and responsive to God's loving presence in our lives.

## What Difference Does Faith Make?

Discover skills that will help you develop an awareness of God's presence in your life.

### Activity

Make a symbol to remind you that God is always with you.

### Faith Decision

Identify what you will do to be aware of God's presence each day this week.

## Materials

pens or pencils

## Enriching the Session

### Blackline Masters

Activities and Assessment Tools booklet:  
Chapter 6

*Called to Prayer and Liturgical Lessons:*  
Junior High

Use appropriate liturgical year and prayer pages.

**Faith First Creed and Prayer Video**  
Segment 3: Real Life Interviews/Social Action

**Enriching the Lesson** (CG page 133)

Illustrating the Work of the Trinity at Liturgy

Creating Contemporary Symbols  
The Liturgical Year's Web Page

**Music Connection** (CG page 133)

[www.FaithFirst.com](http://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**.

## Pray

Page 72

### Prayer Form

Prayer of praise and petition

### Prayer

Pray "You Alone Are God!" together.

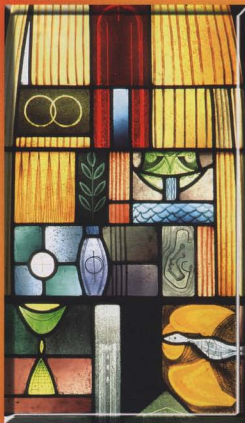
## Review

- 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 families this week.



# Give Thanks to the Lord

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## FAITH FOCUS

What does the Church do when we celebrate the liturgy?

## FAITH VOCABULARY

sacraments  
grace

Paschal Mystery  
liturgical year

*Think about the people, events, and places on which you focus.*

In the movie *Sir Wars: The Pkianim Messia*, young Anakin Skywalker is told, "Focus determines reality." Skywalker was being taught one of life's important lessons: Those things to which we devote time and on which we focus our attention have a major influence on who we are.

God is the focus, or center, of our lives. We celebrate and remind ourselves of this basic truth when we celebrate the liturgy.

*How does the liturgy help you keep God at the center of your life?*

The Seven Sacraments,  
stained glass

Your word is a lamp for my feet, / a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105

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# ENGAGE

## PRAY

- Gather the group for prayer.
- Invite a volunteer to read the first part of Psalm 119:105; have the rest of the group respond with the second part.
- Lead the group in praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the young people to share a sign of peace with one another.

## FAITH FOCUS

- Read aloud and invite brief responses to the "Faith Focus" question.
- Share with the young people that in this chapter they will deepen their knowledge and understanding of how the Church, through the liturgy and sacraments, responds to the constant, loving presence of God in our daily lives.

## DISCOVER

- Assess the group's prior knowledge and understanding of the liturgy and the sacraments of the Church.
- Write the "Faith Vocabulary" terms on the board. Ask volunteers to share what they already know about the meanings of the four faith terms.
- Write their responses next to the appropriate faith terms on the board.
- Read the opening paragraphs to the group.
- Call the young people's attention to the symbols on the stained-glass window and ask volunteers to share how the liturgy helps them focus on God and keep him at the center of their lives.



## Background: Scripture

**The Psalms.** The Psalms put into poetic language the ups and downs of our relationship with God. Psalm 119:105 professes the faith of the People of God that God's word is "a lamp for our feet, a light for our path." This expression of the trusting faith of the psalmist tells us that we are never alone. God never abandons us. God's word is closer to us than we are to ourselves. God's word resonates with the meaning and purpose of our everyday life. The word of God lights the path to our true destiny of everlasting communion with God. In faith we follow that light. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2585–2589.)

## FOCUS

Remind the group of the Church's teaching on the Holy Trinity. Point out that the three divine Persons of the Trinity are present and active with the Church in the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments. Tell the young people that these pages will help them learn more about the Trinity and the liturgy of the Church.

## DISCOVER

- Divide the young people into groups of three.
- Assign one of the three sections on pages 64 and 65—"The Worship of the Father," "With the Son," and "Through the Power of the Holy Spirit"—to each member of each group. Have the young people silently read their sections and prepare a summary of what they have learned.
- Have the young people present their summaries to the other members of their group.
- Share the "Did you know . . ." sidebar to reinforce the group's appreciation of the works of creation, salvation, and sanctification as the work of all three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity.

## Sharing in God's Saving Love

### The Worship of the Father

Jesus focused his life on earth on the Father, joined to Christ at Baptism, we focus all of our attention on God. When we gather together as the new People of God at the liturgy, we join with Jesus, the Head of His Body, the Church. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we give thanks and praise to

God the Father as the source of all the blessings of creation and salvation.

By spending time with the Father and focusing on his love, we share more fully in the life of God, and we welcome him into our lives. We see and appreciate that from the beginning of time God has always done and will continue to do what is good for us.

*Why do many people say they feel closer to God at Mass than at other times?*

### With the Son

Through the work of the liturgy, Christ's work of salvation is made present and carried out among us. Christ is always present and leads his Church in the celebration of the liturgy.

- Christ is present in the priest, who acts in the Person of Christ.
- Christ is present in the assembly.
- Christ is present in the living word of God, the Scriptures.
- Christ is present, most importantly, in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine.

It is always "through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit" (I Doxology, Eucharistic Prayer) that we give praise and thanks to the Father.

*Describe why the liturgy of the Church is the work of the whole Church, Christ the Head and his Body.*



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## Background: Liturgy

**Proclamation of God's Word.** The proclamation of Sacred Scripture is part of the celebration of all the sacraments. This gives witness to the fact that Christ is present in the proclaimed word of God (see *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 7 and 24). The importance of the proclamation of the word of God at Mass is emphasized in many ways in the rites of the Mass. For example, the Book of the Gospels is carried in procession through the assembly at the beginning of the celebration. The Scriptures are read from their own place, the ambo. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1154–1155, 1236, 1349.)



## Did you Know...

The work of God among us is called the mission of God. We speak of creation as the work of the Father, salvation as the work of the Son, and sanctification as the work of the Holy Spirit. The truth is that while each of these works is attributed to one of the three divine Persons of the Trinity, all these works are the work of all three Persons of the Trinity.

- The Holy Spirit opens our minds and hearts to accept God's word.
- The Holy Spirit makes the saving work of Christ present and real to us by his transforming power.
- The Holy Spirit, especially through the Eucharist, brings us into communion with Christ and one another.

The ultimate work of the Holy Spirit is to draw us more deeply both into the mystery and reality of the Holy Trinity and into loving relationship with one another.



Holy Spirit, stained glass

### Through the Power of the Holy Spirit

The mission, or work, attributed to the Holy Spirit is to make us sharers in God's life. In the liturgy the Holy Spirit does this in four ways.

- The Holy Spirit prepares us to meet Christ and join with him. The Holy Spirit prepares our hearts to accept God's gift of himself and to share in God's saving plan of salvation.

### FAITH CONNECTION

Write a verse that gives thanks to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Responses will vary.

## REINFORCE

- Respond to any questions that may arise from the reading of the text materials.
- Invite volunteers to share why many Catholics feel closer to God during the celebration of Mass than at other times.

## INTEGRATE

- Ask the young people to work with a partner for the "Faith Connection" activity.
- Invite volunteers to present their verses to the group.

## Background: Catholic Tradition

**The Sign of the Cross.** The Sign of the Cross is a prayer honoring the Blessed Trinity. Praying it is a statement of the essence of our Christian faith—belief in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The use of the Sign of the Cross has a long history that can be traced back to the mid-third century. When the early Church was being persecuted, Christians sometimes used a sign of the cross as a signal to identify themselves as believers and followers of Jesus Christ. Gradually, the Sign of the Cross was incorporated into the sacramental rites of the Church. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 786, 2157.)

# TEACH

## FOCUS

Remind the group of the seven sacraments of the Church. Tell them that these pages will help them further explore the meaning of these sacraments.

## DISCOVER

- Read the first paragraph of "The Sacraments" to the group to help them recall the term *Paschal Mystery*.
- Have the students briefly look at the seven images of the sacraments to help them recall what they already know about the sacraments.
- Draw a wheel with the word *sacraments* in the center. Write key words and phrases based on the reading about the sacraments as the spokes of the wheel.
- Have the group silently read the remainder of the material on page 66.
- Ask volunteers to describe their knowledge of the sacraments and add words to the wheel.
- Ask volunteers to read "Common Elements" and "Rites of the Sacraments" on page 67 to the group and have everyone listen, discover, and underline key additional concepts about the sacraments.
- Add any new concepts to the wheel.

## The Sacraments

The sacraments make us sharers in the *Paschal Mystery*. The *Paschal Mystery* is the saving events of the Passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension of Jesus Christ. Through this mystery we have been drawn into and made sharers in the mystery of the divine life of the Holy Trinity.

The celebration of Christ's *Paschal Mystery* in the liturgy and sacraments is unique. The sacraments are effective signs instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which *grace*, or the divine life of God, is shared with us. Through our taking part in the celebration of the sacraments, *our life is changed, or transformed, and we become sharers in the life of God*. The Church celebrates seven

sacraments, which are classified into three groups:

- Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
- Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation, or Penance, and Anointing of the Sick
- Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Orders and Matrimony

The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders each imprint on the person who receives these sacraments an indelible, or permanent, character that remains forever. This is the reason a person can receive these sacraments only one time.

*Describe why taking part in the celebration of the sacraments changes your life.*



BAPTISM



CONFIRMATION



EUCCHARIST



RECONCILIATION

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## Background: Liturgy

**The Seven Sacraments.** Tertullian (160–225) was the first to use the term *sacrament*. He used the term to describe the rite of Christian initiation. Saint Augustine (354–430) defined the word *sacrament* as "a visible sign of an invisible grace." Using this definition, Augustine did not think of only seven sacraments. He saw many things in the world as sacred signs. Peter Lombard (ca. 1100–1164) used the term *sacrament* to refer to the seven sacraments of the Church. The Church formally defined the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1545–1563). (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1117.)

## Common Elements

There are certain common characteristics, or elements, that all the sacraments share. These characteristics help us understand why the sacraments are necessary for the salvation of believers.

- Christ is the principal celebrant of every sacrament.
- The sacraments are effective signs of grace. This means that each sacrament actually accomplishes what it signifies. This happens even if the human minister of the sacrament is unworthy.
- All sacraments are instituted, or given to us, by Christ.
- The celebration of the sacraments is both the work of Christ and the work of the Church. The ordained minister of the Church—bishop, priest, or deacon—leads the celebration of the sacraments. Ordained to serve the Church, he acts in the name and Person of Christ.
- The sacraments are sensible signs of the Holy Spirit's work.

## Rites of the Sacraments

Each of the sacraments has a rite approved by the Church for its celebration. A rite is the way something is regularly done. The words and actions the Church uses to celebrate the sacraments are called the rites of the sacraments. The rite used for the celebration of each sacrament has many parts. Some of these parts are divinely given and are unchangeable. For example, a person being baptized is always immersed in water or water is poured over the person's head as the priest or deacon says the words, "(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Rite of Baptism).

The rite of a sacrament also has parts that the Church can adapt and change. For example, before Vatican Council II (1962–1965), Latin, the official language of the Church, was the most widely used language in the celebration of the liturgy by the Roman Catholic Church. Today Mass is celebrated in each country around the world using the vernacular, or the common language used by the people.

*Describe the rites of the Mass. What things are the same each week? What things differ from Sunday to Sunday?*

*Affirm appropriate responses.*



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## REINFORCE

- Have the group summarize what they have learned about the sacraments, using the wheel diagrammed on the board.
- Ask volunteers to describe the parts of the Mass, comparing what things are the same each Sunday with what things may change. If possible, provide the group with missalettes for this activity.

## INTEGRATE

Revisit the discussion activity on page 66 and discuss with the group how participation in the sacraments might change, or transform, their lives.

## Liturgy Tip

**Chronos and Kairos Time.** The two Greek words *chronos* and *kairos* describe time. *Chronos* time is what is measured by a clock. *Kairos* time cannot be measured. *Kairos* time is God's time. The liturgical year celebrates *kairos* time. When we celebrate the liturgical seasons, we have the opportunity to deepen our conversion to Christ and grow in our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. During the liturgical year, we transcend *chronos* and focus our living in the presence of God, who is timeless.



# TEACH

## FOCUS

Remind the young people that the Church celebrates a cycle of seasons throughout the year. Tell the group that this page will help them develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Church's liturgical year.

## DISCOVER

- Paraphrase the first paragraph of "The Liturgical Year."
- Ask volunteers to name the elements that change as the Church celebrates the Eucharist throughout the year.
- Discuss the faith term *liturgical year*.
- Ask volunteers to read aloud the rest of the page to discover how the Church celebrates throughout the liturgical year.
- Have the group discuss the different liturgical colors of the seasons of the liturgical year and why each color helps us enter the spirit of that season of the Church's year.

# APPLY

## REINFORCE

Tape a card with the name of a liturgical season on the back of each student. Using only yes or no questions, the young people must figure out the name of the season taped on their back.

## INTEGRATE

Have the young people work in small groups to do the "Faith Connection" activity.



## The Liturgical Year

As we gather for Eucharist each Sunday we notice that throughout the year the color of the priest's and deacon's vestments changes. We may see green, white, purple (or violet), or red. Hymns and readings change too. All these changing elements help us recognize the feast or season of the liturgical year we are celebrating. The liturgical year is the cycle of seasons and feasts the Church celebrates each year.

**Sunday.** Sunday is the weekly celebration of the Resurrection. It is the Lord's Day. From the days of the early Church, Sunday has been ranked as the first holy day of all.

**Advent and Christmas.** During the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas, we prepare for and celebrate the Incarnation and Nativity and the announcement of Jesus as the Savior of the world.

**Lent, Easter Triduum, and Easter.** During Lent catechumens prepare for their initiation into the Church. All the faithful join with them and renew their own Baptism. The whole Church prepares for the celebration of Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection. Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the celebration of Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday are the most important days of the liturgical year. We call these days—which begin with the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and conclude with Vespers on Easter Sunday—the Easter Triduum, or simply the Triduum, a term which means three days.

**Ordinary Time.** The longest part of the liturgical year is called Ordinary Time. The word *ordinary* comes from a Latin word meaning "number." On these numbered weeks of the year—for example, the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time—we listen to the events of the public ministry of Jesus and respond to his invitation to live as his disciples.

**Solemnities, Feasts, and Memorials.** The Church also celebrates a yearly cycle of feasts. These include the holy days of obligation and other days, such as the solemnity of Christ the King, and days remembering Mary, the Apostles, and the other saints.

## FAITH CONNECTION

Plan the design of a new banner for your classroom prayer space to celebrate an upcoming liturgical season or feast. In this space write the words you would use on the banner.

Affirm appropriate responses.

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## Special Needs

**Group Work.** Divide the young people into groups, one group for each season of the liturgical year. Assign one of the seasons to each group. Have each group come to a consensus of a message that captures the essence of the liturgical season assigned to them, then create a banner, poster, or some other art form to depict the season visually.

# OUR CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## Sacramentals

In addition to the seven sacraments the Church celebrates sacramentals. Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. The sacramentals prepare us to participate in the sacraments and make us aware of and responsive to God's loving presence in our lives.

Sacramentals include objects, such as the altar, the crucifix, the rosary, and statues. They also include blessings, which are the most important sacramentals of the Church. Among the sacramentals, the blessing of people, meals, objects, and places comes first. Every blessing praises God for his gifts and asks that we use these gifts according to the spirit of the Gospel.

## The Blessing of Newly Professed Religious

Some members of the Church are consecrated, or professed, religious. Moved by the Holy Spirit, they promise or vow to live the Gospel with all their heart, joined with others in a religious community. During the ceremony in which religious consecrate their lives to God, they receive a special blessing of the Church.

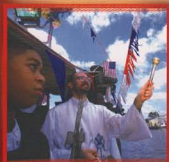
With the grace of the Holy Spirit, some religious resolve to spend their whole life in the generous service of God's people. Others resolve to live for God alone, in solitude and silence, persevering in prayer and penance, in humble work and holiness of life.

In what ways are professed religious reminders to all the baptized to live the Great Commandment (see Matthew 22:34-40)?

Affirm appropriate responses.



Blessing of a religious sister during rite of Religious Profession



Blessing of shrimp fleet, Delcambre Shrimp Festival, Delcambre, Louisiana



Blessing of dogs outside Church of Saint Francis, Lima, Peru

## CONNECT

### HIGHLIGHT

Recall with the young people that Christ is always present and leads the Church in the celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments. Read aloud or paraphrase "Sacramentals." Emphasize that sacramentals prepare us to participate in the sacraments and help make us aware of God's presence in our lives.

### DISCOVER

- Discuss with the group the sacramentals with which they are familiar. List the examples that they give on the board.
- Emphasize that among the sacramentals, the blessing of people, meals, objects, and places comes first.
- Have them look at and describe what is happening in the three photos on page 69. Then read aloud or paraphrase the section "The Blessing of Newly Professed Religious" for the group.

### INTEGRATE

- Discuss with the group how the life of professed religious reminds us to focus our life on God.
- Share with the group some of the sacramentals that are part of the prayer life of your family. Then invite volunteers to name a sacramental and share how it celebrates their faith in God's loving presence in their lives.



## Background: Liturgy

**Sacramentals.** Sacramentals include actions such as, blessings, the use of holy water, praying the Sign of the Cross; and objects such as, palm branches, ashes, medals, holy oils, and candles. The use of these actions and objects enriches our prayer life and reminds us of God's presence with us. Simply put, sacramentals are sacred signs that attune us to God's plan and strengthen us to live our life with God. They sanctify all the circumstances of our lives—even the most routine and ordinary experiences that are part of everyday life (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1677).

# CONNECT

## HIGHLIGHT

Use the material on page 70 to recall with the group that God is always with us, at every moment in our lives.

## DISCOVER

- Have the group quietly reflect with you on the photo on page 70, and then invite volunteers to suggest the various ways they are aware of and express their faith in God's presence in their daily lives.
- Ask volunteers to read aloud page 71 to discover skills that will help them develop an awareness of God's presence in their lives.

## APPLY

## INTEGRATE

Have the young people work in small groups to do the "Faith Connection" activity.

# WHAT DIFFERENCE

## Does Faith Make in My Life?

### Recognizing God's Presence

The Catholic Church—through the liturgy, the sacraments, and sacramentals—makes us aware of and encourages us to respond to the constant, loving presence of God in our daily lives.

One of the wonderful truths of our faith is that God is always present with us. He is not only in heaven but right here within each person.

There are times when you may be very aware of the closeness of God. Then there are times when you just get so wrapped up in what's going on that you totally forget that God is right here—right now. How can you develop the daily habit of recognizing God, thanking him, and praising him for his loving presence?



## Background: Liturgy

**Eucharist: Sacrament of God's Love.** The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* [Lumen Gentium] 11). When we participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we not only praise God for his great love but also commit ourselves to proclaim and share that love with others, especially the poor. We respond to God's love with praise and thanksgiving so that it radiates out to the world. By doing so, we become living signs of God's presence in the world that invite people to respond to God's love for them. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1397.)



Here are a few steps to develop an awareness of God's presence.

- ♦ Become more conscious of your surroundings. Look for the beauty in God's creation.
  - a smile on someone's face
  - a cloud-filled sky
  - a playful pet
  - a friend's laugh
 Say a conscious, deliberate thank-you to God for each of these wonders of creation.
- ♦ Take time to appreciate the gifts God has given you.
  - your very life
  - your family and friends
  - your gifts and talents
  - each new day
 Think of ways to show God your appreciation for each of these gracious gifts.
- ♦ Remember in times of trouble that God is with you.
  - when you are separated from someone you love
  - when you fail at something important to you
  - when nothing seems to be going right
  - when an act of violence reminds you of the evil in the world
 Ask God to give you the courage, strength, and comfort you need.
- ♦ As you encounter people try to remind yourself that each person is a child of God.
  - family members and friends
  - neighbors and classmates
  - strangers and those in need
  - babies and senior citizens
 Thank God for the people in your life and ask God to bless them.



## Faith Decision

In a small group discuss each of the steps to develop an awareness of God's presence. Add your own examples to each list.

Make a symbol to remind you that God is always with you. Put it someplace where you will see it each day. This week I will make a deliberate choice to be aware of God's presence each day by

Affirm appropriate responses.

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## INTEGRATE

- Have the young people divide into small groups for the "Faith Decision" activities.
- Ask each group to discuss the steps named in the reading on how to develop an awareness of God's presence in their lives.
- Have each group create a symbol that can serve as a reminder of God's presence in their lives.
- Ask groups to share their symbols and display them in the learning space.
- Gather the symbols for use during the next session.

## CHOOSE

- Have the group look at the symbols they have created and prayerfully reflect on the presence of the Trinity with the Church and with them personally.
- Have the young people make and write their faith decisions.
- Encourage everyone to use the steps they have discussed to develop an awareness of God's presence in their lives.



## Catholic Social Teaching

**Life and Dignity of the Human Person.** All human life is sacred, and every person demands our respect because we all have been created in the image and likeness of God. The social teachings of the Catholic Church call us to treat all people accordingly. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2258–2317.)

**Tips:** Invite the group to find and discuss Gospel stories which demonstrate Jesus' respect for the dignity of others, especially those who were cast out or marginalized by society in his time. Encourage the young people to examine their own attitudes toward others, including those marginalized in our society today.

# PRAY

- Divide the young people into two groups and gather them for prayer.
- Invite everyone to reflect once again on the photo on page 70.
- Pray "You Alone Are God!" together.

# REVIEW

- Have the young people share their understanding of the meanings of the terms listed under "Faith Vocabulary." After the group agrees on a definition of a term, compare the group's definition with the definition in the Glossary. Clarify as needed.
- Use the "Main Ideas" and the "Critical Thinking" sections to clarify any questions the young people have concerning what they have learned in the chapter.
- Remind the young people to discuss with their family how taking part in the liturgy as a family can help keep God at the center of the life of their family.

## Before Moving On . . .

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

*How well have I modeled affirming comments and behaviors that I would like students to use with one another?*

# PRAY and REVIEW

## You Alone Are God!

**Group 1:**  
You are God; we praise you.  
You are the Lord;  
we acclaim you.  
You are the eternal Father;  
all creation worships you.

**Group 2:**  
To all you angels, all the  
powers of heaven,  
Cherubim and Seraphim,  
sing in endless praise:

**All:**  
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,  
God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full  
of your glory.

**Group 1:**  
Day by day we bless you.  
We praise your name for ever.

**Group 2:**  
Keep us today from all sin.  
Have mercy on us:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All:**  
Lord, show us your love  
and mercy;  
for we put our trust in you.  
In you, Lord, is our hope,  
and we shall never hope  
in vain. Amen.

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## FAITH VOCABULARY

Define each of these terms:

1. sacraments p. 66
2. Paschal Mystery p. 66
3. grace p. 66
4. liturgical year p. 69

## MAIN IDEAS

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

1. (a) Explain the work of the Trinity in the Church's liturgy. pp. 64 and 65
- (b) Describe five ways Christ is present in the liturgy. p. 64
2. (a) Explain why we say the Church's celebration of the liturgy is much more than a reenactment of Christ's death, Resurrection, and Ascension. p. 66
- (b) Describe five elements common to all the sacraments. p. 67

## CRITICAL THINKING

Using what you have learned in this chapter, reflect on and explain this statement.

The sacraments are the "masterwork of God" celebrating the new and everlasting Covenant.

**Responses might include:** Through our taking part in the sacraments, our life is changed, or transformed, and we become sharers in the life of God.

## FAMILY DISCUSSION

How does taking part in the liturgy help us keep God at the center of our family?

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the "Faith First for Families" page at [www.FaithFirst.com](http://www.FaithFirst.com). Also click on the Teen Center to check out the latest games.



## 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

## Illustrating the Work of the Trinity at Liturgy

### Purpose

To reinforce that when we gather to celebrate the liturgy, we are in the presence of the Holy Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (taught on page 64)

### Directions

- Invite the young people to illustrate various ways God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are at work in the liturgy. Divide the young people into groups of three.
- Provide each group a large piece of poster board and ask them to cut out a large circle. Next, using a marker, have them divide the circle cutout into three equal sections, and label one section "Father," one "Son," and one "Holy Spirit."
- Have each group list or illustrate in the corresponding sections the ways God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are at work in the liturgy.
- Invite each group to share their work.

### Materials

poster board  
markers and scissors

## The Liturgical Year's Web Page

### Purpose

To reinforce the liturgical year as the cycle of seasons and feasts the Church celebrates (taught on page 68)

### Directions

- Divide the young people into five groups and assign each group the task of creating a Web page for one of the liturgical seasons.
- Remind them of the importance of the elements of color, Scripture readings, and hymns that need to be incorporated into their Web pages. Provide the necessary

materials to help each group do the needed research to create accurate designs. Invite the young people to share their Web pages and discuss some of the information others will learn from their Web site.

### Materials

construction paper  
crayons and markers  
reference materials

## Creating Contemporary Symbols

### Purpose

To reinforce that the world is filled with signs that make us aware of and responsive to the loving presence of God in our lives (taught on page 69)

### Directions

- Brainstorm with the young people ideas for creating signs or symbols of God's presence that have meaning for the youth of today.
- Have the young people work with partners to create their signs or symbols.
- Invite volunteers to share and explain their symbols.

### Materials

construction paper  
crayons or markers  
scissors



## Music Connection

- "God's Love Is Eternal," P. Tate. *Voices As One (VAO)* #29.
- "Great One in Three," P. Tate/P. Berrell. *VAO* #30.
- "Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God," J. Manibusan. *Spirit and Song* #129.
- "Thanks Be to You," M. Haugen. *Gather Comprehensive* #569.