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Chapter 2

Christianity TAKES ROOT

Introducing the CHAPTER

A study of the Catholic Church introduces us to many great men and women: Mary, St. Paul, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Teresa of Avila to name just a few. But it is Jesus Christ who is the foundation of our faith. This chapter reminds the students of the Church's earliest history in the person of Christ as well as Christ's ongoing presence in the Church.

The chapter reviews Jesus' life, discussing him as a teacher and miracle worker while also exploring the reactions of others to the events of the Paschal Mystery—Christ's Life, Death, and Resurrection.

The section "The Church's Beginning" summarizes the events covered in the Acts of the Apostles. Beginning with Pentecost, the text details the spread of Christianity into the Gentile world. The life of St. Paul, including a synopsis of his missionary journeys and the theology found in his letters, is reported here as well.

From there, the text moves to the Church's "Growth Amidst Persecution" by chronicling the events of the Jewish and Roman persecutions. The Church faced brutal opposition from the likes of the Roman emperors Nero, Domitian, and Diocletian. In the face of much suffering, the martyrs of the Church remained strong in the faith. Christian apologists such as Justin Martyr, who wrote the *First Apology*, defended the reasonableness of Christian faith. An excerpt from this document is given in Chapter 2. This section also cites key reasons why the Church was able to grow in numbers and influence.

The chapter introduces the formation of the New Testament along with other early Christian writings, including catechetical manuals, witness statements, and liturgical guides. The writings of the Church Fathers are highlighted, with St. Irenaeus of Lyons's *Against Heresies* receiving special mention. This material was the Church's most effective argument against Gnosticism.

Finally, by the end of the third century, Christianity was a religion distinct from Judaism. Two of its distinctions were the sacraments and ordained leadership. The bishops are successors of the Apostles—a doctrine in place from the Church's earliest beginnings.

Chapter OBJECTIVES

To help the students:

- Understand the statement "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."
- Review the resources that teach about the life of Jesus.
- Know the central and essential components of Jesus' teachings and miracles.
- Recognize that the mysteries of Christ—his Paschal Mystery of redemption—are intended for all to share.
- Become familiar with sections of the Acts of the Apostles in order to discuss the contribution of St. Paul to the growth of the Church.
- Discuss the issues surrounding the Council of Jerusalem.
- Discover both Jewish and Roman reaction to the rise of Christianity in the first century.
- List key reasons for the spread of Christianity.
- Examine the development of early Church writings, especially the Scripture.
- Differentiate Christianity from Judaism and other religions in the Roman Empire.

Supplies and PREPARATIONS

For Lesson 1

Try to have a map of the Mediterranean world in the classroom to refer to as you present the material in this entire chapter.

- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 1, "The Four Gospels"
- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 2, "Miracles of Jesus"
- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 3, "Who's Who?"
- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 4, "Paul's Journeys"

For Lesson 2

- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 5, "The Church—First Steps"

For Lesson 3

- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 6, "Following the Way of Jesus . . ."

For Lesson 5

- Copies of Chapter 2, Handout 7, "Teenage Lifestyle"
- Arrange a visit from a parish or diocesan director of the catechumenate or a recent convert to visit your class to talk about his or her RCIA experience with the class.

For the Review Lesson

- Recording of meditative music (optional)
- Paschal (Easter) candle and matches

For the Chapter Test Lesson

- Copies of the Chapter 2 Test

Chapter 2 HANDOUTS

"The Four Gospels" – The students discover the what, when, who, and how of the four Gospels.

"Miracles of Jesus" – The students examine a number of Jesus' miracles, what they were meant to teach, and how others reacted to them.

"Who's Who?" – The students identify contemporary Jewish groups based on their statements about Jesus and his message.

"Paul's Journeys" – The students investigate one of St. Paul's missionary journeys.

"The Church—First Steps" – The students do a Scripture search in Acts of the Apostles.

"Following the Way of Jesus . . ." – The students imagine themselves as part of the early Christian community being interviewed by a non-Christian neighbor.

"Teenage Lifestyle" – The students evaluate their lifestyles to compare them to those of the early Christians.

LESSON 1

(Pages 35–40)

Objectives

The students will:

- Discuss literary form and investigate some literary forms in Acts of the Apostles.
- Reflect on the courage of early martyrs for the faith and understand the statement “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”
- Begin to appreciate the meaning of the kingdom or reign of God.
- Review the sources that teach about the life of Jesus.
- Learn about early reactions to Jesus and his message.

Opening the LESSON

- Begin by asking the students if they know what is meant by “literary form”; for example, poetry, drama, speeches, essays, etc. Say that writers use different literary forms in their writing. Explain that St. Luke employed a number of literary forms in his writing the Acts of the Apostles, two of which stand out: discourses (speeches) and summaries. Explain that Luke used summaries whenever he wanted to move quickly from one scene to another. Luke includes three major summaries (Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; and 5:12–16) and seven minor summaries (Acts 1:14; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; and 28:31–30). Go on to read aloud the summary from Acts on page 35 of the text (Acts 2:42–47). Ask:
 - What does Luke say the early Church believes and does? (For example, after the coming of the Holy Spirit, sharing the Good News with both Jews and Gentiles.)
 - How would you compare this description of Church to what you experience the Church believing and doing today?

Teaching APPROACHES

The Seed of the Church (pages 35–36)

- Write Tertullian’s quote on the board: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Call on volunteers to summarize the story of Polycarp (pages 35–36). Ask the students to explain why early believers seemed so willing to die for their beliefs.
- Have the students give a thumbs up for “yes,” a thumbs down for “no,” or a hand wave for “not sure” as they respond to the following question: “What would you be willing to die for . . . for the sake of the truth? . . . to protect the life of a family member? . . . to protect the life of a friend? . . . to protect the life of a stranger? . . . for your faith? . . . for your country?”

The Person of Christ (pages 36–37)

- Ask the students how we know that Jesus was an actual historical figure. Mention the Roman historians Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius, who validated Jesus' historical existence. As a possible research project, have the students look up references to Jesus in the following non-biblical sources:
 - *Roman*: Tacitus, Pliny the Elder, Suetonius
 - *Jewish*: Josephus, Babylonian Talmud
 - *Christian*: Gospel of Thomas
- Write the central proclamation of the Gospel on the board: "The kingdom (reign) of God is at hand." Briefly discuss the urgency of the message and what the students think it means.
- Explain that the kingdom of God is not a place but the advancement of God's loving power into all areas of life where it has not been previously recognized. The coming of the reign of God signals the ultimate power of God and the ultimate freedom of human beings—freedom from oppression, injustice, poverty, fear, etc.
- Summarize the text under "The Person of Christ."
- Distribute Chapter 2, Handout 1, "The Four Gospels." Read through the material with the students. Point out that the term "synoptic" means "seeing together." Go on to explain the *major characteristics* of each Gospel. Have the students list them on the back of the handout:
 - **Matthew**
written to show that Jesus is the Promised One—the Messiah
groups Jesus' sayings to aid memorization
 - **Mark**
shortest Gospel
likely the first Gospel written
presents Jesus' feelings simply and directly
 - **Luke**
most polished Gospel
vividly describes Jesus' compassion
portrays Jesus as friend of the poor, the powerless, sinners
 - **John**
most theologically developed Gospel
written in Greek
portrays Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah
includes numerous "I am . . ." statements

Jesus the Teacher (pages 37–38)

- Call on six students to summarize the six key teachings of Jesus from pages 37–38. For each teaching, have the student offer examples to illustrate. For example:
- *God's reign begins small but grows at God's will.* A relationship between a man and woman often begins in friendship, progresses to marriage, and then blossoms to the gift of parenthood and family life.

- *The Gospel requires a whole-hearted response.* A prisoner who commits his life to Christ while in jail, follows up on his promise by refraining from crime once he is released.

Jesus the Wonder Worker and Jesus the Prayer (page 38)

Read the text on page 38. Distribute copies of Chapter 2, Handout 2, "Miracles of Jesus." Have the students work in pairs to complete the handout. Review the answers as follows:

The Ten Lepers

Luke 17:11–19

Jesus told the lepers to see the priest. On their way they were healed. One of the lepers returned to offer thanks; the others did not. Jesus told the leper who returned that his faith had saved him.

Paralytic at Capernaum

Matthew 9:1–8

Jesus commanded the paralytic to rise and walk. He taught that it is just as easy for people to forgive one another. The crowd was in awe and glorified God.

Raising of Lazarus

John 11:1–45

Jesus ordered the stone in front of the tomb removed, then he prayed to God. Afterward, Lazarus came out of the tomb. Many people came to believe in Jesus. Jesus said that because of the crowd, he made his prayer aloud.

Walking on Water

Mark 6:45–52

Jesus saw the disciples' boat being tossed about in the storm, so he walked toward them on the waves. The disciples thought he was a ghost; they were astonished by what happened. Jesus told them to have courage and not to fear.

Blind Man at Jericho

Luke 18:35–43

Jesus heard the man calling out for pity, asked the man what he wanted him to do; the man asked to be able to see. The people gave praise to God. The man cured of blindness became Jesus' follower.

Reaction to Jesus (pages 39–40)

Distribute copies of Chapter 2, Handout 3, "Who's Who?" and have the students complete it on their own. Afterward, check answers:

1. Wealthy upper class.
2. Advocated the violent overthrow of Rome.
3. Connected with the Jewish priesthood and Temple.
4. Tolerated Roman rule, because it let them stay "on top."
5. Rejected Temple worship.
6. Did not look for (believe in) a Messiah.
7. Anticipated the Messiah would be a military leader.

8. Advocated strict observance of Jewish Law.
 9. A movement, not a sect.
 10. Believed in the oral tradition of Jewish elders who interpreted the Law.
 11. Believed *they* were the way God would save Israel.
 12. Might be labeled terrorists today.
- Point out that another group of people reacted quite favorably to Jesus' message about the kingdom of God—the poor. Take a moment to explain that most Israelites were poor and knew little about religion or the Law, and their poverty kept them from knowing more. Other social classes treated them with disdain. In the eyes of the poor, the Sadducees were too friendly with Rome, the Pharisees too pious, and the Zealots—while people of action—were too violent. The poor lacked leaders of their own and had nothing but the hope that God would keep his promises to send a Messiah to rescue them.
 - Tell the students that as part of their homework, they are to find three instances in the Gospels where Jesus' message would strike a particularly powerful chord with the poor. Explain that they should be ready to share the Bible passages they find at their next session.
 - Draw attention to "What the Church Believes About . . . Our Communion in the Mysteries of Jesus" on page 41. Summarize the information in the panel. Encourage the students to probe one of the areas of Jesus' life to know more about him. For example, do a study of Jesus' parables. Point out that a parable is a unique form of storytelling in which the storyteller includes common experiences that most everyone can understand. For example, Jesus used common folk, settings, and materials that even the simplest in his audience could understand. The parables lead to a single teaching point, and conclude with an unexpected twist or surprise. Parables also call on the listener to make decisions for himself or herself. Have the students read the following parables and write a brief journal entry outlining what the parable means to them:
 - Parable of the Sower (Mt 13:1-9)
 - Parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk 15:1-7)
 - Parable of the Persistent Widow (Lk 18:1-8)
 - Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30)
 - Summarize Jesus' brief public ministry (page 39). Refer the students to the timeline across the bottom of pages 36-54. (*Note:* As you continue to present the material in this chapter, refer back to the timeline to help the students get a feel for the chronology.)

Applying the LESSON

- Have the students read "The Church's Beginning" (pages 41-43) in preparation for the next lesson.
- Draw attention to the Review and Discussion Questions on pages 63-65. Direct the students to respond in their journals to the first two questions. Then have them look at question 13. Encourage them to begin identifying the events, people, and terms listed.
- Remind the students to find three instances in the Gospels where Jesus' message would strike a particularly powerful chord with the poor.

- Divide the class into four groups. Distribute copies of Chapter 2, Handout 4, "Paul's Journeys." Assign each group to one of the sections of Paul's missionary journeys. Read the directions aloud to make sure everyone understand the assignment.
- Finally, point out Scripture Connections on page 63. Direct the students to begin work on the chronology of St. Peter's life. Explain that it will be due at the Chapter 2 Review session.

LESSON 2

(Pages 41–49)

Objectives

The students will:

- Discover why the Acts of the Apostles is called the “Gospel of the Church.”
- Read several passages from Acts in order to discover the beginnings of the Church.
- Identify the four tasks of mission—preaching, community, service, and worship—in Acts.
- Investigate the contributions of St. Paul to the spread of Christianity.
- Share information about St. Paul’s missionary journeys.
- Discuss the issues surrounding the Council of Jerusalem and its ramifications.

Opening the LESSON

- Review how various groups of Jesus’ time viewed him. Write the following two sentences on the board: “I am a _____, and I think that Jesus is _____.”; “I think this way because _____.” Then call on five students. Have them complete the sentences as (1) a Sadducee; (2) a Pharisee; (3) a Zealot; (4) someone living in poverty; and (5) herself or himself. Point out the difference Jesus elicited by his response to human need and his desire to draw people into the Kingdom of God.
- Invite the students to share the three instances they found in the Gospels where Jesus’ message struck a particularly powerful chord with the poor. Summarize on the board. Afterward, invite one of the students to read aloud Luke 4:18. Note the very first thing for which the Spirit of God anointed Jesus (“... to bring glad tidings—good news—to the poor”).

Teaching APPROACHES

The Church’s Beginning (pages 41–43)

- Write the phrase “Gospel of the Church” on the board. Ask: To what do you think this term refers? Explain that the Acts of the Apostles has often been called the “Gospel of the Church,” because it tells of the growth of the Church from its small beginnings in Palestine to the ends of the earth (namely, the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire). Because Rome was the capital and center of the Empire, Luke ends Acts once the Church spread to the city of Rome.
- Distribute copies of Chapter 2, Handout 5, “The Church—First Steps.” Review the material on text pages 41–45 by having the students use their bibles and texts to complete the activity on their own. When they finish, share responses using the following answers:
 1. Jesus and the Holy Spirit
 2. Pentecost and tongues
 3. Peter and all the people
 4. Peter healed a crippled person in Jesus’ name.

5. Gamaliel told the religious leaders to let the Christians be, for if their activity was of human origin, it will destroy itself. But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God.
 6. Greek converts said that their widows weren't being properly cared for; the Apostles couldn't do the work of the deacons because they needed the freedom to preach and lead worship.
 7. No. The Jewish authorities led persecutions against them. One of the first deacons, Stephen, was stoned because of his faith and ministry.
 8. Acts 9:15: "But the Lord said to him (Ananias), 'Go, for this man (Paul) is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites.'"
 9. Peter had a dream, and he saw the Spirit descend upon Cornelius.
 10. Christian and Antioch.
- Before moving on, ask the students to recall the four tasks of the mission Jesus entrusted to the Church, which they discovered in Chapter 1: (1) Share the Message—*kerygma*; (2) Live in Community—*koinonia*; (3) Serve Others—*diakonia*; and (4) Worship the Lord—*leitourgia*. Then call attention to "Early Growth of the Church" on page 42, and read aloud the text section's first sentence. Finally, have the students read the following references in Acts (list on the board) and have them identify which task is being described:

Acts 3:1–10 *diakonia*

Acts 3:12–26 *kerygma*

Acts 2:46 *leitourgia*

Acts 4:32–34 *koinonia*

Members of the Church — Paul of Tarsus: Apostle to the Gentiles — Paul's Conversion (pages 44–45)

- To summarize this text section, begin by asking the following questions, listing responses on the board:
 - What are some words you would use to describe Paul?
 - What work did he do to support himself? (*tent making*)
 - Would you choose St. Paul as a friend? Why or why not?
- Go on to emphasize the following key points about Paul:
 - Very educated Pharisee
 - Roman citizen
 - Recruited by Jewish authorities to root out Christians
 - Revelation and conversion were *simultaneous* events for Paul. He became a vigorous missionary, hardy traveler, and prodigious writer (half of the books of the New Testament are attributed to Paul).
 - The New Testament writer who used the term "Gospel" the most.
- Have the students compare Paul's description of his conversion experience. Have the students read Acts 22:6–16; Acts 26:12–18; Galatians 1:13–17; then compare these accounts to Acts 9:1–12. Either have each student research all three references, or divide

the students into three groups and assign each group a reference. Have the students respond to the following questions:

- Do Paul's accounts differ in any way from the one in Acts 9? If so, how?
- How can you tell that this conversion experience was important to Paul?
- Before moving on, field any questions the students may have about Paul.

First Missionary Journey: 45–49 (page 45), Paul's Second Journey: 49–52 (page 47), and Paul's Third Journey: 53–58 (page 48)

- Have the students gather in the four small groups to which they were assigned in their last class. Tell each group to share information and answers to the questions from their Chapter 2 Handout 4, "Paul's Journeys." Then have each group present its information to the class. Groups could do so in a skit or a TV interview (interviewing Paul and people he met on his journey) or by whatever means the groups feel most comfortable. *Note:* If possible, have a map of the Mediterranean world available for the students to use to outline the route of Paul's journeys.

The Council of Jerusalem (page 46)

- Begin by asking the students to tell what controversy precipitated the Council (*dissension over whether Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jewish*). Ask what the Council's decision was. Go on to review the historical details of the Council of Jerusalem as given in the text, emphasizing the following points:
 - Do Paul's accounts differ in any way from the one in Acts 9? If so, how?
 - The Council was a necessary development to deal with heresy.
 - The Council set a historical precedent for dealing with conflicts and controversy in the Church; it was the first in a long line of councils.
 - The Council was a forerunner to the eventual development of judicial, legal councils centuries later.
- Call attention to "What the Church Believes About . . . Infant Baptism" on page 44. Have a volunteer read the text aloud. Then have the students turn to "What the Church Believes About . . . Catholicity" on page 46. Remind the students how they discovered that saying the Church is *catholic* is saying that it is a believing community filled with the presence of Jesus, open to all—to everyone—in which there are no outcasts. Finally, ask:
 - If the Council of Jerusalem had determined that Gentiles had to embrace Mosaic Law prior to becoming Christian, would there be infant Baptism?
 - Could the Church still call itself *catholic*?
- In conclusion, ask the students to describe the two possible conclusions to Paul's ministry and life (see "Paul's Death" on pages 48–49).

Applying the LESSON

- Tell the students to turn to "Themes in Pauline Theology" on page 49 of their texts. Direct the students to choose one of the themes listed in the text and to write a letter to young Christians along the lines of that theme.

- Have the students read the text section "Growth Amidst Persecution" (pages 49–54) in preparation for the next lesson.
- Draw attention to the Review and Discussion Questions on pages 63–65. Direct the students to respond in their journals to question 3. Again, have them look at question 12, and remind them to continue to identify the events, people, and terms listed. Likewise, remind them to continue working on the chronology of St. Peter's life in Scripture Connections (page 63).
- Read over Learn by Doing on page 65 with the students. Ask them to choose one of the assignments (numbers 2–5) to do on their own. While allowing choice, try to have all four assignments covered by at least one student.

REVIEW LESSON

Objectives

The students will:

- Share the work they did on the Learn by Doing assignment.
- Review the chapter's summary points and Review and Discussion Questions.
- Study for the Chapter 2 Test.
- Join in prayer together.

Opening the LESSON

- Call on students to share their Learn by Doing assignments on St. Peter with the class. Review the charts and post in the classroom.
- Invite any initial questions about the material covered in this chapter. Before answering them yourself, however, invite students to respond.

Teaching APPROACHES

Summary (page 62)

- Read over and review the summary points on page 62 with the group. Invite questions and encourage discussion so that the students may share ideas.
- Go over the Review and Discussion Questions (pages 63–65). Call on different students to share their answers with the group. Compare their answers to the ones that follow. See to it that the students are clear on the definitions of the chapter's many events, people, and terms.
- Allow some quiet time for the students to study on their own or with a partner. If you wish, consider playing some meditative music while the students are studying. If students have more questions, invite them to approach you privately while their classmates study.

Prayer Reflection (pages 62–63)

- Gather the students for prayer around the Paschal (Easter) candle. Sing or play a recording of "All Are Welcome" by Marty Haugen (GIA Publications). Or choose another song that speaks to the meaning of Church.
- Call on one of the students to proclaim the Scripture passage from the opening page of this chapter (Acts 2:42–47) on page 35.
- Lead the students in the following prayer, based on the Jewish *Dayenu*. Invite the students to respond to each prayer statement with the words "It would have been enough."

O God, if you had loved us and called us your own, but had not sent us Jesus, God-made-flesh . . .

If you had sent us Jesus, God-made-flesh, but had not raised him from death to life . . .

If you had raised Jesus from death to life, but had not given us fullness of life through him and the gift of your Spirit . . .

If you had given us both fullness of life through Jesus and the gift of your Spirit, but had not given us the Church . . .

If you had given us the Church but had not raised up Apostles, prophets, and martyrs . . .

If you had raised up Apostles, prophets, and martyrs, but had not sustained your people through the efforts of apologists and apostolic fathers . . .

If you had sustained your people through the efforts of apologists and apostolic fathers, but had not granted us the sacraments and ordained leadership . . .

But as it is, you have given us—your Church—all these things and more. Hear us, then as we turn to your holy word in thanks and praise.

- Invite the students to read aloud together the passage from Ephesians 3:14–21 on page 63 of their text.

Applying the LESSON

- Encourage the students to re-read Chapter 2.
- Study for the Chapter 2 Test.

Review and Discussion Questions (pages 63–65)—Answers:

1. The essential message of Jesus was “Now are God’s promises being fulfilled. God’s kingdom is at hand; change your lives, and believe the Good News.”
2. Jewish religious leaders (Sadducees and Pharisees) saw Jesus as a threat to their power and believed he was a blasphemer; they had him charged with sedition and put to death at the hands of the Romans.
3. Pentecost is called the birthday of the Church because it marked the coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus, empowering them to spread the Good News.
4. Initially, Judaism tolerated Christians, but when Christians refused to support a Zealot revolt against Rome and the Temple was destroyed, Jews banned Christians from the synagogues.
5. Each of the following led to the spread of Christianity:
 - a. Peter’s baptizing Cornelius signaled that the salvation was available to non-Jews.
 - b. Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles signaled the beginning of the Church’s catholicity.
 - c. The Council of Jerusalem made it official: Gentiles need not become Jewish nor obey Mosaic Law in order to be baptized.
6. Answers will vary. *Note:* When reviewing this question, see if volunteers have covered all ten themes listed on page 49.
7. Answers will vary.
8. Answers will vary but should reflect an understanding of the following: the already established Jewish communities of Diaspora; the ease of communication and travel; the *Pax Romana*; the example of Christians living out the Gospel commands.

9. The Church confronted heresies in a variety of ways including establishing a canon of New Testament books; stressing the apostolicity of bishops; producing apologetic writings; and promulgating the writings of the Church Fathers.
10. The Apostolic Fathers and apologists contributed to the growth of the Church by combating heresy and by codifying oral history in the form of catechetical manuals, witness statements, and liturgical guides. They also helped formulate Church doctrine, thus clarifying the official position on crucial elements of belief.
11. After a period of preparation (catechumenate), candidates were welcomed into the Church through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation (laying on of hands) by the bishop—usually at the celebration of the Vigil of Easter. Initiation was completed by welcoming the newly baptized to the Table of the Lord (Eucharist). Since Baptism forgave sin, most Christians held that the baptized would never turn back to sin. However, since people did, in fact, sin, bishops could offer absolution from sin—only once and after long penance.
12. It took many years for Church leadership as we know it today to develop. The early Church was first led by Apostles. Their successors were called bishops (“overseers”). Early on deacons were called to assist the Apostles in caring for the needs of the poor. Over the years, the office of bishop became more crucial. The bishops’ main responsibilities were to preside at the Eucharist, preach, baptize, and forgive sin. Presbyters (priests) acted as elders in the faith communities. As the Church spread, they became subordinate to bishops, acting under their authority but also sharing in their preaching and sacramental ministry.
13. Identify the following:

Events

- Council of Jerusalem—First Church council, at which leaders determined that Gentiles could be baptized without first having to become Jewish.
- Jewish Revolt (66–70)—Jewish Zealot uprising against Rome which failed and led to the destruction of the Temple, end to Temple worship and Jewish priesthood, and the final break between Judaism and Christianity.

People

- Diocletian—Roman emperor (284–305); persecuted Christians and tried to uproot Christianity from Europe—confiscated property, destroyed churches and books, tortured and imprisoned and executed Christians.
- Domitian—Roman emperor who authored the most severe persecution of first century Christians.
- Gamaliel—Member of Sanhedrin who advocated a “look/see” policy toward Christians.
- Josephus—first-century Jewish historian.
- Marcion—denied that a good God could not have created the material (imperfect) world; taught that the God of the Old Testament was not the true God but rather that the true God had been revealed only with Jesus Christ, so he rejected the Old Testament as being God’s word.
- Nero—Roman emperor; sociopath; brutally murdered Christians, blaming them for his misdeeds, for example, the burning of Rome.
- Novatian—Unsuccessful candidate for the papacy; taught that bishops could not forgive the sins of apostasy, murder, or adultery; he wanted a Church of perfect people only.

- Origen—Church father; provided critical edition of the Septuagint; taught ways of interpreting Scripture.
- Pope St. Cornelius—in opposition to Novatian, declared that mortal sins could be forgiven if the sinner repented and did penance.
- St. Irenaeus of Lyons—Church Father, argued against Gnosticism and highlighted the importance of Church tradition for arriving at religious truth.
- St. Justin Martyr—apologist; wrote to Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, the Church the new Israel, and Christian teaching fulfilled the Torah.
- St. Paul—Apostle to the Gentiles.
- St. Peter—head of the Apostles, first “Pope.”
- St. Polycarp of Smyrna (69–155)—martyr, defender of the orthodox faith.
- St. Stephen—deacon, first Christian martyr.
- Tacitus—Roman historian.
- Tertullian—apologist; constructed crucial doctrinal formulations.
- Trajan (98–117)—Roman emperor.

Terms

- Apologist—second-century writers who defended and explained Christianity to nonbelievers.
- Apostle—“one sent,” witness to Jesus’ Resurrection.
- Apostolic Father—someone who personally knew the Apostles or their disciples.
- canon (of the Bible)—official list of approved books.
- *Didache*—the “Teaching,” aimed at candidates for admission to the Church; mentions doctrines like the Trinity, discusses moral teachings, and explains the rites of initiation.
- *episkopoi*—bishops, overseers.
- Gnosticism—belief that Jesus gave “secret teachings,” knowable only to the few.
- heresy—false belief or teaching about a major doctrine.
- hierarchy—the organization of the institutional Church.
- martyr—a person who dies for his or her faith or convictions.
- orthodoxy—right belief.
- *Pax Romana*—(Peace of Rome) a two-century period of political stability that helped the spread of Christianity.
- Pharisee—Jewish group that advocated strict observance of Mosaic Law.
- Sadducee—Jewish upper class, religious/political leaders, tolerated Roman rule.
- schism—a division or split.
- Zealot—Jewish radical group (terrorists) who opposed Rome and engaged in guerilla warfare.