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The Church: The Body of Christ

CHAPTER BACKGROUND

The Spirit of Christ

Though Jesus departed from earth when he ascended to his Father, his spiritual presence remains with the Church. This is evidenced by the energy and staying power of the Church over the centuries.

After the Ascension, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name to dwell with the Church. While we attribute the work of creation to the Father, salvation to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Spirit, the truth is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit always act together on our behalf. When one Person of the Holy Trinity is present with us, all are present. By sending the Holy Spirit upon the Church (see John 16:7, 13), Jesus is intimately and intensely present to his followers.

Saint Paul the Apostle uses the image of the human body to describe how closely united we are with Christ. The members of the Body of Christ, the Church, do not merely gather around him. We are united to him—we are one with him. To use Saint Paul's imagery: We breathe with the breath of his Spirit. We form a part of his sinews and bones for the world to see. We touch with his hands and he with ours. We

serve with his heart, and he with ours, those who need his message of hope and charity.

The Mystical Body of Christ

The Church is Christ's Mystical Body on earth. Jesus himself is the Head of his Mystical Body. He is the preeminent inspiration of the Church.

Through his Spirit, which is the soul of the Mystical Body, Christ guides us, often his wayward members, to become more like him. The more we deepen our belief in Jesus Christ and respond to his word, the more we truly become intimately united with him. The more we share in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the more we are united with Christ and the other members of his Body.

Bridegroom and Bride

The image of bridegroom and bride is another New Testament image that sheds light on the

intimate unity between Christ and his Mystical Body. Jesus compared himself to a bridegroom. (See Mark 2:19.) Saint Paul also described the whole Church and each of her members as a bride betrothed to Christ. (See 2 Corinthians 11:2.)

Christ truly loves his Church and handed himself over to sanctify her. (See Ephesians 5:25–26.) Christ loves the Church and has joined with her in a covenant as binding as a wedding vow. Jesus' love for the Church knows no limits, as his sacrifice on the cross and the Paschal Mystery clearly reveal.



FOR REFLECTION

What does the image of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ say to me about my relationship to Christ and the other members of the Church?

What can I do to encourage the young people to use their gifts and charisms to build up the Church?

First Thoughts

Our Experience of Parish Life

You might find it helpful to remind the young people that the practical, everyday experience of Church is the local parish community. We need to help the students connect the magnificent theology of Saint Paul and his image of the Body of Christ to our experience of parish life.

Believing and Acting

Help the young people make the connection between believing and putting their faith into practice. When we really believe, we act. This is why we choose to become actively involved in our parish. We want to put our faith into action. Our faith may also inspire us to act outside the parish, in our community. For example, we champion the values that our faith teaches us—in our family, in our school, in our workplace, and in the community in which we live.



The Church Teaches . . .

The Revelation of Christ is destined for all people of all ages. On this point the *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)* teaches:

To fulfill this divine plan, Jesus Christ founded the Church, built on the Apostles. He gave them the Holy Spirit from the Father and sent them to preach the Gospel to the whole world.¹ GDC 43

The Church has its origins in the Apostles and has been handed down from Saint Peter and the other Apostles to their successors, the pope and bishops. This chapter focuses on both the mystery of the Church and the Marks, or essential characteristics, of the Church founded by Christ.

See the Catechism . . .

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the mystery of the Church, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 85–90, 751–757, 787–801, 811–865, and 888–892.

*God, our loving Father,
in all the churches throughout the
world you show forth the one, holy,
catholic, and apostolic Church.
May we be a sign of your love for all
people. Help us be the living presence
of Christ, your Son, in the world.
Amen.*

Footnote references may be found on page 256.

LESSON PLANNER

Chapter Focus

To understand that such images as the Body of Christ help us understand the mystery of the Church

Focus

DAY 1

Engage/Teach and Apply
Pages 19–21

Focus

To realize that the Church uses images to express her understanding of the mysteries of faith

Process

Opening Prayer

Discussion

How images help us understand the mystery of the Church

Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 12:27–31, 14:5; Ephesians 4:5–6; Colossians 1:18

Faith Connection: Describe how the images of the Church help you understand the mystery of the Church.

Materials and Options

Materials

pencils or pens, paper

Options

Called to Prayer and Liturgical Lessons booklet: See options for daily, seasonal, and liturgical prayer and lessons.

Activities and Assessment Tools booklet: Building up the Church (page 10)

DAY 2

Teach and Apply
Pages 22–23

Focus

To explore how the Marks of the Church help us understand the mystery of the Church

Prayer

Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

Scripture: John 14:6, 17:21

Activity: Share how the four Marks of the Church help us understand the mystery of the Church.

Did you know: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Materials

pencils or pens

Options

Enriching the Lesson (TG page 83)
Creating Marks of Our Class Puzzles

Activities and Assessment Tools booklet: The Marks of the Church: A Crossword Puzzle (page 9)

DAY 3

Teach/Apply and Connect
Pages 24–25

Focus

To explain the work of the Magisterium, or teaching authority of the Church

Prayer

Presentation

Read, discuss, and summarize content.

Scripture: Matthew 16:18–19, Romans 16:26

Did you know: The writing of pastoral letters is one way the bishops instruct the faithful.

Faith Connection: Interview your pastor about the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our Church Makes a Difference

Explore how a parish council helps a parish.

Materials

pencils or pens, paper

Options

Enriching the Lesson (TG page 83)
Writing Letters to the Bishop

DAY 4

Connect and Apply
Pages 26–27

Focus

To learn skills that help us be responsible and valued members of a group

Prayer

What Difference Does Faith Make in My Life?

Activity: Describe the best group to which you have ever belonged. How does this group rate when you consider the list of suggestions?

Faith Decision: Decide how you will contribute to the work of your parish.

Materials

pencils or pens, paper

Options

Enriching the Lesson (TG page 83)
Working as a Group to Solve a Problem

Faith First Creed and Prayer video
Segment 1: Interviews with young people on faith and our relationship with God.

DAY 5

Pray and Review
Page 28

Pray

Pray the "Prayer of God's People," based on Psalm 84.

Review

Activities: Complete the review exercises to reinforce the concepts of the chapter.

Family Discussion: Encourage the students to share and discuss the "Family Discussion" question with their family this week.

Materials

pencils or pens, paper

Options

Activities and Assessment Tools booklet: Administer chapter 2 test.

Music Connection (TG page 83)



The Church: The Body of Christ

2

FAITH FOCUS

How do images help us understand the mystery of the Church?

FAITH VOCABULARY

Body of Christ	Temple of the Holy Spirit
charisms	Marks of the Church
ecumenism	apostolic succession
Magisterium	infallibility

What things in life are a mystery to you?

Some situations are very difficult to understand or even seem to be beyond our understanding. Some problems seem too difficult to solve. We sometimes call such things mysteries. The Church is a mystery of faith.

Why do you think the Church is called a mystery?

Wong, Diana Ong (1940-).
Chinese-American artist.

[There is] one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.

Enchiridion 4:5-6

19

Day 1

Engage

PRAY

- Gather the class for prayer.
- Remind them that the Holy Spirit is present with them and dwells within each one of them.
- Ask the young people to join hands as you proclaim Ephesians 4:5-6.
- Invite everyone to share a sign of peace.

FAITH FOCUS

Read aloud and brainstorm brief responses to the "Faith Focus" question. Share with the class that in this chapter they will discover more about the mystery of the Church.

DISCOVER

Assess the students' prior knowledge and understanding of the Church as a mystery.

- Write the terms in "Faith Vocabulary" on the board. Ask the young people to share what they already know about the meanings of the faith terms.
- Write their responses next to the appropriate faith terms on the board.
- Brainstorm with the class their understanding of the nature of a mystery.
- Ask volunteers to share things in life that are a mystery to them.
- Read aloud the opening paragraph to the young people.
- Have the students share among themselves why the Church is a mystery.



National Directory for Catechesis

Implementing the National Directory for Catechesis:

Learning Within the Christian Community. Both the leaders and members of the parish community are responsible to ensure that "the faith that it teaches, preaches, and celebrates is alive" (NDC 29C, page 100). As you work with the students, highlight parish ministries and organizations that demonstrate that your parish is truly the Body of Christ.

Day 1

Teach

FOCUS

Remind the young people that there are many different images used to describe the Church. Tell them that these pages will invite them to discover additional images used to give us insight into the mystery of the Church.

DISCOVER

- Read the section "A Mystery of Faith" to the young people. Have them listen for and discover why we speak of the Church as a mystery. **It is made up of both a visible reality and an invisible reality. Affirm other appropriate responses.**
- Ask volunteers to explain how the concept of mystery applies to the Church.
- Have the young people work in pairs to silently read page 21 and describe to each other one of the images of the Church.
- Invite the class to look at the photos on pages 20 and 21 and discuss how they depict the Church.

The Mystery of the Church



A Mystery of Faith

We believe in many mysteries of faith.

A mystery of faith is something we believe because God has revealed it and the Church teaches it. It is a truth of faith that we will never be able to understand fully, so vast is its meaning. No matter how much we learn about it, there will always be more than we can learn and understand about a mystery of faith.

One reason the Church is a mystery is that the Church is made up of both a visible, or human, reality and an invisible, or spiritual, reality. The Church is both a visible community with a hierarchical structure and

an invisible spiritual communion that mirrors the unity of the Holy Trinity. The Church is both an earthly reality that exists here and now on earth and a reality that exists beyond time and space in heaven, where the Lord reigns in glory surrounded by all the saints.

From the days of the early Church, Christians have used images to describe the nature and work of the Church. Each image in its own way tells us a partial truth about the mystery of the Church.



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Teaching Tip

Power of Images. It is difficult to imagine a more closely knit, functioning unit than the human body. If a single part, such as the muscles in the back, feels sore, it is quick to send a message to the whole body. Am I getting the flu? Have I strained my muscles? Am I stressed? Build on the students' knowledge of the interrelatedness of the parts of the human body. Guide them in using this knowledge to help them realize why Saint Paul's teaching on the Church as the Body of Christ gives us insight into the unity of the Church and the necessity of all the baptized to fulfill their responsibilities as members of the Church. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 787–796.)

Images of the Church

The Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit are two images for the Church that are found in the New Testament.

The Body of Christ

The image of the **Body of Christ** compares the Church to the functioning of the human body. Saint Paul the Apostle writes:

Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

As the parts of a physical body are united one to another, so Christians are united with one another in Christ. Christ is "the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). Christ directs and gives life to us. Together we make up the "whole Christ."

Temple of the Holy Spirit

The image of the Church as the **Temple of the Holy Spirit** is used to describe the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Church and within the hearts of the faithful. Saint Paul used this image in his First Letter to the Corinthians (see 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19). The Holy Spirit is the source of the richness of the Church's **charisms** (see 1 Corinthians 12:27–31). Charisms are special graces to be used "so that the church may be built up" (1 Corinthians 14:5).



Family Plan, Diana Ong (1949–), Chinese-American artist

FAITH CONNECTION

Choose either the image "Body of Christ" or "Temple of the Holy Spirit." Describe what it helps you understand about the Church. Share your ideas with a partner.

Responses will vary.

Affirm appropriate responses.

REINFORCE

- Invite volunteers to share how the images of the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit help them understand the mystery of the Church.
- Add new words or phrases to the appropriate faith terms on the board to clarify the meanings of those terms.

INTEGRATE

- Brainstorm other images that might help young teens understand what they have learned about the Church.
- List the images on the board.
- Summarize by sharing that there are many images used by the writers of Sacred Scripture to help us understand the mystery of the Church. These include sheepfold (John 10:1–10), cultivated field (Matthew 21:33–43), building of God (Matthew 21:42, 1 Corinthians 3:9), household of God (1 Timothy 3:15, 1 Peter 4:17), the Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26), and mother (Galatians 4:26).
- Provide art paper and markers, and have the young people work alone or in small groups on the "Faith Connection" activity.
- Ask volunteers to share and discuss their images.

PRAY

Lead the class in praying the Our Father.

Special Needs

Visuals. Visuals are an integral part of the design of *Faith First*. The *Faith First* student texts provide the students with the experience of a wide variety of visuals, such as contemporary poster art, classic masterpiece art, contemporary art, and photographic imagery. These visuals have been carefully chosen to speak to today's visual generation to facilitate the young people's discovery of the deeper meaning of the faith of the Church in a way that words alone cannot achieve. Integrate these visuals into your presentation. Allow time for the students to reflect on and discuss them.

Need: Young people with limited reading proficiency

Teach

PRAY

Have the students silently read 1 Corinthians 12:27 and reflect on their identity as members of the Catholic Church.

FOCUS

Recall with the students that the Church is the Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit. Have a volunteer read the "Faith Focus" question on page 19 aloud and ask the class how they might now answer it. Tell the class that these pages explore the four Marks, or essential characteristics, of the Church founded by Jesus Christ.

DISCOVER

- Write the phrase *Marks of the Church* on the board. Read or paraphrase the opening paragraph on this page for the class. Emphasize that the concept *Marks of the Church* is another faith term that describes the mystery of the Church.
- Have the class work in small groups and assign to each group one of the sections on pages 22 and 23, describing the four Marks of the Church.
- Have each group silently read and discuss the section assigned to it.
- Invite each group to present the key points of its discussion to the entire class, using the appropriate photographs on pages 22 and 23 in their presentations. Clarify as necessary.

The Marks of the Church

Each Sunday at Mass you pray the Nicene Creed. You profess, "We believe . . . in one holy catholic and apostolic Church." One, holy, catholic, and apostolic are the four Marks of the Church. The Marks of the Church are the essential features of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. They help us understand the mystery and mission of the Church.

The Church Is One

The Church is the one Body of Christ. The visible bonds of unity that unite Christ's followers as "one" include:

- profession of one faith received from the Apostles;
- common worship, especially Baptism, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments; and
- direct succession of bishops from the Apostles through the sacrament of Holy Orders.

These bonds of unity within the Church are found most fully in the Catholic Church. Non-Catholic Christians who

do not share fully with us in these bonds of unity today are joined to us "in some, although imperfect, communion" (Decree on Ecumenism 3). In these non-Catholic Christian communities, there are many elements of holiness and truth that are truly means of salvation for their members.

Jesus founded one Church. At the Last Supper, Jesus prayed:

"[M]ay all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:21)

All Christians must make Jesus' prayer their own prayer. We must pray and work for the restoration of the unity of the Church. We call this work of the Church **ecumenism**.

The Church Is Holy

The Church is holy because in Baptism we are joined to Christ, become adopted children of God the Father, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We share in the life and love of God, the Holy One. We receive the grace to live a life of holiness.

How do the Marks "one" and "holy" help us understand the mystery of the Church?

Pope John Paul II and Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch and Archbishop of Constantinople

Cardinal Idina Cassidy (left), President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and German Bishop Christian Kraus (right), President of the Lutheran World Federation



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Background: Doctrine

The Church Is One. These points can help explain the Mark of the Church "one." (1) The Church is one because her source, God, who is the supreme example of unity, is one God in three divine Persons. (See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 813.) (2) The Church is one because of her founder, Jesus. By his saving action, Jesus restores unity in "one people and one body" (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* [Gaudium et spes] 78). (3) The Church is one because of the Holy Spirit, "the principle of the Church's unity" (Decree on Ecumenism [Unitatis redintegratio] 2).



Ordination of Bishops

The Church Is Catholic

"Catholic" is the Mark of the Church that tells us that in God's plan all people are to become one People of God. The Church of Christ that we profess in the Nicene Creed to be "one holy catholic and apostolic" can be found in its fullest in the Catholic Church.

What about all those people who are not baptized? The Catholic Church believes and trusts and teaches that God's love has no limits. People who seek to follow God's will according to their conscience and who through no fault of their own do not come to faith in Christ and his Church can still achieve eternal salvation. Their salvation comes about as a result of the grace of Jesus Christ.

Through his death on the cross and his Resurrection, Christ has won forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God for the entire human race. Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6) in whom salvation is found. It is in this sense

that the Church teaches that all salvation—even the salvation of the unbaptized—comes from Christ through his Body, the Church.

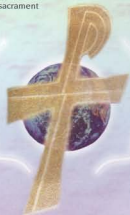
The Church Is Apostolic

Apostolic means "from the time of the Apostles." The Church has its origin and foundation in the life of the original Apostles whom Jesus chose to act in his name. Ever since that time, leadership in the Church has been handed down from Saint Peter and the other Apostles to the popes and bishops through the sacrament of Holy Orders. This connection of all popes and bishops back to Saint Peter and the first Apostles is called apostolic succession.

How do the Marks "catholic" and "apostolic" help us understand the mystery of the Church?

Did you Know...

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897) was a Carmelite nun who during her religious life never traveled far beyond her convent. Yet Saint Thérèse was named the patron of foreign missions. Why is that? Thérèse dedicated her whole life to growing in holiness. She prayed not only for herself but for all others that they might become one with Jesus. In her autobiography, Thérèse wrote about the "little way" of striving for holiness or perfection. Many people today strive to grow in holiness each day by following Saint Thérèse's "little way."



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REINFORCE

- Ask volunteers to share how each of the Marks of the Church clarifies our understanding of the mystery of the Church. **Affirm appropriate responses.**
- Have the young people continue to work in their groups to come up with images that help them understand the Church as "one," "holy," "catholic," and "apostolic."
- List their ideas on the board with the images for the Church that were identified in the previous lesson.
- Read aloud the "Did you know?" sidebar, sharing how the life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux is an example of living a life of holiness.

INTEGRATE

Have the students work in small groups to discuss ways that they can be living "marks" of the Church.

PRAY

Have the students silently pray John 17:21 for the unity of all Christians.

Background: Catholic Tradition

The Apostles' Creed. When the young people first hear the term *Apostles' Creed*, they might think the Apostles actually wrote it. That, of course, is not true. In its present form the Apostles' Creed comes from the eighth century. It summarizes the essential beliefs of the Church handed down from the days of the Apostles. Saint Ambrose of Milan (ca. 339–397), Doctor of the Church, wrote that its authority comes from the fact that it is "the Creed of the Roman Church, the See of Peter, the first of the apostles, to which he brought the common faith" (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 194).

Enriching the Lesson

The "Creating Marks of Our Class Puzzles" activity on page 83 is related to today's content. You may wish to include it in today's lesson.

Day 3

Teach

PRAY

Invite the students to quiet themselves for prayer. Ask them to place themselves silently in the presence of the Holy Spirit and pray the Apostles' Creed together.

FOCUS

Remind the young people that one of the Marks of the Church is "apostolic." Write the "Faith Focus" question from page 19 on the board. Ask the students how they might now answer it. Tell them that this page will help them explore the teaching ministry of the pope and bishops, who are the successors of the Apostles.

DISCOVER

- Ask volunteers to read aloud "The Magisterium" and have everyone highlight key concepts.
- Have the students silently read the "Did you know?" sidebar to learn more about the Magisterium.

Apply

REINFORCE

- Write the faith terms *Magisterium*, *college of bishops*, and *infallibility* on the board.
- Invite volunteers to share the meanings of the terms with the whole group.
- Have the class check the definitions with the definitions in the glossary.

INTEGRATE

- Have the young people work with partners to do the "Faith Connection" activity.
- Ask volunteers to share their questions.

Did you Know...

Since the days of the early Church, the Apostles and their successors have written letters to teach and guide the Church. This tradition still exists today. The writing of pastoral letters is one way the bishops of the United States, either individually or together as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), instruct the faithful on Catholic teachings, worship, social concerns, and other topics that are important to the life of the Church.



Cardinals and bishops from around the world praying before a meeting at the Vatican

The Magisterium

The **Magisterium** is the living teaching authority and office of the Church, entrusted to the pope and the bishops by Christ. Jesus made Saint Peter the visible foundation, or rock, on which he would build the Church (see Matthew 16:18–19). Peter and his successors would be the "rock" and source of the unity of the Church founded by Jesus. The Church uses the term *College of Bishops* to name the unity of all the bishops (the successors of the Apostles) and the special leadership, or primacy, of the pope (the successor of Saint Peter the Apostle) among the bishops.

The pope as the successor of Saint Peter and head of the College of Bishops has a special authority in the Church. He has "supreme, full,

immediate, and universal power in the care of souls." When the pope and the bishops act together in their capacity as the College of Bishops, they exercise supreme and full teaching authority over the universal Church.

Infallibility is the charism of the Holy Spirit given to the Church that guarantees that the official teaching of the pope or the pope and bishops on matters of faith and morals is without error. This charism is at work when:

- the pope teaches officially as the supreme pastor of the Church, or
- the College of Bishops teaches together with the pope.

The Catholic faithful are required to accept such teachings with the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26).

FAITH CONNECTION

Develop several interview questions you would like to ask your pastor about the teachings of the Catholic Church. Invite him to discuss the questions with the class.

Responses will vary.

Affirm appropriate responses.

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Special Needs

Partner Work. The young people should regularly work with partners or in small groups. For example, have partners or groups create the interview questions that they would like to ask their pastor. (See "Faith Connection" activity.) Then have partners or groups role-play their interviews before the entire class, with one partner or group member being the interviewer and the other partner or another group member taking on the role of the pastor. Clarify the answers to questions the respondents in each group give.

Need: Students with limited writing proficiency

OUR CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Parish Councils

All the baptized are called to work together to build up the Church. One way we do this work is through parish councils. A parish council is made up of representatives of the parish family. These representatives are either appointed by the pastor or elected by parishioners and approved by the pastor.

The Work of Parish Councils

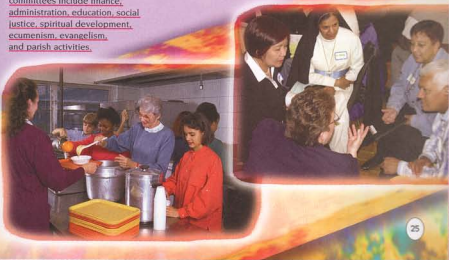
Parish councils help the pastor with his managerial and pastoral tasks. They work with him in such areas as finance, justice, education, and service. Parish councils foster a sense of community by developing and promoting programs that touch the lives of the members of the parish. They also help the parish reach out to the members of the wider community. Parish councils are often organized into dynamic committees. Examples of these committees include finance, administration, education, social justice, spiritual development, ecumenism, evangelism, and parish activities.

Sharing Our Gifts

A parish community contains a whole host of people who use their talents and skills to build up the Church and take part in her mission. For example, parishioners who are social workers, artists, nurses, skilled laborers, merchants, business leaders, secretaries, lawyers, doctors, educators, and so on, can use their gifts to help create vibrant faith communities.

Among the issues that councils tackle are the continuing need for parish volunteers, youth education, development and implementation of parish mission statements, caring for the needy, parent education, and the challenges of the fewer number of priests to serve a growing Catholic population.

How does your parish organize itself to touch the lives of both members of the parish and members of the wider community?



Day 3

Connect

HIGHLIGHT

Recall with the class that the Church is the Body of Christ. Point out that the Church around the world is organized into archdioceses and dioceses, which are further organized into parishes. Explain that the parish often has a parish council to help the parish use all of its gifts and talents to do the work of the Church in its area and to support the work of the Church around the world.

DISCOVER

- Brainstorm the different types of gifts people bring to a parish.
- Ask volunteers to read aloud "Parish Councils" and have everyone listen and discover many of the ways parishioners take part in the work of the parish.

INTEGRATE

Use parish bulletins as a basis for a discussion with the young people about the ways their parish touches the lives of its members and the members of the larger community and contributes to the work of the Church.

PRAY

Have the students silently pray for their parish, asking God to bless its work.

Enriching the Lesson

The "Writing Letters to the Bishop" activity on page 83 is related to today's content. You may wish to include it in today's lesson.

Teaching Tip

Profile the Work of the Parish. When starting to talk about the parish council, young parishioners often ask questions about the variety of work done by the parish. It is important for the students to grow in their knowledge of the history, the people, the work, and the current organization of the ministries of the parish. Perhaps your parish is among those that have a teen representative on the parish council. This is a great way for the parish council to consistently hear the voice of teens as well as for the teens to have firsthand knowledge of and input into the decisions the council makes. Invite the pastor and president or another member of the parish council to visit and share with the class the work they do on the council.

Day 4

Connect

PRAY

Lead the class in praying
Ephesians 4:5–6 from page 19.

FOCUS

Recall that the Church is a mystery of faith. Have the students silently read the "Faith Focus" question on page 19. Ask volunteers to answer it, using the information that they learned in this chapter. Point out that all of the members of the Church are called to work together to build up the Church.

DISCOVER

- Invite the class to look at the photos on pages 26 and 27 and describe the groups that are represented.
- Discuss with the young people the different groups to which they belong.
- Invite volunteers to share the challenges and responsibilities of belonging to a group.
- Have the young people silently read pages 26 and 27 to develop a list of skills needed to be a responsible member of the groups to which they belong.

WHAT DIFFERENCE

Does Faith Make in My Life?

Belonging to Groups

We all have a basic need to belong. Humans were not made to live in isolation; we need other people. Yes, there are times when we choose to be alone, but we all like to belong to groups where we are accepted, have fun, and work together.

Through Baptism you have the wonderful gift of being joined to Christ and belonging to the Church, the Body of Christ. We all belong to the family of God. We have the responsibility of showing others that we are all God's children.

Throughout your life you will belong to many other groups. Your own families, classes in school, teams, clubs, and organizations are only a few examples. Members of a group share things with others, learn to trust each other, recognize one another's gifts and talents, and learn how to work together.

Sometimes it is a challenge to work with a group. To be a vibrant member of any group you have to learn how to get along, how to play fair, and how to work together for the common good of the group.



26

Enriching the Lesson

The "Working as a Group to Solve a Problem" activity on page 83 is related to today's content. You may wish to include it in today's lesson.

Teaching Tip

Reaching Out to People in Need. Young people have a natural sense of caring and empathy for people who are hurting or suffering from a special need. Build on this wonderful quality and encourage the class to work with the social action committee and ministries of the parish council. This work imitates what the early Church did as they made sure that no one among them was in need. (See Acts of the Apostles 2:44–45, 4:32.) Help the young people grow in putting this social teaching of the Catholic Church into practice in age-appropriate ways.

HIGHLIGHT

We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the responsibility to share in the work of the Church and build up the Church on earth. One of the ways we do this is through the many Church groups and non-Church groups to which we belong.

RESPOND

- Have the young people work alone on the "Faith Decision" activity and describe the best group to which they have ever belonged.
- Using the suggestions listed on page 27, have the young people silently identify one skill they can improve on so that they might be a more active and responsible member of the parish.

CHOOSE

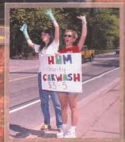
- Invite everyone to prayerfully reflect on the responsibilities of being a member of the Body of Christ. Then have them write their faith decision.
- Encourage the young people to follow through on the work they plan to do.

PRAY

- Have the students reflect on the work they plan to do for their parish. Then invite them to silently ask the Holy Spirit to give them the grace needed to carry out their plans.
- Have the students turn to page 135 and pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit together.

Here are some suggestions to help you be a responsible and valued member of any group.

- * Value being a member of the group.
- * Have a spirit of cooperation and an open mind.
- * Be respectful of other members and their ideas.
- * Express your opinions honestly, in a give-and-take of ideas.
- * Be a part of the planning of projects, the brainstorming of ideas, or the solution of problems.
- * Decide who will do what, when tasks will be accomplished.
- * Work cooperatively for the good of the group.
- * Meet your responsibilities.
- * Ask God's blessings on the group.
- * Pray for God's help in accomplishing your goals.



Faith Decision

- In your journal or on a piece of paper describe the best group to which you have ever belonged. Using the list on this page describe your experience in that particular group.
- Choose one suggestion from the list that you can work on developing so that you can be a more active member of your parish.

This week I will contribute to the work of my parish by

Responses will vary.

Affirm appropriate responses.



27

Teaching Tip

Skills for Group Work. Share these four additional group work skills with the young people:

- Be realistic—be honest about what can be accomplished at the meeting.
- Be a good listener—listen carefully and do not interrupt.
- Be patient—go with the flow of the meeting and do not let frustration show.
- Be visionary—think about and share what you want the results of the meeting to be.

Day 5

Pray and Review

FOCUS

Remind the students that the Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Emphasize that the Holy Spirit dwells within the Church and within all the faithful. Explain that today's prayer is a prayer of praise based on Psalm 84.

PRAY

- Divide the class into two groups.
- Gather the class for prayer.
- Have them pray the "Prayer of God's People," alternating verses.

REVIEW

- Have the young people share the meanings of the terms in "Faith Vocabulary" and compare their definitions with those in the glossary.
- Use the "Main Ideas" and "Critical Thinking" sections to clarify any questions the students may have concerning what they have learned in the chapter.
- Remind everyone to share and discuss the "Family Discussion" question with their family.

Before Moving On . . .

Reflect on this question before moving on to the next chapter.

What have I done to bring a spirit of Christian joy into my classroom?

PRAY and REVIEW

Prayer of God's People

Leader:

O Lord, happy are those who trust in you.

All:

Happy are those who live in your Temple, singing praise to you.

Group 1:

I long to be in your Temple.

Group 2:

Even sparrows have built nests near your altars.

All:

Happy are those who live in your Temple, singing praise to you.

Group 1:

One day spent in your Temple is better than one thousand spent elsewhere.

Group 2:

I would rather be a doorkeeper at your Temple than live in the homes of the wicked.

All:

Happy are those who live in your Temple, singing praise to you.

Group 1:

The Lord is our protector, blessing us with love and honor.

Group 2:

The Lord does not withhold anything from those who do right.

All:

Happy are those who live in your Temple, singing praise to you.

BASED ON PSALM 84

Leader:

Lord God, you call us to be your Church.
May we always be aware that we live in your presence, one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

FAITH VOCABULARY

Define each of these terms:

1. Body of Christ p. 21
2. Temple of the Holy Spirit p. 21
3. charisms p. 21
4. Marks of the Church p. 22
5. ecumenism p. 22
6. apostolic succession p. 23
7. Magisterium p. 24
8. infallibility p. 24

MAIN IDEAS

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

1. (a) Discuss what it means to say the Church is a mystery. p. 20
(b) Describe how the images Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit help us understand the mystery of the Church. p. 21
2. (a) Explain how the Marks of the Church help us understand the mystery of the Church. pp. 22 and 23
(b) Explain how the work of the Magisterium helps us live as faithful and responsible members of the Church. p. 24

CRITICAL THINKING

Using what you have learned in this chapter, reflect on and explain your understanding of this statement:

God invites everyone to salvation.
Affirm appropriate responses.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

How is our family a sign that the Church is the Body of Christ?

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the "Faith First for Families" page at www.FaithFirst.com. Also click on Teen Center and read this week's interactive story.



28

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

Creating Marks of Our Class Puzzles

Purpose

To reinforce an understanding of the Marks of the Church (taught on page 22)

Directions

- Have the students work in groups and provide each group with poster board with the heading "The Four Marks of Our Class" written on it.
- Ask one person in each group to use a marker to divide the poster board into eight or ten puzzle pieces and then cut the poster board into the puzzle pieces.
- Have each person in the group take two pieces of the puzzle and write words, phrases, or symbols on them that identify the spirit of their religion class.
- Have the groups assemble their puzzles and share their descriptions with the whole class.
- Invite the young people to come to consensus on four qualities that identify the class.

Materials

poster board, scissors, and markers

Writing Letters to the Bishop

Purpose

To reinforce that the Magisterium is the teaching authority of the Church (taught on page 24)

Directions

- Discuss with the young people the duties and activities of the bishop of your diocese.
- Have the young people work with partners to compose a letter to the bishop expressing thanks for the work he does.
- Invite the young people to ask questions that they have about the Catholic Church.

- Have the young people share their letters with one another.
- Select several letters and send them to the bishop.

Materials

paper for letter writing, and pens or pencils

Working as a Group to Solve a Problem

Purpose

To reinforce the different skills needed to be a responsible member of a group (taught on page 27)

Directions

- Have the young people work in groups to solve this problem.

These people were at a family reunion: one grandfather, one grandmother, two fathers, two mothers, two sisters, two sons, two daughters, one father-in-law, one mother-in-law, and one daughter-in-law. But not as many people attended as it sounds. How many were there and who were they? (Answer: There were two little girls and a boy, their parents and their father's parents, totaling seven people.)

- After the groups have solved the story problem, have each student use the skills listed on page 27 to analyze how well they participated in the group.

Materials

none



Music Connection

- "In Christ There Is No East or West" (African-American traditional). *Gather Comprehensive* (GC) #738.
- "Song of the Body of Christ/Cancion del Cuerpo de Cristo" (Hawaiian traditional). GC #847.
- "Table Song," D. Haas. GC #849.
- "We Are One Body," D. Scallon. *Voices As One* #98.