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Visit www.osvcurriculum.com to find Research Links, Q & As, Activities, and Life Connections.

Believe with the Spirit

Gathering Rite Procession with the Word



Sing together.

We believe, we believe, we believe.

"We Believe," © 1993, 1994, Bernadette Farrell.
Published by OCP Publications

Leader: Let us pray.

All: *Pray the Sign of the Cross together.*

Leader: Lord, our God, we gather together as a people who believe in you and your promises. Open our hearts to know you more and believe in you more fully. Guide us to seek and find you as you continue to make yourself known to us through the Holy Spirit. We give you praise and thanks for the gift of our faith and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

All: Amen.

Celebration of the Word

Leader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Leader: *Read Matthew 17:14–21.*
The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflect silently.



What does the Gospel tell us about the power of faith? What image of nature describes your faith today?



RITUAL FOCUS

Receiving a Candle

Come forward as directed.

Leader: Heavenly Father, at Baptism, we entered into the faith of the Church. We received the Light of Christ. Hear our prayer as we recall our Baptism and seek to deepen our faith. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever.

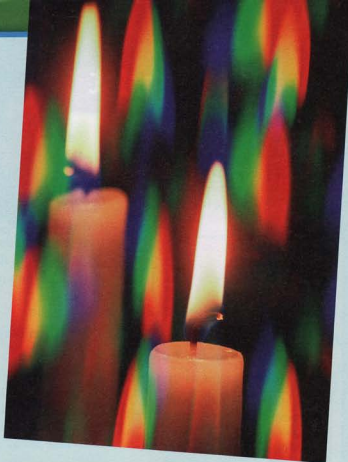
All: Amen.

Leader: [Name], receive the Light of Christ, walk always as a child of the light and keep the flame of faith burning and alive in your heart.
Respond: I will.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: Let us pray.
The response is Hear us, O Lord.

Reader 1: That we will come to a deeper appreciation of the faith we received at Baptism, we pray to the Lord.



Reader 2: That God will bless us with open eyes and hearts that will come to believe in him more fully and love him more faithfully, we pray to the Lord.

Reader 3: That we will find, in this community of faith, support and strength to live as children of the light, we pray to the Lord.

Reader 4: That in faith we will become more responsive to the needs of others, we pray to the Lord.

Leader: Let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

Pray the Lord's Prayer together.

We Go Forth

Leader: God, our Loving Father, we stand before you in faith. Send your Holy Spirit that we may act as witnesses of that faith to those around us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.



Sing again the opening song.



Light of Christ



Reflect

on the Celebration



My Thoughts

When I received the candle and heard the words: "Receive the Light of Christ; walk always as a child of the light and keep the flame of faith burning and alive in your heart," I

Faith helps me

Faith Sharing

- ▶ With a partner or in a small group, review the four Prayers of the Faithful from the celebration. Choose the intercession that you think most expresses a need you have today and share it with your partner or the group.



How does your family keep the flame of faith alive at home and with others?

- ▶ Together make a list of the ways young people show their faith in everyday life.

SIGNS OF FAITH

Paschal Candle Another name for the Paschal Candle is the Easter candle. It is a tall, white candle. During the Easter Vigil, the priest cuts a cross in the candle and traces the Greek letters Alpha above the cross and Omega below, which symbolizes that Jesus is the beginning and the end. Then he carves the numerals of the calendar year into the candle and lights the candle from the Easter fire. While the church is still in darkness, the Paschal Candle is carried in procession into the church as a symbol of the Risen Christ. The candles of the assembly are lit from the Paschal Candle.



The lighting of the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil tells a story of faith. List what you think are the important parts of the story.

TALK ABOUT IT

With a partner or small group, recall an experience when the lights went out and you were stuck in the dark. If this has never happened to you, imagine what it might feel like. Share the experience and how it felt or might feel. How did you or would you find your way out of the darkness?

THINK ABOUT IT

Sometimes we just do not understand how or why something is happening. Think about a time when you were clueless about something, such as how to do a math problem or why someone did something good for you. What was it that helped you to understand? Compare that to how faith helps you understand things.

TALK ABOUT IT

How does your faith help you see things differently from people who do not have faith?

Enlightened by Christ

During the Baptism of a child, the priest or deacon refers to the Easter candle, which represents the presence of the Risen Christ in the world, and says “Receive the Light of Christ.” Then one of the parents or godparents lights the child’s baptismal candle from the Easter candle. The presider tells the parents and godparents to keep the light “burning brightly.” He prays that the “flame of faith” will be kept alive in the child’s heart. The more the child comes to know the Risen Christ and grows in relationship with him, the more faith grows and the more he or she sees things through the life and teachings of Jesus.

Faith and Light

Light is one of the many images and words the Church uses to describe the mystery of faith. **Faith** is our free response to God, who first shares his great gift of love, and to all that he tells us about himself in revelation. **Revelation** involves God’s communication of himself in the Old and New Testaments, and especially through his own Son, Jesus Christ.

We begin to see and understand life better through the light of faith. We can see what we are called to be and do as disciples. Faith is a way of seeing—enlightened by the Risen Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, we grow to see the world as God does. The Holy Spirit helps us see and hear with the eyes and ears of faith. Through faith, we can discover new possibilities for ourselves and new strengths and talents. We see the world in a different way from those who do not believe.



Seeing and Believing



SCRIPTURE

GO TO THE SOURCE

John 1:1–5, 3:1–21, 9:1–40

TALK ABOUT IT

With a partner or in a small group, brainstorm responses to the Faith Focus question. Be prepared to give examples from your own experience.

FAITH FOCUS

What does faith do?

The Gospel of John uses many symbols and images to describe the Good News and the Kingdom. Light and darkness are two of these symbols. In the beginning of the Gospel, we hear that Jesus was a light that came into darkness. Later we read that when Jesus instructed Nicodemus about faith, Jesus talked about light and darkness again and referred to himself as the light of the world. In the story of the Man Born Blind, Jesus used light, darkness, and seeing to teach about the mystery of faith. The Jewish people would not believe the man's testimony about Jesus. They drove him out of the town. Jesus found him and said:



SCRIPTURE

"Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

John 9:35–39

Maybe it was easier for the man born blind to believe in Jesus because he had experienced the **miracle** of having his sight restored. But the Pharisees had seen the miracle, and they still did not believe. Faith is a gift of God, but it has two sides. God continues to make known his presence and to call humans to a faithful relationship with him. We must choose to recognize and respond to his presence.



When have you recognized and responded to God's call to faith?



Faith and Fear

The Pharisees were not the only people who had a difficult time believing in Jesus; sometimes the Apostles questioned and doubted.

What events and/or occurrences in your life have helped you believe in Jesus? What things might have made it more difficult to believe?



Jesus Stills the Storm

And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.

They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Matthew 8:23-27

? What is Jesus' message to the Apostles about belief?

? How can this reading help your faith?

Share the Word

With a partner or in a small group, select two of the Scripture passages below. Read and discuss what they tell you about faith. Then write a paragraph to complete the open-ended sentence that follows.

Matthew 14:28-33	Mark 4:35-42	John 20:24-29
Matthew 15:21-28	Luke 18:35-43	Acts 3:1-10
Matthew 26:69-75	John 14:1-26	Hebrews 11:1-2

These Scriptures helped me see that faith and believing _____

Personal Faith

TALK ABOUT IT

One of the names given to the Church is *Mother*. How has the Church been a mother for your faith?

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do you think it would be difficult to believe alone, without others who shared your faith?

FAITH FOCUS

What is the role of the community in faith development?

Faith is a lifelong relationship with God. Each of us has a very personal and unique relationship with him. As your faith continues to deepen, you will see things from a different point of view. You will grow in your trust of God and feel more connected to him and his plan for you and the world. This is what the Sacraments of Initiation celebrate—your new connections and deepening bonds with God and the Church.

Communal Faith

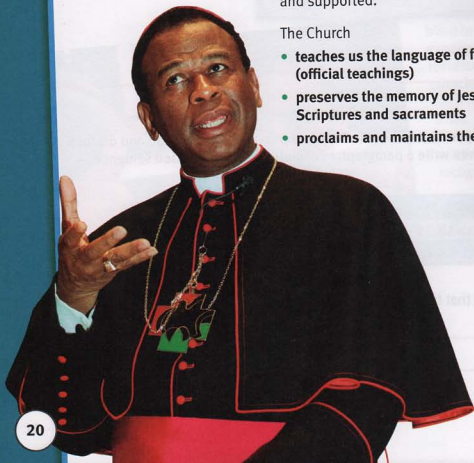
While faith and the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation are personal acts, they are much more than that. They are actions of the Church. Just as we cannot live alone, we cannot believe alone. We receive our faith from God through other people like our parents and family members, and we hand it on to others. We are all links in the chain of faith. Faith has an important **communal** aspect—we are carried by the faith of others, and we support others in faith through our beliefs, prayers, and actions. It is through the community of the Church that our faith is fed and supported.

The Church

- teaches us the language of faith through prayer and doctrines (official teachings)
- preserves the memory of Jesus' words and actions in the Scriptures and sacraments
- proclaims and maintains the mysteries of faith in the creeds

Guided by the Church and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we grow in both our personal and communal faith through actions such as these:

- talking to God
- reading and thinking about the Scriptures
- participating in the communal worship of the Church, especially in the Sacraments
- going out in service to those in need
- learning more in parish programs



Completion of Baptism

The Holy Spirit began the journey of faith with you at Baptism. In Confirmation you will again be blessed with the special Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is necessary for the completion of the grace of Baptism. During his homily, the bishop or priest who will confirm you will remind you of your Baptism. He will talk about the importance of your responding to faith in your life.

In these or similar words he will say the following:

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the Sign of the Cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and Resurrection; your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ. . .

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

So now before you receive the Spirit, I ask you to renew the profession of faith you made in Baptism or your parents or godparents made in union with the whole Church.

Rite of Confirmation, 23

The Sacrament of Confirmation joins you more closely to the Church and gives you a special strength of the Holy Spirit, which will help you share and explain your faith with others in word and action.



SYMBOL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Cloud and Light In the Old Testament, the images of cloud and light often appear together when the Lord is revealing himself. With Moses on Mount Sinai (see *Exodus 24:15–18*), the meeting tent (see *Exodus 33:9–10*), and the wandering in the desert (see *Exodus 40:36–38*), the cloud that reveals Yahweh is both radiant and murky. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit “overshadows” the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation (see *Luke 1:35*); at the Transfiguration (see *Luke 9:34–35*) the cloud overshadows Jesus, Moses, and Elijah; Peter, James, and John hear a voice from the cloud that says: “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” (*Luke 9:35*).



Cloud and light seem almost to be opposites. From your experience, why do you think these are good images for the Holy Spirit?

Witness of Faith

Bio Stats

Ita Ford

- 1940** Ita is born in Brooklyn, New York.
- 1960** She graduates from Marymount College.
- 1961** She enters the Maryknoll Sisters.
- 1964** Ita leaves Maryknoll due to health problems and works awhile as an editor.
- 1971** She reapplies to Maryknoll and is accepted.
- 1972** Assigned to the missions in Chile, Ita goes with her friend, Sister Carla.
- 1980** In March, Ita and Carla respond to a call from El Salvador's Bishop Oscar Romero—just before his assassination. In June, they begin working at the Emergency Refugee Committee in Chalatenango. In August, while returning a political prisoner to his home, Ita and Carla are caught in a flash flood. Carla drowns after pushing Ita to safety. Maura Clarke becomes Ita's new missionary partner.



In December, Ita, Maura, Dorothy Kazei, and Jean Donovan are tortured and murdered for helping the people of El Salvador.

"Am I willing to suffer with the people here, . . . Can I say to my neighbors, 'I have no solution to this situation; I don't know the answers, but I will walk with you, search with you, be with you?'"

Living It Out Today

My baptismal name is Ita. I was named after my grandmother who is a great person and fun to be around. I love her a lot, but I did not like having her name. It was so different from everyone else's. When I was being confirmed, my catechist gave us an assignment to look up our patron saint.

My grandmother had already told me about Saint Ita who was an Irish nun in the fifth century. I just couldn't identify with her. I went online and found the story of Ita Ford and the women martyrs of El Salvador. Here was somebody with my name that I could understand and identify with. I read more about her and found out that her friends said she had "a buoyant personality." She was fun even though she had a difficult life as a missionary. She did not have visions. She had questions and wondered if she should stay in the missions where she worked with the poor. She wanted to do the right thing even though it was difficult. I chose this Ita to be my patron. I pray to her a lot because I want to be good and serve God, but I don't know the answers to all the problems in the world either.

Ita Q.



Faith in Action

Solidarity of the Human Family

The Light of Christ in us at age thirteen may not be as bright as Ita Ford's at age thirty-two or when she began her missionary work with the poor in Chile. But "this light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!" Like Ita Ford, we can choose to believe that God calls us to be in solidarity with others who are hurting. We can contact Maryknoll's Office of Global Concerns about their work overseas and find out how we can be in solidarity with one of their projects. Maybe together, with others around the world, we can work with such faith and courage that we will move the mountain of injustice at least a little in our lifetime.



Visit www.osvcurriculum.com to discover more about Catholic Social Teaching.

Respond in Faith

My Thoughts

Write a short paragraph explaining how this session helped you see the relationship between faith and the Holy Spirit.

Draw a Map

Think about the people and events of your life as a faith journey. Create a map of places, paths, rest stops, and detours that have been part of your journey.



CLOSING PRAYER

*Come, Holy Spirit,
Open my eyes that I may see the events of my life through the eyes of faith.
Open my ears that I may hear the word of God spoken to me.
Open my heart that I may grow more in love with God who has loved me first.
Open my hands and move my feet in faith to serve others.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord.
Amen.*

Respond

in Faith Together

FAITH FOCUS

Discuss the following beliefs together.
Focus on how these beliefs have or could
have an effect on your lives today.
Refer to the lesson if necessary.

- Faith is based on God's great gift of revelation. Among other things, revelation tells us that God the Father communicated himself and his plan for all creation by sending us his own Son, Jesus.
- Faith has two sides: God's call and our response.
- Being a member of the Church strengthens and supports our faith.

RITUAL FOCUS

During the celebration, the candidates received a candle and were reminded of the call to be children of the light. At the end of your time together, pray together for one another using these or similar words:

*May Christ always be our light,
May we walk always as children of the light,
May we see life through the eyes of faith,
May our journey of faith bring light to others.*

Amen.

ACT TOGETHER

At the conclusion of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, the bishop or priest will say these words:

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

Rite of Confirmation, 23

Together select two persons from the parish community who are witnesses of faith. Set up a conversation with them to discuss how they nurture their faith and how and why they are proud to profess it in their daily lives.

To the Sponsor or Family Member: Discuss these quotes from famous Catholics. Focus on how they apply to your life.

☞ **Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.** ☞

— Saint Augustine

SHARE TOGETHER

To the Sponsor or Family Member:

Call to mind the practices and disciplines—such as daily prayer, a certain form of meditation, or reading a favorite devotion—which you do or have done in the past that have helped you grow in faith. If you are comfortable doing so, share those with your candidate and explore some options that he or she may find helpful to continue or start.

To the Sponsor or Family Member: Reflect on your own faith journey. Recall the people and events that have been significant in the deepening of your faith.

☞ **A strong, lively faith is the foundation of all virtue.** ☞

— Catherine McAuley

☞ **Faith has to do with things that are not seen, and hope with things that are not in hand.** ☞

— Saint Thomas Aquinas