

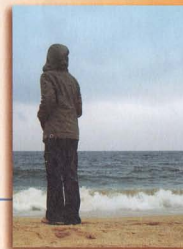
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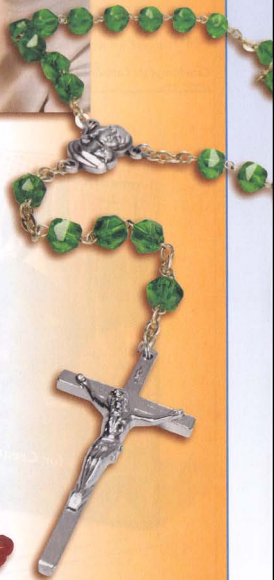
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## Chapter 2: The Gospels: Portraits of Jesus

### 3-Minute Retreat

*As you begin to prepare this session, pause for a few moments and begin to relax. Take several deep breaths and rest in the loving presence of God.*

#### John 2:9–11

And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

#### Reflection

The action was so unusual that the headwaiter felt compelled to mention it. Most likely the bridegroom thought he had served the good wine first. What must have gone through his mind when the headwaiter spoke these words to him? Both the bridegroom and the headwaiter were astounded.

One thing we learn from Jesus in the Gospels is that abundance is a sign of God’s Kingdom. Scarcity does not exist in God’s vocabulary. God is so much bigger than anything we can imagine. Jesus demonstrated that fact over and over again throughout his public ministry. The closer we draw to Jesus, the more we will notice that the Christian life is not business as usual.

#### Questions

In what ways have you experienced the abundance of God?  
What about your life has changed as you have drawn closer to Jesus?

#### Prayer

Speak to Jesus, using these words or words of your own.

*Jesus, you reveal the Kingdom of God in so many surprising ways. May your signs and wonders lead me ever closer to you.*



*Abundance is a sign of  
God's Kingdom.*

# CATECHIST PREPARATION

## Knowing and Sharing Your Faith

Use the following background information on Scripture and Catholic Tradition to deepen your understanding of the content of this chapter.

### Scripture and Tradition in Chapter 2

Because Jesus Christ is their focus, the four Gospels occupy a central place in the Bible. They are at the heart of all Scripture. The Church identifies three stages in the formation of the Gospels. The first stage is the life and teaching of Jesus, all he did and taught for our salvation until he returned to the Father after the Resurrection. The second stage is the oral tradition in which the original witnesses to Jesus' life and Resurrection, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, passed on what he had said and done and what his words and actions mean for us. The final stage is the written Gospel. All of these stages took place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each of the four Gospels gives a unique portrait of Jesus as it teaches the essential truth that Jesus is the Son of God become man for our salvation. From all the information available to them and with an eye to the situation in their particular church, the Gospel writers wrote about what Jesus meant for their communities.

The virgin Mary embodies the obedience of faith perfectly. Throughout her life, even when Jesus her son died on the cross, Mary's faith never wavered. The Church venerates Mary as the purest realization of faith. The Gospel of John reveals to us how Mary prays and intercedes in faith. At Cana, she tells her son about the shortage of wine at a wedding feast. At the foot of the cross, Jesus gives Mary to the beloved disciple, who is a symbol of the whole Church, to be his mother. Mary is the new Eve, the true "Mother of all the living" (CCC 2618) and the Mother of the Church.

### Scripture in Chapter 2

In *John 2:1–12*, Jesus performs his first miracle at a wedding in Cana.

In *John 8:47*, Jesus says those who hear the word of God belong to God.

### Catholic Social Teaching in Chapter 2

One principle of Catholic Social Teaching is that as human beings we have both rights and responsibilities. We have a fundamental right to life and the things we need to live such as food, shelter, employment, health care, and education. Along with these rights we have corresponding responsibilities to respect the rights of our family, neighbors, and all of society. We cannot claim our rights while neglecting our duties. Pope John XXIII wrote in his encyclical *Peace on Earth* in 1963: "Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other." (*Peace on Earth*, 30)

### WINDOW ON THE CATECHISM

The transmission of revelation in the New Testament is presented in CCC 74–95. The stages in the formation of the New Testament are presented in CCC 124–127. Mary as Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church is presented in CCC 963–972.

### GENERAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

The presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis is presented in GDC 101–113.

### NATIONAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

The use of Sacred Scripture in catechesis is presented in NDC 24:B and 67:A. Mary as the example of discipleship is presented in NDC 29:B.

Those who hear  
the word of God  
belong to God.

## For Your Information

Following is background information for the content on the pages indicated.

### The Four Gospels (pages 22–24)

The word *gospel* means “good news.” The four Gospels present God’s saving action in the life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Mark was written in Rome by about A.D. 70. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke were written in the 80s and 90s and used the Gospel of Mark as their basis. The Gospel of John was written in its final form by about the year 100. Though each Gospel tells the good news from its own perspective, together they present the story of our salvation in Jesus Christ. The Church has always believed that the Gospels reveal everything that we need to know to find salvation in Jesus.

### New Testament Apocrypha (page 23)

Occasionally, we hear stories about gospels that have supposedly been hidden, such as the gospel of Thomas and the gospel of Mary Magdalene. Such writings that have not been included in the New Testament are referred to as being apocryphal. Although *apocryphal* means “hidden” or “secret,” the New Testament apocrypha has been and continues to be available (at libraries and on the Internet) for perusal and study as a form of literature. While biblical scholars believe that some of these writings may include actual words and events from Jesus’ life (many of which have parallels in the four Gospels), most of these writings lack historical value and include outlandish accounts of miracles attributed to Jesus as a child. From these apocryphal accounts, however, we learn the names of Mary’s parents, Joachim and Anne, and the legend of the blossoming of Joseph’s staff as a sign that he was to take Mary as his bride.

### Mary in Scripture (pages 26–27)

There is surprisingly little about Mary in the New Testament. She plays an active role in only two stories in Mark (3:31–35; 6:1–6), five stories in Matthew (1:18–25; 2:1–12; 2:13–15, 2:19–23; 12:46–50), five stories in Luke (1:26–38; 1:39–56; 2:1–35; 2:39–40; 2:41–52), and two stories in John (2:1–12; 19:25–27). She does not play a major role in Jesus’ public ministry, and none of the Gospels mention her in connection with the Resurrection. Yet Mary clearly came to be revered in the early Church because of her role as mother of the Savior and her commitment to him. Her place was not above, but within the Church, and that is how we see her in the Acts of the Apostles. The apostles “devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” (Acts of the Apostles 1:14)

### Mary, the Mother of the Church (page 27)

Mary was called Mother of the Church as early as the 12th century. In 1964, during the Mass at the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI officially proclaimed Mary as Mother of the Church. He said: “For the glory of the Blessed Virgin and our own consolation, we proclaim the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church, of the whole people of God, faithful and pastors, and we call her most loving Mother.” *The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church* (60–68) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speak of Mary as not only the Mother of Jesus, but also as the Mother of the People of God.



ART • i • FACT

Mother and Child  
Monica Liu

# CATECHIST PREPARATION

## Working with the Articles


Use the following Active-Learning and Community-Building Activity for working with the articles in this chapter: *Jesus Is the Center* (page 22) and *Model of Faith* (page 26).

### Making Connections

The purpose of the Making Connections activity is to have the young people teach one another the most important ideas in the article they are assigned to read. They work together to identify and explain how the two articles connect.

1. Divide the group in half, calling one group "Article 1" and the other group "Article 2."
2. Have each group read silently the assigned article, taking notes on page 30. (5–7 minutes)
3. Draw attention to the words *Evangelists*, *Gospels*, and *Tradition*, which are defined in the Glossary.
4. Have the young people form groups of four with peers who read the same article. Each young person should take a turn sharing his or her notes with the small group. Group members should listen attentively and add new ideas to their notes. (5 minutes)
5. Circulate among the groups to be sure the young people are on-task and recording the most important ideas from their articles.
6. Form new groups of four with two young people from Article 1 and two from Article 2. Those who read Article 1 should use their notes to tell the other pair about Article 1. Those who read Article 2 will do the same. Both pairs should record the others' main points. (10 minutes)
7. Each group of four should work together to complete the Connect section, showing how the two articles connect. Encourage the young people to write complete statements and to include their reasons for making each statement. (10 minutes)
8. Finally, the young people in each group should pick a reporter to read their group's connection statements to the entire group.
9. When the groups are finished reporting, lead the young people through the sidebars and TidBytes of the chapter beginning with page 23.

## Making Connections



1. Read the article assigned to your group.
2. Note the main points from your article in the appropriate column below.
3. Join your group with a group who read the other article.
4. Record the main points in the appropriate column below.
5. Work together to complete the "Connect" section to show how the two articles connect.

NOTES FROM ARTICLE 1	How do these two articles connect?	NOTES FROM ARTICLE 2
<b>JESUS IS THE CENTER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Gospels are more than biographies of Jesus.</li><li>• Jesus is the center of the Gospels.</li><li>• The Gospels tell us what we need to know about salvation in Jesus.</li><li>• The Gospels were formed through a three-step process.</li><li>• The Holy Spirit guided the authors.</li><li>• The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.</li><li>• The Gospels are a report that help us to know Jesus.</li></ul>	<b>Connect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Jesus is the center of both articles.</li><li>• Both articles show us how the Gospels teach us to have faith in Jesus.</li><li>• Both teach us that we find salvation in Jesus.</li><li>• The <i>Widening of Christ</i> and the <i>Four of the Cross</i> are specific stories from the Gospel of John, one of the four Gospels mentioned in the first article.</li><li>• All four Gospel writers point out Mary as a model of faith; John points this out the most clearly.</li></ul>	<b>MODEL OF FAITH</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We honor Mary as a model of faith.</li><li>• The wedding at Cana tells us about Jesus' first miracle.</li><li>• Mary had faith in Jesus.</li><li>• Mary is present at the end of Jesus' public ministry—the Crucifixion.</li><li>• Jesus calls the beloved disciple the <i>Mary</i> in his mother.</li><li>• Catholics believe this title means that Mary is the Mother of the Church.</li><li>• Our faith tells us to try to imitate Mary's faith.</li></ul>

30 Unit 1 • John Explores the Mystery of God

## Extending the Chapter

Use the following suggestions to extend the session (parish catechists) or to extend the chapter over 5 days (school catechists).



### For Your Eyes Only (page 21)

Bring in some family photos and show them to the young people, explaining how the photos tell some of the story of your family's history. Invite the young people to use their imaginations to create "photos" that tell part of their family history. Distribute an index card and drawing materials to each young person and direct them to draw a picture that tells part of the story of their family history. When they are finished, invite the young people to share their "photos" and stories. Point out that the New Testament can be compared to a family photo album that tells the story of Jesus and the early Church.

### Bridge-Builder A (page 22)

Arrange the young people in pairs and provide them with poster paper and markers. Have them take turns creating portraits of one another. Encourage them to be creative about drawing their partner in a pose that expresses something about that person. (examples: holding a stack of books because she's a good student; swinging a baseball bat to show that he's a good player) Allow enough time for the young people to complete their portraits and then show them to the entire group. Ask volunteers to describe the difference between a photograph and a portrait. (A photograph captures the image exactly as it is; a portrait includes the artist's impression of the image.) Explain that the four Gospels can be considered portraits of Jesus since they are not biographies but are accounts of the impression that Jesus made on the lives of people.

### Bridge-Builder B (page 23)

Bring in a camera that displays or produces pictures instantly, such as a digital camera or a Polaroid camera. Ask for a volunteer who is willing to be photographed in four or five poses. Tell the young people to imagine that a magazine is going to print the volunteer's photograph and that the final selection will be made from the two best photos. Take the pictures and then show them to the young people (in small groups if you have a large number of young people). Have them decide which are the best two. When you are finished, thank the volunteer and point out that when we select pictures, we try to pick the ones that best represent the person as we truly see him or her. Compare that process to how the four Gospels were chosen by the early Church to be part of the New Testament because they best represent how the early Church experienced Jesus.



### Walkin' the Talk (page 24)

Direct the young people to open their Bibles to the Letters of John in the New Testament. Point out that when a passage is identified as being from one of John's letters rather than from the Gospel of John, a number appears before the name John in the citation—1 John, 2 John, or 3 John. Have a volunteer read aloud 1 John 4:7–21. Tell the young people that this passage is read at many Catholic weddings. Direct their attention to the brevity of 2 John and 3 John.



### It Out (page 27)

Tell the young people to imagine that they are owners of a new kind of modeling agency, an agency that seeks models of faith. Arrange the young people in groups of three or four and have them brainstorm a list of qualities that they would look for in candidates applying to serve as models. Provide a few examples of qualities such as patient, forgiving, courageous, and understanding. When they are finished with their lists, have each group report to the entire group. Direct their attention to page 323 to review the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit and the virtues. Explain that people who possess and practice these qualities are true models of faith.

### Bridge-Builder C (page 28)

Bring in a CD of a contemporary song in which a particular word or phrase is repeated. Play the song and ask the young people to count the number of times that the word or phrase is repeated. Then ask volunteers to comment on why songs often include the repetition of words and phrases. (Repetition expresses emotion; it is used so that the message sinks in with the listener.) Point out that marketing experts say that consumers need to be exposed to a message at least seven times before they decide to make a purchase. Tell the young people that the prayer form *lectio divina* uses the repetition of Scripture verses to help the word of God sink in to our minds and hearts.

For planning Day 5 (school catechists) or for additional activities (parish catechists), see page PO31.



## Chapter 2: The Gospels: Portraits of Jesus

### MATERIALS

#### Required Materials

- Bibles
- Writing paper, pencils, pens
- Art materials
- A family heirloom
- A recent news story that appeared in several different newspapers or on several different news agency web sites
- Examples of popular magazines
- An award medal

#### Optional Materials

- Old family photographs
- Index cards (4" x 6")
- Poster paper, markers
- A camera that can display or produce pictures instantly, such as a digital camera or a Polaroid camera
- A CD of a contemporary song that repeats a particular word or phrase many times
- CD player
- Blackline Master 1-2

#### e-resources

[www.FindingGod.org](http://www.FindingGod.org)

### PREPARATIONS

- Check the Extending the Chapter suggestions on page 21e to choose activities that best fit your time frame.
- Look over the Active-Learning and Community-Building Activity on page 21d.
- Bookmark your Bible at John 2:1–12 and John 8:47.
- Gather some information about Internet sites that research family trees.
- Collect samples of junk mail and bills.

### STEPS

### OUTCOMES

*At the end of the chapter, the young people should be able to*

#### Engage (page 21)

- Tracing Our Roots

- relate the experience of learning from stories about our families to learning about Jesus from the Gospels.

#### Explore (pages 22–27)

##### Articles

- Jesus Is the Center
- Model of Faith

##### Sidebars

- Why Four Gospels?
- The New Testament
- Signs

- identify the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and describe the process the Gospels and New Testament went through to reach their final form.
- explain that Jesus is the center of the Gospels.
- identify Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as the model of our faith.
- relate the story of Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana.
- describe the role of signs in the Gospel of John.
- define Evangelists, Gospels, *lectio divina*, rights and responsibilities, and Tradition.

#### Reflect (page 28)

##### Prayer

- Filling Our Water Jars

##### Sidebar

- Lectio Divina

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

#### Respond (page 29)

- What's What? • Say What?
- So What? • Now What?
- Here's What

- identify practical ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

### FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL CATECHISTS

Day 1 Engage

Day 2 Explore: Articles

Day 3 Explore: Sidebars and TidBytes

Day 4 Reflect and Respond

Day 5 See page PO31.

### USING MUSIC

For suggestions of music that can be used in this chapter, see page 459.



# Roots

People have a natural curiosity to know where they came from and how they are related to others. The more we learn about our families, the more we learn about ourselves. Think about how exciting it would be to find a dusty old notebook under the wooden floorboards in your great-grandmother's attic. What would you want to know about her?



## For Your Eyes Only

If you were to write your autobiography, what would you want your great-grandchildren to know about you?

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## ENGAGE

### Getting Started

Begin this experience of recognizing God in daily living by doing the following activity. Bring in a family heirloom to show to the young people and share any stories related to it that shed light on your family history. Invite the young people to describe family heirlooms that they have and to share stories related to them. Point out that we can learn about our ancestors through such valued family possessions passed down through generations. Tell the young people that the Gospels are like the heirlooms of the Church and that we can learn about Jesus from them.

### Tracing Our Roots

Point out that there are a variety of services on the Internet that can be used research family trees. Share any information you may have gathered about your family before the session. Explain that people are interested in tracing their roots because they want to learn more about themselves and their ancestors. Invite a volunteer to read aloud this section. Have volunteers share their answers to the question.

### For Your Eyes Only

Read aloud the directions to this TidByte and then allow a few minutes for the young people to complete the activity independently. Tell the young people that they will not be asked to share their responses.

*(To do more with For Your Eyes Only, see page 21e.)*

**Bridge-Builder A**

To extend the session (parish catechists) or to begin Day 2 (school catechists), consider using Bridge-Builder A on page 21c.

**Working with the Articles**

In this chapter the two articles are Jesus Is the Center (page 22) and Model of Faith (page 26). Use the Active-Learning and Community-Building Activity on page 30, Making Connections, to engage the young people with these articles. See page 21d for full directions.

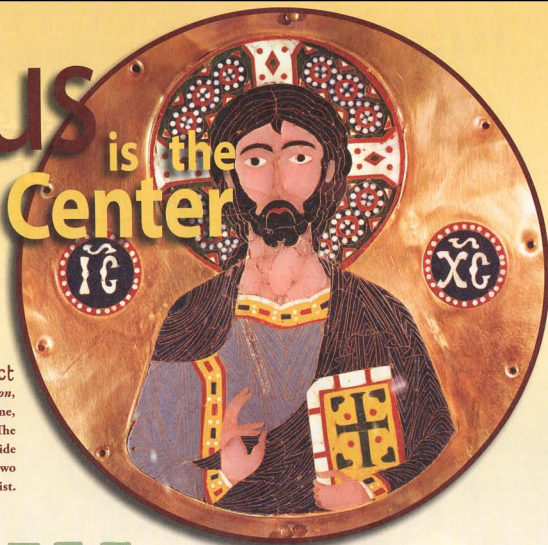
Be sure to have volunteers read aloud John 2:1–12 (The Wedding at Cana) from their Bibles either before or after the article Model of Faith is read.

(For more information, see *The Four Gospels* on page 21c.)

(For more information, see *Mary in Scripture* on page 21c.)

# Jesus is the Center

art • i • fact  
*Christ in Benediction,*  
 10th century, Byzantine,  
 cloisonné enamel plaque. The  
 Greek letters on either side  
 of the image are the first two  
 letters of Jesus and Christ.



**W**hen we read a biography about a historical person, we sometimes check to see if the author supported the facts. To do this we might read the footnotes at the bottom of the page or the endnotes at the back of the book. If we are really interested in the historical person, we might read the sources that the author used to research the facts. We do this so that we can be somewhat confident that the information we are learning about the person is accurate and truthful.

**AUTHORS OF THE GOSPELS**

It is easy to think that when we are reading the **Gospels** we are reading a biography of Jesus. But the authors of the four Gospels were not writing to tell us everything they knew about Jesus. They were writing to help us realize how important Jesus is for our salvation.

The Gospels are special to us because they tell us the most important things we should know about Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. The authors of the Gospels were inspired by the Holy Spirit to record the faith of the early Church, a faith that has been passed down to us. The Gospels are at the center of our faith because Jesus Christ is the center of the Gospels. One way of understanding what the authors of the Gospels did is to compare the different ways Jesus is depicted in the paintings and drawings in this book.



If all the stories about Jesus were told, there would not be enough books to record them.

The paintings or drawings show Jesus in the way he was seen by different artists at different times and from different cultures. Each portrait is unique. But each one communicates to us how important Jesus is. The Gospels were written in the same way. Each author tells us what is important about Jesus, but each one does it in a unique way.

### FORMATION OF THE GOSPELS

The Gospels didn't appear overnight. In fact, there were three different stages in the formation of the Gospels that we know today. The first stage was the life of Jesus, his birth and his life in Nazareth, his public ministry in Galilee, and finally his death, Resurrection, and Ascension. From the time Jesus entered into public life, he was accompanied by a number of disciples, some of whom he chose to be apostles. They saw the way he lived his life, they watched him care for others, and they listened carefully to his teachings. They also spoke to Jesus after his Resurrection.

The second stage in the formation of the Gospels was the preaching of the good news of the salvation of Jesus Christ. The apostles and other disciples of Jesus went out and told people about Jesus. The followers had been filled with the Holy Spirit, so they had a better understanding of who Jesus was and what his teachings meant. They shared their knowledge and understanding with anyone who would listen. They taught others the way Jesus had taught them. This passing on by the apostles of what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit is called **tradition**. It is passed on to us today by the apostles' successors, the bishops, along with the pope.

The final stage was the actual writing of the Gospels. The writers collected stories about Jesus and sayings of Jesus that they remembered or had been told. Each of the four Gospel writers, known as the **Evangelists**, composed his own account of the life of Jesus. In each case they wanted to show what Jesus meant to them and to the others living in their communities.

All three of these stages took place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The authors were doing what Jesus wanted them to do. He had told them to preach the Gospel to others, but he had not directed them to write

*continued on page 24 ►*

## Why Four Gospels?

**We usually think** of John's Gospel as the "Fourth Gospel." Indeed, of the 4 Gospels in the Bible, John's Gospel was the last one written, probably some 60 to 70 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. However, at the time there were a number of manuscripts in circulation that were said to tell the real story of Jesus. Some of these manuscripts told of a Jesus who did not come to save everyone. In response, Church leaders established some rules to help them choose which writings would be considered inspired by the Holy Spirit. First, they asked whether the writings were of apostolic origin.

Could they be linked to the teachings of one of the apostles? Second, they asked if the writings came from an authentic Christian community. For example, in about the year 180 Saint Irenaeus wrote that he accepted the writings found in the New Testament because he had received them from the Church in Rome. The importance and trustworthiness of the Church in Rome, the Church founded by Peter, was a sure sign for Irenaeus that the writings were inspired by God. Third, the Church leaders asked if the writings conformed to the "rule of faith." That is, did the writings reflect the authentic faith that had been learned from the apostles? Did the writings teach that Jesus Christ was Lord and Savior and had come to save the world? The writings we have today in the Gospels do all of these things and are the only Gospels accepted by the Church as truly inspired by the Holy Spirit as teaching the truth about Jesus Christ. There will be no other Gospels added to the Bible that will teach us anything new about Jesus Christ.



## EXPLORE

### Bridge-Builder B

To extend the session (parish catechists) or to begin Day 3 (school catechists), consider using Bridge-Builder B on page 21c.

### Why Four Gospels?

Find a recent news story that appeared in several different newspapers or on several different news agency Web sites. Bring in the examples and show the young people that even though only a single event was being covered, there were several different accounts or perspectives. Ask what the word **perspective** means. (*a specific point of view; a way of looking at things*) Explain that we get different perspectives in news stories because reporters see or interpret events and people in a variety of ways.

Point out that we have different perspectives on people, songs, movies, TV shows, athletes, and so on. Choose a topic and invite volunteers to share different perspectives about it.

Tell the young people that we have received more than one perspective on Jesus—we have four Gospels. Invite a volunteer to read aloud this sidebar.

Direct the young people to open their Bibles and locate the four Gospels.

**(For more information, see New Testament Apocrypha on page 21c.)**

## The New Testament

Direct the young people to open their Bibles to the page where the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins. Ask them to compare the size of the two testaments. (*The Old Testament is much larger than the New Testament.*) Ask volunteers to describe briefly the main focus of each testament. (*The Old Testament is about God's relationship with the people of Israel before the arrival of Christ; the New Testament is about Jesus and the early Church.*)

Invite a volunteer to read aloud this sidebar. Direct the young people to open their Bibles and locate the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters, and the Book of Revelation.

## Walkin' the Talk

Direct the young people to open their Bibles to John 1:35–42. Have a volunteer read aloud the passage. Point out that the John mentioned in verse 35 is John the Baptist and that one of his two disciples is named Andrew. Explain that according to tradition, the unnamed disciple is John, who became one of the apostles and after whom the Gospel is named. Invite a volunteer to read aloud this TidBit.

*(To do more with Walkin' the Talk, see page 21e.)*

# The New Testament

**The author** of John's Gospel refers to himself as an eyewitness (John 19:35). We need to remember, however, that there were no reporters present taking down his account. In fact, for about 25 years after Jesus' death and Resurrection, just about everything we know about Jesus was passed on through word of mouth. The apostles and the other disciples preached the gospel, and the followers of Jesus gathered in their homes to worship God. Then around the year 55 the apostle Paul began writing letters to communities of Christians in different parts of the Roman Empire. About a decade later the first Gospel was put together by Mark, and within 25 years the other three Gospels had been written by Matthew, Luke, and John. In the meantime, other letters were written by James, John, and Jude. Letters to the Hebrews, Colossians, Ephesians, and Timothy were written. The Book of Revelation was written near the very end of the first century. It was placed at the end of the New Testament. In its final form, the New Testament is made up of the four Gospels, followed by the Acts of the Apostles, all the letters by Paul and by the others, and finally the Book of Revelation.



## Walkin' the Talk

**John was called to be an apostle** in the first year of Jesus' public ministry. He is often referred to as the "beloved disciple" and is the only one of the twelve apostles who did not abandon Jesus at the time of his Passion. John not only preached the Good News but is also credited with writing the fourth Gospel and three epistles. The Book of Revelation is also attributed to him, although his authorship is not certain. According to tradition, John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil by order of the Roman emperor Domitian. He emerged unharmed and was banished to the island of Patmos for a year. John outlived the other apostles—he died of old age in Ephesus around the year 100.

► *continued from page 23*

anything down. However, the writers knew that they would not live forever. They wanted to preserve the teachings of Jesus accurately so that future generations, like our own, could read the Good News that they preached. Their inspiration came from the Holy Spirit. The Gospels that they wrote tell about God's gifts to everyone. They are the source of all truth and understanding about how we are to live our lives.

IM

**"Whoever belongs to God hears the words of God."**  
(John 8:47)

### THE FOUR GOSPELS

We have four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Even though each of the Gospels give us a unique portrait of Jesus, they all teach the essential truth that Jesus is the Son of God become man, sent by the Father for the sake of our salvation. At the end of the Gospel of John we are told that if all the stories about Jesus were told, there would not be enough books to record them. What we do have is a special treasure, helping us to know Jesus as Lord, Savior, and friend. 🌟

*That sounds like a lot of writing. It makes my fins sore just thinking about it.*




art • i • fact

St. John the Evangelist, Byzantine mosaic, San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy. The eagle behind John is his symbol.



 **John 8:47**

Invite the young people to quiet themselves and to notice any sounds that they hear. After a few moments without talking, invite volunteers to identify the sounds they heard. Ask a volunteer to explain the difference between hearing and listening. *(To hear something is to let the sounds enter our ears; to listen is to pay attention to the sounds we hear.)* Point out that our ears are bombarded with thousands of sounds and bits of information each day and that although we hear them, we cannot possibly listen to them all.

 Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture passage. Explain that hearing God's Word is one thing, but that if we really listen, we will learn to observe it. Invite the young people to once again quiet themselves. Tell them that allowing ourselves quiet time each day is important so that we can listen to God speaking to us in our hearts. Allow the young people to sit quietly for a moment. Then invite them to pray aloud, in unison, the words of the Scripture passage.

 **Our Roots Are Showing**

Invite a volunteer to read aloud this TidByte. Direct the young people to open their Bibles to the page that lists the books of the Bible. Point out the 73 books of the Bible and how they are arranged.

*(To do more with Our Roots Are Showing, see Blackline Master I-2.)*

 **Our Roots Are Showing**

The books that make up the Bible did not come about by chance. The Church had to decide which books were inspired by the Holy Spirit when they were faced with the Jewish scriptures and all the writings about Jesus and about living the Christian life. After several centuries, the Church established the official list of the 73 books that comprise the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. This official list is called the *canon*, which comes from a Greek word meaning “measuring stick” or “rule,” because the writings contained within the Bible are our rule of faith.

### ✔ It Out

Bring in some popular magazines and show the covers to the young people. (Be careful to choose covers that are not suggestive.) Point out that models are chosen for their physical beauty as people who appear to be physically flawless. Mention the phrase “beauty is only skin deep” and explain that we have other kinds of models in our lives—people whom we can admire and look up to.

Invite the young people to read this TidByte independently. Ask volunteers to share examples of other models of faith in their lives.

*(To do more with Check It Out, see page 21e.)*

*(For more information, see Mary, the Mother of the Church on page 21c.)*

# Model of Faith

**A**s Catholics we honor Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the model of our faith. Of all the Gospel writers, John points this out the most clearly. To understand John’s message about Mary, let’s look at two stories as John tells them—one from the beginning and one from the end of Jesus’ public life.

#### WEDDING FEAST AT CANA

In John 2:1–12, Jesus is about 30 years old. Although he has disciples, he has not yet begun his public ministry. Jesus, Mary, and the disciples are invited to a wedding feast in the town of Cana, in Galilee. Wedding feasts at that time lasted a long time, sometimes even days. At this particular wedding, the hosts run out of wine. This is embarrassing for the family because they may have to cut the feast short and send everyone home.

Mary sees that the hosts have run out of wine and she tells Jesus about it. Jesus does not believe that it is his concern. He tells Mary that it is not yet his time to begin his public acts. However Mary tells the waiters, “Do whatever he tells you.” She is confident and has faith that her son will solve the problem. It is interesting to note that these are the last words we hear Mary speak in the Gospel of John.

Although he was not planning on doing anything, Jesus does not disappoint. Nearby there are six empty water jars that, when filled, are going to be used for washing the hands and feet of the guests. Jesus tells the waiters to fill the large jars with water. Then he tells one of the waiters to pour out some of that water and take it to the headwaiter. By the time the headwaiter tastes the water it has been transformed into wine. In fact, all of the water



Do whatever  
he tells you.

in the jars have been transformed. The headwaiter is amazed that the hosts have saved such wonderful wine for the end of the feast. This did not often happen, as the best wine was usually served first. To have better wine later in the celebration is a great surprise for all who are there.

When John told this story, he wanted his readers to see that just as the people at the feast were given all the wine they desired, so the people of the world have been given all they need through the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

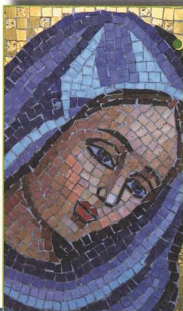
Mary had faith in Jesus. Her faith-filled action at the wedding feast set the stage for Jesus' glory to be revealed to his disciples. They saw this sign of Jesus' glory, and they came to believe in Jesus. The disciples' faith, then, followed upon Mary's faith, and that is what John wants us to know about her.

#### AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

The second story comes from the end of Jesus' public ministry. In John 19:26–27 Mary is once again with him at a pivotal moment. As Jesus hangs on the cross, Mary and the beloved disciple stand by. Jesus tells Mary that the beloved disciple is her son, and then he tells the beloved disciple that Mary is his mother.

The Gospel of John gives us these words, but what do they mean? As Christians have reflected on the words, they have come to understand how important Mary is in the story of our salvation. She is not our physical mother; however, she is the spiritual mother of everyone who believes in Jesus. We are her children in faith—that is, our faith in Jesus is modeled after Mary's faith. Like any good mother, she points us in the right direction.

Our faith tells us to have the same trust in Jesus that Mary showed at Cana and at the foot of the cross. Mary is our model of faith. That is what John shows in his Gospel. **16**



## IT OUT

**Mary is a model of faith** for people today, but especially for those who experience violence and poverty. Think about it—Mary lived in Nazareth, part of an occupied state under the heel of imperial Rome. She lived with the constant threat of violence. She gave birth while she and Joseph were homeless, and they had to flee like refugees to a strange land to escape being killed by a jealous king. We can turn to Mary when we experience tough times because she's experienced them too.

## Signs

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there are many stories about Jesus performing miracles of healing, of feeding crowds of people, and of doing such things as walking on water. John's Gospel is somewhat different. There

are fewer stories of miracles, of "signs" as John calls them, and they are told to reveal who Jesus is. The wedding at Cana illustrates the significant role of Mary in Jesus' ministry. With the sign of the changing of the water to the wine, Jesus' disciples place their faith in him as he showed he was the one who fulfilled God's promises with abun-

dance. The miracle of the loaves and fishes provides a context for Jesus to proclaim that he is the bread of life. In the later chapters of John, the cure of the blind man in Chapter 8 and the bringing of Lazarus back from the dead in Chapter 11 show more clearly how Jesus is the one sent by God. But instead of inspiring faith in his adversaries, Jesus' signs lead them to hate him even more and to plot his murder. This leads to his greatest sign of love, his crucifixion for the sake of our salvation.



### Signs

Ask the young people to complete this sentence: "Where there's smoke (there's fire!)" Point out that smoke is an indication that something is on fire. We can say that smoke is a sign because it reveals the presence of fire. Explain that signs reveal or express something to us that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud this sidebar. Ask volunteers to identify the signs that are mentioned in the sidebar. (the miracle at Cana, the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the cure of the blind man, the raising of Lazarus, and Jesus' Crucifixion)



## REFLECT

### Bridge-Builder C

To extend the session (parish catechists) or to begin Day 4 (school catechists), consider using Bridge-Builder C on page 21c.

### Lectio Divina

Ask volunteers to describe how we might read personal mail differently than we read other mail. (We read it slowly and carefully; we sometimes reread parts of it.) Explain how that gives us a clue as to how we can pray with Scripture in the form called *lectio divina* or “sacred reading.” Have volunteers read aloud this sidebar. Draw attention to the phrase *lectio divina*, which is defined in the Glossary. Tell the young people that in each unit of their books they will participate in a prayer based on *lectio divina*.

### Filling Our Water Jars

Invite the young people to quiet themselves for prayer. Pause for a moment and then read aloud the introduction. Pause again and then read aloud the directions for helping the young people prepare themselves to listen to God’s word. After a few moments, slowly and prayerfully pray aloud the words of John 2:1–12. Then guide the young people through the meditation step, prayerfully reading the directions before again reading aloud the Scripture passage. After a brief pause, lead the young people through the directions that invite them to pray and contemplate. Allow time for prayerful silence and then invite them to pray aloud the words of the closing prayer.

## PRAYER

# Filling Our Water Jars

### LECTIO DIVINA

**Lectio divina**, Latin for “sacred reading,” is an ancient form of Christian prayer. It is a way of spending time with the Word of God by using a special form of reading. However, it is more than just reading the Word of God—it is conversation with God.

This is how to prepare yourself for *lectio divina*. Begin by quieting your thoughts, perhaps by concentrating only on breathing in and out.

#### Read

The first step is reading slowly a brief passage of scripture.

#### Meditate

The second step is meditation—the words sink in and echo within you. Reflect on what God might be saying to you. Which words speak the most to you? Repeat them a few times.

#### Pray

The third step is prayer. God speaks to you and you respond with your own words or with some words of the text.

#### Contemplate

The final step is contemplation, sitting quietly with God, beyond words and feelings.

**If we want to grow closer to God**, we have to spend time with him. Praying with Scripture is a way we get to know God and become aware of being filled with his love. Think of yourself as a water jar and think of God as the water overflowing within you.

Here’s one way to pray with Scripture that we’ll use throughout the year. Begin by focusing your attention on your breath. Be aware of your breath as it flows in and out. Let go of any distracting thoughts. Open yourself to receive the Word of God.

**Read:** John 2:1–12 (The Wedding Feast at Cana)

**Meditate:** Imagine yourself at the wedding with Jesus, Mary, and the other guests.

**Read a second time:** John 2:1–12 (The Wedding Feast at Cana)

**Meditate:** Use the space below to write down any words or phrases that stand out to you.

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**Pray:** Share your reflections with God in your own words. Ask him if there is anything else in this story he’d like you to notice. Then thank him for this time of prayer.

**Contemplate:** Spend a few moments in prayerful silence with God.

**Let us close by praying together:** Loving God, thank you for giving us an abundance of your life and love. Help us to be like Mary and to place our trust and love in Jesus, your Son. We ask this in his name. Amen.





## RESPOND

For the sections What's What?, So What?, and Now What?, read aloud the directions. After the young people complete those sections, invite volunteers to share their responses.

### What's WHAT?

■ Look over the main points of this chapter. What is one additional important insight you would add to this list? Write it on the lines below.

- Each of the four evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—wrote their own account of the life of Jesus.
- There were three stages that had to happen before the Gospels were finished and in the form we know today.
- The Gospels are at the center of our faith because Jesus Christ is at the center of the Gospels.
- Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the model of our faith.
- Jesus' first miracle took place at a wedding feast in Cana.
- In the Gospel of John, Jesus' miracles are referred to as signs which reveal who Jesus is.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### So WHAT?

■ How can reading the Gospels help you to get to know Jesus better?

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### Say WHAT?

*Evangelist • Gospel • lectio divina  
rights and responsibilities • tradition*

### Now WHAT?

What is one thing you will do this week to become more familiar with the Bible?

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### Here's WHAT the Catholic Church Teaches

One principle of Catholic Social Teaching is that we as human beings have both rights and responsibilities. We have intelligence and free will. We have a fundamental right to life, and the right to things we need to live such as food, shelter, employment, health care, and education. Along with these rights we have corresponding responsibilities to respect the rights of all people.

Our **rights and responsibilities** are universal and inviolable. This means that they cannot be taken from us and we cannot give them away. We cannot claim our rights while neglecting our duties to protect these rights for others. In 1963 Pope John XXIII wrote in his encyclical *Peace on Earth*: "Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other."

### Say What?

Ask for volunteers to define the words from memory or to use the Glossary, and then to use each word in a sentence.

### Here's What

Bring in an award medal to show the young people and ask what people mean when they say sarcastically, "What do you want, a medal?" (They mean that what the person did was already expected of him or her.) Point out that we give medals to people for going above and beyond the call of duty. Invite a volunteer to read aloud this section. Draw attention to the term **rights and responsibilities**, which is defined in the Glossary. Then remind the young people that as Catholics, we don't believe that we deserve a medal for protecting the rights of others to have what they need to live. Rather, we believe it is our duty.



### Closure

Invite the young people to pray in thanksgiving for what they have learned. Pause briefly and then pray, **Thank you, Jesus, for proclaiming the Good News to us. Help us to live to your word and to live the Gospel each day. Amen.**

Conclude by encouraging the young people to make some space in their lives to hear and listen to God's word.

Use the following Active-Learning and Community-Building Activity for the articles in the Explore step of this chapter: Jesus Is the Center (page 22) and Model of Faith (page 26).

## Making Connections

The purpose of the Making Connections activity is to have the young people teach one another the most important ideas in the article they are assigned to read. They work together to identify and explain how the two articles connect. See page 21d for full directions.

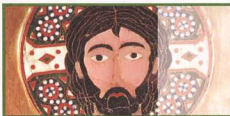
If needed, have the young people tear out this page to use with this activity. When they are finished, have them reinsert this page into their books or collect the pages so that you can redistribute them for the Respond step of the chapter.

When the group is finished with this activity, lead the young people through the sidebars and TidBytes of the chapter.

# Making Connections



1. Read the article assigned to your group.
2. Note the main points from your article in the appropriate column below.
3. Join your group with a group who read the other article.
4. Record the main points in the appropriate column below.
5. Work together to complete the “Connect” section to show how the two articles connect.



### NOTES FROM ARTICLE 1

#### JESUS IS THE CENTER

- The Gospels are more than biographies of Jesus.
- Jesus is the center of the Gospels.
- The Gospels tell us what we need to know about salvation in Jesus.
- The Gospels were formed through a three-step process.
- The Holy Spirit guided the authors.
- The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- The Gospels are a treasure that help us to know Jesus.

## Connect

### How do these two articles connect?

- Jesus is the center of both articles.
- Both articles show us how the Gospels teach us to have faith in Jesus.
- Both teach us that we find salvation in Jesus.
- The Wedding at Cana and the Foot of the Cross are specific stories from the Gospel of John, one of the four Gospels mentioned in the first article.
- All four Gospel writers point out Mary as a model of faith; John points this out the most clearly.



### NOTES FROM ARTICLE 2

#### MODEL OF FAITH

- We honor Mary as a model of faith.
- The wedding at Cana tells us about Jesus' first miracle.
- Mary had faith in Jesus.
- Mary is present at the end of Jesus' public ministry—his Crucifixion.
- Jesus tells the beloved disciple that Mary is his mother.
- Catholics believe that this means that Mary is the Mother of the Church.
- Our faith tells us to trust in Jesus as Mary did.