

LET'S DIVE INTO
CONNECT!

BRINGING FAITH TO LIFE

Welcome to <i>Connect! Bringing Faith to Life</i>	ii
Program Components	iii
Overview of Components	iv
Catechist Guide Year 3	
Contents	6
Chapter 1	7
Chapter 2	18
Chapter 3	29



saint mary's press

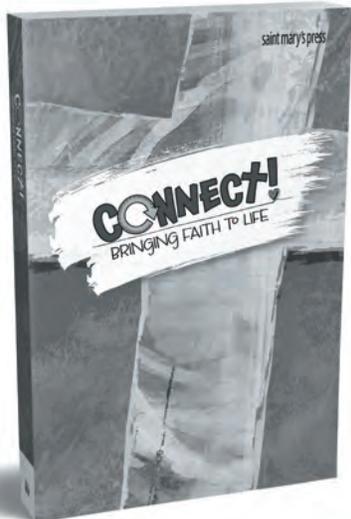
Welcome to *Connect! Bringing Faith to Life*

This three-year program invites sixth, seventh, and eighth graders to explore the Catholic faith and make important connections to their lives.

Each year of the program engages the participants in an exploration of all four pillars of faith (The Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments, Christian Morality and Justice, and Prayer) as well as the Bible. The lessons based on the different pillars of faith make up most of the program and cover the fifty chapters in the *Connect!* book.

Additional chapters in year 2 and year 3 offer life-issue lessons that explore a variety of topics pertinent to the lives of middle schoolers and that reflect the application of faith concepts explored in earlier chapters.

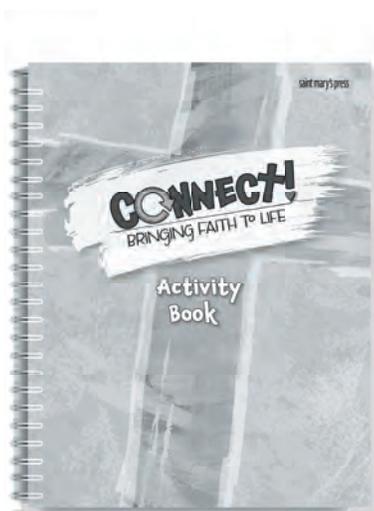
Program Components



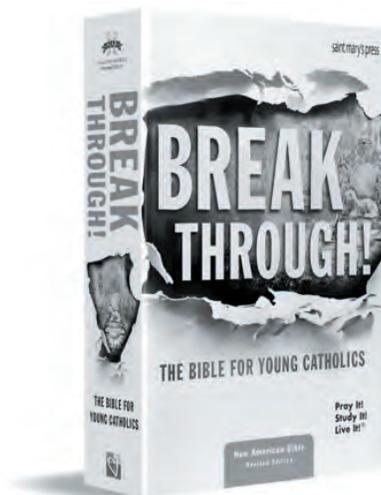
Connect! Book



Catechist Guides



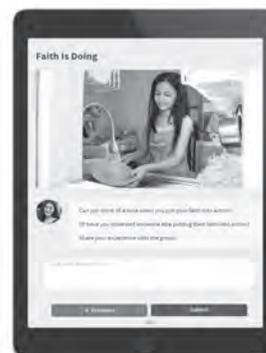
Activity Book



Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, NABRE



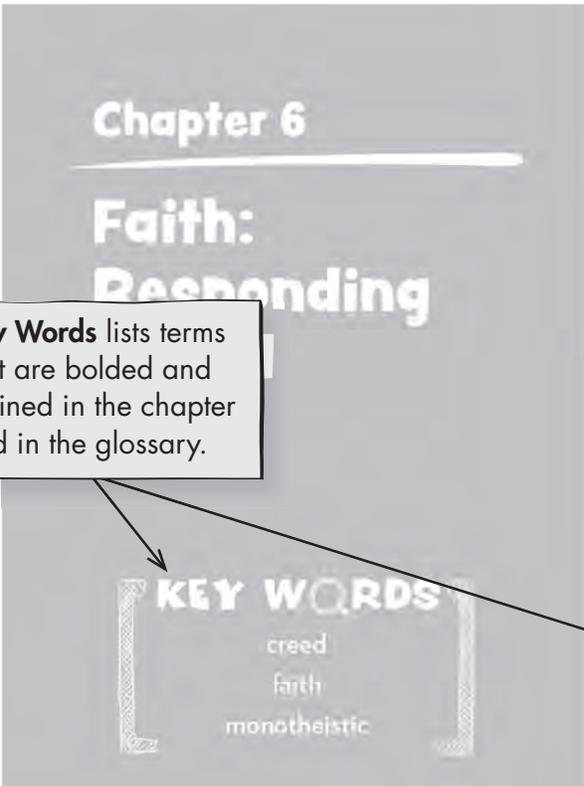
Online Resources



eLearning Lessons

Overview of Components

Connect! Book



Key Words lists terms that are bolded and defined in the chapter and in the glossary.

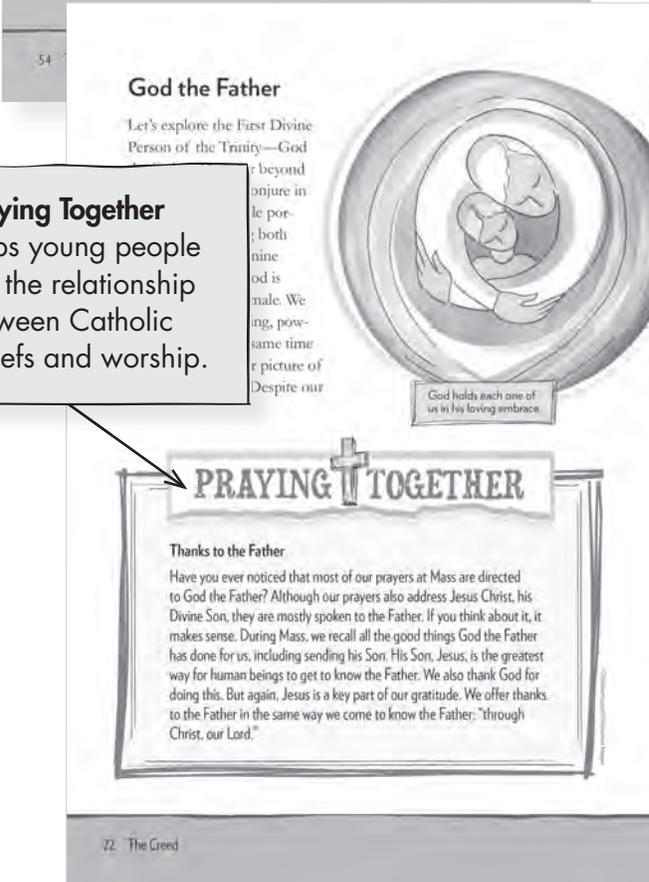
Often people say you need to have faith. They might say, "Keep the faith" or "Have faith in God." Has anyone ever asked if you have faith in God? Have you ever considered what your response would be? Maybe your first thought was, "Yes, of course I do!" Maybe this is the first time you have ever thought about it, so you do not have a quick answer. Maybe you are just not sure what you believe. Just considering the question is one of the first steps of faith. This chapter looks into what having faith means. Afterward, you may realize you have more faith than you thought you did.

What Is Faith?

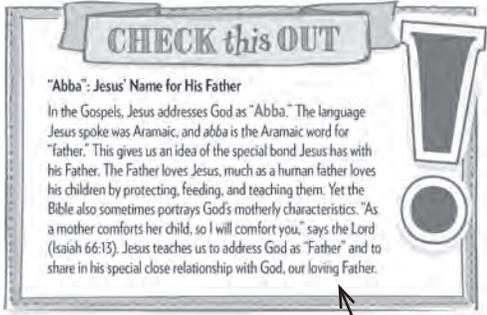
Throughout history, God has called upon people to follow his will. Faith is the way people respond to God's call. On a simple level, faith means a

KEY WORD Faith — Believing and accepting that God made himself known to us through his words and actions, especially through Jesus Christ. It is accepting God's truth with our minds and allowing it to guide our entire lives.

Connect with God offers a short prayer for young people to pray alone or together as a group.



Praying Together helps young people see the relationship between Catholic beliefs and worship.



limited understanding of God, we know and profess in our Creed that God the Father is maker of "all things visible and invisible," the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

Jesus called God "Father," and we do the same. In calling God "Father," Jesus expresses his unique relationship with him: "All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father, and no one knows anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal himself, except the Father who has chosen him." (John 1:12-13)

God the Father is most certainly not like us, he is not a human being. It is important to note this difference and remind ourselves that God's ways are not our ways.

KEY WORD Abba — The Aramaic word for the Father.

Check This Out! provides a more in-depth exploration of topics related to the chapter.

Good to Know provides instructive and engaging information.

Third, events in the Gospels often delete or make perfect events that preceded earlier in the Old Testament. Chapter 6 of John's Gospel, for instance, recalls how God provided a kind of bread for his people in the desert so they wouldn't die (see Exodus, chapter 16). Then Jesus reveals that he is the perfect Bread from Heaven that gives eternal life to everyone who believes in him.

Fourth, we do not have to figure out everything ourselves. Many Bibles have helpful notes and comments. Thoughtful Christians have written many commentaries on the Gospels.

good to KNOW

We now have printers and other technology that can reproduce text easily. But before the 1400s, even printing presses didn't exist. Trained people—usually monks and nuns in monasteries—made new copies of the Bible by copying the Scriptures by hand.

What Do You Think? reflects on a topic and provides a question for discussion with the group or at home.

followed, the Apostles. Our bishops have the full power and responsibility to explain Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. But the Church also urges all of us to study and think about Jesus. If we ask in prayer, the Holy Spirit will guide us in our reading.

Reading the Gospels has changed lives. Missionaries have risked their own safety to bring the Good News to those who have not heard. Others have made the lives of those around their homes much better by their Gospel-inspired words and deeds.

If you want to make a difference in the world, try reading the Gospels. You will meet unforgettable, real people like Mary, the Mother of God; Joseph; Peter; James; and John. Above all, you will get to know Jesus. He will enlighten, challenge, encourage, comfort, and amaze you. He will become your hero and ideal. He will make you truly happy in this life and the next.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Imagine that Christ has just given this mission to you and your friends. Even though you don't have a lot of money or friends in important places or much experience in speaking to other people, you know you want to accept the mission. How would you go about spreading Jesus' teachings to all people? What first steps would you take? How far would you try to spread the message? Through what means would you do so?

Living the Gospel suggests ways young people can put their faith into action.

LIVING the GOSPEL

How to Read Scripture

God speaks to us personally in Sacred Scripture. We read Scripture to understand God's will for our lives. So, how can we get the most out of reading from Scripture, especially the Gospels?

First, we can ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand and live the Gospel message.

Second, we can read intentionally and carefully. We can imagine the people and events and even "make a movie" of them in our minds.

Third, we can pause to think about what we have read and how we can apply it to our own lives. How does the Holy Spirit encourage, teach, correct, challenge, comfort, or inspire us in this passage?

This way of reading and reflecting on Scripture can yield big insights. Of course, that will not always be the case, but if you keep trying with faith, the fruits will surely be great.

Roots of Faith provides historical insight into Catholic beliefs and practices.



roots of faith

The Church and Other Religions

The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions is one of the final documents the Second Vatican Council approved in the 1960s. The document marks a special moment in the Church's history with other religions, including Judaism. It rejects attitudes of contempt for Judaism and the Jewish people, and it rejects anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) teachings. The Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is a response to God's Revelation in the Old Testament. The Church has a profound love and respect for the Jews. While the Church deeply respects other religions, it emphasizes that we can know the fullness of God's Revelation only through the Catholic Church. This does not mean that those who follow other religions are barred from eternal life with God. Many people are not Christian but seek God with sincere hearts. People who try to do God's will, even if they do not know Jesus Christ or his Church through no fault of their own, may also achieve eternal friendship with God, or salvation.

People of Faith offers background on twenty-five of the many people who have strengthened the Church and inspired others with their faith.



PEOPLE of FAITH

Saint
CATHERINE OF SIENA

Catherine was born in 1347, in Siena, Italy, the twenty-fourth child born to her parents. Having experienced visions of Christ as a young child, she wanted to dedicate her life to Christ. Catherine loved the Church deeply, and she became known for her teaching and writing. She served people who were poor and sick. She ministered to people in prison and those suffering during the plague of 1374. During the papacy of Urban VI, the Church was in chaos and disarray. Urban was power hungry. The cardinals, recognizing their mistake in electing him, elected another pope. However, Urban refused to give up the papacy, so the Church had two rival popes. Catherine suffered, seeing the Church suffer. She prayed that her sufferings might heal this serious rift in the Church.

In 1380, Catherine collapsed from exhaustion and a practice of extreme fasting. Within months she was dead. At her death, the marks of stigmata (the wounds of Jesus) were seen on her body. Catherine is also known for her writings on the spiritual life. She was canonized and was the first layperson named a Doctor of the Church. Saint Catherine's feast day is celebrated on April 29.



Catechist Guides

The **Chapter Summary** provides a concise explanation of the content covered in the chapter.

8 Year 1

Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

"God is love" (1 John 4:8), and love is meant to be revealed. God chooses to reveal God's very life, love, and plan for humanity to us. We call God's sharing of his life, love, and plan Divine Revelation. God has chosen to communicate his Revelation through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. These together make up the single sacred Deposit of the Word of God, preserved, protected, and passed down through the Church for the sake of the world.

Background for the Catechist

When you hear "God's Word" or "Word of God," what first comes to mind for you? For many people, it is the Bible. Sacred Scripture is a key mode of God's Revelation, but the Bible is not in itself, or solely, God's Word. Help the participants see that like a two-drawer filing cabinet, Scripture is only one part of the sacred Deposit of Faith!

Jesus himself is the *Eternal Word of God* (see John, chapter 1), and the Word has made the Father known to humanity by the power of the Holy Spirit from the very beginning of time. Emphasize to the participants that when discussing "the Word," we're ultimately referring to Jesus as revealed in Sacred Tradition and in Sacred Scripture. Both Tradition and Scripture are essential parts of God's Revelation to humanity. The Church preserves, protects, interprets, and communicates this Good News with the whole world in every generation. This is primarily the role of the Apostles and their successors, the popes and bishops of the Church, and we have the great joy of sharing their work.

Also emphasize that because we are human, we cannot expect to fully know God in this life. But as we live our life, we come to know God more and more until we come to fully know him in Heaven. This year will be a part of that very important journey toward God for the young people in your group, and you will be their guide.

Catechist's Prayer

Good and gracious God, open my eyes to your grace, love, and presence in my life and in the young people in my care. Give me the grace to be a faithful witness to your existence, eternal truth, and loving kindness. Continue to reveal yourself to me that they might know you through me. Amen.

Teaching Tip

When talking about God, it is helpful to use the term *mystery*. God is beyond our complete comprehension, but he is not unknowable. Help the participants see that it's okay to be awestruck and filled with wonder regarding God. It's okay for us to not have all the answers. God continues to draw us close to himself and reveal himself to us, but he remains a mystery. Invite the participants to be open to what God is revealing to them as they learn more about what God has revealed to the Church.

Background for the Catechist offers a point of reflection on a topic related to the chapter.

The **Catechist's Prayer** can be prayed before preparing for or teaching each chapter.

Teaching Tip offers suggestions or points of consideration for the chapter's lessons.

Each core lesson includes step-by-step instructions and follows the same format: **Opening Prayer, Engage Activity, Core Content, Core Learning Activity, Session Wrap-Up, and Closing Prayer.**

Getting Ready lists the core understanding and highlights key information to aid planning.

28 Year 1

Chapter 3 • The Holy Trinity 29

Getting Ready

Connect! Bringing Faith to Life, pages 26–33

Core Understanding
The Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith—namely, that the one loving God has revealed himself in three Persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

<p>Materials Needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> index cards, one for each participant <p>Key Words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God the Father • Holy Spirit • Son of God • Trinity 	<p>Catechism Pillar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Creed <p>Catechism Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs 232–267 (The Trinity)
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Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Make** the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” (Pause.)
2. **Pray** the following:
 - Loving God, in your amazing, unquenchable love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Help us appreciate you for the invitation to immerse ourselves in your love. Help us say yes to your invitation, through Christ.
3. **Invite** the participants to offer any special intentions.
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Invite** the participants to say aloud together the Sign of the Cross. (“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.”)
2. **Ask** the young people how many times they have said the Sign of the Cross.
3. **Invite** a few volunteers to share with the whole group what the Sign of the Cross means.

Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

Trinity Spotting

Objective: To help the participants discover evidence of the Trinity all around them—that every time they see three in one, they might think of God.

1. **Explain** in these or similar words:
 - God desires that we know him and that we think of him and pray to him often. He has placed evidence of his loving presence all around us. Unfortunately, we don’t often have eyes to see this. In fact, I’m willing to bet that there is evidence of the Trinity in this room, in your house, and in the natural world that we’ve all been missing—until now.
2. **Ask** the young people to find “People of Faith” on page 33 in their books. Note that Saint Patrick saw evidence of the Trinity in a three-leaf clover and used that clover to teach the people of Ireland about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. **Arrange** the participants into pairs. Each pair should look around the room or, if possible, around the parish grounds to go “Trinity Spotting.” They have only 10 minutes to come up with as many examples of Trinity as they can. Tell them to look for three things that are distinct but closely related or one thing with three parts.
4. **Give** everyone an opportunity to share their findings with the group. Conclude by suggesting to the young people that they use the things they identified to remind themselves that the one loving God has revealed himself as three Divine Persons—Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit—who are in complete union with one another.

Session Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** volunteers to share key things they learned during the session. Ensure that the following points are made:
 - There is only one God.
 - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate gods. They are three Divine Persons united in the one God.
2. **Distribute** the index cards. Instruct the participants to write the following question on their cards:
 - What questions do I still have about the Trinity?
3. **Invite** the young people to take the cards home and refer to them a few times during the week. Ask them to answer the question for themselves or to share their cards with friends or family members and discuss their answers with them.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to find “Connect with God” on page 27 in their books. Invite them to read the prayer aloud together.
2. **Close** by making the Sign of the Cross.

4. **Remind** the participants that at Mass when we recite the Creed, we begin with the words “I believe in one God.” Add comments in light of what was shared in step 3 (For example, if someone expressed the idea that Christians believe in one God, affirm that. If belief in one God didn’t come up, then clarify that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not separate gods.)
5. **Introduce** the term *trinity* and explain that it describes a unity of three things. Draw a picture of a shamrock (a three-leaf clover) that all the young people can see. Ask for volunteers to share why this might be a good symbol for something that is a trinity. (It is made up of three leaves united to make up a single, unique plant.)
6. **Explain** the following information:
 - The earliest Christians were Jewish and worshipped only the God of Israel, but through experience, they realized that the one, true, loving God was revealing himself as three Persons.
 - For Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity is the central truth of faith: There is one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (If accurate, remind them that they read a little about this in chapter 2.)
 - The love and unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit flow out to us and fill us so that we can share that love with others.

Core Content (15 minutes)

1. **Engage** the young people in a review of pages 27–32 in the *Connect!* book by dividing the material into sections, such as the following:
 - “One God, Three Divine Persons,” pages 27–29
 - “The Work of the Trinity,” pages 29–31
 - “The Trinity is a Communion,” pages 31–32
2. **Assign** each young person one of the sections of material. They can read silently to themselves or gather in small groups with others who share the same assigned material. If opting for small-group reading, ask one person from each group to read the material aloud.

P If a choice for your group, consider choosing to read the chapter prior to the participants to read the chapter during the session. This approach incorporates the key points listed on page 33 of this guide.

Chapter 3

Optional Activities are offered at the end of each core chapter, providing ways to adapt or extend lessons.

40 Year 1
Chapter 4 • Creation 41

Optional Activities

Genesis on God and Creation (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant

Objective: To explore what Genesis tells us about God and creation.

1. **Arrange** the participants into small groups of three or four, and distribute the Bibles. Instruct everyone to find Genesis 1:24–2:4 and read the passage silently.
2. **Instruct** each group to appoint a recorder to write down its ideas. Give the groups the following task:
 - List at least five things the story tells us about God and creation that do not contradict what science tells us.
3. **Invite** each group to present its list to the large group. After each group has presented, affirm and build on their responses as necessary. Include the following things if the reports don't include them:
 - God created everything.
 - God is all powerful.
 - Human beings are made in the image of God.
 - Human beings are essentially good.
 - All of creation is good.
 - God shares his creative power with us.
 - Humans are responsible to care for God's creation.

Caring for Creation (20 minutes)

Objective: To reflect on the gift of creation and the call to care for this gift.

Materials Needed

- the video "CST 101: Care for God's Creation" (3:05), available on YouTube

1. **Read** aloud, or invite one or more participants to read aloud, Genesis 1:26–31. Highlight the following idea from the passage:
 - God gave human beings dominion over the animals—all the fish, the birds, and the creatures that walk on land.
2. **Write** *dominion* where all can see. Ask for volunteers to share their understanding of the common meaning of *dominion* (control, superiority, domination).
3. **Explain** to the young people that the Book of Genesis was written in Hebrew and that our text is a translation. Note that scholars who study the Hebrew language and how best to translate it emphasize that the common English language notion of dominion isn't an exact translation. Instead of thinking about control and domination, the idea of "taking care of" something is closer in meaning.
4. **Announce** that you are going to show a 3-minute video on caring for the Earth. Let everyone know that after viewing you will ask them to describe one scene or idea that especially caught their attention. Play the video "CST 101: Care for God's Creation."
5. **Facilitate** the participants' sharing of the aspects of the video that caught their attention.
6. **Highlight** the idea that caring for the Earth and caring for other people are related. Consider reshooting the segment in which Carolyn Woo talks about poor people being hurt most when creation suffers (begin at 1:27).
7. **Conclude** by reminding the young people about the theme of gift. Recall that we hear that theme in Genesis and also in the video: All creation is a gift from God, and we are called to take care of this gift.

God's Ongoing Creation (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- markers
- newsprint, one sheet for each small group of three or four

Objective: To reflect on how God's creative power can be found at work in the world today.

1. **Arrange** the participants into small groups of three or four. Distribute some markers and a sheet of newsprint to each group. Ask the participants to brainstorm how God's creative power can be found at work in the world today. If they need some assistance, ask: "Where can you find people working to bring about new life? How do natural events help bring about new life?"
2. **Invite** the groups to illustrate their examples.
3. **Direct** each group to present its illustration and to emphasize that God's creation continues.

The **Chapter Summary** provides the key ideas covered in the lessons. It may be used as a catechist reference, copied and distributed to the young people, or sent home with the participants as helpful information for their families.

Chapter 4 Summary

Creation

1. God created the entire universe out of nothing and without help.
2. The role of science is to figure out the physical nature of the universe, but only God can reveal that creation is a gift of God's love.
3. Evil exists, but God's love continually turns evil into good.
4. In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we see the triumph of good (the Resurrection) over evil (his suffering and death on the cross).
5. God created us in his image, as free and loving beings, so that we can freely choose between good and evil.
6. Sin is the choice of evil (even on a small scale) over good. Sin separates us, even in a small way, from God and from one another.
7. We can sin by omission—that is, by not doing something we know we should do.
8. The Word of God, Jesus Christ, became man to save us, to give us new life, and to restore and deepen our union with God.
9. God continually guides creation toward greater love, and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can cooperate with God in his plan.
10. In the Nicene Creed, we summarize what has been revealed about God and his plan for us, including the creation of the "invisible," the angels.

The life-issue lessons that are part of the catechist guides for year 2 and year 3 follow a slightly different format: **Opening Prayer, Engage Activity, Core Learning Activity 1, Core Learning Activity 2, Session Wrap-Up, and Closing Prayer.**

158 Year 3

Life Issue G

Getting Ready

Core Understanding
The saints and other Christian role models show us how we can love God, others, and ourselves.

Materials Needed

- a Bible
- sticky notes, six for each participant
- newsprint, two sheets for each small group of three or four, plus three extras
- markers
- dictionaries, one of each for each small group of three or four
- copies of the handout "Guidance in Living Our Faith," page 000, one for each participant (optional)
- scissors, one for each small group of three or four
- rolls of tape, one for each small group of three or four
- several magazines for each small group of three or four
- other craft supplies

Catechism Connection

- Paragraph 2030 (Saints as Examples of Holiness)
- Paragraph 1477 (The Value of the Good Works of the Saints)
- Paragraphs 750–752, 771, 899 (The Church as Communion)
- Paragraph 1102 (Faith and Community of Believers)

Life Issue G

Engage Activity (15 minutes)

1. **Distribute** six sticky notes to each participant. Instruct the young people to list the qualities and values that are most important to them (honesty, caring, strength, and so on), one per note.
2. **Collect** all the notes, read each one aloud, and then stick each to a sheet of newsprint, posted where all can see. Have another sheet of newsprint posted next to this one.
3. **Direct** the participants to find "Living the Gospel" on page 144 in their books, which lists the fruit of the Spirit. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask the following question:
 - What qualities and values do people who are filled with God's Spirit possess? (*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control*)
4. **Write** the responses on the sheet of newsprint posted next to the one with the sticky notes. Point out the qualities and values that are the same or similar to those on the sticky notes and those that are different. Facilitate a discussion by asking the following questions:
 - The things we have posted here reflect what we value and what we believe, and what disciples of Jesus Christ value and believe. How do we put these values and beliefs into action?
 - Who do you know who demonstrates one or more of the qualities we have posted here? How do their lives reflect those qualities?

Core Learning Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Guidance in Living Our Faith

Objective: To seek saints and Christian role models who we can look to as our guides.

1. **Arrange** the young people into small groups of three or four. Distribute a sheet of newsprint, a marker, and a dictionary to each group. Ask for one person in each group to write the phrase "Role Model" at the top of the newsprint. Explain the task as follows:
 - Each group has 3 minutes to come up with a dictionary definition for *role model*.
2. **Invite** each group to share its definition for *role model*. Comment as follows:
 - Role models are people who possess qualities that we want to imitate.
3. **Encourage** the groups to refer back to the qualities that were listed earlier on the newsprint. Instruct each group to develop a list of qualities and values found in a Christian role model and to share their lists. Ask the groups to name some people they consider Christian role models. (Suggest that they add names of role models they listed earlier or names of the people of faith featured in the *Connect!* book.)
4. **Invite** each group to share their role models. Write these names on another sheet of newsprint. Comment as follows:
 - Many of the role models in the media today are trying to sell us things. Sport figures and pop stars are role models who are sometimes glorified despite their bad behavior. Being a winner can be so valued that some people cheat to obtain this status. This contradicts the message of Jesus.
 - The saints and Christian role models are people we look to as our guides. Their attitudes and actions show us how we can love God, others, and ourselves.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Make** the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." (*Pause.*)
2. **Tell** the young people that this session will begin with a reading that speaks of the qualities of a Christian role model. Ask a volunteer to read Colossians 3:12–17 aloud. Pray the following:
 - Lord, bless our gathering today. We thank you for the saints and the people in our lives who show us how to live with love. Help us be good Christian role models for others. Amen.
3. **Invite** the participants to offer any special intentions for which they would like to pray.
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

160 Year 3

Optional Add On: Distribute a copy of the handout "Guidance in Living Our Faith" to each participant. Use the handout to help the young people reflect on the role of the saints in their own lives.

Core Learning Activity 2 (15 minutes)

What Is a Role Model?

Objective: To reflect on the most important qualities of the ideal Christian role model for young people.

1. **Arrange** the participants into small groups of three or four. Distribute to each group a sheet of newsprint, scissors, a roll of tape, a marker, several magazines, and other craft supplies. Explain the task as follows:
 - Each group will use the large sheet of newsprint to trace the outline of a group member's body and then cut out the figure.
 - Use the magazines and craft supplies to create a group "role model."
 - Your role model will reflect the most important qualities of the ideal Christian role model for young people. You may refer to the people of faith in the *Connect!* book.
 - Be as creative as you'd like in introducing your role model to the large group.
2. **Invite** the groups to present their role models to the large group.

Session Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** volunteers to share key things they learned during the session. Ensure that the following point is made:
 - The saints and other Christian role models show us how we can love God, others, and ourselves.
2. **Distribute** the index cards. Instruct the participants to write the following questions on their cards:
 - Who is one of my role models? Why?
3. **Invite** the young people to take the cards home and refer to them a few times during the week. Ask them to answer the questions for themselves or to share their cards with friends or family members and discuss their answers with them.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Ask** the young people to spend several minutes praying for those who have been role models for them. Pray the following:
 - Lord God, you have given us your Son Jesus, to show us the way to you. Thank you for sending us role models who show us how to love you, ourselves, and others. May the fruits of the Spirit shine in our lives as we become lives as we become role models for others. Amen.
2. **Close** by making the Sign of the Cross.

Life Issue G

Life-issue lessons include a **handout** that corresponds to one of the learning activities with the lesson. A **chapter summary** is also included and can be used as a catechist reference, copied and distributed to the young people, or sent home with the participants as helpful information for their families.

I Am God's Gift to the World

I am _____, I am made in the image of God,
write your name

not because of what I can do or what I look like, but simply because I am his child. God has given me a light to shine by giving me the gifts of _____.

list two or three of your gifts and talents

During this life, I will have many roles. I may not always know what my role is, but right now I know that I am _____.

list a few important roles you have: son, daughter, sister, brother, friend, student, volunteer, tutor, scout, team captain, and so on

But I cannot do everything on my own. God has also placed _____

list your family members

in my life. They are people I love and who love me by _____.

list what your parents and others have done for you

I am a member of the communities of _____

and _____

name

I am a temple of the Holy Spirit to whom God has given the qualities of _____

list a few of your qualities: joy, honesty, courage, curiosity, loyalty, humor, and so on

I am not God's gift to myself. I was not placed here to seek my own pleasure, but to serve. I serve others by _____

list a few good things you do for others

I am God's unique gift to the world. I am _____

write your name



Life Issue A Summary

Feeling Alone

1. Being identified with a group is fine. It is good to be a part of a larger community. In fact, much of our faith is about being part of something larger than ourselves.
2. Nonetheless, we are more than what we like, where we live, the school we attend, or the race or races we are.
3. To find out who we truly are, we can turn to God. God speaks to us through the Church, through the Bible, and through prayer.
4. Human beings are good. There is nothing we or anyone else can do to take this goodness away.
5. Though we are always good, we do not always do good things. There is a difference between being good and doing good things.
6. God made each of us differently. Each of us has a particular role that no one else can accomplish. Some of us have gifts and talents that others do not. Our job is to share our gifts and talents with one another.
7. Every human being is a creature of God and is therefore loved by God, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or religion.
8. All of our lives are gifts. Your life is not just God's gift to you; it is God's gift to everyone else.
9. Your gift and responsibility is to develop the gifts and talents God gave you to the best of your ability.

Activity Book

The **activity book** offers two activities to supplement each chapter in the *Connect!* book. These activities can be incorporated into the lessons in a variety of ways.



Revelation

Thoughtfully and reflectively respond to the following questions.

Think about the events of a typical day for you—your classes in school, sports or other activities you participate in, and time with family and friends. How do you experience the presence of God in your day?

Describe how your own artistic depiction of Creation would look. What elements would you include to convey God's power?

Choose one of the elements you selected, and explain how it conveys God's power.

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8



Scripture and Tradition

Complete the following sentences, and then find each answer in the word search below. Words can appear in any direction.

- The part of the Mass in which we hear readings about what God has done for our salvation is the Liturgy of the _____.
- The _____ is another name for Sacred Scripture.
- The Bible's authors were guided by the _____ to record without error what God wants us to know for our salvation.
- At the Council of Trent, the bishops made clear that both _____ and _____ are necessary for our salvation.
- The Bible contains the forty-six books of the _____ and the twenty-seven books of the _____.
- God's Revelation is complete in _____.
- In _____, we are called to be prophets by sharing God's Word with others in our words and actions.

N	O	I	T	I	D	A	R	T	T	T	E
G	L	T	P	N	S	H	Y	D	E	N	L
K	D	S	I	Q	R	T	V	W	R	E	B
K	T	I	U	U	L	I	F	O	U	M	I
Y	E	R	M	Y	F	R	A	R	T	A	B
P	S	H	S	W	J	I	Q	D	P	T	O
O	T	C	I	D	C	P	S	X	I	S	L
O	A	S	T	F	O	S	B	E	R	E	N
H	M	U	P	K	O	Y	V	J	C	T	H
V	E	S	A	F	O	L	W	S	W	E	
E	N	E	B	S	M	O	R	T	Q	E	S
D	T	J	C	S	K	H	Y	I	P	N	S

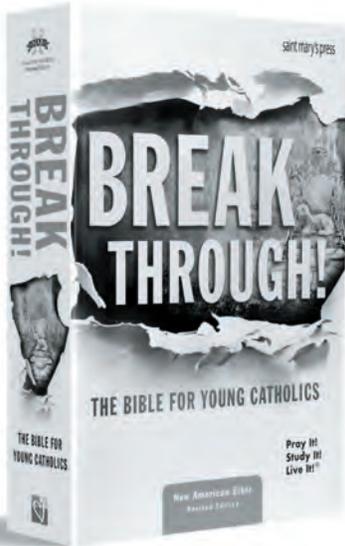
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9

Bible

Young people will get the most from the lessons if they have their own Bible. The program works best with the *New American Bible Revised Edition (NABRE)*. The NABRE translation of **Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics** (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2016) is highly suggested for use with this program as it was developed specifically for adolescents and can enhance the study of Scripture with its special features.

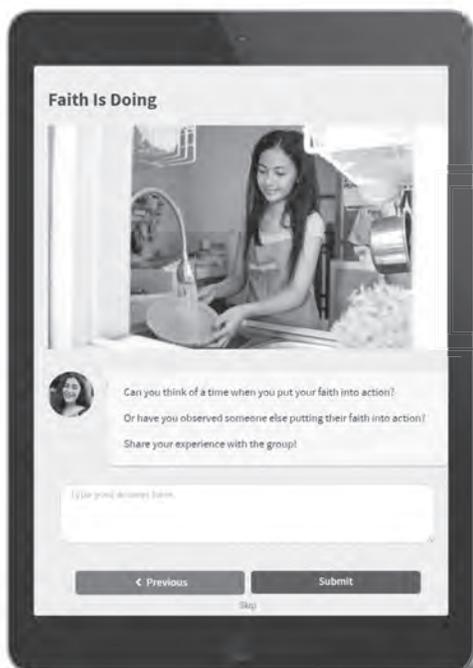
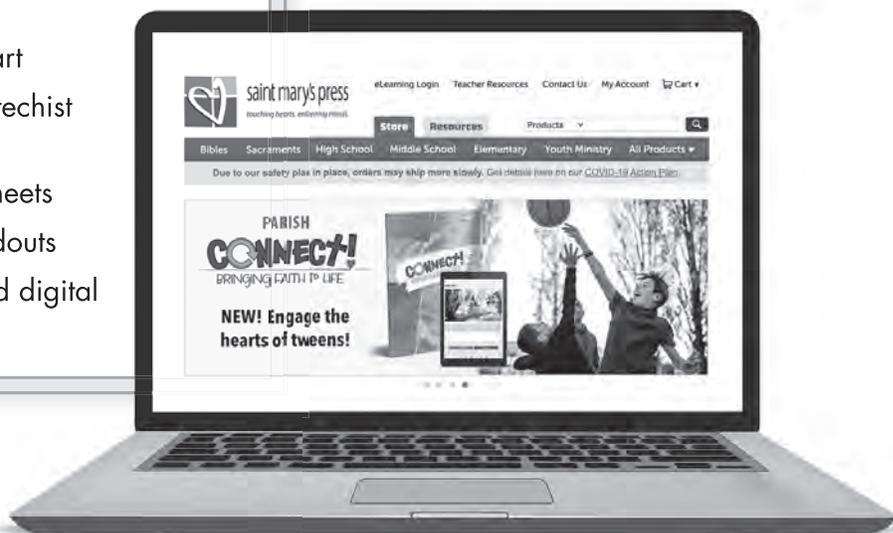


Online Resources

Online Resources specific to each catechist guide can be found at www.smp.org/connect_parish.

These resources include:

- a scope-and-sequence chart
- a digital version of the catechist guide
- catechist and parent tip sheets
- digital versions of all handouts
- web links to recommended digital media



eLearning Lessons

Interactive **eLearning lessons** provide a digital learning option for the gathered sessions or at home.

CONTENTS

The first three chapters can be found on the following pages.

Introduction	
Chapter 1: Pentecost and the Apostles' Mission	7
Chapter 2: The New Testament Letters	18
Chapter 3: The Mission of the Church	29
Chapter 4: The Structure of the Church	40
Chapter 5: End Things: Heaven and Hell	49
Chapter 6: Mary and the Saints	59
Chapter 7: The Sacraments of Healing	69
Chapter 8: The Sacraments at the Service of Communion	79
Chapter 9: Working for Justice	89
Chapter 10: Biblical Models for Prayer	99
Chapter 11: The Lord's Prayer: A Prayer for All Time	109
Life Issue A: Feeling God's Presence	120
Life Issue B: Discovering Our Purpose	128
Life Issue C: Spending Money Wisely	134
Life Issue D: Making Choices about Technology	140
Life Issue E: Using Our Time Well	147
Life Issue F: Experiencing Challenging Times	154
Life Issue G: Identifying Role Models	160
Life Issue H: Respecting Differences	166
Life Issue I: Facing Our Feelings	174
Life Issue J: Dealing with Doubt	182
Glossary of Key Words	189
Acknowledgments	191

Chapter 1

Pentecost and the Apostles' Mission

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the participants explore the story of the young Church, found in the Acts of the Apostles. They discover the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the Apostles and all who encountered them on Pentecost. The young people also experience Peter as he courageously reaches out to all people, and journeys with Paul, from conversion to martyrdom, as he spreads the Good News.

Background for the Catechist

Have you ever felt like you're not good enough or that you're out of place? Maybe you regret decisions you've made or you don't feel worthy of something you're called to do. If so, the Acts of the Apostles is a story for you. It's a story of change—change that is possible in individuals and throughout the Church when we are open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Acts of the Apostles focuses on two extraordinary leaders, Peter and Paul, and how God transformed their lives so that they might spread the Good News. It is also a story of remarkable communities, including the newborn Church at Jerusalem and other communities as they struggled to establish themselves.

Acts of the Apostles speaks of a Church both persecuted and flourishing. The witness of the Acts of the Apostles continues to inspire and guide the Church throughout time, today and for all generations to follow.

Catechist's Prayer

Holy Spirit, come upon me this day as you did to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. Guide my words so that you may be heard and understood by all I encounter today. Give me the courage and passion of Peter and Paul. Come upon me, Spirit of Pentecost, and set my heart on fire. Amen.

Teaching Tip

The account of Pentecost is found in the Acts of the Apostles, which continues in the same vein as the Gospels. It is full of miraculous healings, visions, and other stories that defy modern explanation. It also tells of people experiencing great joy and suffering because of their belief in Christ. As the young people read this book, encourage them to think about the implications of faith for their own lives.

Getting Ready

Connect! Bringing Faith to Life, pages 426–437

Core Understanding

The Holy Spirit empowered the growth of the early Church, which we learn about in the Acts of the Apostles.

Materials Needed

- four sheets of newsprint
- a marker
- index cards, one for each participant

Key Words

- evangelize
- Pentecost

Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

Catechism Connection

- Paragraphs 858–860
(The Church Is Apostolic)
- Paragraphs 935–936
(The Consecrated Life)

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Make** the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." (*Pause.*)
2. **Pray** the following:
 - Holy Spirit, catalyst of the Church, spark our faith today as we explore the wonders of Pentecost and the power that inspired the Apostles to spread the Good News to all people and nations. Amen.
3. **Invite** the participants to offer any special intentions for which they would like to pray.
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Engage** the participants' experience by asking them to think to themselves about how they would answer this question:
 - Imagine you have a time machine that can take you to any era or event that you wish. Which moment in time would you travel to, and why?

2. **Explain** to the young people that every person in the room might imagine a different period of time or event to travel to for a variety of reasons. Encourage a few participants to share the era or event they thought of and why. Affirm their creativity and diversity.
3. **Invite** the participants to imagine the early years of the Church, and what it might have been like to live during this time. Share the following in these or similar words:
 - In the early years of the Church, there were no televisions, cell phones, internet, or social media. We would likely find the rustic conditions and poor methods of communication challenging.
 - Christianity grew exponentially in those early years, despite not having the Bible or the ability to travel and speak freely about the newfound faith.
4. **Direct** the participants to write down one thing they believe contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity, despite the lack of technology or ease of communication.

Core Content (15 minutes)

1. **Engage** the young people in a review of pages 428–436 in the *Connect!* book by dividing the material into sections, such as the following:
 - “Pentecost,” pages 428–431
 - “The Work of Saint Peter,” pages 432–433
 - “The Travels of Saint Paul,” pages 434–436
2. **Assign** each young person one of the sections of material. They can read silently to themselves or gather in small groups with others who share the same assigned material. If opting for small-group reading, ask one person from each group to read the material aloud.
3. **Invite** volunteers to report key ideas from each section of the material to the large group. Be prepared to expand on the participants’ reports as necessary to ensure key concepts are covered.

Teaching Tip

If collaborative reading and reporting is not the best choice for your group, consider using one of the following options or another of your choosing:

- **At-home reading option:** Invite the young people to read the chapter prior to the session.
- **In-session individual reading option:** Ask the participants to read the chapter during the session, or read it aloud to them.
- **Presentation option:** Give a short presentation that incorporates the key points listed on the handout “Chapter 1 Summary” on page 17 of this guide.

Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

Change Happens

Objective: To explore the realities of change and growth in personal development and in the early Church.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
 - Change is all around you. It's part of who you are. You are in your adolescence, which simply means a time of growing, maturing, and changing. We change in many different ways, such as in our appearance, our friendships, and our beliefs. Sometimes change comes naturally, and other times it comes due to choices we or others make.
 - Let's explore the changes around us, what influences them, and how they affect us.
2. **Invite** or select four recorders to help track the discussion. Write the following headings on four sheets of newsprint: "Appearance," "Taste," "Connection," and "Belief." On each sheet, add a column titled "Influences" to the right of the main heading.
3. **Challenge** the participants to create a list of changes going on in their lives. As each is named, assign a recorder to list it under its proper category (for example, a growth spurt is an "appearance," a new favorite band is a "taste," a new school or group of friends are "connections," and new values or opinions are "beliefs"). Use these examples, if necessary, to prime the conversation.
4. **Ask** the participants what influences each of these changes, and record these as well under the appropriate heading. For example, a growth spurt comes naturally, and interest in a new band might be sparked by friends.
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
 - Some change is simple and has little impact. Other change can impact people and society forever. Christianity was new to the people of the first century AD. It has survived and thrived due to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and the courage of the people who spread this new way of life.

Session Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** volunteers to share key things they learned during the session. Ensure that the following points are made:
 - The Holy Spirit empowered the growth of the early Church.
 - We can learn about the changing early Church and its leaders in the Acts of the Apostles.
2. **Distribute** the index cards. Instruct the participants to write the following questions on their cards:
 - How might the early Apostles be examples in my life today?
 - What can I do to build the Church?

3. **Direct** the young people to take the cards home and refer to them a few times during the week. Ask them to answer the questions for themselves or to share their cards with friends or family members and discuss their answers with them.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to find "Connect with God" on page 427 in their books. Invite everyone to pray the prayer aloud together.
2. **Close** by making the Sign of the Cross.

Optional Activities

Materials Needed

- the clip “Nutty for Nuts” from the movie *Ice Age: The Meltdown* (2006, 91 minutes, rated A-I and PG), available on YouTube (*optional*)
- half sheets of poster board, one for each participant
- markers
- several old magazines
- several pairs of scissors
- several bottles of glue

Paul’s Perseverance (20 minutes)

Objective: To identify the young people’s passions and the work required to pursue them.

1. **Introduce** the activity with these or similar words:
 - To spread the Good News, Paul took three long missionary journeys. Each took several years as he spanned thousands of miles by foot and by boat, and each brought him hardship and persecution because of his faith.
2. **Ask** a volunteer to read aloud the Bible passage on page 435 in the *Connect!* book.
3. **Show** the clip “Nutty for Nuts” from the movie *Ice Age: The Meltdown*, if possible, to inspire creativity. Otherwise, move to the next step.
4. **Distribute** the poster board and art supplies, and instruct the participants to illustrate, by drawing or making a collage, what they’re “nutty” or passionate about doing. Offer examples such as a sport, a particular dance form, a hobby, a musical instrument, a video game, or a school subject. Their presentation should include the following elements:
 - why they are passionate about the chosen activity
 - how they have pursued their passion so far
 - what further sacrifices they are willing to make for their passion

Teaching Tip

Decide in advance how much time to allot for the young people to prepare and share their presentations.

5. **Invite** the participants to share their presentations. Ask them whether they would endure hardships and persecutions for their passions like Paul did.
6. **Conclude** with these words from page 436 in the *Connect!* book:
 - “Saint Paul endured all these things because he was so committed to telling others the Good News about Jesus Christ. Because of people like him, the early Church quickly spread and flourished.”

Materials Needed

- a Bible
- the video “Famous Failures,” available on YouTube (*optional*)

The Power of Peter (20 minutes)

Objective: To highlight the movement of the Holy Spirit in helping Peter and all Christians overcome challenges.

1. **Introduce** this activity in these or similar words:
 - After Jesus placed his trust in Peter to lead the Church, Peter denied his friendship with Jesus on the night before Jesus died. Yet Jesus gave Peter another chance, calling him to lead the Church. With the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit, Peter did things he could never have imagined. Let’s explore one of his first amazing moments.
2. **Invite** a volunteer to read Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10 aloud.
3. **Read** the story a second time yourself, including guidance for contemplation along the way. Use this narrative, or adapt it as you see fit:
 - One day Peter and John went to the Temple at three o’ clock in the afternoon, the hour for prayer. There at the Beautiful Gate, as it was called, was a man who had been lame all his life. Every day, he was carried to the gate to beg for money from the people who were going into the Temple.
 - Put yourself in the lame man’s shoes, worthless as they are. He can’t walk anywhere on his own. He can’t farm or fish or build things. His friends carry him places, and he begs all day. He has little hope or dignity.
 - When he saw Peter and John going in, he begged them to give him something. They looked straight at him, and Peter said, “Look at us!” So he looked at them, expecting to get something from them.
 - Most people ignored the lame man. These guys were different. They actually looked at him. Was there hope? Might he eat well tonight?
 - But Peter said to him, “I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I order you to get up and walk!”
 - Put yourself in Peter’s shoes. Three years before, he was catching fish. He met Jesus and left his nets behind. What does he have to show for it? Not a penny. He couldn’t walk on water like Jesus did. But these words were coming out of his mouth!
 - Then Peter took the lame man by his right hand and helped him up. At once, the man’s feet and ankles became strong; he jumped up, stood on his feet, and started walking around. Then he went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God.
 - Babies take weeks and months to move from crawling to walking. In seconds, this man did something he’d never done before. He also probably never had much reason to praise God—until now!

- The people there saw him walking and praising God, and when they recognized him as the beggar who had sat at the Beautiful Gate, they were all surprised and amazed at what had happened to him.
 - Where did Peter get such power? Could Peter heal me if I needed it?
4. **Introduce** the video with these or similar words:
 - Peter's newfound power would change not only the life of the lame man but also the lives of people around the world and throughout the future. Not bad for a simple fisherman, a sinner, and a man who once denied Jesus.
 5. **Play** the video "Famous Failures," if you are able, and explain that you will look at some other surprising stories. Otherwise, move to the next step.
 6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
 - We should never underestimate God's power to provide strength when we are weak or hurting. Peter didn't give up during challenging times, nor did many famous world leaders, athletes, and entertainers. Peter kept following Jesus and was open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. All our gifts come from God, and we should trust that the Holy Spirit will strengthen and guide us when times get tough.

Name Your Flame Game (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- six flames, cut from large adhesive mailing labels and colored with orange marker with the following words or phrases (one each) written on them:
 - Genius
 - Wise Old Person
 - Priest (or Nun)
 - Superhero
 - Language Expert
 - Doctor

Objective: To help the participants understand the diversity of gifts and how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to do new and greater things.

1. **Introduce** the activity using these or similar words:
 - Pentecost was an incredible day. The Apostles and all who heard them experienced the Gifts of the Holy Spirit:
 - Wisdom
 - Understanding
 - Counsel (Right Judgment)
 - Fortitude (Courage)
 - Knowledge
 - Piety (Reverence)
 - Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)
 - Some people thought the Apostles were drunk. But Peter spoke courageously, helping everyone understand, and three thousand people became Christians that day.
2. **Select** six volunteers to help you with this part of the activity. Invite them to come forward, but tell them and everyone in the group to remain silent. Affix a flame to each of their foreheads, making sure they don't see what is written on their flame.

3. **Instruct** the rest of the group to treat those wearing the flames according to what is written on their flames. For example, tell them that if “U.N. Ambassador” was on a flame, you might say, “You’re so diplomatic!” or “How can we ever find peace?” Encourage the participants to be descriptive with their hints but not obvious. Tell those wearing the flames to remain silent. Allow 3 to 5 minutes of interaction, with those wearing flames mingling with the rest of the group. Then invite those wearing the flames to return to the front of the group.
4. **Ask** each flame-wearer, one at a time, the following:
 - What do you think your flame says? (*After they guess, have them remove and view their flames.*)
 - What inspired your guess?
5. **Invite** group members to share the kind of gifts they mentioned that pertain to each flame-wearer’s role.
6. **Conclude** by sharing the following or similar words:
 - The Apostle Paul wrote in his First Letter to the Corinthians that there are many types of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit; many ways to serve God, but the same God; parts of a body, but one Body in Christ.
 - Peter and the Apostles experienced new gifts and growth on Pentecost. They were able to do new things to serve God. Though such changes may not happen so suddenly in our lives, we must be open to the movement of the Spirit as we are each called to share the Good News in unique ways.

Chapter 1 Summary

Pentecost and the Apostles' Mission

- 1.** The Acts of the Apostles is a written account of the early Church following Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven.
- 2.** The Acts of the Apostles focuses on the Church of the Apostles and their first followers.
- 3.** This book's main theme is how the Holy Spirit guided the Apostles so the Word of God could spread, and it focuses in particular on the work of Saints Peter and Paul.
- 4.** The Acts of the Apostles begins with the Ascension of Jesus and then gives an account of the event of Pentecost.
- 5.** Saint Peter emerges as the leader of the early Church as it struggles to find its way. In an important event, Peter realizes that the Good News is meant for everyone—Gentiles as well as Jews.
- 6.** After his conversion, Saint Paul brings the Church to the far reaches of the Roman Empire through his missionary activity.
- 7.** The Acts of the Apostles ends with the image of Saint Paul in Rome, teaching about the Lord Jesus and proclaiming the Kingdom of God.



Chapter 2

The New Testament Letters

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the participants explore the growth and challenges of the early Church through the New Testament letters. These twenty-one letters provide helpful insights about the problems the Church faced and how it grew and developed. In reading the advice and encouragement of Saint Paul and other writers, the young people discover guidance as they try to live as Christians today.

Background for the Catechist

When was the last time you received a letter in the mail? In our era of text messaging and social media, getting personal mail is rare and often heartwarming. Rarer still are words of guidance, either written or spoken, from loved ones and mentors who help us through difficult times. The need for speed and brevity make advice giving as uncommon as letter writing itself. Though not always appreciated at first, challenging guidance can prove invaluable throughout our lives.

The New Testament letters address situations of a time far in the past, but their guidance is still pertinent today. Saint Paul and other writers worked tirelessly to spread the faith to the ends of the Earth. They traveled on foot and in simple boats. After sharing the Good News and making new friends and disciples in a certain place, they would move on, not knowing if they would ever see those people again. But letters would bring these evangelists news—some joyful and some difficult. These letters made a difference, fanning the flames of faith then and for generations to come.

We read of Paul reminding Christians that Jesus' humiliating Crucifixion was a necessary part of God's plan for our salvation. He assured them that they too would be raised—body and soul—into eternal life with Christ. Perhaps most importantly, he reminded his readers, including us, that Jesus came to save everyone. Throughout time, Paul's assurance that faith in Christ supersedes old laws has transformed many lives.

Other letters address real human experiences and conditions, such as distrust, suffering, judgment, and love. Today's young people may consider writing letters to be old-fashioned and the content of the New Testament letters to be archaic. It's our challenge to help them discover, among these gifts from the past, Good News they can use in their own journey.

Catechist's Prayer

Lord, you often spoke of writing on the hearts of your people. Treat my heart as your blank sheet, and fill it with words of wisdom, guidance, and hope that I can share with the young people I minister to. I ask this in your most holy name. Amen.

Teaching Tip

It may be helpful to steer the participants to maps of Saint Paul's journeys found in many Bibles. In addition to showing the cities of that time, the young people will get a sense of the distances and time frames of Paul's travels.

Getting Ready

Connect! Bringing Faith to Life, pages 438–448

Core Understanding

The New Testament letters provided important guidance to the early Christian communities and help us live as Christians today.

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant
- index cards, one for each participant

Key Word

- resurrection

Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

Catechism Connection

- Paragraphs 74–76
(The Transmission of Divine Revelation)
- Paragraphs 131–133
(Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church)

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Make** the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” (*Pause.*)
2. **Pray** the following:
 - Loving God, you spoke words of encouragement and wisdom to the earliest Christians through the letters of Paul and other wise guides. Speak to us today, and write words on our hearts that will keep us on your path for all our lives. Amen.
3. **Invite** the participants to offer any special intentions for which they would like to pray.
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Engage** the young people’s experience by asking the following questions:
 - How do you communicate? If you had a choice to contact a friend or relative, whether they’re across the street or across the planet, how would you do it?
2. **Invite** volunteers to share their answers. As different means of communication are mentioned, ask for a show of hands from those participants who regularly communicate in this way.

3. **Raise** the following questions:
 - Which means of communication is quickest?
 - Which allows you to express yourself more clearly?
 - Which brings you closer to the other person?
 - Which lasts the longest?
4. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
 - Texting, photo sharing, social networking, and video chatting apps are popular ways to stay in touch with people. When our Church was young, there was one way to communicate with people at a distance—letters. Those letters have endured in the pages of the Bible. Today, we'll learn how they continue to guide us.

Teaching Tip

Be alert to the speed at which technology develops. Add newer modes of communication that have emerged recently, and delete outdated modes that might distract the young people from your point.

Core Content (15 minutes)

1. **Engage** the young people in a review of pages 440–447 in the *Connect!* book by dividing the material into sections, such as the following:
 - “Understanding the New Testament Letters,” pages 440–441
 - “Themes in the Letters of Saint Paul,” pages 441–444
 - “Themes in the Other Letters,” pages 444–447
2. **Assign** each young person one of the sections of material. They can read silently to themselves or gather in small groups with others who share the same assigned material. If opting for small-group reading, ask one person from each group to read the material aloud.
3. **Invite** volunteers to report key ideas from each section of the material to the large group. Be prepared to expand on the participants' reports as necessary to ensure key concepts are covered.

Teaching Tip

If collaborative reading and reporting is not the best choice for your group, consider using one of the following options or another of your choosing:

- **At-home reading option:** Invite the young people to read the chapter prior to the session.
- **In-session individual reading option:** Ask the participants to read the chapter during the session, or read it aloud to them.
- **Presentation option:** Give a short presentation that incorporates the key points listed on the handout “Chapter 2 Summary” on page 28 of this guide.

Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

He Said What?

Objective: To illustrate the nature of the New Testament letters and how we might approach them when reading.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
 - As our *Connect!* book says, the New Testament letters can be challenging to understand, for they are often one part of a larger conversation. Many of the letters respond to a problem or an issue, presented through a messenger or a letter, that we no longer have. The New Testament letters are often the response, and we are left to make educated guesses about the problem from the response.
 - For example, assume your friend Jane (*use any name*) told you she is no longer speaking to Leah (*again, use any name*) because of their science fair project. Jane says that Leah made charts even though charts were not the best graphic to use, and their grade suffered because of them. Now Jane has to go home and tell her parents about their science fair grade.
 - What might you assume about what caused the problem? What do you think was the result of the problem? (*Take some time to ask the young people how they arrived at their conclusions.*)
 - What clues in Jane's story led you to think this is the problem?
 - These are all good guesses, made from the clues given, but they are guesses based on your friend's telling of the story. We have the same issue in many New Testament letters. We often have disagreements and concerns, but we are seeing only one side of the discussion.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the participants to find Galatians 2:11–14. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud.
3. **Arrange** the participants into five groups. Have each group select a reporter, a recorder, and a reader. Write the following questions (but not the answers) where all can see. Direct each group to reread the passage from Galatians and answer the questions. Each group should take notes and be able to share answers for all five questions with the large group, but they will report back to the large group on only one question.
 - What does Paul say about Peter? (*Peter had been eating with Gentile believers but then changed his mind. Paul calls him a coward.*)
 - According to the Letter to the Galatians, what does Peter believe about eating with Gentiles? (*He is afraid to eat with them because of the men sent by James.*)
 - What does Paul report he said to Peter? (*"You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?"*)
 - What can we know for certain from this Scripture passage? (*Paul's perspective: It is acceptable to eat with and live like Gentiles.*)
 - What do we think we can safely assume (*but have no confirmation of*) from Peter? (*Peter thought it was acceptable to eat with Gentiles, but then he changed his mind and thought Gentiles should become like Jews.*)

4. **Reconvene** the large group, and invite the small groups to share and discuss their answers, emphasizing the challenge of identifying the problem because we have only Paul's response. Point out that we do not have a record of Peter's understanding of the problem, only Paul's response.
5. **Conclude** by reiterating the nature of the New Testament letters. We often do not know the exact details and have to make educated guesses, but the values presented in the letters continue to help all live as Christians, even today.

Session Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** volunteers to share key things they learned during the session. Ensure that the following points are made:
 - The New Testament letters provided important guidance to the early Christian communities.
 - Regardless of the limited information we have in the New Testament letters, the messages contained within continue to help us live as Christians today.
2. **Distribute** the index cards. Instruct the participants to write the following question on their cards:
 - What questions do I have about living as a Christian that could benefit from the guidance of a trusted leader?
3. **Direct** the young people to take the cards home and refer to them a few times during the week. Ask them to answer the question for themselves or to share their cards with friends or family members and discuss their answers with them.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to find "Connect with God" on page 439 in their books. Explain that today you will read this prayer, and they may simply listen or follow along in their books. Begin by making a Sign of the Cross, and sit in silence for a moment. Read the prayer slowly.
2. **Close** by making another Sign of the Cross.

Optional Activities

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant
- a crucifix
- several copies of a supermarket tabloid
- a website that focuses on celebrity gossip (*optional*)
- internet access (*optional*)

From So Good to So Bad So Quickly (20 minutes)

Objective: To connect with the anxiety that Christians faced regarding Christ's Crucifixion and the necessity of Paul's response.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words, pausing after the question for responses:
 - The cross is everywhere. Can you think of places where we see the cross or crucifix?
 - Whether it is on our meeting room wall, in our jewelry, or tattooed on someone, the cross is a prevalent symbol. But it also is misunderstood.

Teaching Tip

To ensure equal understanding for this topic, it may be helpful to explain to the participants that a crucifix is a cross that includes the corpus, or body, of Christ.

2. **Distribute** the Bibles. Instruct the participants to find John 12:12–19 and Matthew 27:27–31. Invite two volunteers to read these passages aloud, in that order. Then say the following, giving the young people time to respond to the question before offering the explanation in the second bullet:
 - How did things go from so good to so bad so quickly?
 - Jesus caused problems for the religious and civic leaders. They had to do something. Crucifixion was how the Roman Empire got rid of people who defied their authority and warned other people to not cause problems. The pain was excruciating, a word whose roots and intensity come from the word *crucifixion*. The crucified also were stripped of their clothing and their dignity as they died.

Teaching Tip

To set the tone for this discussion, have in mind a recent and appropriate example of a famous or powerful person who experienced an embarrassing setback.

3. **Distribute** the supermarket tabloid or have the young people access a website that focuses on celebrity gossip. Direct them to find stories of famous and powerful people experiencing embarrassing setbacks. Share an example you have thought of, ask the participants to share a few examples, and then say:
 - Pop stars, athletes, actors, and politicians at the height of their fame and fortune face ridicule when their actions are caught on videotape. But it is not embarrassing just for them. Often the people who look up to them or follow them end up being most let down. Perhaps you were a fan of someone involved in a scandal. Did you feel embarrassed or disappointed in the person you looked up to? Did you feel that they fell a bit from the superstar status you once gave them? Now consider what Jesus' followers might have been feeling at witnessing the Crucifixion of someone they gave up everything to follow. It's not hard to imagine that Jesus' Crucifixion was embarrassing and humiliating for his followers.
4. **Ask** the participants to reflect on how the people in the stories you shared had to overcome the perceptions of others and see the world differently. Their lives of apparent failure and humiliation are ultimately stories of success and joy. But we only know that because we know the end result of their struggles.
5. **Direct** the participants to find Philippians 2:6–11. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then conclude by saying:
 - Saint Paul had to help the early Christians understand the Crucifixion and help them see that it was part of the path to glory. The humiliation on the cross is only part of the story, a story that brings salvation and proclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Laying Down the Law (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant
- internet access

Objective: To understand the challenge Paul faced in explaining the purpose of the laws in the growing young Church.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
 - Do you know that there is an actual law in Missouri that makes driving with an uncaged bear in your car illegal? Many states have laws that sound strange and outdated to us today but that were actually written and became law.
2. **Invite** the participants to do an online search for outdated laws that are still on the books in various states. Their goal is to find the strangest law and share it with the group.

3. **Begin** a conversation about all the Jewish laws found in the Old Testament, using these or similar words:
 - How many laws did God give his Chosen People in the Old Testament?
 - Many people think there were ten, but the Torah outlines 613 laws by which the Jews lived. The first Christians were Jewish, just as Jesus was. Many conflicts arose as Church leaders discerned whether Gentiles (people who weren't Jews) had to become Jewish and follow Jewish laws if they were going to become Christians.
4. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the young people to find Romans 3:22–31. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then share these thoughts:
 - Some Jewish laws seemed pretty extreme, so there were strong feelings about whether the Gentiles would be made to follow them. Has your family ever experienced tension when the rules seem to be more or less strict for certain members?
 - Sometimes laws need to be rethought as times and experiences change. For Christians, the presence of Jesus—God's Son on Earth—brought about a necessary reevaluation of the Law that had been given by Moses in the Old Testament. Paul helped Christians of his time (and helps them today) understand that God is the ultimate source of Law, and that faith in Jesus is central to how we should live.

Faith in Action (20 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant
- internet access (optional)

Objective: To explain the early Church's growing understanding that works bring our faith in Christ alive.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
 - Have you ever tried a new thing or joined a new group and been confused about what is expected? Whether you have started a new club or activity at school, or you've recently liked a new group on a social networking site, you want to know what you're getting yourself into. Early Christians were entering a new way of life, and there were plenty of differing opinions about what it meant to be a Christian.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and ask the participants to find Romans 3:22–31. Direct a volunteer to read the passage aloud, giving particular emphasis to verses 27–28. Then say these or similar words:
 - Paul was trying to clear up confusion, but this led to more confusion. Paul said that faith is the most important thing, and that simply following the religious laws wasn't enough. At the same time, he points out in verse 31 that faith doesn't do away with the Law. In other words, you can't simply have faith. True faith leads to action. Unfortunately, not everyone heard or understood that last part.

Teaching Tip

If you have more time, arrange the young people into small groups and have them explore the Scripture passages noted in step 3. If not, the description after each Bible citation will clarify the focus on mercy in each story.

3. **Ask** the participants to read the following Scripture passages and to identify mercy as portrayed in each one:
 - **The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31):** The rich man had the opportunity to show mercy to Lazarus. Ironically, he can't receive mercy from Lazarus in the afterlife.
 - **The story of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:34–40):** Jesus shows several ways that we serve him by showing mercy to those in need.
 - **Deacons appointed to help widows (Acts of the Apostles 6:1–7):** The early Church realizes the sin of neglecting widows and appoints men to show them mercy.
 - **The rich man who turned away (Luke 18:18–30):** Jesus sets a high standard. Following the Law is not enough. We must practice mercy.
4. **Share** these or similar words:
 - Despite Paul's guidance and the examples of Jesus and the Apostles, there still was confusion and disagreement. The Letter of James clarifies the relationship between faith and works.
5. **Read** James 2:14–17 aloud to the group.
6. **Invite** the participants, in small groups or individually, to come up with a list of things they do (or could do) to show Jesus' love for those who are poor and vulnerable.
7. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
 - Put simply, the Letter of James tells us that we can't just talk the talk, just saying we love God.
 - Nor can we simply walk the talk, doing things that make us look good but not loving God.
 - We need to walk the talk, doing things that show our love of God by serving others. If we don't, our faith means nothing.

Chapter 2 Summary

The New Testament Letters

1. The New Testament contains twenty-one letters, also called *epistles* (a Greek word meaning “letter”).
2. Thirteen of the letters were written by Paul or his followers. Seven more letters were written by James, Peter, John, and Jude (or by their followers). The Letter to the Hebrews is by an unknown author, and it reads more like a sermon than a letter.
3. Most letters follow this format: (a) greetings, (b) the body of the letter, and (c) personal messages and a blessing.
4. We read these letters today because the values they express help us live our Christian lives.
5. In the letters of Saint Paul, we find these important themes: (a) Jesus’ death on the cross, (b) the resurrection of the body, and (c) Jesus’ coming to save all people.
6. The First Letter of Peter addresses the suffering the first Christians experienced for living their faith.
7. The Letter of James addresses the concern of living our faith with integrity and also warns against judging others, boasting, and ignoring those who are poor and hungry.
8. The First Letter of John encourages us to live in the light of God’s revealed truth and to not give up our faith in Jesus. The whole letter talks about the importance of love.
9. We read the letters of the New Testament today because we can learn from them how to live as Christians. These early Christians, who lived so close to the time of Jesus’ life, death, and Resurrection, can guide our lives in Christ today.



Chapter 3

The Mission of the Church

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the participants discover that the Church is a community by studying three important images of the Church: People of God, Body of Christ, and Temple of the Holy Spirit. The young people also explore the meaning of the four Marks of the Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. They learn how, like Christ, the Church is both human and divine.

Background for the Catechist

What do you think of when you hear the word *church*? People often have varying understandings of this word. For many young people, this word likely brings up images of the building where they spend an hour each week in prayer. Others may see church primarily as an institution that makes rules. Some might think of it as a place to connect with people of similar values, a place to learn more about God, or a place from which to go forth and serve. The Church is all these things and more.

Ultimately, the Church is an assembly of people who come together in response to God's call to make Christ present in the world. By exploring the different images we have of the Church, we can come to understand more deeply the rich implications of being part of this assembly of people.

One of the key images used to describe the Church is Body of Christ. Paul uses this image to help Christians see they are part of something far bigger than themselves. Paul tells us we each have an essential part, or role, that must be combined with the parts and roles of others in order to best work toward our common goal. Likewise, he writes of the presence of many gifts—abilities or values that come from God—that people have and share together to carry out the mission of the Church. Discovering their individual gifts and the ways they can contribute is an important activity for adolescents who are often searching to find their place in the Church. Helping youth identify their unique role is important for the rest of us as well. Our youth have gifts and talents that are essential to the Body of Christ and our mission as the Church.

Catechist's Prayer

Loving God, thank you for calling me to serve your Church and its young people. Help me understand that they are longing to find their place in this world and to be part of the Church's vital mission. Guide me in helping them identify and nurture the gifts with which you have richly blessed them. Amen.

Teaching Tip

Many factors influence a young person's perspective on the Church. Just as this chapter includes candid acknowledgments of the Church's human flaws, it is important to validate the insights and opinions of the participants.

Getting Ready

Connect! Bringing Faith to Life, pages 449–460

Core Understanding

The Church is a unique assembly of people who come together in response to God's call to live out the mission of spreading the Good News.

Materials Needed

- at least four Bibles
- index cards, one for each participant

Key Words

- Apostolic
- Catholic
- discipleship
- Marks of the Church
- People of God

Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

Catechism Connection

- Paragraphs 748–769
(The Church's Origin, Foundation, and Mission)

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Make** the Sign of the Cross, and lead everyone in saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." (*Pause.*)
2. **Pray** the following:
 - Loving God, call us together today to do something worthy and wonderful as we learn about you and your Church. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who called us to be your people. Amen.
3. **Invite** the participants to offer any special intentions for which they would like to pray.
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity (10 minutes)

1. **Engage** the participants' experience by sharing these or similar words:
 - Most of us are members of some group that comes together for a common purpose. Tell me about some groups to which you belong and why they come together.
 - We are also all part of this group, which gathers for a common purpose. What is our purpose or goal?
2. **Dig** deeper into the young people's involvement in the groups identified during the opening discussion by asking how they were invited or recruited to be part of those groups.

3. **Clarify** that some involvement is voluntary, and some is not, and that some groups are exclusive, while others are open to all.
4. **Tell** the participants that most groups rely on the gifts or skills of their members to work toward a common purpose.
5. **Mention** that groups begin and continue by being called together by a common cause or purpose. They are intentional in their gathering.
6. **Explain** that the Church is a type of community with characteristics that make it different from other groups. Continue with the following points:
 - The Church is an assembly of people who come together in response to God’s call.
 - The people who respond to God’s call are one family through faith and Baptism.
 - God has a plan for the world, and the goal of the plan is the Church.
7. **Conclude** by sharing these or similar words:
 - Today, we’ll explore more about Church and its mission.

Core Content (15 minutes)

1. **Engage** the young people in a review of pages 451–459 in the *Connect!* book by dividing the material into sections, such as the following:
 - “Images of Church” and “The People of God,” pages 451–453
 - “The Body of Christ” and “Temple of the Holy Spirit,” pages 453–454
 - “The Marks of the Church” and “One,” pages 455–456
 - “The Marks of the Church,” “Holy,” “Catholic,” and “Apostolic,” pages 455, 457–458
 - “The Church Is Human and Divine,” page 459
2. **Assign** each young person one section of the material. They can read silently to themselves or gather in small groups that share the same assigned material. If opting for small-group reading, ask one person from each group to read the material aloud.
3. **Invite** volunteers to report key ideas from each section of the material to the large group. Be prepared to expand on the participants’ reports as necessary to ensure key concepts are covered.

Teaching Tip

If collaborative reading and reporting is not the best choice for your group, consider using one of the following options or another of your choosing:

- **At-home reading option:** Invite the young people to read the chapter prior to the session.
- **In-session individual reading option:** Ask the participants to read the chapter during the session, or read it aloud to them.
- **Presentation option:** Give a short presentation that incorporates the key points listed on the handout “Chapter 3 Summary” on page 39 of this guide.

Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

Call Stories

Objective: To help the young people relate to the Church's calling together of people by exploring the responses of several individuals in Scripture.

1. **Introduce** the activity in these or similar words:
 - The word *church* means "convocation." *To convoke* means "to call together." The same root gives us the word *vocation*, or calling.
 - A convocation is a community of people who gather in response to a call. In the case of the Church, that call comes from God. How does God call us?
 - The Bible has many "call stories." We'll now explore some of these and hopefully see ourselves in some of the stories.
2. **Assign** Bible stories to groups, arranging the participants based on how you think they'll best function and how many stories you wish to explore. Options include: three large groups, each exploring one of the first three stories; four or more groups, each exploring one of the first three stories; or four or more groups, each exploring one of the ten stories. Write the list of Bible stories where all can see, for reference:

- Samuel's call (1 Samuel 3:1–10)
- Mary's call (Luke 1:26–38)
- Peter's call (Luke 5:1–11)
- Abram's call (Genesis 12:1–5)
- Moses's call (Exodus 3:1–15)
- David's call (1 Samuel 16:3–13)
- Isaiah's call (Isaiah 6:1–8)
- Jeremiah's call (Jeremiah 1:4–10)
- Jonah's call (Jonah 1:1–3, 2:1–2, 3:1–4)
- Saul's call (Acts of the Apostles 9:1–22)

Teaching Tip

Each of the stories listed in step 2 offers foundational material for considering the mission of the Church and our own call to serve. If you would like to give more time for the participants to explore these stories, you might wish to modify this assignment, instructing them to work individually and identifying two or three stories from the list. Instruct each participant to provide a written response to the questions presented below. Alternatively, choose one story and walk the group through the questions as an example.

3. **Distribute** the Bibles. Direct each group to assign a reader, a recorder, and a reporter. The reader will proclaim the reading within the small group and may be asked to summarize it later for the large group. The recorder will take notes during the group discussion. The reporter will summarize the discussion in a report back to the large group.
4. **Write** the following questions where all can see, and invite the groups to respond to them for their assigned reading:
 - What unique challenges did each person face in responding to God’s call?
 - What did God see in them?
5. **Ask** the young people the following question:
 - What does this say about what God sees in us when he calls us?

Additionally, the groups should respond to the specific question for their assigned Scripture story. You may want to write each group’s question on a slip of paper to hand out for reference.

- **1 Samuel 3:1–10:** Samuel is young, and the Lord had never spoken to him. Have you heard God speaking to you?
 - **Luke 1:26–38:** Mary is troubled and confused. How can this be? Has God’s call ever made you anxious?
 - **Luke 5:1–11:** Peter is at first doubtful, then fearful. Has God confused or surprised you with his message?
 - **Genesis 12:1–5:** Abram leaves everything behind; he is very old. Have you or your family ever been called to make a great sacrifice?
 - **Exodus 3:1–15:** Moses feels unworthy, but God assures him of his support. Have you ever felt like a nobody, incapable of doing great things?
 - **1 Samuel 16:3–13:** David is young—not what Samuel expected—but God sees things differently. Have you ever been overlooked unfairly or surprised by someone’s confidence in you?
 - **Isaiah 6:1–8:** Isaiah feels hopeless because he is sinful, but God’s touch gives him confidence. How has God or a friend given you hope in yourself?
 - **Jeremiah 1:4–10:** Jeremiah feels he is too young, but God gives him the words to speak. Have you ever been surprised by unexpected strength to say or do the right thing?
 - **Jonah 1:1–3, 2:1–2, 3:1–4:** Jonah at first disobeys God, but God saves him anyway. Jonah then obeys God. Have you ever been blessed with a second chance to do the right thing?
 - **Acts of the Apostles 9:1–22:** Saul persecuted Christians, yet Jesus chose him to be one of the greatest disciples. Who has looked beyond your faults to see your great gifts and potential?
6. **Ask** each group’s reporter to summarize the story the group explored and the group’s response to the question. Affirm their responses, and ask clarifying questions that encourage them to relate to the biblical hero’s response.
 7. **Conclude** by emphasizing that God calls everyone to the mission of spreading the Good News. We too are called by God to be part of the mission of the Church.

Session Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** volunteers to share key things they learned during the session. Ensure that the following point is made:
 - The Church is a unique assembly of people who come together in response to God's call to live out the mission of spreading the Good News.
2. **Tell** about a group experience you have had where it was important that each member contribute their gifts in order to accomplish a task. It may be something you did as a family, as part of an athletic team, as a member of a musical group and so on.
3. **Distribute** the index cards. Ask the participants to write the following questions on their cards:
 - What image would I use to describe the Church? Why?
4. **Direct** the young people to take the cards home and refer to them a few times during the week. Ask them to answer the questions for themselves or to share their cards with friends or family members and discuss their answers with them.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the participants to find "Connect with God" on page 450 in their books. Ask a volunteer to read the prayer aloud as the rest of the group follows along in their books or is silently attentive.
2. **Close** by making the Sign of the Cross.

Optional Activities

Make Your Mark (20 minutes)

Materials Needed

- four sheets of art paper
- markers

Objective: To explore the four Marks of the Church.

1. **Begin** the exploration of the Marks of the Church with these or similar words:
 - Jesus and the Church have made indelible marks on the world, which means that their impact can't be removed. For example, the Church has made a lasting difference in the areas of education, health care, and work for social justice.
 - We all hope to leave our mark on the world so that people now and in the future know that our lives made a difference. Some legacies are carved in the stone of monuments. Others leave their legacy through written books, or through music that stands the test of time. Since we don't have any stone to carve, we're going to design our own monument that captures the four Marks of the Church.
2. **Arrange** the participants into four groups. Give each group a sheet of art paper and some markers, and assign each group one of the marks. Provide the following instructions:
 - Find pages 456–458 in your books. One group member should read aloud the mark your group has been assigned.
 - Brainstorm together what this mark means in our world today. Who is living this out, and how do they live it? How can this be expressed in a few words or a drawing? Assign a group member to record comments.
 - Design a stone monument. Hopefully everyone will have a hand in the artwork, but all are expected to contribute and to explain the group's work to the large group.
3. **Facilitate** a discussion of the four groups' work, considering common themes.
4. **Conclude** by saying these or similar words:
 - These images that we created attempt to capture the marks, the essential features, of our Church. These marks help the Church make a mark on the world.

Master Builders of the Temple of the Holy Spirit (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Bibles, one for each participant
- the movie *The Lego Movie* (2014, 100 minutes, rated A-1 and PG)

Objective: To help the young people further explore Paul's image of the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

1. **Distribute** the Bibles. Ask the participants to find 1 Corinthians 3:9–16, and invite a volunteer to read it aloud.
2. **Make** the following points:
 - Paul is encouraging us to build carefully on the foundation of our faith.
 - Jesus is that foundation, and it is up to us to build the rest as a worthy home for God's Spirit.
 - Our personalities, values, interests, and relationships influence how strong and beautiful this temple will be.
3. **Introduce** *The Lego Movie*. Begin by asking how many of the young people have seen it. Explain that Emmet is an ordinary construction worker. A prophet has foretold that Emmet will be "the Special," chosen to save the world. But there isn't much special about Emmet. The master builders ridicule him, and most refuse to work with him. In the scene we're about to watch, Emmet, along with the prophet and four master builders, escapes the forces of evil. When things seem at their worst, they learn something about themselves.
4. **Play** the section of the movie from 46:35 to 54:55, and then ask the following questions:
 - Why did the submarine fall apart? (*because the builders didn't cooperate and share their gifts*)
 - What advice did the prophet give Emmet? (*to embrace what is special about himself*)
 - How did Emmet win people's confidence? (*He built something that seemed foolish, but it was the only thing that worked.*)
 - What did Emmett say to change their thinking? (*He told them they were talented and imaginative, but they couldn't work together as a team.*)
5. **Conclude** by saying these or similar words:
 - Jesus has poured out his Spirit onto all the members of the Church. Its members have many gifts and skills. By embracing our gifts and working together, we can build a worthy place where God can dwell.

Mapping the Church (20 minutes)

Materials Needed

- a world map
- internet access

Objective: To illustrate the reach and diversity of the Catholic Church around the world.

1. **Invite** the participants to form five groups, and assign each group one of the following countries: Nigeria, Mexico, Pakistan, Israel, and Vietnam.
2. **Write** the following questions where all can see, and tell the groups to assign each member one question to search online and answer:
 - Where is that country?
 - What is the number of Catholics in that nation?
 - What percentazge of that nation's population is Catholic?
 - Are Catholics oppressed in that nation?
 - What is the main language spoken in that nation?
 - How do you say or write "God" in that language?
3. **Tell** the groups they have 3 minutes to find this information, using the internet.
4. **Ask** each group to share its findings with the large group.
5. **Conclude** by telling the young people that our faith is celebrated by over a billion people in more than 150 nations and in hundreds of languages and dialects around the world, yet we are still one Church.

Chapter 3 Summary

The Mission of the Church

1. The word *church* means “convocation,” a community of people who gather in response to a call.
2. The people who respond to God’s call are one people through faith and Baptism, are united in love by the Holy Spirit, and are the Body of Christ in the world.
3. Jesus founded the Church during his earthly ministry. Since the Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, the Church has been working to fulfill her mission of bringing the Good News of salvation to all people.
4. Since the time of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the Church has been described in these images: People of God, Body of Christ, and Temple of the Holy Spirit.
5. The Jews understood themselves to be the People of God, the Chosen Ones through whom God would save the world. The first Christians came to see that they were God’s people, God’s Chosen Ones, through Christ and the Holy Spirit.
6. The Church is the Body of Christ because all her members are united to Christ, the Head. The entire Church gets life and nourishment from Christ, especially through the Eucharist.
7. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as a whole and in each member of the Church. The Holy Spirit is the center or soul of the Church’s life.
8. Two other images of the Church are (1) the Church as Bride of Christ and (2) the Church as a sacrament, making visible the communion we share with God.
9. The Marks of the Church are essential features of the Church: The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

