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Break Through!

The Bible for Young Catholics



New Testament
Leader Guide



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The **Bible** for **Young Catholics**

New Testament Leader Guide

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The publishing team included Gloria Shahin, editorial director; and Joanna Dailey, editor. FaithClipart, image, page 71. Prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the production departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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Printed in the United States of America

4354

ISBN 978-1-59982-222-8, paper
ISBN 978-1-59982-216-7, e-book

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Introduction

Getting to Know *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*, Its Leader Guides, and Its Activity Booklets

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics has a growing family of resources that complement one another. This *New Testament Leader Guide* follows the *Old Testament Leader Guide*. Activity booklets accompany both leader guides.

The *Breakthrough!* Family of Resources

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics will be your strongest resource for introducing young adolescents to Sacred Scripture. Every element of this Bible was carefully chosen or created to appeal to young people who are ten to thirteen years old. This starts with the choice of using the Catholic edition of the *Good News Translation* for the Bible text. The *Good News Translation* was created with a vocabulary and reading level appropriate for the younger student. If you have been using translations with a more advanced reading level, you will notice an immediate difference in your students' ability to read and understand the Bible text.

Additionally, *Breakthrough!* provides many other tools to help young people feel more comfortable and familiar with the Bible. Forty illustrated color inserts feature “interviews” with the biblical characters. These character interviews quickly identify the important events in the biblical characters' accounts and the roles these people played in salvation history. A four-page salvation history time line at the beginning of the Bible shows how these biblical characters fit into God's big picture of salvation history.

Another key feature is the inclusion of Pray It!, Study It!, Live It!, and Catholic Connections articles. These articles appear alongside the biblical text in forty biblical books. The forty books were chosen to provide the best overview of salvation history and a representative sampling of the different types of books found in the Bible. For these forty books, the articles provide a commentary to help young readers better understand and apply the biblical message to their lives. Pray It! articles give the young readers ideas about applying the spirituality of the Bible. Study It! articles give them background so that they better understand the

context of the passages they are reading. Live It! articles challenge the young people to live biblical values and teachings. Catholic Connections articles show where important Catholic teachings are found in Scripture.

These are some of the other features you will find in *Breakthrough!*

- lists to help find important Bible accounts, prayers, and teachings
- a glossary with definitions of more than 180 important Bible words
- nine color maps
- a list of important Catholic prayers
- a list of important Catholic beliefs

The Leader Guides and the Bible

Both the Old Testament and New Testament *Leader Guides for Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* (Saint Mary's Press, 2006) provide you with tools to invite young adolescents to encounter God through more than forty biblical characters from both the Old and New Testaments.

This *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Leader Guide* (Saint Mary's Press, 2013) invites you to take a personal approach in your study of Jesus and his disciples. Both the *New Testament Leader Guide* and the *Activity Booklet* help you teach about Jesus through his different gifts and experiences. In the first part, "Focus on Jesus," the emphasis is on Jesus and his teachings. In the second part, "Focus on the Disciples of Jesus," Mary and the disciples are introduced individually to the students in an engaging activity format. This leader guide also identifies similarities between the lives of Jesus and his disciples and the lives of your students, providing you with options for inviting your students more deeply into the message of Jesus and into their own call as disciples.

The Leader Guides and the Activity Booklets

Both of the leader guides have accompanying activity booklets that provide the students with ways to learn about Jesus or one of his disciples with greater independence. The activity booklets have word puzzles to help the students gain familiarity with the content of relevant readings as well as introductions to the subject matter, lists of relevant Scripture passages from *Breakthrough!* articles, and questions and space for reflection.

The leader guides were written to help teachers use the Bible with young people rather than as a guide to using the activity booklets. This *New Testament Leader Guide* does, however, also provide suggestions about ways you can use the Bible and both resources together. The

activity booklet puzzles often function like the activities in the leader guide, in that they require the students to read some of the passages they need to be familiar with in order to get to know Jesus or one of his disciples better. When you see the activity booklet icon, you will find suggestions about using the puzzles in conjunction with these activities.

The introductory paragraphs and reflection questions in the activity booklet often come from the activities in the leader guide. When you see the activity booklet icon in this section of the leader guide chapters, you will encounter suggestions about when and how you might have your students answer the questions in the activity booklet to enhance their experience of the activities.

The leader guide and the activity booklet both stand alone, however. There are advantages to using them together, but every activity in this *New Testament Leader Guide* can be conducted without the activity booklet, and every activity page in the activity booklet can be completed without the leader guide. The needs of your students and your own resources should determine which combination of these products you choose.

About the Term *Young Adolescent*

You will notice that the *Breakthrough!* materials use the term *young adolescent* throughout. This term describes young people who are at the age where they would normally be in grades five through eight. We intentionally use a term that describes their age rather than their status in school, which is what would happen if we used *junior high* or *middle school*. We all know that, depending on what part of the country you find yourself, even these terms are fluid!

We also use the terms *young people* and *student* to refer to this same group. Even though some activities may lend themselves more readily to the classroom of a Catholic grade school, the authors wrote with both school and parish needs in mind.

Looking More Closely at This Leader Guide

This leader guide has many features that will help you in your ministry with young adolescents. Though the Bible itself is not a “curriculum,” you will find that this leader guide will supplement the Christology or New Testament curriculum you are currently using.

This book consists of two parts. The first part emphasizes the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The second part introduces the students to individual disciples who interacted with Jesus, beginning with his mother and first disciple, Mary of Nazareth. You can use the chapters in order or pick and choose as you need. In addition to inviting your students to learn the accounts about Jesus and his disciples, the material

in the chapters enables you to make connections between your young people's lives and the life of Jesus.

Three appendixes are also included, noting additional resources, tools for teaching, the activity book answer key, and an index of activities by chapter.

The next sections explain the rationale behind the different parts of the chapters.

Preparing to Teach

Each chapter begins with a section called "Preparing to Teach." There is quite a bit of "raw material" in the first half of each chapter, such as citations from Sacred Scripture, lists of *Breakthrough!* articles, and connections between Jesus or one of his disciples and young people. These tools make it easier for you to reflect about your own students and their needs and questions and then to move quickly into a lesson or session plan that will bring the Bible and its people alive for your young people.

Instead of going through the chapters sequentially, we hope you will make decisions about what and how to teach based on a combination of factors, such as what materials you have and what you think will excite your students. The chapters in this guide are set up to support your own discernment in teaching. Pray about your students' needs, and focus on the aspects of Jesus' life, perhaps augmented by focusing on one of his disciples, with which they would most identify right now.

The following parts of the chapters should help you tailor your teaching to the needs of your students.

Overview

The overview consists of several paragraphs that bring the chapter topic into focus and highlight ways the subject connects with the young people at their own stage of development.

This Chapter at a Glance

This short section gives you the names of the activities that are in the second half of the chapter. Each chapter provides at least one activity that helps the young people become more familiar with a Gospel account about Jesus or one that helps them probe more deeply into the person of Jesus or one of his disciples.

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus and His Disciples

This section lists no more than twelve key passages about the aspect of Jesus or the particular disciple under study. An asterisk identifies those

passages that are most important to read. This section should make it easier for you to find relevant passages and to assign reading to your group.

Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus



This section lists several articles from *Breakthrough!* that are relevant to your study. The Bible features Pray It!, Study It!, and Live It! articles so that the students can learn more about aspects of the Bible, develop their prayer life, and hear challenges to live differently. These three types of articles, as well as the Catholic Connections, can be springboards for conversation with your students. When you see the *Breakthrough!* icon in the margin, you will know that you will be directed to an aspect of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*.

Jesus, the Disciples, and Young Adolescents Today

This section suggests several connections between Jesus, his ministry, or a particular disciple and the young people with whom you are working. Perhaps one or two of the connections will intuitively or obviously seem more suitable for your group now. But next year, with another group, another two may emerge as important.

Activities

The second half of each chapter is devoted to class or session activities. Each chapter has a choice for you to consider as you explore the person of Jesus or one of his disciples with the students. The handouts offered for each chapter can easily be found at the end of that chapter. You will notice that the authors of this guide believe it is possible to learn about Jesus and his disciples while having an enjoyable, meaningful, and creative time.

The Appendixes: Making It Easier for You

Appendix 1: Additional Resources

This appendix suggests resources that provide background for you and materials that can help you share the beauty of Scripture with the students.

Appendix 2: Tools for Teaching

This appendix contains some of the best and most creative activities that our authors wrote for this guide. These activities can be used with different biblical people. Look in this appendix if the recommended

activity does not seem appropriate for your group or if you have had success with one of the approaches before.

Appendix 3: Answer Key for *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet* Puzzles

This appendix contains the answers for the word puzzles that appear in the *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet*. This appendix does not directly connect with any materials in this leader guide. You may choose to use the activity booklet to give your students additional opportunities to learn about Jesus. The activity booklet is available from Saint Mary's Press, www.smp.org.

Appendix 4: Index of Activities by Chapter

This appendix lists the activities from the guide by chapter, enabling you to quickly find them and providing you with some sense of the learning styles they address and the methods they use.

Journeying with the Young People

Early adolescence is an exciting age from which to be looking at the accounts and person of Jesus. Young people are fairly preoccupied with the opportunities, experiences, and turmoil of this age, so they are primed for accounts about Jesus and his disciples that speak of trying new things, relating with friends, making a difference, wrestling with rejection, and making important decisions.

The opportunity to look at the issues in their own lives in light of Jesus' life presents young people with a model of how to address these issues in a loving way, with prayer and grace, and in Christian community. These young people are continuing to transition into an adult faith and relationship with Jesus as disciples. You have the privilege to journey with them.

PART I: Focus on Jesus

Chapter 1

Jesus and His Family

Preparing to Teach

Overview

Jesus was born into and grew up in a family. Although his childhood and young adolescence are centuries and thousands of miles away, young people can come to understand that they themselves share many human experiences with Jesus. It helps young people to realize that Mary was likely about their age when the angel appeared to her and that the finding of Jesus in the Temple probably happened when he was a young adolescent. Your students and their parents are not the only ones who miscommunicate!

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus are a model loving family. Jesus learns a humble trade and participates in the religious rituals of a devout Jewish family. It would be a mistake, however, to idealize that this family had it easy by any means. They faced homelessness, became refugees in another country, and likely lived a subsistence lifestyle. The students can see that it was not always Christmas for this family, even though that is a snapshot of their family life that we tend to focus on.

This Chapter at a Glance

Activities

- The Birth of Jesus
- *Las Posadas*
- Jesus and Human Rights Violations

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus and His Family

The passages listed in bold are readings the students will reference to complete the puzzle “Jesus and His Family,” on page 11 of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet*.

- **Matthew 1:1–17** (The ancestors of Jesus Christ)
- **Luke 2:1–7, Matthew 1:18–25** (The birth of Jesus Christ)*
- **Luke 2:8–20** (The shepherds and the angels)*
- **Matthew 2:1–12** (Visitors from the East)*
- **Matthew 2:13–15** (The escape to Egypt)
- **Luke 2:21** (Jesus is named.)
- **Matthew 2:16–18** (The killing of the children)
- **Matthew 2:19–23** (The return from Egypt)
- **Luke 2:39–40** (The return to Nazareth)
- **Luke 2:22–38** (Jesus is presented in the Temple.)*
- **Luke 2:41–52** (The boy Jesus in the Temple)*

Asterisk (*) signifies key passages to cover.



Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus and His Family

- King of Kings (Matthew 1:1–17)
- Remember Moses? (Matthew 2:13–18)
- “Born of the Virgin Mary” (Luke 1:26–38)
- Hail Mary! (Luke 1:41–42)
- “Where Were You?” (Luke 2:41–51)

Jesus’ Family and Young Adolescents Today

- Jesus is fully human. Adolescents share in Christ’s human nature.
- The facts surrounding the birth of Jesus were rather scandalous. Some students were also born under circumstances that others may have considered less than ideal.
- Joseph and Mary were poor. Many young adolescents can relate to a life of frugality.
- Jesus’ birth brought visitors from afar. The birth of each student brought with it a celebration and visits from relatives and friends.
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are refugees from violence. Young adolescents are aware of people seeking refuge because of violence in their communities.
- Jesus and his parents did not communicate well about their plans to leave Jerusalem. Young people and their parents can miscommunicate at times.

- Jesus did not see eye to eye with Mary about being by himself in the Temple. Young adolescents and their parents do not always agree on how much freedom young people should have.

Activities

The Birth of Jesus

In this activity the students will read an excerpt from Luke, chapter 2, to review or learn the main events surrounding Jesus' birth.

Preparation

- ❑ Make copies of the handout "The Birth of Jesus" (Document #: TX003011), one for each student.
- ❑ Complete the handout yourself before meeting with the students.
- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible and pens or pencils, one of each for each student.

1. Distribute the handouts, Bibles, and pens or pencils. Ask the students to read Luke 2:1–12 quietly to themselves. When they finish reading, ask them to close their Bibles and fill in the handout from memory.
2. When all the students are finished with the handout, have them check their work by opening their Bibles to the passage in Luke and reviewing their answers. Call on the students to share their answers with the class. Answer any questions they might have about the reading.



Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, they can work on the puzzle "Jesus and His Family," on page 11, which covers not only Luke's narrative but Matthew's also. The activity on the handout "The Birth of Jesus" (Document #: TX003011) in this guide prepares the students for puzzle questions about Luke. See appendix 3 of this guide for the solution to the puzzle.



Las Posadas

"Las Posadas" is a wonderful Advent activity that involves the whole school or religious education program. In this activity the students will recreate the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the Mexican tradition of *Las Posadas*. Because this activity ideally involves school-wide participation, it is important to give advance notice and directives to all involved.

Preparation

- ❑ Have the class create invitations for all the other classes in the school, inviting them to *Las Posadas*. Let the classes know they will each have to assign one student as their innkeeper.
 - ❑ Have the students include a short explanation of the Mexican tradition of *Las Posadas*. (Information about this celebration is readily available on the Internet.)
 - ❑ *Las Posadas* is a Mexican tradition. *Las Posadas* means “inn” and “to find a safe place.” The celebration is a re-enactment of the arrival of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem. Ask each class in the school to decide on a name for their inn and decorate their classroom door.
1. Assign two students in your class to play the roles of Mary and Joseph.
 2. On the designated day, begin *Las Posadas* with your class. Instruct Mary and Joseph to knock at each classroom door that is decorated. The townspeople (the remaining members of your class) follow Mary and Joseph from inn (classroom) to inn. Have the designated innkeepers from each class turn them away. Once a class’s innkeeper has turned away Mary and Joseph, that whole class, including the innkeeper, should join the procession.
 3. When Mary and Joseph reach the last inn and are again turned away, they then lead the whole school community to assemble in the sanctuary or auditorium to sing appropriate Advent or Christmas hymns, such as “O Holy Night” or “Away in a Manger.”
 4. Lead the students in a discussion of their experience of *Las Posadas*. What did it feel like to play the different roles of innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, and the townspeople?

Additional suggestion: Play instrumental Advent or Christmas hymns quietly over the public address system while Mary and Joseph go from inn to inn. Remind all the students to remain silent during the procession so as to present a solemn, holy environment for the event.

Jesus and Human Rights Violations

In this activity the students will study several events in Jesus’ life from the perspective of current international law in order to reflect more deeply on his early years.

Preparation

- ❑ Make copies of the handouts “Human Rights” (Document #: TX003012) and “Human Rights and the Life of Jesus” (Document #: TX003013), one of each for each student.
- ❑ Have pens or pencils, one for each student.
- ❑ Reflect on or research human rights issues. The United Nations has a helpful Web site for teachers.

1. Distribute the handout “Human Rights” (Document #: TX003012), and go through the articles with the students. Clarify any questions they might have about the language used in the articles.



2. Discuss the importance of these articles in the global community. If there are any issues of human rights in the news, refer to them or to past events the students would be familiar with, to help illustrate the articles.

3. Distribute the handout “Human Rights and the Life of Jesus” (Document #: TX003013) and pens or pencils, and ask the students to complete the handout individually, using the previous handout, “Human Rights,” as a reference. Discuss the results as a class. Ask the students how they think the experience of having their human rights violated shaped Jesus and his parents.



Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, this would be a good time for them to answer question 1 on page 12, which asks them to find similarities between their own birth and Jesus’ birth. Have them answer the question in writing.



The Birth of Jesus

At the time Emperor _____ ordered a _____ to be taken throughout the Empire. . . . Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of _____ in Galilee to the town of _____ in Judea, the birthplace of King David. . . . He went to register with _____, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in _____, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a _____—there was no room for them to stay in the _____.

There were some _____ in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An _____ of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, “Don’t be _____! I am here with _____ for you, which will bring great joy to all people. This very day in David’s town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord!” (Luke 2:1,3–12)

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Human Rights

*From the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”	**Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.	Article 6 1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. 2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
Article 13. 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.	Article 10 2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances, personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (<i>ordre public</i>), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.
Article 14. 1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.	Article 22 1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.
Article 16. 3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.	



<p>Article 25.</p> <p>2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.</p>	
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*Articles from “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” on the United Nations’ Web site. Used with permission.

**Articles from “United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,” on the United Nations’ Web site. Used with permission.



Human Rights and the Life of Jesus

Match the events in Jesus' life outlined below with the articles from the United Nations documents "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and "United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child," outlined on the handout "Human Rights" (Document #: TX003012), both crafted in the last century:

The circumstances surrounding the consequent birth of Jesus were rather scandalous because Mary and Joseph were betrothed to be married when Mary became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, 'Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave.'" (Matthew 2:13)

"When Herod realized that the visitors from the East had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger." (Matthew 2:16)

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Chapter 2

Jesus' Baptism and Temptation

Preparing to Teach

Overview

Many young people have been baptized, whether in the Catholic Church or in another Christian denomination. All of them have been tempted to sin. It is interesting that right after his Baptism by John, Jesus is sent by the Holy Spirit into the desert. The proximity of the two accounts suggests how much the grace of Baptism is needed to resist temptation. Though young people may not be thinking daily about their Baptism, they need to know that they have a special character because of it, one that has the strength to resist temptation if it is not weakened significantly by sin.

At Jesus' Baptism, God the Father affirms Jesus in his truest identity as God's Son. Then, in the desert, Jesus confronts those forces that seek to corrupt this identity and destiny. Many adults experience both reinforcement and doubt about their true identity, but young adolescents can perceive it to be an overwhelming struggle at times.

The young adolescent is very sensitive to the importance of belonging—being “the beloved,” “the special one”—and may believe that association with a certain group or team can provide the status they desire, at least for a short time. Yet this status often remains elusive; the feeling of being “the unbeloved” or “the ordinary one” can weigh on the young person.

Like Jesus in the desert, the young adolescent's sense of true self is challenged. Young adolescent believers struggle with social acceptance and are tempted to compromise their integrity simply to avoid the hassle of defending their faith. This chapter can help the students recognize their true selves, as Jesus did, and also provide them with tools to reject those voices that would cause them to doubt God's care for them and that would try to persuade them that they are foolish to want to serve others so willingly.

This Chapter at a Glance

Chapter 2

Activities

- Presentations of Baptism and Temptation
- Baptism: Path to Our True Identity
- Resisting the Tempter with Jesus Today

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus' Baptism and Temptation

The passages listed in bold are readings the students will reference to complete the puzzle "Jesus' Baptism and Temptation," on page 13 of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet*.

- Matthew 3:13–17, **Mark 1:9–11**, Luke 3:21–22 (The Baptism of Jesus)*
- **Matthew 4:1–11**, Mark 1:12–13, Luke 4:1–13 (The temptation of Jesus)*
- Matthew 16:21–28, **Mark 8:31–33**, Luke 9:22–27 (Jesus speaks about his suffering and death.)
- **Mark 9:42–47**, Matthew 18:6–9 (Temptations to sin)
- **Mark 10:35–45** (The request of James and John)
- Matthew 28:16–20, Mark 16:14–18, Luke 24:36–49 (Jesus appears to his disciples.)*

Asterisk (*) signifies key passages to cover.

Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus' Baptism and Temptation

- Facing the Devil (Matthew 4:1–11)
- Lent (Mark 1:12–13)
- Baptism, Born Again! (John 3:1–8)



Jesus' Baptism and Temptation and Young Adolescents Today

- The Baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of his public ministry and shows all that he is beloved by God. Though many young adolescents may not remember their own Baptism, they can realize that they too are beloved of God and that because of their Baptism, God has a ministry for them.

- Jesus is willing to commit his life to God out of total love and says that his future suffering will be a Baptism. Jesus' suffering, death, and Resurrection bring life. Young people can see that the Paschal mystery allows people to grow through their suffering if they take it to God.
- Jesus experiences the pull of temptation as do young adolescents. Jesus is a model of resisting temptation and not giving in to selfishness.
- The devil tempts Jesus to use his gifts selfishly. Young adolescents face similar temptations.

Activities

Presentations of Baptism and Temptation

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible, one for each student.
1. Distribute the Bibles. Then divide the class into six groups, and assign each group one of the readings from "Passages from Sacred Scripture Related to Jesus' Baptism and Temptation." Ask the students to read their passages individually in silence and then aloud in their groups.
 2. These readings contain quite a bit of imagery. Ask each group to create either a still-life representation of the reading or a skit about it. Once a group has presented its visual presentation of the story, ask the members to share what they learned either about Baptism or temptation from their reading. If you review these readings later, the students can perform again to help the class remember the accounts.



Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, they can now assess their knowledge of these accounts by completing the "Jesus' Baptism and Temptation" cut-out puzzle, on page 13. See appendix 3 of this guide for the solution to the puzzle.

Baptism: Path to Our True Identity

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible, pens or pencils, and sheets of paper, one of each for each student.

❑ Gather the following additional supplies for this activity:

- a white board and marker for notes
- a clear drinking glass
- two cups of milk
- a can opener
- a can of chocolate syrup

1. Introduce this activity by reminding the students that during Jesus' Baptism, God the Father reveals himself and his love to Jesus and that this love is central to Jesus' identity as well as his mission. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each of the three groups one of the different accounts of Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3:3–17, Mark 1:9–11, Luke 3:21–22), and compare the accounts together as a whole class.

2. Ask the students to reflect on these two questions:

- ▶ What do you think your identity is based on?
- ▶ How can you grow in knowing your own true identity as God's beloved?

The students may respond in several ways. Part of their sense of identity comes from looking back on their personal histories through scrapbooks, pictures, and stories. They also learn who they are through their interactions with family and friends. Ask the students these questions:

- ▶ What is identity theft?
- ▶ What must be scary about identity theft?
- ▶ What kinds of things must people do to “recapture” their stolen identity?

Share these thoughts with the students in your own words:

- ▶ So much deeper than our identity, according to the United States government (and even our scrapbooks), is our identity in God. Each one of us is made in God's image before Baptism. In Baptism, however, we become members of Christ. We are incorporated in the Catholic Church and take on the mission of the Catholic Church. This identity is much closer to the identity we feel within our own families.

3. Note that when we ally ourselves with a sports team or an important cause, we incorporate this sports team or cause into our identity. Ask the students these questions:

- ▶ What are some of the differences between die-hard sports team fans and casual followers of a sports team?
- ▶ What might a die-hard follower of Jesus look like? What might a casual follower of Jesus look like?

Share these thoughts with the students in your own words:

- ▶ When adults enter the Catholic Church, they realize they are like casual fans of Jesus who want to become die-hard fans. The word *baptism* is derived from the Greek word *baptizein*, which means “to dip or immerse in water.” A related word means “to dye,” as in dying cloth. When an adult or infant is immersed in the water of Baptism, it is like he or she is dyed with the Holy Spirit and transformed. Anyone who has seen a die-hard fan painted with team colors can see that this person has been taken over by enthusiasm for the team.
4. Use milk and chocolate syrup to help illustrate the image that we not only die with Christ but are dyed with Christ at Baptism. As you pour the chocolate syrup into the glass of milk, it sinks to the bottom. Illustrate that a person needs to stir it in order for it to become chocolate milk. Note that when we are dyed with Christ, immersed in him, at Baptism, we can either push his identity to the bottom of the glass or we can welcome him and allow him to permeate our whole existence.
 5. Conclude the activity by discussing this question with the students:
 - ▶ What can we do to stir up the presence of Christ within, to accept him more fully, to be more truly ourselves?



Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, this would be an appropriate time to ask the young people to respond in writing to question 1 on page 14.

Resisting the Tempter with Jesus Today

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible, pens or pencils, and sheets of paper, one of each for each student.
1. Introduce the activity with thoughts along these lines:
 - ▶ The devil’s temptations to Jesus can be seen as tests to Jesus’ true identity. Although the devil claims he is testing Jesus to see if he is God’s Son, this temptation actually asks Jesus to compromise this identity.
 - ▶ When we are tempted, we have a choice to affirm who we really are as children of God or to allow the temptation to shape our identity.

2. Arrange the students into groups of three. In their groups, have them read the three accounts of the temptations in Matthew 4:1–11, Mark 1:12–13, and Luke 4:1–13. Ask them to note the similarities and differences among the accounts. Ask these questions:
 - ▶ What is the devil trying to do in tempting Jesus? Why?
 - ▶ What is Jesus' basic answer to these temptations? Why?
3. Review the three ways the devil tempts Jesus. Note that though the devil might not tempt us in the same way, we struggle with some of the same issues that he tempted Jesus with.
 - ▶ "If you are God's Son . . ." (Matthew 4:6) could be understood as a challenge to Jesus' identity. While we might have a natural desire to "prove ourselves," when do people tempt us by saying "prove it"? Do we tend to want to prove to ourselves and others that we are worthwhile?
 - ▶ The devil tempts Jesus with power and wealth. Power and wealth are certainly temptations for many people.
 - ▶ When the devil asks for the stone to be turned into bread and for Jesus to jump off the Temple, he asks him to do something "supernatural" or outside the regular forces of nature, something miraculous. Jesus used his miracles only to heal or help others. People can ask us to use our gifts selfishly rather than for others.
4. Discuss this question with the students:
 - ▶ What is our attitude toward our own gifts and talents? Do we prefer to use our gifts and talents just for ourselves, or can we see them as gifts to be used in God's service?
5. Explore the ways Jesus resisted temptation. Ask the students to describe how he was able to do this. Aloud, reread Jesus' response to each temptation. Ask the group:
 - ▶ Does Jesus suggest where we should turn when we feel tempted?
6. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student. Ask the students to fold the sheet of paper into three columns. Give these directions:
 - ▶ In the first column, write down five to seven talents and other good qualities you have.
 - ▶ In the middle column, for each talent or quality, write down what it looks like if you use it just for yourself or to promote yourself.
 - ▶ In the far right column, write down what the talent or quality looks like when you realize you are a son or daughter of God, a member of a community, and you use it for others.



7. To conclude the activity, discuss what makes it easy to use talents for others and what makes it difficult.

Variation: If the students are using the activity booklet and you are short on time, ask the students to answer question 2 on page 14, and to discuss their answers in place of steps 6 and 7 of this activity.

Chapter 3

Jesus and His Disciples

Preparing to Teach

Overview

Young adolescents are very concerned with their friends. Jesus also values friendship. In his friendship with the disciples, Jesus calls them to live like him and is himself a model of the servant leadership he preaches. Although some young adolescents are a poor example to their peers, many inspire and encourage their friends to virtue.

The length of Jesus' ministry is three short years. He knows his ministry must continue without him after his death and Resurrection. Jesus discerns and calls followers who are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. He sends them out to preach, heal, and forgive sins. He begins by calling two fishermen, Peter and his brother Andrew. There is nothing remarkable about these men aside from their unabashed desire to drop everything and follow Jesus. They are not trained in theology, yet they are courageous enough to follow this Jesus, whose radically different views on religious laws are concerning to some.

Jesus values friendship. He includes the Apostles in many important aspects of his life, the Last Supper being one of the most significant. It is at this meal that Jesus models the behavior he intends the Apostles to follow in their ministry. When Jesus removes his outer garment, ties a towel around his waist, and removes the men's sandals to wash their feet, he models the behavior he expects from the Apostles—that of servant. Jesus displays behaviors that represent a new covenant between God and human beings, one based on love and service.

People who love in a Christlike way, putting the welfare of others first, are living testimonies to the existence of Christ in our world. Jesus prays to the Father for the protection of his disciples; he knows the hardships they will face when ministering in his name. Today we the Church continue this mission, and our young adolescents are part of it!

This Chapter at a Glance

Activities

- Chosen for Service
- To Love and to Serve
- John, Chapter 17

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus and His Disciples

The passages listed in bold are readings the students will reference to complete the puzzle “Jesus and His Disciples,” on page 15 of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet*.

- Matthew 4:18–22, **Mark 1:14–20**, Luke 5:1–11 (Jesus calls four fishermen.)*
- Matthew 9:9–13, **Mark 2:13–17**, Luke 5:27–32 (Jesus calls Matthew.)
- Matthew 8:18–22, Luke 9:57–62 (The would-be followers of Jesus)
- **Matthew 10:1–4**, Mark 3:13–19, Luke 6:12–16 (Jesus chooses the twelve Apostles.)*
- Matthew 10:5–15, Mark 6:7–13, Luke 9:1–6 (Jesus sends out the twelve disciples.)*
- Luke 8:1–3 (Women who accompanied Jesus)
- Luke 10:1–12 (Jesus sends out the seventy-two.)*
- Luke 14:25–33, Matthew 10:37,38 (The cost of being a disciple)
- **John 1:35–42** (The first disciples of Jesus)
- **John 1:43–51** (Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael.)
- John 13:1–20 (Jesus washes his disciples’ feet.)*
- John 17:1–26 (Jesus prays for his disciples.)*

Asterisk (*) signifies key passages to cover.



Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus and His Disciples

- The Twelve (Matthew 10:1–4)
- Called and Sent (Mark 3:13–19)
- Peter the Rock (Matthew 16:13–20)
- What? No Cell Phone? (Mark 6:6–13)
- Jesus: A Friend and Teacher to All (Luke 8:1–3)

- Shame on You! (Luke 9:23–27)
- Two by Two (Luke 10:1–12)
- Mary as the First Disciple (John 2:1–12)

Jesus, His Disciples, and Young Adolescents Today

- Jesus has twelve special friends, the Apostles. Young adolescents also have special relationships with friends.
- The Apostles are a diverse group of men. Adolescents embrace friends of different cultural, economic, social, and religious backgrounds.
- Jesus is a loyal friend. Young adolescents value loyalty in their friendships.
- Jesus forgives Peter when Peter denies knowing Jesus. Young adolescents have the experience of being forgiven by friends, and by God through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- Jesus shares his intimate thoughts and emotions with the Apostles. Young people share their intimate thoughts and emotions with their best friends.
- Jesus relies on his closest disciples to be with him during difficult times in his life. Young people also rely on friends to help them through difficult times.
- Jesus prays for his disciples. Young adolescents often pray for friends in need or for their families.

Activities

Chosen for Service

In this activity the students will create a plan to attract others to participate in an event for a specific social justice issue or charity.

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible, sheets of paper, and pens or pencils, one of each for each student.
1. Before gathering for this activity, have the students choose a particular social justice or charitable organization to research. Have them collect information about it from the Internet, and ask them to note whether the organization has a specific way of fund-raising (a car wash, a walk-a-thon, etc.).

2. Distribute the Bibles, and ask the students to follow along as you read Luke 5:1–11, 27–32 and Luke 6:12–16 aloud. Discuss these readings with the students. Ask them to consider why Jesus chose the twelve men to be trained as Apostles. Explain that Jesus wanted them to carry on his ministry when he would no longer be with them.
3. Suggest the following idea to the class:
 - ▶ Suppose you wanted to actively carry on Jesus' ministry by becoming involved in a social justice effort or charity outreach. How would you go about doing this?
4. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each student. Ask the students to write a letter to the school at large. (This will be an exercise rather than a real campaign.) Give these instructions:
 - ▶ The letter should describe who you are and why you choose to assist this social justice organization or charity with its unique cause.
 - ▶ In the body of your letter, include comments that will encourage others to join with you in supporting this cause. (Although this letter is simply a tool to explore the Gospel message of discipleship, it will help each student become aware of his or her ability to be part of Jesus' ministry as a disciple.)
5. Conclude the activity by having the students share their letters with fellow classmates. You may want to have the students vote on one social justice organization or charity as an opportunity to do a schoolwide or parishwide fund-raiser. Help the students recognize the parallel between Jesus' way of gathering people to assist him in his ministry and what the students themselves could do with others to better the world.



Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, the puzzle “Jesus and His Disciples,” on page 15, is a good way to familiarize them with several of these biblical accounts. See appendix 3 of this guide for the solution to the puzzle.

To Love and to Serve

In this activity the students will reflect on Jesus' interactions with the disciples at the Last Supper and then design “acts of service” coupon books for their families.

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible and sheets of paper, one of each for each student.
- ❑ Gather crayons or markers and several staplers.

1. Distribute the Bibles, and have the students read the account of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet in John 13:1–20. Then read the account out loud slowly, focusing on the contradictions Jesus introduces to the Apostles.
2. Give background information as to what was typically done in Jesus' day when guests entered a house. Stress that foot washing was usually reserved for the lowest slave. Jesus' behavior was shocking to the Apostles!

Have the students share their thoughts in response to these questions:

- ▶ Do you understand why Peter first told Jesus he could not wash his feet?
- ▶ Can you think of a situation today that would be an example of such a switch in power? *(Invite the students to share a similar story. An example might be the governor's cleaning their shoes after they stepped in a dog's mess.)*
- ▶ If we today do not let Jesus serve us as he did the Apostles, are we in danger of no longer being his disciples?
- ▶ Do you understand why Peter wants a more complete bath after learning how key this cleansing is to being Jesus' disciple?
- ▶ What are some adjectives that could describe the love Jesus is showing his disciples?
- ▶ What are the reasons behind Jesus' act of service?

Note: The students can answer the last two questions in writing using question 1 on page 16 of the activity booklet.



3. Ask a student to read aloud John 13:12–17. Have another student paraphrase the passage. Then ask all the students to brainstorm ways they could model Jesus' actions in their families. (Examples might be cleaning one's room, walking the dog, washing the dishes, taking out the garbage, etc.) Challenge the students to come up with service ideas that go beyond what is generally expected of them.
4. Tell the students they will now create a coupon book that will entitle their family to five acts of service free of charge. The students can use their creativity in making the coupons, but they could also just use a single 8½-x-11-inch sheet of paper to make several coupons. Distribute the art materials, and explain that the students should make a cover and a back page for their coupon book.
5. Conclude the activity by having the students report back about the success of their coupon books at home.

John, Chapter 17

In this activity the students will write their own prayers for loved ones based on Jesus' prayer for his disciples.

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible, one for each student.
- ❑ Make copies of the handout "John, Chapter 17: Praying for Others" (Document #: TX003014), one for each student.

1. Explain to the students that the prayer in John, chapter 17, is one of intercession, talking to God on behalf of others.

2. Allow the students time to read the prayer quietly to themselves. Then offer the following insight about the prayer:

- ▶ Jesus is concerned with the events the disciples will encounter in the near future. Life will be filled with challenges, so he asks God the Father to protect the disciples from the hostile world. Before Jesus prays for them, he gives glory to God the Father.



3. Allow the students some time to reflect on any current or future concerns they may have about family or friends and to jot those concerns down privately. If the students are using the activity booklet, they may instead write down a few things they would like help with as a response to question 2 on page 16.



4. Distribute the handouts to the young people. Using the model provided on the handout, have the students write their own intercessory prayers.

John, Chapter 17: Praying for Others

Brainstorm personal family issues that are of concern to you as well as any issues that may be troubling your friends. Using the outline below as a guide, write a personal intercessory prayer in the blank space.

1. In the first paragraph, give glory to God.
2. In the second paragraph, list the intercessions you have brainstormed.
3. In the third paragraph, pray for unity.
4. In the final paragraph, describe what you intend to do to make God known to others.

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3. In the third paragraph, pray for unity.

4. In the final paragraph, describe what you intend to do to make God known to others.



Chapter 4

Jesus in Prayer

Preparing to Teach

Overview

The majority of young adolescents pray, but they may be only beginning to understand what it means to be a person of prayer like Jesus is. Your young adolescents may or may not have support for spiritual growth at home. A regular pattern of seeking solitude for prayer may seem foreign to some young people who are very interested in communicating with their friends, whether by phone, by text message, or in person. They may need some help understanding the value of solitude, whether in nature, in the school chapel, or in their bedroom.

Jesus learns to pray in a devout family that actively participates in the Jewish spiritual life. At the age of twelve, Jesus experiences an intensification of his spiritual life when he is found in the Temple.

Jesus' prayer springs from this passionate desire to be with God. As much as Jesus is "God with us," he very much lives his life "with God." Throughout his ministry, Jesus has a steady, regular pattern of rising early (or staying up all night) to pray in out-of-the-way places and on hillsides. We see Jesus praying in the midst of ordinary life events as well as during important ones. His relationship with the Father grows through the joys and struggles of life.

Jesus' followers cannot help but notice this important part of his daily life and eventually inquire about learning how to pray like him (see Matthew 6:7–15). Why? They want to grow in their relationship with God as Jesus does. There is something about the praying Jesus that fascinates and draws his followers to learn more.

Young adolescents certainly have ordinary and extraordinary events in their lives and encounter challenges and struggles. Jesus' prayer life may not have made difficulties go away, but the young people should be able to see that Jesus approaches difficulties very differently because of his close relationship with his Father. Learning to pray means patterning our prayer lives after Jesus as well as asking for the grace to share his desire to be with God.

This Chapter at a Glance

Activities

- Learning to Pray from the Expert
- “Lord, Teach Us to Pray”

Chapter 4

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus in Prayer

The passages listed in bold are readings the students will reference to complete the puzzle “Jesus in Prayer,” on page 17 of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics: New Testament Activity Booklet*.

- **Matthew 6:5–6** (Teaching about prayer)*
- **Matthew 6:7–15**, Luke 11:1–4 (Our Father)*
- Matthew 7:7–12, **Luke 11:5–13** (Ask, seek, knock)*
- **Mark 1:35–39** (Jesus preaches in Galilee.)
- Luke 5:15–16 (Jesus prays in lonely places.)
- **Luke 6:12–16** (Jesus chooses the twelve Apostles.)
- Mark 9:2–9, **Matthew 17:1–13**, Luke 9:28–36 (The Transfiguration)
- **Matthew 11:25–27**, Luke 10:21–23 (Jesus prays in thanks.)
- **Luke 18:1–8** (The Parable of the Widow and the Judge)*
- **Luke 18:9–13** (The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector)*

Asterisk (*) signifies key passages to cover.

Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus in Prayer

- Shine Bright (Matthew 5:13–16)
- No Show-Offs (Matthew 6:5–7)
- Obstacles to Prayer (Matthew 26:36–46)
- I Messed Up Again, Jesus (Mark 14:32–72)
- Turn Down the Noise (Luke 4:42–43)
- The Our Father: Another Version (Luke 11:1–4)
- Prayers of Petition (Luke 11:9–13)
- Common Cents (Luke 20:19–26)



Jesus in Prayer and Young Adolescents Today

- Jesus' prayer life is influenced by his family experience of faith. Young adolescents also come from backgrounds that affect the way they think about prayer and their prayer practices. For some, prayer has been nurtured at home; for others, it has been absent or even discouraged.
- Jesus often goes to an outdoor setting to pray. Young people are also drawn to nature for reflection.
- Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer. Though the young people probably know how to say the Lord's Prayer, they might need to be encouraged to pray it as a prayer of praise, repentance, and petition.
- For Jesus, prayer is taking time to be with God in a consistent way through easy times and hard times. Young people can be invited to grow in relationship with God so that, like Jesus, they bring all their concerns to God as a regular part of their lives.

Activities

Learning to Pray from the Expert

In this activity the students will become familiar with passages from Sacred Scripture in which Jesus prays and teaches or tells stories about prayer. The young people will also summarize some of the key qualities that Jesus emphasizes.

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible and pens or pencils, one of each for each student.
- ❑ Make copies of the handout "Jesus, the Expert on Prayer" (Document #: TX003015), one for each student.



1. Distribute the Bibles, pens or pencils, and handouts. Have the students complete the handout either individually or in small groups.
2. Go over the handout with the students, asking for input about the most important aspects of Jesus' teaching in a particular passage. As a whole class, try to find a word that summarizes even further what Jesus is asking from us in each passage from Sacred Scripture. For example, Matthew 6:5–6 could be summarized by saying, "Pray in your room rather than in places that are public," or it might

be captured by the word *humility*. Have the students record these responses on the handout.

Consider using this list that characterizes prayer when you or the young people prepare a type of prayer.

Note: If the students are using the activity booklet, you may want to assign question 1 on page 18, and discuss the students' reflections. If you are short on time, have the students work on question 2 on page 18, which summarizes the main points of this activity.

The students will also be well prepared to complete the puzzle "Jesus in Prayer," on page 17 of the activity booklet. The puzzle would be a good review of this material. See appendix 3 of this guide for the solution to the puzzle.



"Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

In this activity the students will examine the different parts of the Lord's Prayer and then will write the prayer in their own words.

Preparation

- ❑ Gather copies of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible and pens or pencils, one of each for each student.
 - ❑ Make copies of the handout "Reflecting on the Lord's Prayer" (Document # TX003016), one for each student.
1. Introduce the activity by saying that Jesus describes some of the key attributes of prayer and shows the results of a rich prayerful life.
 2. Distribute the Bibles, and have the students follow along as you read Matthew 6:7–15 aloud. Ask them why this prayer is so important.
 3. Distribute the handouts and pens or pencils to the students. Postpone reading the directions for now. Help the students recognize significant parts of the Lord's Prayer by asking the following questions:
 - ▶ Where do we ask for mercy?
 - ▶ Where do we praise God?
 - ▶ Where do we petition God for things we need?
 - ▶ Should these three elements be part of our regular prayer, whether we are saying the Lord's Prayer or not?
 4. Read the directions on the handout with the students. Provide some quiet time for the students to work on the handout individually.



5. Invite some of the students to share what they wrote down on the handout. Mention that “translating” the Lord’s Prayer can be a type of prayer—one that attempts to understand the words and phrases more deeply. Provide the students with these other ideas about the Lord’s Prayer. Consider using the ideas with the students during your prayer sessions with them.
 - ▶ Say the Lord’s Prayer as slowly as you can. Take a phrase of it, and repeat it to yourself ten times before moving on to the next phrase.
 - ▶ Pray only one section of the Lord’s Prayer per day. Repeat it throughout the day, and consider what it means. The next day, add another section to it. Repeat the process until you have completed the prayer.

Jesus, the Expert on Prayer

Read the Gospel passages below, and write a summary statement or two about what Jesus tells us about prayer.

Matthew 6:5–6

Matthew 6:7–15

Matthew 11:25–27

Matthew 11:28–30

Mark 1:35–39

Luke 5:15–16

Luke 6:12–16

Luke 11:5–13

Luke 18:1–8

Luke 18:9–14



Reflecting on the Lord's Prayer

Next to each phrase from the Lord's Prayer, write another version of the phrase, using more current language or simply putting the words in a different way.

Our Father,

who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day

our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

