

IMAGE OF GOD SERIES®

TEACHER'S MANUAL
CONFIRMATION

Spreading and Defending the Faith

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION



Updated Second Edition

SPREADING AND DEFENDING THE FAITH

Confirmation Teacher's Manual

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Updated Second Edition

First Edition Authors

John Sondag

Revision Authors

John Sondag

Mary Jo Smith

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Image of God: 1-800-635-3827
Ignatius Press school/parish line: 1-800-431-1531
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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The object of this textbook is to help students appreciate the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation as it influences all areas of their lives. The Holy Spirit is given to a person in the first sacrament received, the Sacrament of Baptism, to sanctify that person. But, he is given the Holy Spirit again in a special way in the Sacrament of Confirmation to thrust the confirmed person into the mission of the Church, whose purpose is to bring all people to Jesus. The confirmed is aided by the Holy Spirit to undertake the mission of bringing others to know and love Jesus Christ.

We strongly suggest that each student be provided with a copy of the the Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (RSV2CE); the YOUCAT (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*); and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC).¹ Throughout the student textbook, there are numerous opportunities for students to look up various Scripture verses and topics in both the YOUCAT and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

THE IMAGE OF GOD SERIES' PRESENTATION OF "IMAGE OF GOD" IN CONFORMITY WITH THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*

Catechesis on the human person created in the image and likeness of God is used throughout the series. It is the intent of the authors of the Image of God Series to present the creation of man and woman in the image of God in the series as "image of God" is defined and presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Above all, however, it is the intent is to make Jesus Christ the heart, center, and focus of the Image of God Series—he is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible" (Colossians 1:15–16; cf. CCC 241).

The impetus for the use of the theology of "image of God" in the series is an insight of Saint John Paul II that highlights both human dignity and proper human

activity of man and woman created in the image of God. Each human being has been created by God in his image and likeness. "The divine image is present in every man" (CCC 1702). Our dignity is further ennobled by Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our human nature in order to redeem it. "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning" (CCC 1691, quoting St. Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C).²

Most importantly, it is Jesus who redeems the human race and reveals human beings to themselves. "It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God (cf. GS 22)" (CCC 1701). Furthermore, "In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear" (CCC 359, quoting GS 22 § 1). "Christ . . . makes man fully manifest to man himself and brings to light his exalted vocation" (CCC 1710, quoting GS 22 § 1). "Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (GS 22 § 1).

All creation reflects God, who made all things. However, it is especially man and woman who bear a resemblance to God because they have been created in his image and likeness. "All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently, we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, 'for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator' (Wis 13:5)" (CCC 41).

"Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead" (CCC 357). "In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an

¹Both the RSV2CE and the YOUCAT are published by Ignatius Press. For information about the YOUCAT, see their website at <https://www.youcat.org/>. Online, the *Catechism* can be found at <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/files/assets/basic-html/page-I.html#>.

²For a list of the spelled-out forms for all abbreviations used for the *Catechism* references, please see the appendix.

INTRODUCTION

equal personal dignity’ (*FC* 22; cf. *GS* 49 § 2). ‘Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God’ (*MD* 6)” (*CCC* 2334).

The human person, both male and female, is created in the image of God. “Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, *willed* by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. ‘Being man’ or ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator (cf. Gen 2:7, 22). Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity ‘in the image of God.’ In their ‘being-man’ and ‘being-woman,’ they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness” (*CCC* 369; emphasis in original).

Man and woman each possess a spiritual soul. The soul is the invisible part of the human being because it is spiritual. Soul “refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him (cf. Mt 10:28; 26:38; Jn 12:27; 2 Macc 6:30), that by which he is most especially in God’s image: ‘soul’ signifies the *spiritual principle* in man” (*CCC* 363; emphasis in original).

The personal soul possesses the powers of intellect and will. The intellect is the power to know, to reason, to think, and to understand. The will is the power to choose the good and to love. “By his reason [intellect], he [man and woman] is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he [man and woman] is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He [man and woman] finds his perfection ‘in seeking and loving what is true and good’ (*GS* 15 § 2)” (*CCC* 1704).

The human person is blessed by God with a free will. Freedom is an attribute of a being created in the image of God. “By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an ‘outstanding manifestation of the divine image’ (*GS* 17)” (*CCC* 1705).

In addition to a personal soul, Adam and Eve also had bodies. “The human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God’: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 6:19–20; 15:44–45): ‘Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily

condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world’ (*GS* 14 § 1; cf. Dan 3:57–80)” (*CCC* 364).

“The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body (cf. Council of Vienne [1312]: DS 902): i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature” (*CCC* 365).

In the beginning, God created man and woman (Adam and Eve) in his image and likeness. God placed them in a beautiful garden. They had a friendship or intimacy with God which is called “original holiness”. They loved each other. They were integrated or experienced a wholeness or harmony within themselves. Their intellect and will governed their bodies in truth and love. They were not subject to death. They lived in harmony with all creation.

“By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die (cf. Gen 2:17; 3:16, 19). The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman (cf. Gen 2:25), and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called ‘original justice’” (*CCC* 376).

However, “‘Man, enticed by the Evil One, abused his freedom at the very beginning of history’ (*GS* 13 § 1). He succumbed to temptation and did what was evil. He still desires the good, but his nature bears the wound of original sin. He is now inclined to evil and subject to error: ‘Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness’ (*GS* 13 § 2)” (*CCC* 1707).

Original Sin wounded and disfigured human beings, but did not destroy them. “Disfigured by sin and death, man remains ‘in the image of God,’ in the image of the Son, but is deprived ‘of the glory of God’ (Rom 3:23), of his ‘likeness.’ The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (*CCC* 705).

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“In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. ‘Crowned with glory and honor,’ man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging ‘how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth’ (Ps 8:5; 8:1). Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence” (CCC 2566).

We inherit Original Sin and its consequences. Due to Original Sin, we are born without grace, God’s life in us. We lack the likeness to God. Also, due to Original Sin, the powers of our souls are affected. Our minds are darkened and our wills are weakened. In our bodies, we suffer from concupiscence. Concupiscence means that our “human appetites or desires remain disordered due to the temporal consequences of original sin, which remain even after Baptism, and produce an inclination to sin” (CCC, Glossary). In other words, we lack integration or wholeness. Due to Original Sin, we also suffer and we die.

Original Sin “is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin—an inclination to evil that is called ‘concupiscence’” (CCC 405).

Jesus Christ is *the* Image of the invisible God or the Perfect Image of God (uncreated, consubstantial with the Father). Jesus Christ is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who became human without giving up his divinity. In other words, Jesus is God incarnate or the Word made flesh. “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man” (CCC 464).

On the other hand, all of us as men and women created in the image of God, have the divine image in us. It is Jesus, as true God and true man, who reveals us to ourselves and makes us fully manifest to ourselves. He reveals to us our identity—that is, who we are, human beings, persons created in the image of God. “‘Christ, . . . in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation’ (GS 22). It is in Christ, ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15; cf. 2 Cor 4:4), that man has been created ‘in the image and likeness’ of the Creator” (CCC 1701).

It is Jesus who manifests to us how we should act. Jesus is our example and our model. “In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is ‘the perfect man’ (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him” (CCC 520; emphasis in original). “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear” (CCC 359, quoting GS 22 § 1).

“It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God (cf. GS 22)” (CCC 1701). “The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (CCC 705).

“God is love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the ‘plan of his loving kindness,’ conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son: ‘He destined us in love to be his sons’ and ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son,’ through ‘the spirit of sonship’ (Eph 1:4–5, 9; Rom 8:15, 29)” (CCC 257).

Due to the Paschal Mystery—that is, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ—grace is made available to us. Grace is God’s life in us or God dwelling in us. “‘For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ’ (SC 61)” (CCC 1670).

By his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Jesus returns the love of the Father that was rejected by Adam and Eve at the beginning. This love is returned because of Jesus’ obedience to the Father. Out of love for the Father, Jesus said: “[Not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). “Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel’s vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God’s Servant, totally obedient to the divine will” (CCC 539).

INTRODUCTION

Through the sacrifice of the Cross, Jesus gives us the grace to imitate him and to return the love that God has for us. “The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the ‘one mediator between God and men’ (1 Tim 2:5). But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, ‘the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery’ is offered to all men (*GS* 22 § 5; cf. § 2). He calls his disciples to ‘take up [their] cross and follow [him]’ (Mt 16:24), for ‘Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps’ (1 Pet 2:21)” (*CCC* 618).

“We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son’s, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father (cf. Jn 8:29)” (*CCC* 2825). The power of the Holy Spirit or grace empowers us to choose what Christ chooses.

“Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body” (*CCC* 1997; emphasis in original). Sanctifying grace “heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity.” It makes us “holy, and Christlike” (see *CCC*, Glossary). Sanctifying grace comes to us through Baptism and through the other sacraments. The sacraments themselves are the fruits of the Paschal Mystery and are personal meetings with Jesus Christ through sensible signs.

“By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin (cf. council of Florence [1439]; *DS* 1316). In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God” (*CCC* 1263; emphasis in original). “Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ’s grace [sanctifying grace], erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle” (*CCC* 405).

However, sanctifying grace helps us to prevail in our spiritual battles and to overcome the consequences of Original Sin in our lives. Our likeness to God is restored by grace (see *CCC* 405). By the power of sanctifying grace we are enabled and

strengthened to reflect God in what we think, and say, and do. Grace enables us to imitate the Perfect Image of God, Jesus Christ. As Our Lord himself taught: “‘A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another’ (Mt 5:48; Lk 6:36; Jn 13:34)” (*CCC* 2842). Imitating Jesus constitutes the moral life and through the power of sanctifying grace, we grow more loving in our relationship with God by imitating Jesus.

It is important to note, however, that “it is impossible to keep the Lord’s commandment [‘that you love one another, even as I have loved you’] by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make ‘ours’ the same mind that was in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal 5:25; Phil 2:1, 5)” (*CCC* 2842).

In other words, sanctifying grace (God’s life within us) enlightens our minds, strengthens our wills, and helps us to overcome concupiscence. We still suffer death, but, at the end of time, Jesus will raise our mortal bodies and make them like his own. For those who are united with Jesus at their death, eternal life in heaven awaits them.

“By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us” (*CCC* 1708). “He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven” (*CCC* 1709).

God revealed his plan of salvation gradually, over time, through words and deeds. “It [God’s plan] involves a specific divine pedagogy: God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ” (*CCC* 53). “Indeed, ‘the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men’ (*DV* 15)” (*CCC* 122).

INTRODUCTION

Catechesis on the “image of God” in the series may be summed up in the following six points:

1. The human person has been created in the image and likeness of God.
2. The fall did not destroy the image of God in us, but seriously tarnished it. The fall also deprived human beings of the glory of God, of his “likeness”. Due to the fall, we experience a divided heart, darkened mind, and weakened will and concupiscence in the flesh, as well as suffering and death.
3. Christ is *the* Perfect Image of the invisible God and has restored the likeness to God for us in principle.
4. Baptism restores the divine image in us, as well as the likeness of God: we are ennobled by sanctifying grace and enabled to act as persons created in the image of God.
5. The Christian moral/spiritual life, drawing on the grace of Baptism, engages in the daily struggle to live out the restored likeness in the experience of daily living.
6. Christian daily life involves the imitation of Christ, who “in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation” (CCC 1701).

Lesson Format

All of the lessons include the following sections: Chapter Focus, Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Preparation (includes list of materials needed), Explanation, Review Questions, and Celebration (closing prayer).

Besides the review questions, assessment is also provided through activities and assignments. Additionally, in the appendix of this manual, copy masters can be found for assessment of the following: a sample interview for the student, which includes questions to be discussed at the Confirmation interview; a list of prayers and teachings to be memorized; questions and answers regarding apologetics; different scenarios regarding practicing the faith; a form for a Confirmation service project; and interview questions for Catholic of the Year.

One of the characteristics of this textbook is its interdisciplinary approach, using journalistic styles of writing to convey some of the rich teachings and history of the Church. Students will be able to understand better the role of a journalist and to

learn some skills of news writing as they learn more about their faith, particularly as it applies to the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In a well-written news story, the first paragraph summarizes the essential message. By answering the questions Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? a journalist captures the important elements of what is being reported. If there had been newspapers at the time of the early Church, they might have contained news stories like the ones found in the student textbook. Even though some details are imaginary, the articles are based on historical facts, and a journalistic approach may help students to recognize that the Catholic faith is a historical religion based on facts. It will also help them appreciate the importance of truthfulness, objectivity, and accuracy.

May the Spirit of Truth inspire the minds and hearts of those who use this textbook to prepare for Confirmation, so that they will spread and defend the truths of the faith by word and example. Through these teachers and students, may the Holy Spirit lead others to Jesus, who will bring them to the Father.

Scripture accounts in the form of “newspaper” stories are suggested in some of the lessons. These accounts may be read directly from Holy Scripture before reading the “newspaper” accounts. These “newspaper” accounts should not be confused with the actual Scripture readings.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Chapter Focus

The purpose of chapter 1 is to familiarize students with the journalistic approach and to review in a newspaper format the scriptural basis for the Sacrament of Confirmation. You will explain the basics of a news article and show students how the Sacrament of Confirmation and its related application in the life of the Church are rooted in the Pentecost event and other events in the early Church.

Point out to students that newspapers have a standard format for reporting news articles. These articles try to answer six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

By answering each question, a good reporter will have important information to give readers the essence of the story. This format is helpful to newspaper editors. For example, if a story must be shortened, the important elements will remain, because the essential questions have been answered in the first paragraph. The remaining paragraphs help to explain further the main information that has been captured in that “lede”, or first fact-filled sentence.

You may want to bring a newspaper to class and analyze several articles to help students understand the basic format used by news writers. Once this format has been explained, the students can be given an assignment of answering the “six questions” of some of the articles about the early Church in the first chapter.

Note that articles such as “Mother of Jesus of Nazareth Stays with Disciples during Pentecost Event” are *feature* articles. Feature articles are not written in a standard news article format.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The Church—instituted by Christ Jesus: CCC 763–66

The Church—foreshadowed from the world’s beginning: CCC 760

Preparation

The following items are needed for class:

- Copies of several news articles from a daily newspaper to hand out to students
- Bibles, to show the correspondence between the biblical stories and the news articles
- YOUCAT
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Explanation

Explanation of News Writing

Have the students read and discuss textbook page vii.


Introduction

Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? are the standard questions a good journalist uses when writing a news article.

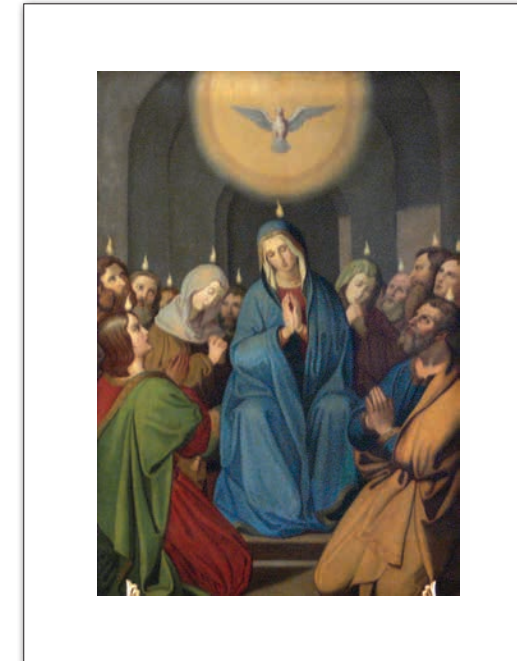
The “lead”, or first sentence of an article, usually answers these questions. The answers capsuleize the article and give readers essential information about a particular event. The remainder of the article expands upon the information found in the lead and first paragraph.

The standard news article is set up in an inverted pyramid form, in which the most important information is presented first and the least important last. This form enables a copy editor to leave out the last part of an article, if the newspaper does not have enough space for the entire article, and the reader can still obtain the essential information from the abbreviated article.

This textbook on Confirmation has a number of articles about Christ and his Church written in a newspaper format. You will be asked to analyze these articles and answer the essential questions—Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?—so that you can capsuleize important information about your faith. By asking the journalist’s six questions, you can arrive at essential elements of the faith. The answers you uncover will assist you in understanding better the truths revealed to us by Christ and his Apostles. The better you understand your faith, the better you will be able to live it and explain it to others.



vii



Explain the Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? of a good news article. Help the students understand why this approach is used for effective journalism. Explain that an inverted pyramid illustrates the method of including the essential information in the first paragraph of a story, leaving the least important details of the story for the end.

Distribute the copies of several news articles to students. Have them answer the questions Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? Show them how other paragraphs in the article further explain the essential answers to the journalist’s six questions.

Teacher Note: Throughout the Confirmation student textbook, there are numerous stories for the students to read. This reading can be done as homework or read aloud in class depending on available class time and classroom dynamics.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Have the students read Acts 2:1–42. Then read and discuss the article “Three Thousand Jews Become Followers of the Late Jesus of Nazareth” on textbook page 1.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Three Thousand Jews Become Followers of the Late Jesus of Nazareth

JERUSALEM—Three thousand Jews were baptized in Jerusalem yesterday, becoming followers of the late Jesus of Nazareth after a series of unnatural events occurred on the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Jesus of Nazareth, who, having been crucified on Golgotha, died about fifty-three days before this feast, has been reported to have risen from the dead.

A group of followers of this former religious leader are led by a man named Peter. This band of followers had been praying in the upper room where Jesus had his last supper before his Death. According to a follower of Jesus, named Luke, these disciples, including the mother of Jesus, had been gathered in prayer in this upper room for the previous nine days.

Bizarre events began to happen on the tenth day, which coincided with the Jewish feast of Pentecost. Luke said that “suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2).

“And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them” (Acts 2:3). Luke continued, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3).

According to eyewitnesses, many Jews from outside Israel were in Jerusalem and assembled together as they all heard these followers speak in their own languages. The foreigners were able to understand these followers of Jesus as the disciples proclaimed their God’s marvelous deeds.

Some persons in the crowd thought that the disciples of Jesus had been drinking too much. Peter, the leader of these followers, addressed the assembled and said, “These men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day” (Acts 2:15).

Peter continued with a long speech about what had happened to their leader, Jesus, who had died. He told them that Jesus was “a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know” (Acts 2:22).

Jesus had been crucified and had risen from the dead, according to Peter. “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

After Peter boldly asserted that Jesus was “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), the assembled crowd was deeply moved and asked Peter and the other Apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). The crowd was moved because “the title ‘Lord’ indicates divine sovereignty. To confess or invoke Jesus as Lord is to believe in his divinity. ‘No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor 12:3)” (CCC 455).

Peter answered, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

According to Luke, approximately three thousand persons were baptized after more testimony was presented to the crowd by Peter. (Read the actual Scripture account in Acts 2:1–42.)

Have them answer the journalist’s six questions. Analyze the story and show how the rest of the article expands on the answers to these questions.

Point out to students that the main purpose of Pentecost was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus who were in the upper room. The followers did not stay in the upper room after this event but went out and began to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the world. Explain that Peter, as the head Apostle, was the first to announce this message to listeners from many different places. All of these heard Jesus’ followers speak in their own languages.

Explain that the Holy Spirit moved the Apostles to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, but it was also the Holy Spirit who moved the minds and hearts of the hearers to believe this message. The same Holy Spirit was active in the early Church, both in those who announced the message and in those who accepted it.



Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 118 and CCC 731 to learn more about Pentecost.



To learn more about Pentecost read YOUCAT 118 and CCC 731.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Have the students read and discuss the feature article “Mother of Jesus of Nazareth Stays with Disciples during Pentecost Event” on textbook page 2. Point out to the students that this is not a news article, so it does not follow the standard news format of answering the journalist’s six questions. Also, remind the students that the “newspaper” article is not an actual Scripture account.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Mother of Jesus of Nazareth Stays with Disciples during Pentecost Event

JERUSALEM—Mary, the mother of Jesus of Nazareth, the man who died and who many claim has risen from the dead, was with the followers of Jesus during the recent Pentecost event. She was also with her Son when he was crucified at Golgotha about two months ago.

In an interview, Mary was asked about the extraordinary series of events surrounding Pentecost. She said that her role was to be with her Son’s followers, because he had set up a structure for continuing to be present to the world.

Mary viewed her role as praying to her Son, who, she said, continues to live. She had stood beneath the Cross as her Son died, and she helped to lay his body in the tomb.

The mother of Jesus commented on how painful it had been for her to see her only child die such a cruel death, when she knew that he was an innocent man. “I knew I was helpless,” she said, “but I also knew that he was doing the will of his Father in heaven. I offered him to his Father as he himself poured out his life to his Father.”

She related that she had found great joy in her Son’s rising from the dead, but that she missed him very much since he ascended into heaven. “I long for the day when I can be with him and see him face-to-face.”

“I know he is very much with me and that I can receive him at the Eucharistic Sacrifice that we celebrate,” she continued, “but I still wait for the time when I can see him again.”

Mary said that she plans to remain close to the followers of Jesus. One of them, by the name of John, has been said to be the appointed protector of Mary.

“I know that I can aid them in their work of bringing other people to believe in my Son, Jesus,” Mary commented. “Their work is a spiritual work, and I can be of service to them by praying to my Son to assist them.”

“I love my Son, Jesus, and he loves me,” she stated. “If I make a request to him, he is bound to grant it, if it is his heavenly Father’s will.” (Read the actual Scripture account of Pentecost in Acts 2:1–13.)

☀ To learn more about Mary read YOUCAT 117.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

*“I offered him to his Father
as he himself poured out
his life to his Father.”*



Explain that Mary was with the followers of Jesus in the upper room at Pentecost. Stress that Mary, by praying for the Church, continues to be a part of the Church’s mission of bringing others to her Son. Show how Mary, by her presence at her Son’s Crucifixion, played a role in offering him to his Father as he poured out his life.



Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 117 to learn more about Mary.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

Read and discuss the article “Peter, John Confirm in Samaria, Rebuke the Magician Simon” on textbook page 4. Have the students answer the six questions. Show how the Sacrament of Baptism is distinct from the Sacrament of Confirmation. Also, point out how a sacrament is a gift from God and cannot be bought or earned. Have the students read Acts 8:4–25 after reading the first newspaper account on page 4.

Then have the students read and discuss the story “Council Clarifies Teaching on Salvation” on textbook page 4. Have the students answer the six questions. Point out that it was the Holy Spirit who guided the decision of the first Council of the Catholic Church. Indicate to the students that it was Peter, the leader of the Apostles, who announced the decision of the Council to the assembly. This assembly is usually referred to as the Council of Jerusalem. Have the students read Acts 15:1–35 after reading the second newspaper account on page 4.

★ *Have the students read and discuss CCC 882–84 to learn more about Church councils.*

Review Questions

- 1. What are the questions every journalist should use to supply the information for the first paragraph of a news story?**
Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? These will help a journalist know if he has put all of the important information in an article. It will also enable the writer to shorten his article, if necessary, without having to rewrite the article, because the essential information can be found in the first paragraph.
- 2. What was Pentecost?**
It was the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the followers of Jesus who were in the upper room ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven. It was the birthday of the Catholic Church, when the Apostles went out and began to preach the Good News about Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. What was the role of Mary after Pentecost?**
She continues to pray to her Son for us and the Church.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH



Peter, John Confirm in Samaria, Rebuke the Magician Simon

SAMARIA—Peter and John, two Apostles of the late Jesus of Nazareth, traveled from Jerusalem to visit some of Jesus’ followers. These disciples had already heard the Word of God preached to them by Philip, and they had been baptized, but they had not received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands (Confirmation).

Simon, a magician, wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from the Apostles. “Give me also this power,” Simon requested, “that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:19). “Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!” Peter responded. “Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20, 22–23). (Remember, “To confess or invoke Jesus as Lord is to believe in his divinity. ‘No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor 12:3)” (CCC 455), so Peter was encouraging Simon to pray to God, who alone can forgive sin.)

The magician replied, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me” (Acts 8:24). (Read the actual Scripture account in Acts 8:4–25.)

Council Clarifies Teaching on Salvation

JERUSALEM—The first Church Council held in Jerusalem decided yesterday to permit Gentiles (non-Jews) to be received into the body of believers without first being circumcised. The first group of followers of Jesus of Nazareth had been Jews, while some of the recent converts to the new religion have been Gentiles.

After considerable discussion, Peter, the head of the Apostles, spoke at the assembly, saying, “But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as [the Gentiles] will” (Acts 15:11). Much discussion ensued among the Apostles and presbyters after a delegation from Antioch related the conversion of Gentiles to the faith.

Led by Paul and Barnabas, this delegation came to Jerusalem after dissension had arisen in Antioch because a group of followers of Jesus insisted that Gentiles should be circumcised when they became part of this new religion. The delegation came to the Church authorities in Jerusalem to settle the dispute. Followers of Jesus believe that the Holy Spirit guides a council so that the Apostles will correctly interpret the will of Christ.

The same Council further decided that converts from the Gentiles would not have to observe other Jewish practices except to “abstain from [meat that] has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from [meat that] is strangled and from unchastity” (Acts 15:29). The Council sent two representatives, Judas Barsabbas and Silas, to the Church in Antioch to deliver a letter from the Council about the decisions of the assembly. (Read the actual Scripture account in Acts 15:1–35.)

★ To learn more about Church councils read CCC 882–84.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY CHURCH

4. Was Confirmation a separate sacrament in the early Church?

Yes, the Acts of the Apostles tells about Saint Peter and Saint John giving the Holy Spirit to followers who had already been baptized by Saint Philip.

5. How was the controversy settled as to whether Gentiles should be baptized?

The controversy was settled at the first council held in Jerusalem. It was decided that Gentiles could be received into the Church without being circumcised.

Celebration

Have the students say the Prayer to the Holy Spirit (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 81).

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Chapter Focus

The objective of chapter 2 is to help students deepen their understanding of the three sacraments of initiation—namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist—which draw us into a relationship with Christ and his Church. Each sacrament will be explained so that students will see that these three sacraments are different but related to one another.

Each sacrament has a unique function in bringing a person into the life of Christ and his Church, so by investigating and understanding the uniqueness of each sacrament, the students preparing for Confirmation will better appreciate the sacrament they are about to receive, and will be open to its graces.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Baptism: CCC 977, 1275, 1278

Confirmation: CCC 1285

Eucharist: CCC 2177

Sacraments of initiation: CCC 1299–333

Preparation

The following items are needed for class:

- Bibles
- YOUCAT
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Explanation

Have students read and discuss the news story “Pope Paul VI Issues New Document to Update Sacrament of Confirmation” on textbook page 5. Have them answer the six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Pope Paul VI Issues New Document to Update Sacrament of Confirmation



ROME, August 16, 1971—Pope Paul VI issued a letter yesterday addressed to the entire Catholic Church on the Sacrament of Confirmation to update the liturgical celebration of that sacrament and to assist the faithful in understanding better the effects that this sacrament has on the lives of Catholics.

The letter, entitled Rite of Confirmation Apostolic Constitution *Divinae consortium naturae*, not only explains the Sacrament of Confirmation, but also shows that sacrament's relationship to the other sacraments of initiation—Baptism and Eucharist. All three sacraments are related, and together they initiate a person into the life of Christ and his Church.

Pope Paul VI explained in the document that the spiritual life has a certain likeness to the natural life. “The sharing in the divine nature which is granted to all people through the grace of Christ has a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life,” he wrote.¹

“The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and finally are sustained by the food of eternal life in the Eucharist,” the pope continued. The document further explained the effects of each of these three sacraments.

“In Baptism, the newly baptized receive forgiveness of sins, adoption as

sons of God, and the character of Christ, by which they are members of the Church and for the first time become sharers in the priesthood of their Savior,” Pope Paul VI stated.

The Sacrament of Confirmation confers a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who gives “special strength”. “Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are ‘bound more intimately to the Church’ and ‘they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ’,” the pope continued.

Pope Paul VI also explained that the Sacrament of Confirmation should be administered in the following manner. It is to be “conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: ‘Accipe Signaculum Doni Spiritus Sancti’ [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit].”

★ To learn more about what Sacred Scripture says about Confirmation read YOUCAT 204.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Talk with them about how the effects of the sacraments of initiation correspond to the natural life of a person.

Natural life	Spiritual life
Birth	Baptism—born in the Lord
Growing in strength	Confirmation—strengthened by the Holy Spirit
Nourishment	Holy Eucharist—nourished by Jesus' Body and Blood

After they have read and discussed the news story, then have them list the effects of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

Baptism: sins forgiven; adopted as children of God; receive baptismal character; share in priesthood of Christ (as well as prophetic and kingly offices); and sanctifying grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are received

Confirmation: receive strength from the Holy Spirit; receive Confirmation character; completes Baptism; bound more intimately to the Church; obliged to spread, defend, and live the faith

Holy Eucharist: sustained by the food of eternal life, the Body and Blood of Christ, which unites us to Christ in a special way

Your students may not have seen the Sacrament of Confirmation administered, so conclude discussion of the news story by explaining how Confirmation is administered (see the last paragraph in the news story on textbook page 5).

 *Have the students read and discuss **YOUCAT 204** to learn more about what Scripture says about Confirmation.*

Baptism and Confirmation

Have the students read and discuss “Baptism—Related to Confirmation” and “Effects of the Sacrament of Baptism” on textbook pages 6–7. Talk about the list of the effects of the sacrament with the students. You may want to have students memorize these effects.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Baptism—Related to Confirmation

To understand the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is necessary to understand the Sacrament of Baptism. Exactly what does the Sacrament of Baptism do for the person receiving it? The sacrament, which consists in the pouring of water or the triple immersion in water with the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” has several effects. Baptism first of all cleanses an individual of all sin, both Original Sin and any actual sins that might have been committed. This enables the baptized person to be a friend of the Lord, something that would have been impossible if the person had not been freed from Original Sin or any mortal sin. Through Baptism, we receive sanctifying grace. “The grace of the Holy Spirit confers upon us the righteousness of God. Uniting us by faith and Baptism to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, the Spirit makes us shares in his life” (CCC 2017). For Original Sin deprived Adam and Eve and all their descendants of the participation in God’s life that made them friends with God.

Through Baptism, which forgives sins, you are made a friend of God. Baptism, through the power of the Holy Spirit, unites you to Jesus, who becomes your Brother. You, then, become an adopted child of the Father.

Through this union with Jesus, you take on the character of Christ. At Baptism, we receive an indelible, or permanent, spiritual character or seal. We belong to Christ. Because Christ and his Church are one, you, then, become united with the Church and enter and become a member of the Church.

The baptized person also becomes a sharer in the priesthood of Jesus, who offers himself to his heavenly Father, particularly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. You, therefore, are given the responsibility of offering praise and worship to the heavenly Father through words and deeds. In fact, the indelible spiritual sign of Baptism consecrates you for Christian worship, especially the Mass.

The baptized person is not only made a priest (not an ordained priest), but also a prophet and a king. For Jesus is priest, prophet, and king. As a prophet, you have the responsibility of bringing the Good News of salvation to others. As a king, you serve, and you have dominion over the created world by reordering all things according to Christ’s will.

Because Baptism has made you an adopted child of the Father, it also has made you an heir to heaven. You now can attain heaven for all eternity, so long as you do not forfeit heaven by dying in the state of mortal sin.

Baptism also gives you the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, which enable the baptized person to know God, to hope in him, and to love him and his other sons and daughters. This first sacrament of initiation also confers the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Baptism, then, is the first sacrament all Catholics must receive before any of the other sacraments. It is the sacrament that applies to each person the merits of Jesus’ Death and Resurrection, which won salvation for all mankind.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, then, Baptism is given as a means of personal salvation. The individual is redeemed and born into the life of God. This initial life is further strengthened and nourished by the work of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT



Effects of the Sacrament of Baptism

1. Takes away all sin (Original and actual), which deprives one of friendship with God
2. Gives sanctifying grace, which establishes a friendship with God
3. Makes us adopted children of God
4. Confers the character of Christ
5. Makes us members of Christ's Church
6. Makes us priests, prophets, and king; sharers in these three offices of Christ
7. Confers the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity
8. Bestows the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
9. Makes us heirs of heaven
10. Applies the merits of Jesus' Death and Resurrection

★ Learn more about the sacraments of Christian initiation by reading CCC 1275 and the Sacrament of Baptism by reading CCC 1276–84.

7

Have the students read and discuss the section “Confirmation—What Is It?” on textbook page 8. Show the connection of Confirmation to Pentecost and how, like the Apostles, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit “to spread and defend the [Catholic] faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ” (Rite of Confirmation Apostolic Constitution; found in paragraph 2 on student textbook page 8). Point out to students that the mission of the Church is to spread and defend the faith and to make Christ present to the world. By Baptism they are already priests, prophets, and kings, sharing in these three offices of Christ, but in Confirmation the Holy Spirit will be given to strengthen them in living these offices.

Also, point out that the sacrament makes the candidate a “soldier of Christ” in the spiritual realm. The confirmed person is called upon to defend the faith when others persecute followers of Jesus and his Church. Point out that the normal minister of Confirmation is a bishop. The bishops are successors of the Apostles. The bishop meets the bodily and spiritual needs of the people of his diocese—that is, they were ordained to carry on the work of the Apostles in the Church. Be sure that the students understand the meaning of “successor”. You can explain that our current president is a successor of George Washington.

Ask: *How can a young person spread the faith by both word and deed?* (Answers will vary but should include examples that indicate the following.) *By not following peer pressure to do something known to be wrong, by giving faith a priority over sports, etc.*

It should be pointed out that after Confirmation, the Holy Spirit helps us to accomplish these ways of spreading the faith. Have the students look up the definition of the word “martyr”, either online or in a dictionary. Point out that the word “witness” is used in the definition. Have the students research some of the saints who were martyrs and write a brief report on one of them. Some examples are Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Andrew, Saint Justin Martyr, Saint Anastasia, etc. Catholic Online is a good source for information on saints.

★ *Have the students read and discuss CCC 1275 to learn more about the sacraments of Christian initiation and CCC 1276–84 to learn more about the Sacrament of Baptism.*

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Confirmation—What Is It?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which a baptized person is sealed with the gift of the third person of the Blessed Trinity. Granted, the baptized person has already received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, but this special sealing with the Holy Spirit is given to bind the person even more closely to Christ and his Church.

Baptism is given for personal salvation, but Confirmation is given to thrust an individual outward and send that person on a “mission”. Confirmation is the Pentecost event for a baptized person. Like the disciples who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and went out to proclaim the Good News about Jesus Christ, those who are confirmed are given the Holy Spirit to energize them “to spread and defend the [Catholic] faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ” (Rite of Confirmation Apostolic Constitution).

The gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is given to bind you more closely to Christ and his Church, and the mission of the Church is to bring others to Christ by speech and action. The purpose of Confirmation is to help you fulfill your responsibilities within the mission of the Church. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, you are given the grace to become an active agent for Christ, and not merely a passive recipient of God’s gifts.

In the Sacrament of Baptism you have been anointed priest, prophet, and king, in order to give worship to God, to proclaim the Good News, and to serve others and reorder creation according to Christ’s will. In Confirmation, these responsibilities are energized by the Holy Spirit, so that you, as a member of the Church, will take on the tasks connected with these offices of Jesus Christ, which have now been delegated by him to the Church.

Confirmation strengthens the gifts of faith, hope, and charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were given for the first time in the Sacrament of Baptism. Now, as these gifts are strengthened, they can be used to spread and defend the faith.

As a defender of the faith, you are made a soldier of Christ—that is, someone willing to withstand attacks against the Catholic faith, even to the point of death. You are a soldier of Christ in a spiritual sense, not in the sense of being willing to face physical battles. But a soldier of Christ might well be asked to suffer persecution for the sake of the Catholic faith, and you will have the spiritual strength to defend the faith when it comes under attack from others.

To show the connection between Confirmation and Pentecost, the normal minister of Confirmation is a bishop, because the bishops are successors of the Apostles, who were present at the first Pentecost. In special situations, the bishop may delegate a priest to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

★ To learn more about the Sacrament of Confirmation read *YOUCAT 203* and *CCC 1315–21*.

Confirmation and the Meaning of Life

Have the students read and discuss “Finding Life’s Meaning through the Sacrament of Confirmation” on textbook page 9.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Finding Life’s Meaning through the Sacrament of Confirmation



“You will be sent!” “You will have a mission!”

That mission was given to you when you were baptized, but that mission will be strengthened and energized when you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. For that sacrament will bestow on you a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to send you into the world “to spread and defend the Catholic faith both by word and deed as true witnesses of Christ”.

Because you are sent by the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith, you will always have a purpose in life. This means that you will have to look for opportunities to bring the Good News of salvation to the people around you.

These opportunities are plentiful, because all people can grow in their understanding and love of Jesus. Every day you will be with people (relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, and people with whom you work) who need to hear and see that the redemption of the world affects their lives.

We can spread the Good News by talking to others about the faith and also by our example—that is, our good deeds of service to others. If you look for opportunities to spread the Good News, you will find them everywhere.

You do not have to talk about Jesus all the time to give witness to your faith. You can show others that you are a believer by living your faith and by doing acts of service and kindness.

Even someone sick in bed or dying of cancer has the opportunity and the mission to bring others to Christ by word and deed. Of course, one effective way to bring others to the Lord is by prayer, and ill or disabled persons can lovingly offer their pain and suffering to the Father with the sacrificial Death of Jesus on the Cross for sinners, for the missions, for the good of the Church, or for others who need prayers.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, of the Child Jesus, is the patroness of missions in the Church. She was a young nun who died at the age of twenty-four, who never went to the foreign missions herself. She did, however, offer her prayers and actions for those in need, particularly those in the missions, so she was proclaimed a patroness of missions.

Someone who constantly looks for ways to spread the faith will find ways, because opportunities exist all around us. Each morning a baptized and confirmed person has a good reason to get up—the mission to spread the Good News to others!

★ *Have the students read and discuss *YOUCAT 203* and *CCC 1315–21* to learn more about Confirmation.*

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Have the students read and discuss “Pope Benedict XVI Calls a Synod to Confer about Church’s Mission to Evangelize” on textbook page 10. If students are interested in Church synods, information can be found online. Point out that a missionary is one who is sent, and that by Baptism and Confirmation, each of us is sent to spread and defend the faith by what we say and do. Show how this mission can give a person meaning in one’s life, even if one is sick or dying. Show the relation between suffering and spreading the faith. Have students talk about opportunities of bringing the faith to others in their daily lives, in what they say and do.

★ *Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 11 and 123 to learn more about the mission of the Church.*

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Pope Benedict XVI Calls a Synod to Confer about Church’s Mission to Evangelize



VATICAN CITY, October 7, 2012—Pope Benedict XVI has convened a synod of bishops to confer on the Church’s role in evangelization. The pope will meet with approximately 250 bishops and cardinals from throughout the world (less than five percent of the total number) to discuss various issues surrounding the proclamation of the faith to believers and nonbelievers.

The pope usually convenes a synod every two to three years to receive advice and counsel from his brother bishops about various problems in the Church and goals that need to be accomplished. A synod is different from an ecumenical council, which gathers all of the bishops of the world together with the pope, who is head of the college of bishops. In the two thousand year history of the Catholic Church there have been only twenty-one ecumenical councils. Whereas synods are advisory, ecumenical councils may

teach authoritatively and even can use their authority to declare some teaching of the Church infallible—that is, without possibility of error.

This synod is focusing on evangelizing, which means proclaiming the Good News so that people can come to believe in Jesus Christ and his teachings. One of the problems to be addressed is the reevangelization of Catholic countries where many believers have lost their faith and there is a need to bring them back to the Catholic Church.

★ To learn more about the mission of the Church read YOUCAT 11 and 123.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Have the students read and discuss the feature story about Father John Maronic, O.M.I., on textbook page 11. Father Maronic, O.M.I., founded the group Victim Missionaries. Point out to students that as a feature story, it differs from a news story. Show how those who are sick or disabled can be missionaries of the Church by uniting their suffering with Jesus' Death on the Cross and making their sufferings a prayer for others in the Church, such as missionaries in foreign countries; priests and those considering vocations; those who are tempted; or family members and others who need our prayers.

★ *Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 66 and 280 to learn more about suffering and human dignity.*

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Father John Maronic, O.M.I., Founds Victim Missionary Group for Sick and Disabled Persons

BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS, 1964—Father John Maronic, O.M.I., founded a group to help chronically ill and disabled people see their suffering in the light of the Gospel. This group, called the Victim Missionaries, has as its goal assisting its members to unite their sufferings with the sacrifice of Jesus' Death on the Cross.

Father Maronic, who has been working at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, gathered a group of handicapped and sick persons together in order to support one another in a Christian understanding of their suffering. Because the sick and disabled were traveling to Marian shrines throughout the world, Father Maronic decided to organize them as they came to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows.

A member of the religious order called the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Father Maronic called this new organization "Victim Missionaries" because he wanted the sick and disabled to understand that they could offer their sufferings to their heavenly Father in imitation of Jesus, an innocent victim, who gave his life for all sinners. He used the word "missionaries" because he hoped that the members of this group would see themselves as missionaries sent



to help the Church by offering their prayers and sufferings for the good of the Church.

Father Maronic saw the sick and the disabled as a real "gold mine", ready to be tapped for the good of the Church. "This suffering will be wasted if we do not help these people see that their lives can bear spiritual fruit for the rest of the Church," he said.

Members of the Victim Missionaries gather together once a month for a day of recollection, in which they have conferences on the spiritual life, pray together, and celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

★ To learn more about suffering and human dignity read YOUCAT 66 and 280.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Have the students read and discuss “Confirmation Is Linked to the Sacrament of the Eucharist” on textbook page 12. Explain that those who are baptized and confirmed are drawn into the life of Christ and his Church, and that in the Holy Eucharist we are united with Jesus himself and the Church, whose union with Christ is perfectly expressed in the Holy Eucharist.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Confirmation Is Linked to the Sacrament of the Eucharist

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist are related to one another, and together they are called the sacraments of initiation, because they initiate and draw those who receive them more deeply into the life of Christ and his Church.

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament that perfectly expresses our relationship with Christ and his Church. When we receive this great sacrament, we are united with Jesus himself as he is risen from the dead. “Christ’s work in the liturgy is sacramental: because his mystery of salvation is made present there by the power of his Holy Spirit” (CCC 1111). When we receive the Eucharist, we receive the Risen Lord.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are also united with the rest of the Church, for, in the Eucharist, members of the Church become one in the Lord, just as grains of wheat come together to form one bread. The Eucharist perfectly expresses the Church coming together and being united to Jesus.

We were created to know and love the Lord. Baptism and Confirmation help us to know and love the Lord. In the Eucharist we have the perfect opportunity to know Jesus and to give ourselves totally to Jesus, who in union with the Holy Spirit presents us to the Father.

Those who have been baptized and confirmed are sent as priests, prophets, and kings to serve Jesus and his Church. As missionaries and ambassadors of Jesus and his Church, they are to draw all people together in faith, hope, and charity, so that they will be able to give praise and honor to the Father.



★ To learn more about what happens when the Eucharist is celebrated read YOUCAT 217.

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

We can offer our studies to the Lord as a prayer of praise to our heavenly Father.



★ *Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 217 to learn more about what happens when the Eucharist is celebrated.*

Review Questions

1. Name the sacraments of initiation. What do they accomplish in the life of a believer?

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. Initiate means to begin, so these sacraments bring believers for the first time into the life of Jesus and into his Church.

2. What is the relation between natural life and the supernatural life?

Natural life

Birth

Growing in strength

Nourishment

Spiritual life

Baptism—born in the Lord

Confirmation—strengthened by the Holy Spirit

Holy Eucharist—nourished by Jesus’ Body and Blood

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

3. What is Baptism?

It is the sacrament in which by water and the gift of the Holy Spirit we are made adopted sons and daughters of God, members of the Church, and heirs to heaven.

4. What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

It is the sacrament by which a bishop or priest anoints a person on the forehead with holy chrism in a laying on of hands. The confirmed is thereby strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Catholic faith by words and deeds.

5. What is the Pentecost event for a Catholic?

It is the Sacrament of Confirmation in which the believer is sent out (like the Apostles) to spread and defend the faith. The Apostles were in the upper room, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they went out and began to preach the faith to all nations. After we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, our mission is to bring the faith to the rest of the world through our words and deeds.

6. What is a “soldier of Christ”?

Soldiers protect and defend their countries. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, a person is given the Holy Spirit, who gives the confirmed person the spiritual strength and courage to defend the faith.

7. Doesn't a believer receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism?

Yes, but in the Sacrament of Confirmation, there is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to thrust us into the mission of bringing the faith to the world. Baptism is given more for the sake of our salvation, whereas Confirmation pushes us outward to help us take up our role in the Church whose mission is to bring others to Jesus Christ. By cooperating with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, we take up our roles in God's plan of salvation, and in the process, we become the saints we are called to be.

8. What is the role of suffering in bringing others to Christ and his Church?

We can unite our sufferings with those of Jesus, and these sufferings can be offered as a prayer for others. They can become a prayer for sinners, for vocations, for those who are being persecuted, or for our family, friends, benefactors, and enemies who need our prayers.

9. What is the Holy Eucharist and what is this sacrament's relation to the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus made present so we can receive Jesus himself, who unites us with him and the rest of the Church. This sacrament perfectly expresses our relationship with Christ and his Church, so that in it, Baptism and Confirmation come to an earthly fulfillment that looks forward to fulfillment in heaven.

Celebration

As a way to show students the connection between their sufferings and the salvation of others, have the students pray the Morning Offering (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 77).

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Chapter Focus

This chapter shows how we are called to be part of the Church that Jesus founded to make himself present to the world until he comes in glory at the end of time. The Catholic Church is so united with Jesus that we refer to this reality as the Mystical Body of Christ. We are not just a number in this Church; we play an important role as we bring our gifts and talents to the Lord and unite ourselves with him. In this chapter, students preparing for Confirmation are given an opportunity to reflect on these gifts and talents and on how they can be utilized in service to the Church.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The Church—Body of Christ: CCC 787–95

Vocation (call of all by Jesus): CCC 542–43

Christ’s faithful—hierarchy, laity, consecrated life: CCC 871–933

Preparation

The following items are needed for class:

- Bibles
- YOUCAT
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- Copies of Copy Master 1 (appendix, p. 91)

Explanation

The Church can be described using a number of different, yet complementary, images. One dominant image is the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. “The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body” (CCC 789; emphasis in original).

Stressing the intimacy of the union between Christ and the Church, the *Catechism* also states: “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ” (CCC 795). Also, speaking of the Church and Christ, Saint Thomas Aquinas stresses this oneness when he writes: “‘Head [Jesus] and members form as it were one and the same mystical person’ (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 48, 2)” (CCC 795).

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Have students read and discuss textbook page 15. Point out how different persons have different roles to play in the Church, which, with Christ, forms the Mystical Body of Christ. We should assess our gifts and talents and decide our roles in the Church, not for the future but right now, as young Christians.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

By our Baptism, we became united to Jesus Christ, and we were united to the other members of his Church. Christ and all the members of the Church form one Mystical Body. Jesus and the Church together, head and members, form the one Mystical Body of Christ. “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ” (CCC 795).

That means that you have a role to perform in the Church. The Church has many members, and we all have a role to play in her activity.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux asked the Lord in prayer what her role in the Church was supposed to be. He answered her by enlightening her mind as she reflected on the Scriptures about the Church being the Body of Christ. “The word ‘Church’ means ‘convocation.’ It designates the assembly of those whom God’s Word ‘convokes,’ i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ” (CCC 777).

She came to realize that her function was to be the heart because the heart was connected with love. Saint Thérèse wrote, “If the Church was a body composed of different members, it couldn’t lack the noblest of all; it must have a Heart, and a Heart BURNING WITH LOVE. And I realized that *this love alone* was the true motive force which enabled the other members of the Church to act; if it ceased to function, the Apostles would forget to preach the gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood” (CCC 826, emphasis in original).¹

All of us need to figure out what role we play in the Church. Just as each person in a family must cooperate with the other members of the family, so too, as members of the Church, we cooperate with Christ and others in the Church.

☀ To learn more about the unity of Christ and the Church read CCC 813, 789, 795.

At this point in our lives we are called to be students, so it is important to study well in preparation for adult roles in the Church. The more prepared we become through our studies, the better we will be able to serve the Church in the future.



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☀ *Have the students read and discuss CCC 813, 789, and 795 to learn more about the unity of Christ and the Church.*

Focus on the lives of students and how their sacrifices can be offered to the Lord. Point out how other aspects of their lives can make Christ present to their relatives, friends, and neighbors.

The parish brings Christ to the world through sacraments, education, and service. We can assist with the work of the parish through our prayers, time, and talents. Furthermore, the Church goes beyond the parish to make Christ present in the community, the world of business, and the political arena. We can all use our talents and virtues to make Christ present to the people we encounter daily. Emphasize that many times our prayer (or good works or suffering offered as prayer) helps to open the hearts of others to God’s message of salvation.

Have the students read and discuss textbook pages 16–17. Review the Morning Offering (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 77) and point out how this prayer helps us to unite our “prayers, works, joys and sufferings” of each day with Jesus. Emphasize that in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass we offer in a special way our sufferings with the sacrifice of Jesus’ Death on the Cross, made present in an unbloody manner.

Discuss how distractions and difficulties can occur in prayer. (See CCC 2729, 2731, and 2734.)

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



We can offer our studies to the Lord as a prayer of praise to our heavenly Father and as a prayer of petition for sinners, missionaries, or others who need our prayers. Our desk can become an altar on which we offer our sacrifices to the Lord. These sacrifices can, then, be presented to the Lord every time we participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

But our lives have more aspects to them than study. We are sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, or neighbors. We participate in sports, play musical instruments, or have hobbies. We read books, watch television, and go to movies.

All these relationships and activities involve our virtues and talents. We are better children of our parents if we have the virtues of charity, respect, obedience, patience, and generosity. We are better friends if we are patient, understanding, and forgiving.

Some of us have athletic talent, while others have the ability to play musical instruments or to sing. Maybe some of us are good with computers, while others are good at cooking.

All these virtues and talents can be put at the service of the Lord and his Church, if we offer them to the Lord. Some can be directly put at the service of the Lord, for instance, by making a cake for a bake sale at church or by singing in a church choir. We should look for ways in which we can help our parish and our Catholic institutions, because they help to build up the Mystical Body of Christ through the sacramental, educational, or service functions that they provide.

But it is not only in church-related activities that we can use our talents for building up the Mystical Body of Christ. We can offer a basketball or baseball game to the Lord as a prayer of worship and petition for sinners to come back to the Church or for some other need. We can start off the game with a prayer in our hearts like the following: "Jesus, thank you for the ability to play basketball. Help me to play well. I give this game (or practice session) to you as a gift of my love, and I offer it as a prayer for sinners who need my prayers."

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The Morning Offering is another way of presenting our virtues and talents to the Lord, for in that prayer we offer "our prayers, works, joys, and sufferings" of each day to the Lord for special intentions of the Church. "God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer" (*CCC* 2567). Even though we say this prayer at the beginning of each day, we can pause throughout the day and offer what we are doing to the Lord. It is a way of lovingly recognizing that our virtues and talents come from him and should be returned to him.

The celebration of Mass, however, is the best way of offering our lives to the Lord. For in the Mass we have the sacrifice of Jesus' Death on the Cross made present. We have the opportunity to offer all our virtues and talents to the Father with Jesus, as he offers himself to the Father in the same sacrifice he offered on the Cross.

We were not present for the Paschal Mystery, Jesus' dying on the Cross and rising from the dead, the most important and central event of all history. But God in his wisdom has made this event present to us every time Mass is celebrated. So, each time we go to Mass, it is as if we are standing beneath the Cross with Mary, offering Jesus to the Father and offering our own sacrifices, prayers, virtues, and talents to the Father through Jesus' sacrifice.


CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Gifts and Talents

Have students read “What Virtues and Talents Has God Given Me?” on textbook page 18. Then have them divide a sheet of paper into four columns with these headings: “Virtue or Talent”, “God”, “The Church”, and “Others”. Then have the students list

- their God-given virtues and talents in the first column;
- how their talents can serve God in the second column;
- how their talents can serve the Church in the third column; and
- how their talents can serve others in the fourth column.

The textbook gives the students an example of this assignment. Point out to them that they may yet discover additional talents or cultivate additional virtues.

 Have the students look up and discuss *YOUCAT 299* and *CCC 1803* to learn more about virtues.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH


What Virtues and Talents Has God Given Me?

The Lord has given each person a variety of virtues and talents to serve him. When each of us uses these gifts from the Lord, and we work together as one family, his Church, then Jesus’ heavenly Father is glorified.

To use these gifts well, it is important that we know what these virtues and talents are. Make a list of your talents, write ways in which they can be used in the Church, and be sure to thank God regularly for his gift of these talents.

When listing these virtues and talents, make sure to remember the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which were given to you in Baptism and which will be strengthened and deepened by the Sacrament of Confirmation. In addition, remember to list the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, also given in Baptism and strengthened and deepened in Confirmation.

Virtue or Talent	God	The Church	Others
Faith	Praise of God	Praying for those in purgatory or for vocations	Praying for peace
Hope	Having confidence that God gives grace when we do good for others	Encouraging others in the Church to trust when they are suffering	Helping others see that God will help them in their difficulties
Charity	Celebrating the Eucharist, where we become one with Christ and the Church	Helping at a parish	Shoveling snow or running errands for an elderly person
Mathematics	Offering classes or homework to God as an act of love	Offering classes or homework as a prayer for the missionaries	Tutoring someone who is having trouble in math in class
Singing	Joining the parish choir	Christmas caroling with friends or family	Being in a school musical
Athletics	Offering games or practice to God as an act of thanksgiving	Being an example of good sportsmanship and good conduct	Playing fair and recognizing the talents of others
Writing	Composing a prayer to God	Writing a thank-you letter to a pastor or bishop	Writing a note to tell your parents you love them
Cooking	Offering the act of cooking to God as an act of thanksgiving	Making cakes or cookies for a bake sale for charity	Cooking a meal or a dessert for your family

 To learn more about virtues read *YOUCAT 299* and *CCC 1803*.

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CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

The Parable of the Talents

Have the students read and discuss the Gospel parable of Matthew 25:14–30 on textbook page 19. We do not always use the talents and virtues God has given us. Have your students consider some of the fears that keep us from developing our God-given gifts. Overcoming these fears can be a means of “taking up the Cross” in imitation of Jesus. Discuss how these fears can suppress good actions.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

The Parable of the Talents

Read Matthew 25:14–30. In this Scripture passage, we see three servants being given certain amounts of money (a talent, at the time of Jesus, was a measurement of money). Two of the servants use the money well, but one buries the talent. The master who gave these servants the money is pleased with the two who doubled his money but is upset with the one who buried the money.

In applying this passage to our lives, we ask ourselves if our Master, the Lord, has given us, his servants, some talents—not necessarily money, but virtues, such as faith, courage, and patience, and talents, such as a good mind, musical ability, or athletic skills. Our talents have been given to us to use well. In reflecting on this passage, ask yourself these questions:

- Have you ever been afraid to use your talents? Fear can paralyze you when you would like to do good things.
- What are some things that cause you to be afraid?
 - Ridicule? Friends making fun of you?
 - Making a mistake? Doing the wrong thing?
 - Losing time or money and not receiving back what you have given up?
 - Being embarrassed? Thinking someone won't like you?
 - Being put out of the group? Being called names?

In thinking about how we are to use the talents God has given us, we may recall times when others have made fun of us. This can be painful, but many times persons who do great things for society must bear the brunt of a few people poking fun at them. Just think of all the cartoons in the newspapers making fun of the president of the United States. The president knows that some of his decisions may be unpopular. But if he didn't act because of the possibility that others would poke fun at him, the whole country might suffer.

If we are afraid that others will make fun of us when we make a speech in public or play the piano for elderly residents in a nursing home, then the people who could benefit from our good works may never receive the fruits of our labors. If we are afraid of being ridiculed for doing what is right—going to church on Sunday or staying sober when our friends get drunk—then others will not reap the reward of our prayer or friendship.

Some of us are just afraid of making mistakes, because we are perfectionists. We have to do things the very best we can or not do them at all. When there is a possibility of making a mistake, we become paralyzed and do not act. We won't sing in public, make a speech, or write a poem, because what we do may not be perfect. Others never benefit, then, from our good works.

We may think that serving others or giving of our talents and virtues demands too much time and energy on our part. We may be afraid that we will lose some of the free time we have for ourselves. What we forget, however, is that we have been made by God to be happy, and the way we attain happiness is to give ourselves entirely to what is truthful, good, and beautiful. Because God is pure truth, goodness, and beauty, we will not ultimately be unhappy or lose out when we serve him or others because we love him.

As the bishops of Vatican Council II wrote, “Man . . . cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”¹² Our talents are given to us by God so that we can use them to give ourselves in love to God and to our neighbor.

Sometimes perfectionists do not accomplish good actions because they are afraid of making mistakes. Discuss how developing talents and virtues takes time and energy and may require sacrifice, but the effort will bring us happiness. Point out the connection of this idea to Matthew 25:24–28. We can see in the Scripture passage how one servant was afraid and hid his talent. In not using his time and energy to develop his talent, it went to waste.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH



“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’”

(Matthew 16:24–28)

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Have students read and discuss the feature story “Leader of New Religious Group Explains the Social Dynamic of Christians” on textbook page 21. This is not a news story; it should be analyzed from a theological point of view. Discuss how Saint Paul compares the Church to a human body with its many parts. Show how each of us has a role to play in the Church, just as each part of the body has a specific role, but it also works in coordination with the other parts for the good of the whole body. The various parts of the Church form a unity with Christ, to whom we are united by the Holy Spirit in Baptism. Point out that Saint Paul talks about some gifts being greater than others, the greatest being charity, a gift that we receive from Baptism.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Leader of New Religious Group Explains the Social Dynamic of Christians

In his letter to believers in the city of Corinth, the Apostle Paul refers to Christians as the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27). The *Catechism* also proclaims that “the comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body” (CCC 789; emphasis in original).

Stressing the intimacy of the union between Christ and the Church, remember that the *Catechism* also states: “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ” (CCC 795). And that “Christ ‘is the head of the body, the Church’ (Col 1:18). He is the principle of creation and redemption” (CCC 792). Also, speaking of the Church and Christ, Saint Thomas Aquinas stresses this oneness when he writes: “Head [Jesus] and members form as it were one and the same mystical person” (CCC 795).³ This teaching affects the way Christians treat one another and the manner in which they use their gifts and talents.

Paul also wrote that “the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body” (1 Corinthians 12:14–15).

Paul further explained that “God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be?” (1 Corinthians 12:18–19).

The importance of each person in the Church was pointed out in Paul’s same letter when he said, “But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:24–25).

Paul explained that believers are joined together because “by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Because of this union in the Lord, we are also united to one another.

According to Paul, God has set up a priority of functions based on the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to the members of the Church. Apostles are first, followed by prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, assistants, administrators, and those who speak in tongues (see 1 Corinthians 12:28).

In his same letter, Paul wrote that there are three great gifts from God: faith, hope, and love; “but the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13)—namely, love of God and neighbor. This is a gift given to all the baptized believers, and it endures beyond death, when many of the other gifts given to the Church cease.



CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Have the students read and discuss “How Do You Discern Your Vocation?” on textbook page 22. An individual may be given many gifts and talents to use, but how does one use them in the manner in which our Lord wants them to be used? The Lord calls us to do his will. This call is a vocation. To help students discern their vocations, three suggestions are given in this section—prayer (refer to the section in chapter 7 entitled “The Holy Spirit Moves Our Hearts in Prayer” for a further explanation of meditative prayer), listening to the Church, and talking to pastors, parents, and teachers.

★ *Have the students look up and discuss YOUCAT 265 to learn more about vocations.*

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

How Do You Discern Your Vocation?

“Vocation” means a “call”. To hear a call, one must listen. In order to hear what Jesus is asking you to do, you must listen. Jesus may be calling you in a variety of ways, so how should you listen to Jesus?

1. Pray.

Our prayers should include quiet time to listen to Jesus speak. We can do that by thinking about the Scriptures or other prayers we say. As we think about them and try to apply them to our lives, the Holy Spirit may inspire us through certain thoughts that strike our minds. Jesus sometimes uses these thoughts to speak to us. We should pray the following words: “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening” and “Lord, show me what you want me to do, for I come to do your will.”



2. Listen to the Church.

Learn and know what the Church teaches, because Jesus speaks to us today through the Church. “The Church is apostolic. She is built on a lasting foundation: ‘the twelve apostles of the Lamb’ (Rev 21:14). She is indestructible (cf. Mt 16:18). She is upheld infallibly in the truth: Christ governs her through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors, the Pope and the college of bishops” (CCC 869). We know that the pope and the bishops are the official teachers who speak in the name of Jesus, so we should always match thoughts from our prayer with what the Church teaches. Sometimes our thoughts in prayer could be our own selfish desires, rather than Jesus teaching us, but if our thoughts go contrary to the Church’s teaching, we will know they are not Jesus’ words.

3. Talk to your pastors, parents, and teachers.

Ask these people who practice their faith how they think you can best serve the Church with your specific talents. They can give you some indication as to whether you have the ability to pursue a certain vocation. If you want to be a priest or religious, your pastor, parents, or teachers can discuss with you whether you have the faith, mental ability, and physical health necessary. You should have the advice of several persons (parents, priests, and teachers), because each one sees you in different ways.

Of all of the people in your life, your parents have had a primary place in your education. The Church teaches that parents are the primary teachers of their children in matters of the faith (see CCC 2223). The Church also teaches that your parents are not to *choose* a vocation for you, but they have a responsibility to give you advice (see CCC 2230). Once you have chosen your vocation, your parents should give you their support and respect.

★ To learn more about vocations read YOUCAT 265.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Have the students read and discuss “Special Callings within the Church” on textbook page 23. This page introduces the call to religious life, to ordination, and to the Sacrament of Matrimony. These are formal calls or vocations to which persons respond with lifelong commitments. Some people are called to make these formal commitments, while others have other roles in the Church. We respond to a vocation because Christ calls, not because of the prestige or power connected to it. The basic call, to which all Christians are summoned, is the call to holiness. Men and women in the Church who remain single throughout their lives are called to holiness by their Baptism. Our faithful response to the call of our Baptism and our vocations will enable us to grow in holiness. Note: only ordination, the religious life, and marriage are vocations. The single life is a call to holiness by baptism.

Give each student a copy of the questionnaire for students regarding a Confirmation interview (see Copy Master 1, appendix, p. 91).

One purpose of this questionnaire is to help students reflect on the Sacrament of Confirmation and how it can influence many areas of life. This questionnaire may also be used as a tool for interviewing the students before Confirmation.

It will be helpful for you to explain the questions to the students before they answer them.

Review Questions

1. What does it mean to call the Church a “single Mystical Body”?

Just as a person is made up of many parts, so too Christ and the Church with her many members come together to form one Mystical Body. The many members with their varied talents and gifts work together with Jesus Christ as the Head of this Mystical Body.

2. Why does a believer want to share his gifts and talents with others?


God gives us gifts and talents to be used to build up the Catholic Church, which makes Christ present to the world through truth, goodness, and beauty. The Church, with her many parts, works together with Christ in order to accomplish the great work of salvation for others in word and deed.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Special Callings within the Church

Jesus calls us to do special tasks within the Church. Just as a human body has certain parts that can function only in a certain manner, so too within the Church all have different roles to play. Each person's responsibilities are important. The members of the Church meet their responsibilities by following the call of Christ.

You should not seek a role in the Church because of its power or prestige, but because Christ is calling you to this task or role. By following Christ's call, you are led to holiness. The Church has had popes who are saints, and it has had young people whose roles were relatively insignificant also become saints. When you are faithful to Christ's calling, you can help others to become holy also.

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- Within the Church, some are called to the religious life, in which men or women take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Poverty, chastity, and obedience are called the evangelical counsels. Men and women religious take these vows to dedicate themselves more fully to Christ and to express their total love for him.
 - Some men are called to be ordained. This vocation enables the Church to have the Gospel preached and the sacraments celebrated, particularly the Eucharist. Men who are called to be ordained participate in a special way in the mission of Jesus Christ. Bishops participate in the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders; priests and deacons also share in the mission of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Both bishops and priests are required to make a promise of celibacy, and deacons may make a promise of celibacy or they may be married, provided they are married before they are ordained. If a deacon's wife dies, he may not marry again.
 - Some men and women are called to the Sacrament of Matrimony. This vocation enables a man and a woman by their marriage to become a sign of Christ's love for his Church. Together their enduring marital love represents the total union of Christ and his Church. God gives a husband and wife the grace to have a love for one another that is permanent, faithful, and open to new life.
 - Some men and women remain single throughout their lives. They are called to be holy by their Baptism. When these people respond to the universal call to holiness received in Baptism, they may have more availability to serve people. They may also have more time for prayer than someone who has a family or is in full-time ministry. They can live a Christian life by being a good example for others. Like every baptized Christian, they are called by God to holiness.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTICAL BODY —CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

3. What metaphor does Saint Paul use to describe the Church working together?

The human body, which has many parts. Each part is important and provides a special function. Just as each part of the human body affects other parts, so too our gifts and virtuous living and talents have an effect on the rest of the Church.

4. What is a vocation?

It is a calling from God to act as a person created in the image of God in a certain way for the perfection of our holiness.

5. How does one hear (discern) God's calling?

Through prayer: asking God to reveal one's vocation and taking time to pray in quiet to listen for the promptings of God; through listening to the Church: Jesus uses the Catholic Church's teaching to make known his will; through talking to pastors, parents, and teachers: to get their perspective on how the Lord is calling us to live.

6. What are the special callings or vocations from God?

Vocations include the priesthood, the diaconate, religious or consecrated life, marriage.

Celebration

As a way of emphasizing that the Catholic Church has a wide variety of gifts through her many saints, pray the Litany of the Saints (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 83) with the students.