

## Chapter 1

### Featured Story

Every Baptized Person Is a Part of the Church  
(1 Corinthians 12:12–27)

#### Lesson Goals

- to recognize that we are all an important part of the Church
- to identify the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation
- to name the Eucharist as the most important sacrament in the Church

#### Lesson at a Glance

##### **Go** (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

Engage Activity

##### **Seek** (30 minutes)

Featured Story

Core Learning Activity

##### **Find** (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of the Eucharist

Lesson Wrap-Up

Closing Prayer

#### Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 activity booklet
- different-colored 12-inch balloons, with two different body parts written on each one with marker
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

#### Music Suggestions

- "We Are the Body of Christ" by Andrew Chinn (World Library Publications)
- "We Are One Body," by Monica's Joy Choir, Ed Archer conducting (GIA)

# We Are Part of the Church



### Background Focus

It is human to want to belong. We constantly look for reassurance among our family, friends, and interest groups (clubs, sports teams, and associations) that we are accepted, that we share a common goal with others, and that we are important contributors to something bigger than ourselves. This need to feel welcomed and part of something meaningful is felt at all ages.

Through our Baptism, we become an important part of a truly amazing community—the Church. We may find ourselves sometimes wondering what we have to contribute to the Church or if our presence really matters. But the Church relies on the fact that each and every individual member is an absolutely essential part of the ongoing mission and ministry of Jesus. We are all called to embrace an active and engaged role in spreading the Good News through word and deed. Simply put, the Church needs our unique gifts.

This chapter provides an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a baptized member of such an important mission. As you lead the children in this reflection, allow yourself to consider what being part of the Catholic Church means to you and how you respond to the Church's call that says: "You are an important member of this community. You belong here."

##### **Go** (10 minutes)

### Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of their chapter 1 activity booklets.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

## Engage Activity

- Invite the children to brainstorm a list of groups that they might belong to, and record their answers on the board. Give some examples if they need help. (Answers might include sports teams, family, friends, school, class, church, etc.)
- Ask the children to think about what it means to be part of a group:
  - What are some of the rules of being part of this group?
  - What does it mean to be a good group member?
- Take some time to go through their brainstormed list on the board and ask the different questions of each type of group. If they have *church* on the board, leave that until later.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about what it means to be a part of a very important group that follows Jesus. Ask them if they know what this group is called (*the Catholic Church*). If this has been listed on the board, put a circle around the phrase.

## ✚ Seek (30 minutes)

### Featured Story

- Invite the children to find 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1807).
- Direct them to turn the page and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story (page 1808).
- Tell them that the text between the leaves on page 1808 is a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1808–1809. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork, and ask them to predict what the story might be about.
- Invite a volunteer to read the title on page 1808, and ask the children to share what it means to be baptized. If they have ever been to a Baptism, ask them to share what they remember about what happened. Then ask them if they remember their own Baptism.
- Read the Featured Story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as:
  - Is the body made up of one part or many parts? (*many*)

- What are some of the different parts of the body mentioned in the Scripture verses? (*feet, hands, ears, eyes*)
- What does the story say about us? (*We are parts of Christ's body.*)
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bibles open. Answer: "For the **body** is not made up of only one **part**, but of many parts. . . . As it is, however, **God** put every **different** part in the body just as he **wanted** it to be. . . . All of you are **Christ's** body, and each **one** is a part of it."

### Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1809 to the children, or invite a volunteer or volunteers to read.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
  - Each part of our body does an important job for us.
  - The Bible teaches that the Church is Jesus' Body.
  - Each person in the Church is important and has different gifts.
  - God has a special job for us, which helps the Church.
- Explain to the children how we use the terms *Christ's Body* and *Body of Christ*, using the following points:
  - When we say we are Christ's Body, it means that, together, we work as members of the Church to continue Jesus's mission of love that he started when he was on earth.
  - Sometimes we use the term *Body of Christ* as another name for all of the people in the Church. (You may also wish to explain that the children may hear *Body of Christ* used as another name for the Eucharist.)
  - The Church needs each of us, sharing our unique gifts together, just like a body needs many different parts to work well.

### Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1809 or read it aloud to the group.
- Ask the children if they understood the puzzle, and invite a volunteer to share what the puzzle means.

- Point out the significance and importance of each person in the Church and what a gift the Church is in that we can join with other people who are trying to use their gifts to follow Jesus. Encourage the children to pray to God to help them be the best members of the Church possible and to use their gifts to help the Church.

### Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! cartoon on page 1809.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading the best that they can.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story (pages 1808–1809) that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

## Core Learning Activity

### Parts of One Body Relay

**Note:** Balloons are used in this activity. If any of the children have an allergy to latex, you should choose a different activity.

- Blow up several balloons and write two different parts of the body on each, such as *Elbow/Shoulder* or *Head/Nose* or *Side/Back* or *Eye/Ear* (or do this in advance).
- Choose two children and explain to them that they have to get from one part of the room to another by touching the balloon only with one of the body parts written on the balloon. For example, if *Head/Nose* was written on the balloon, one child may touch the balloon with only his or her head and the other child may touch the balloon with only his or her nose. Together they must move themselves and the balloon to the other side of the room.
- Give the pair a start signal, and time how long it takes them to get to the other side of the room. If the pair drops their balloon, they have to go back to the beginning and start again. Encourage the rest of the children to cheer on the pairs.

- Continue the activity with another pair of children and with different parts of the body written on their balloon. Repeat this process until all of the children who want a chance have been paired and have raced, reusing some of the balloons if necessary. **Note:** If you have space, you can also make this a race between several different teams at the same time.

### Process the Activity

- Invite the children to share how the activity they just took part in is like being part of the Church. (*Answers might include: like the parts of the body, we all had to work together; the rest of the group cheering them on is like the support we get from being part of the Church; we work together with our different gifts for the same purpose—continuing the mission of Jesus, etc.*)
- Ask the children how a person becomes a part of the Church. If they need help, remind them of the title of the Bible reading for the day: *Every Baptized Person Is a Part of the Church*.

### Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on page 22 in its place.

## ✕ Find (20 minutes)

### God's Treasure of the Eucharist

- Explain to the children that Jesus gave the Church seven **sacraments** to bring us closer to him and to help us answer his call to be his followers. Invite them to name as many sacraments as they can, and list all of the sacraments on the board. If the children have witnessed any of the sacraments, encourage them to share briefly.
- Tell the children that there are really three sacraments that begin our life in the Church, and that these three sacraments, together, are called the **Sacraments of Christian Initiation**. Circle, or write, *Baptism*, *Confirmation*, and *Eucharist* on the board, and write "Sacraments of Christian Initiation" near them. Explain that *initiation* is another word for *beginning*.
- Explain some basic information about the Sacraments of Christian Initiation to the children, using the following as possible points to cover:

- The Sacrament of **Baptism** gives us new life and unites us with Jesus.
- This is a sacrament you have already received and probably don't remember because you were most likely babies. (Ask if anyone was baptized after infancy and what they recall about the sacrament.)
- In the Sacrament of **Confirmation**, a bishop or priest anoints us with holy oil, which is a sign that we are strengthened as Christians.
- Confirmation makes our relationship with Jesus and the Church even stronger.
- The Sacrament of the **Eucharist** is the Sacrament of Christian Initiation that you are preparing for now, as you have already been baptized. This sacrament prepares us for a lifetime of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ at the **Mass**, which helps us be the best members of the Church and followers of Jesus we can be.
- The Sacrament of the Eucharist is the Church's most important sacrament and is why it is important to spend some time preparing and learning about this sacrament.
- Ask the children some of the following questions to check for comprehension:
  - How many sacraments are there? (*seven*)
  - What is the first sacrament we celebrate? (*Baptism*)
  - Which three sacraments are also called the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and help us become a full part of the Church? (*Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist*)
  - Which Sacrament of Christian Initiation do we celebrate again and again, all throughout our life? (*Eucharist*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of their activity booklets and complete it. Give them a few minutes to look at each symbol and then choose the one that suggests the sacrament they are preparing for now. Make sure they put a check mark next to the symbol for First Eucharist.

**Teacher Note:** This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of the Eucharist Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 1 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

## Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
  - We are all an important part of the Church.
  - The three Sacraments of Christian Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
  - The Eucharist is the most important sacrament in the Church.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



## Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Read, or invite a volunteer to read, the prayer from page 1 of the activity booklet.
- Invite the children to come to you, one by one. Make the Sign of the Cross on each child's forehead as you say: "\_\_\_\_, you are an important part of the Church. Spread the love of Jesus in everything that you do." Encourage the child to respond, "Amen."
- Play a piece of music, if time allows, that speaks about being part of the Church, the Body of Christ.
- End by saying: "May God bless us as we continue to learn and grow as followers of Jesus. Amen." Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

**Materials Needed**

- a large piece of paper or poster board with a full-body outline of Jesus

**Materials Needed**

- long strips of paper, one for each child, with the phrase, "I can be a good member of the Church by . . ."

**Materials Needed**

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector



## Additional Activities

### The Gifts We Bring to the Church (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to think of a gift they have that they can use to continue Jesus' mission of love. (*Examples include: be kind, love others, be a good son or daughter, pray for others, help those in need, go to Mass.*) Call on the children, one by one, to stand and name a gift. Then invite them to come up and write their name and gift within the outline of Jesus. Make sure to include your name and a gift as well.
- Show the children all of the different names and gifts just in this room, and invite them to think of the many people throughout the world who are also part of the Church.
- Keep this activity throughout the preparation time for First Eucharist as a reminder to the children that we are all important as members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

### Being a Part of the Church (15 minutes)

- Ask the children for examples of how they might finish the sentence, and record several of their responses on the board.
- Encourage the children to think of a way they can be a good member of the Church, and invite them to write it on their slip of paper.
- Ask the children to bring their completed strips of paper to you. Make a circle by joining the ends of a strip of paper together and gluing or stapling them. As other children come forward, make links by joining the circles together. When you are finished, you will have connected links of all of the different ways the children have thought of to be good members of the Church.
- Bring this to the room throughout the time of sacrament preparation so the children can be reminded that, as a Church, we work together to spread Jesus' message of love.

### We Are One Body (15 minutes)

- Show the video "The Body of Christ," available on YouTube (3:09).
- Invite volunteers to explain what happened in the video.
- Ask the children to share how they think the video reflects the Scripture reading from First Corinthians.
- Remind the children that we all have different gifts that when shared together can do amazing things, just like our body parts working together help us do things every day.