

**LET'S DIVE INTO**  
**CONNECT!**

BRINGING FAITH TO LIFE

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# Welcome to *Connect! Bringing Faith to Life*

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

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

The Bible-focused lessons found in each year invite the students to study key themes and passages, using a Bible as the primary student text. The students will not simply read about the Bible. They will read the Bible itself.

The third year of *Connect!* adds seven weeks of focused study about Church history. The students access the content for this study in a separate student book created just for this topic. The Church History student book offers an overview of the life of the Church from its early formation to today.

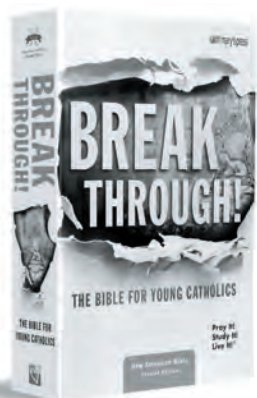
# Program Components



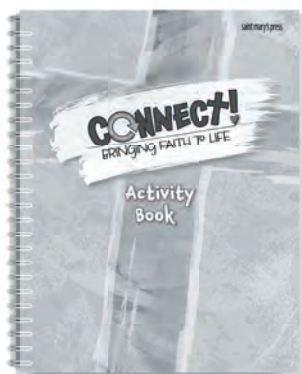
Connect! Student Book



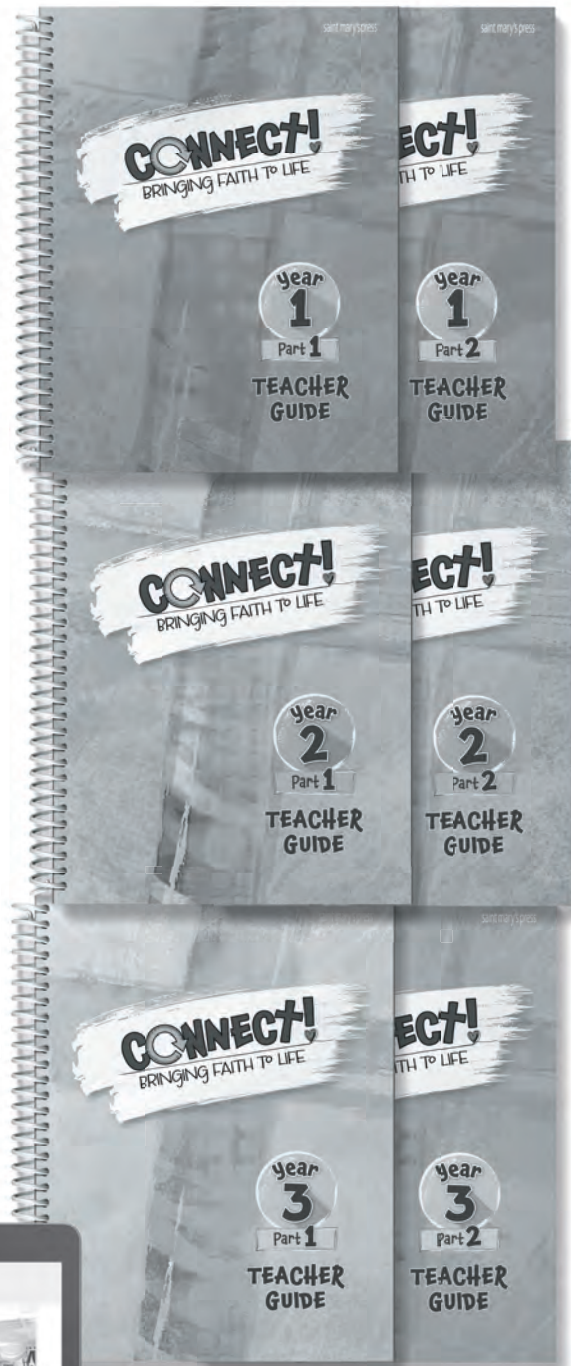
Church History Student Book



Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics, NABRE



Activity Book



Teacher Guides



Online Resources



eLearning Lessons



**Good to Know** provides instructive and engaging information.

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

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

### good to KNOW

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

**What Do You Think?** reflects on a topic and provides a question for discussion in class or at home.

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

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

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



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

### LIVING the GOSPEL

#### How to Read Scripture

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

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

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

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

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

**Living the Gospel** suggests ways students can put their faith into action.

### roots of faith

#### The Church and Other Religions

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

**Roots of Faith** provides historical insights into Catholic beliefs and practices.

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

### PEOPLE of FAITH

#### Saint CATHERINE OF SIENA

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

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



# Church History Student Book

The **Church History** student book is structured in the same way and with the same features as the *Connect!* student book.

## Chapter 1

### The Early Church

#### KEY WORDS

deacon  
Ecumenical Council  
Gentiles

6 Chapter 1

Rationalists also believed that the same universal laws could be applied to human behavior. If human beings operated by natural laws, rationalists argued, then people did not need the guidance of the Bible or the Church. Truth and moral law would come from natural laws. Therefore, people could guide their own behavior without help from a divine authority.

**Empiricism** was another philosophical movement of the 1700s. Empiricists believed that all knowledge came through the human senses and experience. In other words, everything people knew about the world, they knew by observing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. Some empiricists thought certain Christian beliefs could be proven by human experience. For example, John Locke tried to prove that God exists as Creator based on observing the order of the universe. Many empiricists, however, denied any belief or knowledge based on faith. They used empiricism to try to prove that God did not exist. Some philosophers tried to use Newton's scientific findings to show that the universe operated like a machine; that is, it operated by its own natural laws not by a divine being's



**empiricism** → A philosophy claiming that all knowledge comes through the human senses and experience.

#### good to know

Did you know the father of the big bang theory was a Catholic priest? His name was Fr. Georges Lemaitre (1894–1966) of Belgium. As a young priest, he earned his doctorate in physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was also president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences from 1960 until he died in 1966. In 1928, Lemaitre published a paper in which he argued that the physical universe was originally a single particle that exploded and expanded into the universe.

If you listen for news about the Church in the world today, it can seem like there are two groups of Christians: One group of Christians, like those who live in the United States, are allowed to practice their religion peacefully, bringing God's love into their families, workplaces, and civic institutions. But another group of Christians, like those living in the Middle East and in some African and Asian countries, are persecuted and even killed for believing in Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church estimates that more than one hundred thousand Christians are killed violently every year.

This is not something new. It was like this for the first Christians in the years after Christ ascended into Heaven. At some times and places, Christians lived peacefully with their neighbors and witnessed to their faith in Christ and God's love. At other times and places, Christians were persecuted and sometimes killed because of their faith. Their lives remind us that following Jesus Christ and living as he taught us to live will sometimes cause conflict with people who do not believe. Yet the witness of the early Christians, even amid persecution, was also responsible for the amazing growth of the Church during that time.

#### CONNECT with GOD

Thank you, God, for the Church.

Thank you for this community of believers in which we learn to follow your Son through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

May we strengthen one another in faith and share our faith with others, even when we are met with ridicule, hardship, or persecution. Amen.

guidance. These empiricists believed that science and religious faith were totally at odds with each other.

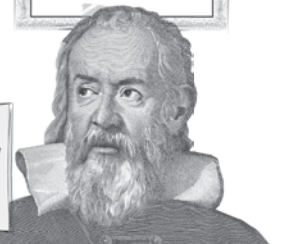
But is religion really at odds with science? During the Age of Reason, the Church was suspicious of scientific theories that seemed to contradict the Bible. For example, in the 1600s, the astronomer Galileo Galilei published his work saying the Earth revolves around the sun. The idea that the sun rotated around the Earth, however, had been accepted by the ancient Greeks. The Creation accounts in Genesis also seemed to support the theory that the sun rotates around the Earth. So the Pope had Galileo put under house arrest for suggesting the Bible was wrong. Today, we understand that different passages of the Bible are written in different genres. The Bible expresses the truth of what we need to know for our salvation. It does not need to be scientifically accurate to accomplish this purpose.

Galileo Galilei was an astronomer who discovered that the Earth revolved around the sun and not the other way around. Galileo's writings were condemned by the Church, and he was put under house arrest. The Church later expressed regret for these actions.



#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We can learn about God in many ways. The Church says it is important to use our reason—such as observation and logic—as well as faith to learn about God and grow closer to him. What are some ways you use reason to learn about God? How do you learn about God through faith? Take some time to think about how your reason and faith work together to help you know God better.



# Teacher Guides

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

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

The **Chapter-at-a-Glance** page lists core understandings and highlights key information to aid planning.

8 Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

**Chapter 1**

**Chapter Summary**

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

**Background for the Teacher**

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

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

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

**Teacher's Prayer**

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

**Teaching Tip**

It is important to properly introduce the concept of mystery when talking about God. God is beyond our complete comprehension, but he is not unknowable. Help the students see that it's okay to be awestruck and filled with wonder with regard to God. It's okay for us not to have all the answers right now. God continues to draw us close to himself and reveal himself to us. Invite the students to be open to what God is revealing to them as they learn more about what God has revealed to the Church.

9 Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

**Chapter 1**

**Chapter at a Glance**  
Core Text: Student Book

**Core Understandings**

1. Out of love, God reveals himself and his plan for humanity in two main ways: through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
2. The seventy-three books that make up our Sacred Scripture are the Word of God, whereby human authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit to share the truths that will bring us our salvation.
3. Sacred Tradition consists of those truths that will bring us our salvation and that have been handed down to us over the centuries through the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. Although God has made himself known to us, our human understanding cannot completely grasp him.

**Catechism Pillar**

- The Creed

**Catechism Connection**

- Paragraphs 31–43, 50–141 (The Revelation of God)

**Key Scripture Passages**

- Genesis 1:1–2:4
- Genesis 2:5–25
- 1 Samuel 3:1–10
- Job, chapter 38

**Prayer Suggestions**

- **Prayer:** Good and gracious God, in your great love, you shared your life with humanity. You made yourself known to us that we might come to know, love, and serve you in return. Help us, Lord, to desire you above all things, to value you more than silver or gold, to make your friendship our heart's one and only desire. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
- **Scripture Reading:** 1 John 4:7–12
- **Student Book:** "Connect with God," page 9
- **Music:** "God of Wonders," by Third Day, available on YouTube

**Key Words**

- Gospels
- Revelation
- Sacred Scripture
- Sacred Tradition

**Chapter Project**

- "Getting to Know Others," page 26

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

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

The **day overview** notes the content covered in the lesson, the core understanding emphasized, and any materials needed.

Each lesson follows the same format: **Opening Prayer, Engage Activity, Core Content, Core Learning Activity, Comprehension Checkpoint, and Closing Prayer.**

10 Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

Chapter 1

**DAY 1**

**Student Book**  
Introduction and "Revelation," pages 9–12

**Core Understanding**  
Out of love, God reveals himself and his plan for humanity in two main ways: through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

**Materials Needed**

- copies of the handout "Chapter 1 Reading Guide," pages 27–28, one for each student (optional)
- digital presentation tools (optional)

**Opening Prayer (5 minutes)**  
Begin with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 9:  
➤ God, in your great love for humanity, you revealed yourself to past generations. Make yourself known to us today. Open our eyes to your constant loving presence all around us at every moment. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Engage Activity (5 minutes)**

1. **Engage** the students' experience with this challenge, using these or similar words:
  - I'd like you to think of a time when you really wanted to be friends with someone, or someone really wanted to be friends with you, and later you actually did become friends. Consider how that friendship got going and eventually developed.
2. **Invite** two or three volunteers to share how their friendships developed. Add comments that help the students see that relationships develop because people are intentional about wanting to be friends and make themselves known—and so it is with God.

**Optional Activity: "Who Am I?" (20 minutes), page 22**

**Core Content (10 minutes)**  
Review pages 9–12 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section "Introduction and Revelation" on the handout "Chapter 1 Reading Guide," or use the handout as a homework assignment or as a review at the end of the week. Collect and grade the handout at the end of the week.

**Handout icons** provide a visual cue whenever a lesson uses a handout.

**Optional Activities** provide ways to adapt or extend lessons and can be found at the end of each chapter.

Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition 11

Chapter 1

- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Throughout all of history, God has made himself known to human beings in a number of ways: through creation, through the Church, through our conscience, through friends and family. He continues to do so today.
  2. God makes himself known to us because he loves us.
  3. What God has made known about himself and his plan for humanity is called Revelation.
  4. Revelation is communicated in two main ways: Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

**Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)**  
**Revelation A to Z**  
**Objective:** To become aware of the variety of ways God reveals himself to us.

1. **Introduce** the activity in these or similar words:  
➤ Several stories in the Gospels are about blindness and learning to see. These stories aren't just about seeing the things around us but also about seeing God present and working in the people, events, and things that fill our lives. This is sometimes called seeing with the eyes of faith. We are going to conduct a little activity to practice how well we can see with the eyes of faith.

12 Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition

Chapter 1

4. **Direct** each group to choose a recorder. The recorder should write down the six or seven letters they have been assigned on the left side of a sheet of paper. Direct their attention to the categories you have displayed. Tell the groups to come up with six or seven names of things that start with their assigned letters. These things must reveal God or something about God and can come from any of the five categories you have displayed. The recorder should then write the names of these things beside each letter on their paper. The groups must be prepared to explain to the entire class how each of these things is a revelation of God. For an extra challenge, they should include one example from each category in their list of things.
5. **Ask** the groups to share their lists, starting with the group or groups that have the letters A to F. When it is not clear or obvious how a particular thing may reveal something about God, ask the group to explain.
6. **Conclude** by emphasizing that signs of God's love and presence are all around us if we can see with the eyes of faith. Their groups' lists are examples of this truth.

**Teaching Tip**

Consider displaying the groups' lists in your classroom for the rest of the week to remind the students of the many ways God reveals himself to us. If there is time, the students could decorate or illustrate their lists.

**Digital Option:** Have the students prepare their lists using digital presentation tools. Each letter and its corresponding thing can be presented on a separate slide. The students can search online for appropriate images to illustrate the slides. The groups' presentations can then be combined to create one presentation for the entire alphabet.

**Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)**  
**Ask** the students to each write a short answer to the following prompt:  
• Write down two or three examples of how God continues to reveal himself to the world today.

**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

**Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**  
Close with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 9.

**Icons** also provide visual cues when lessons provide assessment opportunities, cross-curricular opportunities, video options, and digital options.



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

50 God the Father

**Optional Activities**

**DAY 1**

**A Picture of God (20 minutes)**

**Objective:** To enable the students to concretize their "picture" or impression of a God who cannot be pictured, and to emphasize Jesus' role in helping us to discover who God is.

**1. Explain** in these or similar words:

- No one knows what God looks like. Only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, became human and had a human face. God is Divine Being and is Pure Spirit. Some artists have portrayed God as an old man, but God is not affected by time. But there is one way we can express who God is to us, and that is through prayer and art. When we combine prayer and art, the Holy Spirit can help us channel our creativity so that we can make our own "picture of God." What is your picture of God?

See "Good to Know" on page 24 in the student book. You might want to note that the Israelites often pictured God in a cloud.

**2. Distribute** the art paper and the art supplies you have chosen. Announce a moment of silence, and then lead the group in the Lord's Prayer.

**3. Invite** the students to observe these three rules in creating their pictures of God:

- Do not copy or imitate another painting you have seen.
- Be prepared to explain your drawing or painting.
- Use color and abstract shapes.

**4. Ask** volunteers to share their pictures of God. Draw out the meanings of their pictures by asking questions like:

- Why did you choose these colors?
- Are you in this picture anywhere?
- If you could be in this picture, where would you be? What would you say to God?

**5. Conclude** by reminding the students that we are grateful to Jesus Christ for coming among us and telling us who God is by showing us how much God loves us. Because each of us is a unique person, each of us has a unique relationship with God. We can all know God in our own way.

**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

**Materials Needed**

- art paper, one sheet for each student
- markers, poster paint, or other drawing or painting supplies

God the Father 51

**DAY 2**

**We Share the Love of the Trinity (20 minutes)**

**Objective:** To emphasize that through Baptism we are made part of the Trinity through Jesus Christ, and our call as Christians is to share the love of the Trinity with others.

**1. Ask** the students to read "Living the Gospel" on page 25 in the student book. Note that often God loves and cares for us through the love and care of others.

**2. Explain** in these or similar words:

- When we are baptized, we are invited into the relationship of love that the Trinity shares with us. When two people share with each other at a deep level, in marriage or friendship, a great love springs up between them. This is what happens between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of love that unites them and all of us with them. The Trinity is a great Mystery, and we are part of it! At Mass, during the Sign of Peace, we share Christ's peace with one another by shaking hands. This is really a symbolic way of sharing God's peace and love with others. When we treat others with kindness, we are sharing the love of the Trinity. Let's make a symbol of this Trinitarian love right now.

**3. Ask** the students to form a large circle. Take one piece of candy from your bag. Explain to the students that you will give this piece of candy to someone and will say some special words. (Note: When you give this piece of candy, say these words: "May the love of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you always.") The student who receives the candy is to say, "Amen," repeat the words to the next person, and pass along the candy. The next person does the same, saying "Amen" and passing the candy to the next person. Give out a second piece of candy, a third, and so on, to different students, for as many students as are present. This pattern continues until everyone has a piece of candy. When the last person in the circle receives a piece of candy, they hang onto it. Ask the students to wait until everyone has a piece so you can eat the candy together. *Optional:* Finish this "circle of love" by extending a handshake of peace around the circle in the same way.

**4. Conclude** by asking the following or similar questions:

- In our everyday lives, how do we treat the people we meet?
- Do we share the love of God with them in any way? Does this sharing have to be a concrete gift, like candy?
- What does God's love look like in your age-group?
- A Native American saying goes, "I cannot criticize someone until I have walked a mile in his moccasins." How can you put yourself into the "shoes" of another? Why is this a good thing to do?

**Materials Needed**

- a bag of hard candy (wrapped) or other symbolic token of love

26 *Revelation, Scripture, and Tradition*

**Chapter Project**

**Getting to Know Others**

**Objective:** To allow the students to build relationships and allow another person to be "revealed" to them.

**Materials Needed**

- digital presentation tools (optional)

**1. Explain** to the students at the beginning of the week that they will be doing a service project called "Getting to Know Others." Ask the students to each visit and interview an older person. For example, they may visit an elderly home or interview an elderly relative. They are to ask questions about that person's life: their childhood, adult life, children, grandchildren, places they traveled, their understanding of God, lived through wars, service to country and local community, and so on. The students must keep notes on what their person tells them. Remind them that the person will be revealing themselves to them; this is a holy moment, and they should treat the person with great respect. They might take a picture of the person to use with their report.

**2. Provide** some way for the students to report at the end of the week or the following week what they learned about the person they interviewed. This could be through a written report, a poster with highlights, a digital presentation, and so on.

**3. Ask** the following questions after their reports:

- How can getting to know another person deeply also reveal God to us?
- How is getting to know another person deeply like getting to know God? How is it different from knowing God?

The **Chapter Project** is an optional activity that students can work on throughout the week.

# Activity Book

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

Year 1  
**1A**

## Revelation

Thoughtfully and reflectively respond to the following questions.

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

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

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

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Year 1  
**1B**

## Scripture and Tradition

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

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

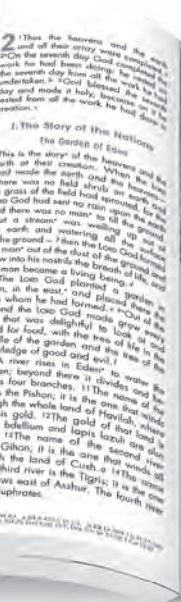
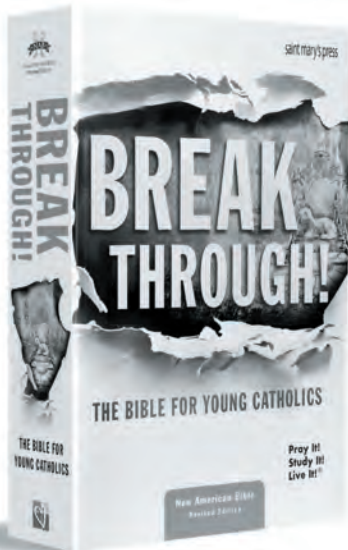
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# Bible

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



## Online Resources

**Online resources** specific to each teacher guide can be found at [www.smp.org/connect\\_school](http://www.smp.org/connect_school).

These resources include:

- a scope-and-sequence chart
- a downloadable version of the teacher guide
- handouts, quizzes, and tests for downloading and customizing
- presentations you can use to introduce and review the chapter content
- additional lesson plans on life issues for young people
- web links to recommended digital media



## eLearning Lessons



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

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# Chapter 1

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## **Pentecost and the Apostles' Mission**

## Chapter Summary

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

## Background for the Teacher

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

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

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

## Teacher's Prayer

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

## Teaching Tip

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



# Chapter at a Glance

Core Text: Student Book

## Core Understandings

1. Acts of the Apostles is a story of transformation for early Christians and can serve as an inspiration for the Church today.
2. The Holy Spirit empowered the growth of the early Church, especially at Pentecost.
3. Peter was a disciple of courage and persistence who guided the Church's early growth.
4. Paul's transformation led to his essential missionary journeys and the growth of the Church.

## Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

## Catechism Connection

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

## Key Scripture Passages

- Genesis 11:1–9
- Acts of the Apostles 2:1–13, 38–42
- Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10
- 2 Corinthians 11:24–27

## Key Words

- evangelize
- Pentecost

## Chapter Project

- "Back to the Gardens," page 27

## Prayer Suggestions

- **Prayer:** Breath of God, inspire me. Holy fire, refine me. Spirit of God, strengthen me, body and soul. Guide my steps, that I might faithfully follow your will. Amen.
- **Scripture Reading:** Acts of the Apostles 2:17
- **Student Book:** "Connect with God," page 427
- **Music:** "Holy Spirit, Come Now," by Jesse Manibusan, available on YouTube

# DAY 1

## Student Book

Introduction, pages 427–428

## Core Understanding

The Acts of the Apostles is a story of transformation for early Christians and can serve as an inspiration for the Church today.

## Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Chapter 1 Reading Guide,” pages 28–29, one for each student (*optional*)

## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 9:

- Who knows what comes next, Lord? Only you, who created me and designed the plan for my life. Please grant me more gifts, Lord, beginning with the patience to watch things unfold. Bless me with the wisdom to know your path and the courage to follow it. Amen.

## Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students' experience, using these or similar words:
  - Imagine you have a time machine that can take you to any era or event you wish. Which moment in time would you travel to, and why?
2. **Invite** the students to form pairs and discuss.
3. **Ask** volunteers to share brief responses with the large group, affirming creativity and diversity.
4. **Conclude** by saying these or similar words:
  - Our journey this week will take us back to the earliest days of the Church, an exciting time that continues to have an impact on us today.

**Optional Activity:** “Do Not Open until Pentecost” (5 minutes), page 22

## Core Content (10 minutes)



**Review** pages 427–428 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “Key Words” on the handout “Chapter 1 Reading Guide,” or use the handout as a homework assignment or as a review at the end of the week. Collect and grade the handout at the end of the week.
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Neither the Bible nor the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* existed in the early Church.
  2. Faith spread through the spoken word and by the lived witness of believers.
  3. The Holy Spirit guided the Apostles and can guide us to share our faith.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Change Happens

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

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - Change is all around you. It’s part of who you are. You are in your adolescence, which simply means a time of growing, maturing, and changing. We change in many different ways, such as in our appearance, our friendships, and our beliefs. Sometimes change comes naturally, and other times it comes due to choices we or others make.
  - Let’s explore the changes around us, what influences them, and how they affect us.
2. **Invite** or select four recorders to help track the discussion. Write the following headings on the board: “Appearance,” “Taste,” “Connection,” and “Belief.” Add a column titled “Influences” to the right of each heading.
3. **Challenge** the students to create a list of changes going on in their lives. As each is named, assign a recorder to write it under its proper category on the board (e.g., a growth spurt is an “appearance,” a new favorite band is a “taste,” a new school or group of friends are “connections,” and new values or opinions are “beliefs”). Use these examples, if necessary, to prime the conversation.
4. **Ask** the students what they think influences each of these changes, and record these as well under the appropriate heading. For example, a growth spurt comes naturally, and interest in a new band might be sparked by friends.
5. **Remind** the students of the time-machine scenario on pages 427–428 in the student book and discuss as a group:
  - What are the signs of the change going on in your friend’s life?
  - How did your friend identify the change, and what influenced the change?
  - How is the change in this story similar to changes happening in your life? How is it different?
  - How can change extend to you? To others?

6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:

- Some change is simple and has little impact. Other change can impact people and society forever. Christianity was new to the people of the first century AD. It has survived and thrived due to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and the courage of the people who spread this new way of life.

**Optional Activity:** "Ripple Effect" (5 minutes), page 23

### **Comprehension Checkpoint** (5 minutes)

**Instruct** the students to write their responses to the following questions:

- What are three ways that you have grown or changed over the past year?
- What is one way the early Church changed society? What do you think brought about this transformative change?

### **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 9.

## DAY 2

### Student Book

"Pentecost," pages 428–431

### Core Understanding

The Holy Spirit empowered the growth of the early Church, especially at Pentecost.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter 1 Reading Guide" handouts *(optional)*
- a candle, a wooden match, and a cup of water *(optional)*
- the video "Full HD High Speed Movie—Burning Match—Streichholz" (0:27), available on YouTube *(optional)*
- slips of papers with the word *peace* written in different languages, one for each student
- pronunciation guides, one for each student
- internet access *(optional)*
- Bibles, one for each student
- an online language translator *(optional)*
- a digital student response system *(optional)*

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 9:

- Holy Spirit, catalyst of the Church, spark our faith today as we explore the wonders of Pentecost and the power that inspired the Apostles to spread the Good News to all people and nations. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Light** a candle, using a wooden match. Hold the match in the flame, allowing it to consume most of the match before tossing it in a cup of water. If you cannot use a real match due to safety regulations, consider using the YouTube video of a burning match.
2. **Ask** these or similar questions:
  - What did the fire do to the match?
  - What other things can fire do?
3. **Light** another match, and conclude with these or similar words:
  - At Pentecost, the Spirit appeared in the form of tongues as of fire, transforming the disciples. The Spirit strengthened, purified, and enlightened them to spread the Good News to the ends of the Earth. May this symbol of God's grace inspire us to be on fire with the Spirit today!

## Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 428–431 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “Pentecost” on the handout “Chapter 1 Reading Guide.”
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. As told in Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit guided the Apostles to evangelize so the Word of God could spread.
  2. The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, empowering them to evangelize people throughout the Earth with the Good News.
  3. The Holy Spirit gave Peter the wisdom and courage he needed to evangelize, speaking words that would transform the lives of many at Pentecost and beyond.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Scripture Study: Pentecost

**Objective:** To recreate the experience and the outcome of Pentecost.

1. **Prepare** slips of paper, each with the word *peace* in a different language, along with a pronunciation guide, one for each student in the class. Many websites list this word in multiple languages.
2. **Read** Acts of the Apostles 2:5–13, increasing energy and speed as you go.

### Teaching Tip

When sharing this or any Scripture, make an effort to proclaim God’s Word with enthusiasm and appropriate emotion. Some passages, such as this one, include names that are difficult to pronounce. If you stumble over one, avoid drawing attention by shrugging or chuckling.

3. **Distribute** the slips of paper, and use these or similar words to begin the activity:
  - Take a few minutes to greet every other student in our class with a handshake and the word on your slip of paper.

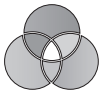
### Teaching Tip

It will be beneficial to participate in this activity yourself in order to moderate the class. The students may find this activity amusing because of the different languages, so be prepared for some extra energy and laughter around this step.

4. **Ask** the students if they know what they were just saying to one another. Ask if anyone can explain why so many different languages are spoken around the world.
5. **Distribute** the Bibles, and invite a volunteer to read Genesis 11:1–9 aloud.
6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The Acts of the Apostles shares that people were in Jerusalem from many places, yet everyone understood what Peter and the Apostles were saying. The words we just shared from many languages all mean “peace.” What we just experienced is a sign of peace, similar to what you might hear at Mass during World Youth Day. The early Christians looked back to the Tower of Babel story to explain the confusing mix of languages around the world. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit provided gifts that empowered the Apostles to understand one another and spread the Good News.



**Digital Option:** Direct the students to use online language translators to learn longer phrases and words of faith, such as the Sign of the Cross, the Glory Be, or parts of prayers found in “Appendix A: Catholic Prayers” in the student book.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** If your school offers world languages, invite the teacher(s) to provide translations of words of faith. The language teachers might also give the students an assignment to memorize and recite longer prayers such as the Lord’s Prayer or the Hail Mary.

**Optional Activity:** “Name Your Flame Game” (15 minutes), page 24

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Invite** a volunteer to read Acts of the Apostles 2:38–42 aloud.
2. **Ask** the students to respond to a poll, which asks, “Which image from the Pentecost story is most inspiring to you?” Provide these answers as optional choices:
  - strong, driving wind
  - tongues as of flame
  - Apostles speaking so everyone understands
  - Peter’s powerful speech
  - three thousand becoming Christians that day
3. **Use** your digital student response system to collect student responses. If this is not possible, write the choices in a place the students can see and then ask for a raise of hands to indicate the students’ selections.
4. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The gift of the Holy Spirit ruled the day on Pentecost. The wind, the fire, and especially the words that Peter said inspired three thousand people to make a life-changing decision on the spot. Today’s viral videos might spread more rapidly but don’t have such impact.



### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 9.

## DAY 3

### Student Book

"The Work of Saint Peter," pages 432–433

### Core Understanding

Peter was a disciple of courage and persistence who guided the Church's early growth.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter 1 Reading Guide" handouts (*optional*)
- Bibles, one for each student
- the video "Famous Failures," available on YouTube (*optional*)
- index cards, one for each student
- markers or crayons
- a sheet of newsprint that says "Peter" in large lettering

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 9:

- Saint Peter—first called among the Apostles, first to proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, and first to speak at Pentecost—inspire us today to be open to Christ's call in our lives and to be courageous in spreading the Good News among those in our class and to all those we meet. We ask this in Christ's most holy name. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students' experience, using these or similar words:
  - Saint Peter is one of the most incredible people in the Bible. What do you know about Peter?
2. **Invite** a volunteer to read aloud "Check This Out!" on page 433 in the student book.
3. **Lead** the students in a brief discussion with these or similar words:
  - Jesus saw something special in Peter. Despite Peter's flaws, Jesus chose him as an important leader. Can anyone share a time when a parent, coach, or other leader gave you a special opportunity or a second chance?
4. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - Peter disappointed Jesus at times, but he grew to understand Jesus very well. Peter turned out to be one of the most influential leaders in the history of our Church.



## Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 432–433 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “The Work of Saint Peter” on the handout “Chapter 1 Reading Guide.”
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Peter, commissioned by Jesus, led the early Church with his courageous words and actions.
  2. Peter boldly spread the Good News despite imprisonment and persecution.
  3. Peter and the Apostles heeded Jesus’ challenge to spread the Gospel to all nations and to baptize people.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### The Power of Peter

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

1. **Introduce** this activity in these or similar words:
  - After Jesus placed his trust in Peter to lead the Church, Peter denied his friendship with Jesus on the night before Jesus died. Yet Jesus gave Peter another chance, calling him to lead the Church. With the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit, Peter did things he could never have imagined. Let’s explore one of his first amazing moments.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and invite a volunteer to read Acts of the Apostles 3:1–10 aloud.
3. **Read** the story a second time yourself, including guidance for contemplation along the way. Use this narrative, or adapt it as you see fit:
  - One day Peter and John went to the Temple at three o’ clock in the afternoon, the hour for prayer. There at the Beautiful Gate, as it was called, was a man who had been lame all his life. Every day, he was carried to the gate to beg for money from the people who were going into the Temple.
  - Put yourself in the lame man’s shoes, worthless as they are. He can’t walk anywhere on his own. He can’t farm or fish or build things. His friends carry him places, and he begs all day. He has little hope or dignity.
  - When he saw Peter and John going in, he begged them to give him something. They looked straight at him, and Peter said, “Look at us!” So he looked at them, expecting to get something from them.
  - Most people ignored the lame man. These guys were different. They actually looked at him. Was there hope? Might he eat well tonight?
  - But Peter said to him, “I have no money at all, but I give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I order you to get up and walk!”

- Put yourself in Peter's shoes. Three years before, he was catching fish. He met Jesus and left his nets behind. What does he have to show for it? Not a penny. He couldn't walk on water like Jesus did. But these words were coming out of his mouth!
- Then Peter took the lame man by his right hand and helped him up. At once, the man's feet and ankles became strong; he jumped up, stood on his feet, and started walking around. Then he went into the Temple with them, walking and jumping and praising God.
- Babies take weeks and months to move from crawling to walking. In seconds, this man did something he'd never done before. He also probably never had much reason to praise God—until now!
- The people there saw him walking and praising God, and when they recognized him as the beggar who had sat at the Beautiful Gate, they were all surprised and amazed at what had happened to him.
- Where did Peter get such power? Could Peter heal me if I needed it?

4. **Introduce** the video with these or similar words:

- Peter's newfound power would change not only the life of the lame man but also the lives of people around the world and throughout the future. Not bad for a simple fisherman, a sinner, and a man who once denied Jesus.



5. **Play** the video "Famous Failures," if you are able, and explain that you will look at some other surprising stories. Otherwise, move to the next step.

6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:

- We should never underestimate God's power to provide strength when we are weak or hurting. Peter didn't give up during challenging times, nor did many famous world leaders, athletes, and entertainers. Peter kept following Jesus and was open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. All our gifts come from God, and we should trust that the Holy Spirit will strengthen and guide us when times get tough.

**Optional Activity:** "Taming the Green-Eyed Monster" (15 minutes), page 25

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Ask** the students to think about one word they would use to describe Saint Peter. Distribute the index cards and markers or crayons, and direct the students to write their word on the index card, embellishing it with colors, bubble letters, etc.
2. **Collect** the cards and display them around the classroom. Place the sheet of newsprint that says "Peter" in large lettering in the middle of the display.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 9.

## DAY 4

### Student Book

"The Travels of Saint Paul" to end of chapter, pages 434–437

### Core Understanding

Paul's transformation led to his essential missionary journeys and the growth of the Church.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter 1 Reading Guide" handouts (*optional*)
- the clip "Nutty for Nuts" from the movie *Ice Age: The Meltdown* (2006, 91 minutes, rated A-I and PG), available on YouTube
- digital presentation tools (or markers and a sheet of poster board for each student)
- copies of the handout "Chapter 1 Quiz," pages 30–31, one for each student

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 9:

- Saint Paul, the light of Christ opened your eyes to God's love for his people and inspired you to spread the Good News far and wide. Inspire us to be open to transformation and to know God's love in new ways today. We ask this in the most holy name of Jesus. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students' experience by sharing the following:
  - Today, we will learn about Saint Paul, who many people consider to be the greatest Apostle and the strongest influence on Christianity after Christ himself. What do you think Paul is doing when we first hear about him in the Bible? Let's take a quick quiz.
2. **Tell** the students that they will need to vote for one of the following options:
  - Go to this corner (*point to first corner*) if you think Paul gave a compelling speech to Jewish leaders about how they have resisted the Holy Spirit and rejected Jesus.
  - Go to this corner (*point to second corner*) if you think Paul picked up stones and murdered a man who gave a courageous speech about how the Jewish people rejected Jesus.
  - Go to this corner (*point to third corner*) if you think Paul protected the cloaks of the people who stoned the man who spoke bravely about how the Jewish people rejected Jesus.

3. **Invite** the students to stand, and direct them to indicate their answer by going to the different corners of the room. Ask one or two students in each group to explain why they made their choice.
4. **Conclude** by saying these or similar words:
  - Despite Paul's efforts to spread Christianity, he actually was the cloak-watcher at the stoning of Saint Stephen, the first Christian to die for his faith. Paul's role seems unimpressive, but it is important to know that he began as a feared persecutor of the Church and then later became its greatest proponent and finally a martyr himself.

### Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 434–437 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:



- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section "The Travels of Saint Paul" on the handout "Chapter 1 Reading Guide." When the students finish, collect and grade the handout.
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Saint Paul was a devout Jew who persecuted Christians before his dramatic conversion.
  2. Paul traveled tirelessly to bring the Good News to cities throughout the Roman Empire.
  3. Paul endured hardships and persecutions in his journeys, eventually dying for his faith.

**Optional Activity:** "Seeing the Light" (5 minutes), page 26

### Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

#### Paul's Perseverance

**Objective:** To identify the students' passions and the work required to pursue them.

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



## Teaching Tip

Decide in advance how much time to allow for the students to prepare and share their presentations.

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



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the presentations or posters for credit or grading.



## Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Distribute** the handout "Chapter 1 Quiz," and allow the students time to complete it.
2. **Collect** the quizzes for grading.



## Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 9.

## Optional Activities

### DAY 1

#### Materials Needed

- small boxes wrapped in red paper, one for each student
- small candies or coins (*optional*)
- Bibles, one for each student

### Do Not Open until Pentecost (5 minutes)

**Objective:** To inspire the students to consider the gifts they have that can be used to build up the Church and to emphasize the delay of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### Teaching Tip

To keep this simple, you might use empty matchboxes for your wrapped packages, and before wrapping insert a slip of paper in each that reads "Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." You might wish to weight the box (and add a rattle, to increase curiosity) with small candies or coins. At the conclusion of the day 1 lesson, collect the boxes to redistribute near the end of the day 2 lesson or instruct the students to set them aside.

1. **Distribute** the wrapped packages, instructing the students not to unwrap them until they are told.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and invite a volunteer to read Acts of the Apostles 1:1–4 aloud.
3. **Ask** these or similar questions:
  - What do you think is inside these boxes?
  - What is the greatest thing these little boxes might contain?
  - Why is it difficult to wait to open a gift?
4. **Conclude** the discussion with these or similar words:
  - Pentecost is when the Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Before Pentecost, Jesus told the disciples they would receive a gift. What was the gift they were waiting for? What did it mean to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? What was the Kingdom of God? They had to wait to find out, just as you will have to wait to open these gifts.
5. **Collect** the boxes to be opened later in the week, or ask the students to set them aside.

**Materials Needed**

- a basin of water
- a rock
- copies of *Breakthrough!*, one for each student (optional)

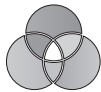
**Ripple Effect** (5 minutes)

**Objective:** To explore the reach and impact of the work of the Apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

1. **Ask** the students to find the map on page 435 in the student book. Invite them to do the following:
  - locate Jerusalem (*at the lower right*)
  - speculate on how Paul traveled (*mostly by boat and on foot*)
  - note how Paul's path is rarely straight as he travels to share the Good News
2. **Drop** the rock into the basin of water. Point out the ripples it creates.
3. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The rock creates steady waves that spread from the center to the edges of the basin. The Spirit of Christ forced Paul from Jerusalem on a path that was rarely direct and often turbulent. Paul went from port to port, person to person, inspired by the Holy Spirit to create a ripple effect of faith that lasts to this day.

**Teaching Tip**

Users of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* will also want to refer to the maps in the back regarding Paul's journeys.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** This activity could expand into a geography lesson by inviting the students to use the internet to explore the modern names of the cities and nations Paul visited. The students could also explore the air distances and travel times between certain ports.

## DAY 2

## Materials Needed

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

## Name Your Flame Game (15 minutes)

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

1. **Introduce** the activity using these or similar words:
  - Pentecost was an incredible day. The Apostles and all who heard them experienced the Gifts of the Holy Spirit:
    - Wisdom
    - Understanding
    - Counsel (Right Judgment)
    - Fortitude (Courage)
    - Knowledge
    - Piety (Reverence)
    - Fear of the Lord (Wonder and Awe)
  - Some people thought the Apostles were drunk. But Peter spoke courageously, helping everyone understand, and three thousand people became Christians that day.
2. **Select** six volunteers to help you with this part of the activity. Invite them to come forward, but tell them and everyone in the class to remain silent. Affix a flame to each of their foreheads, making sure they don't see what is written on their flame.
3. **Instruct** the rest of the class to treat those wearing the flames according to what is written on their flames. For example, tell them that if "U.N. Ambassador" was on a flame, "You're so diplomatic!" or "How can we ever find peace?" Encourage the students to be descriptive with their hints but not obvious. Tell those wearing the flames to remain silent. Allow 3 to 5 minutes of interaction, with those wearing flames mingling with the rest of the class. Then invite those wearing the flames to return to the front of the class.
4. **Ask** each flame-wearer, one at a time, the following:
  - What do you think your flame says? (*After they guess, have them remove and view their flames.*)
  - What inspired your guess?
5. **Invite** the students to share the kind of gifts they mentioned that pertain to each flame-wearer's role.
6. **Conclude** by sharing the following or similar words:
  - The Apostle Paul wrote in his First Letter to the Corinthians that there are many types of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit; many ways to serve God, but the same God; parts of a body, but one body in Christ. Peter and the Apostles experienced new gifts and growth on Pentecost. They were able to do new things to serve God. Though such changes may not happen so suddenly in our lives, we must be open to the movement of the Spirit as we are each called to share the Good News in unique ways.



**DAY 3****Taming the Green-Eyed Monster** (15 minutes)**Materials Needed**

- art paper, one sheet for each student  
*(optional)*
- green markers or crayons  
*(optional)*

**Objective:** To relate to an emotion that could hinder or help both a person and the group of which they are a part.

1. **Introduce** this activity in these or similar words:
  - The playwright William Shakespeare called jealousy a green-eyed monster. It gets the best of people. Jewish people believed that Peter's shadow could cure people as he walked by them. Their leaders became jealous and threw Peter in jail, but he later escaped.
2. **Direct** the students to write two "I" statements, the first stating something that makes them jealous, and the second stating how they respond to this jealousy. For example, (1) "I get jealous of good athletes" and (2) "I practice harder."
3. **Ask** the following questions:
  - What goals do you hope to accomplish in the next few years?
  - What setbacks or obstacles might hinder you? Could jealousy hinder you or the groups that might help you achieve your goals?
  - What gifts will help you persevere during challenging times?
4. **Invite** the students to share their answers to the final question with the class.
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - We sometimes don't think clearly when we are jealous. The Jewish leaders wanted to kill the Apostles because their jealousy was getting the best of them. One of the Jewish leaders, however, advised the rest to be patient. He wasn't guided by his jealousy. If the Apostles were truly doing God's work, he said, there would be no way to stop them, which proved to be true.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** Expand this lesson into an art project. Distribute the art paper and markers or crayons, and instruct the students to draw a jealous face, writing sentences that form the features (eyes, mouth, nose) and outline (jawline, hair).

**DAY 4****Materials Needed**

- 
- a Bible

**Seeing the Light** (5 minutes)

**Objective:** To experience the blindness and subsequent challenges Paul faced as he began his ministry.

1. **Instruct** the students to close their eyes and cover them with their hands.
2. **Read** Acts of the Apostles 9:11–19 aloud, followed by 9:26–30, reminding the students to keep their eyes closed and covered. Following the reading, remind the students that Saul's encounter with Jesus left him blind for three days until Ananias visited him.
3. **Invite** the students to uncover and open their eyes. Allow time for their eyes to adjust.
4. **Ask** the following questions:
  - Your eyes were closed and covered for under 2 minutes. Was it hard to adjust to seeing the light?
  - What challenges did Paul face once he was able to see again?
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The faith we learn today is a gift from God, but we are indebted to Saul (Paul) and other missionaries who followed him despite many challenges.



## Chapter Project

### Back to the Gardens

#### Materials Needed

- a clip from *Back to the Future* (1985, 116 minutes, rated PG), from 1:31:53 to 1:45:25, available on YouTube
- Bibles, one for each student



**Objective:** To show that faith demands trust in God and the story God writes for us by comparing well-known Bible stories to a modern story about the problems we create when trying to force our future plans.

1. **Introduce** the movie clip by saying these or similar words:
  - Our student book invites us to hop in a time machine back to the first century. Some of us might go back in time to relive an event, while others might go back to change things. The movie *Back to the Future* is about a teenager who tries to use a time machine to tamper with future events.
2. **Show** the clip from 1:31:53 to 1:45:25.
3. **Ask** these or similar questions:
  - Why does Marty want to change the future?
  - Why does Doc not want to tamper with future events?
  - What, if any, harm could come from altering historical events?
4. **Arrange** the students into small groups of three or four. Distribute the Bibles, and assign each group one of these two stories:
  - Genesis 3:1–13 (Adam and Eve in the Garden)
  - Matthew 26:26–46 (Jesus' Agony in the Garden)
5. **Invite** the groups to rewrite and act out the story they were assigned, altering one detail and imagining how that might change the outcome. They can add characters and adjust the plot. Use your judgment in balancing preparation time with performance time.
6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - Our Church's past is the story of our salvation. Things happened as they did for the sake of God's will. When Jesus told his Apostles that he had to go to Jerusalem to die, Peter tried to stop him. Jesus scolded Peter for thinking like a human instead of accepting God's will.
  - In Acts of the Apostles, Peter accepts the gifts and mission God planned for him. When Paul began persecuting the followers of Jesus, God intervened and changed his life, making Paul a powerful force for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Faith demands trust in God and the story God writes for us.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Chapter 1 Reading Guide

## Key Words

Match each word in the word bank with its definition. Search for blue words throughout the chapter.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The biblical event after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven, when the Holy Spirit came on the disciples as Jesus had promised.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. To actively work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

a. evangelize  
b. Pentecost

## Pentecost

Complete the sentences.

- Acts of the Apostles is a written account of the Church that emerged after Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ into Heaven.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ focuses on the work of Saints Peter and Paul in spreading the Word of God to the far reaches of the Roman Empire.
- A main theme of Acts of the Apostles is how the \_\_\_\_\_ guided the Apostles so God's Word could spread.
- Jesus told the \_\_\_\_\_ that they would evangelize, spreading the Good News to the ends of the Earth.
- Jesus' promise about the coming of the \_\_\_\_\_ was fulfilled at an event called Pentecost.
- When the Holy Spirit came, there was a noise like a strong driving \_\_\_\_\_, and what looked like tongues of \_\_\_\_\_ touched each person there.

## The Work of Saint Peter

Complete the sentences.

- Peter continued Jesus' mission through his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Despite persecutions and threats to his life, Peter continued to \_\_\_\_\_ bravely.
- Peter's preaching attracted some non-Jewish people, called \_\_\_\_\_, to believe in Christ.



## Chapter 1 Reading Guide

List three important things to know about Saint Peter.

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## The Travels of Saint Paul

Complete the sentences.

1. Saint Paul was known as \_\_\_\_\_ before his conversion.
2. The Christian leaders sent Paul on \_\_\_\_\_ journeys to cities that had not yet heard about Christ.
3. Like Peter, Paul upset the Jewish leaders, who \_\_\_\_\_ him by challenging his authority and even physically attacking him.
4. After helping the Church to spread and flourish, Paul was beheaded, becoming one of the Church's first \_\_\_\_\_ .



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 1

# Chapter 1 Quiz

## Multiple Choice

Write the letter of the best answer in the space provided before each number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Acts of the Apostles focus on the work of Saints \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in spreading the Word of God to the far reaches of the Roman Empire.
- Peter, Paul
  - James, John
  - Andrew, Philip
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Jesus told the Apostles they would \_\_\_\_\_, spreading the Good News to the ends of the Earth.
- evangelize
  - proselytize
  - profess
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Jesus' promise about the coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at an event called \_\_\_\_\_.
- Christmas
  - Easter
  - Pentecost
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Under \_\_\_\_\_ leadership, the Gentile converts formed communities, the first churches.
- Jesus'
  - James's
  - Paul's
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ became the visible head of the Church on Earth after Jesus' Ascension.
- Paul
  - Peter
  - Jesus



## Fill in the Blank

Read the words in the word bank. Write the letter of the word that completes each sentence in the space provided before each number.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Apostles formed new \_\_\_\_\_ when they traveled to preach the Good News

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. To \_\_\_\_\_ is to actively work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_ is the biblical event that occurred after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven, when the Holy Spirit came on the disciples as Jesus had promised.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a term used to refer to a non-Jewish person.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_ upset the Jewish leaders, who persecuted and attacked him for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

- a. evangelize
- b. Pentecost
- c. Christian communities
- d. Gentile
- e. Paul



# Chapter 1 Answer Keys

## Chapter 1 Reading Guide

### Key Words

1. b
2. c

### Pentecost

1. Resurrection, Ascension
2. Acts of the Apostles
3. Holy Spirit
4. Apostles
5. Holy Spirit
6. wind, fire

### The Work of Saint Peter

1. words, actions
2. evangelize
3. Gentiles
- 4.–6. *Answers may vary but could include:*
  - Saint Peter emerged as leader of the early Christian community.
  - Peter guided the Apostles in choosing a successor to Judas.
  - Peter spoke to the crowds at Pentecost.
  - Peter continued Jesus' mission through his words and actions.
  - Jewish leaders put Peter in prison twice; both times he was freed by angels.
  - Peter had a vision that people of all races can become followers of Christ.

### The Travels of Saint Paul

1. Saul
2. missionary
3. persecuted
4. martyrs

## Chapter 1 Quiz

### Multiple Choice

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. c  |
| 2. a | 7. a  |
| 3. c | 8. b  |
| 4. c | 9. d  |
| 5. b | 10. e |

### Fill in the Blank





# Chapter 2

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# The New Testament Letters

## Chapter Summary

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

### Chapter 2

## Background for the Teacher

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

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

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

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

## Teacher's Prayer

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

### Teaching Tip

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

# Chapter at a Glance

Core Text: Student Book

## Core Understandings

1. The New Testament letters provided important guidance to the early Christian communities.
2. The twenty-one letters can help us live as Christians today.
3. Saint Paul addressed many concerns that confused and divided early Christian communities, including his important teaching that God's plan of salvation is for all people.
4. Writers of the New Testament letters guided early Christians through many misunderstandings and conflicts, focusing on the importance of love. These messages were, and continue to be, transformational.

## Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

## Catechism Connection

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

## Key Scripture Passages

- Matthew 27:27–31
- John 12:12–19
- Acts of the Apostles 17:1–10
- Romans 3:23–31
- Galatians 2:11–14
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:6
- James 2:14–17

## Key Word

- resurrection

## Chapter Project

- "In the Footsteps of Matteo Ricci," page 54

## Prayer Suggestions

- **Prayer:** Loving God, you spoke words of encouragement and wisdom to the earliest Christians through the letters of Paul and other wise guides. Speak to us today, and write words on our hearts that will keep us on your path for all our lives. Amen.
- **Scripture Reading:** Romans 1:8–12
- **Student Book:** "Connect with God," page 439
- **Music:** "Your Grace Is Enough," based on 1 Corinthians 12:9, available with lyrics on YouTube

# DAY 1

## Student Book

Introduction, pages 439–440

## Core Understanding

The New Testament letters provided important guidance to the early Christian communities.

## Materials Needed

- the song/video “Your Grace Is Enough,” available on YouTube *(optional)*
- a digital student response system *(optional)*
- copies of the handout “Chapter 2 Reading Guide,” pages 55–56, one for each student *(optional)*
- colored paper squares, two of different colors for each student
- Bibles, one for each student

## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 35:

- Lord, you are the author of all life. As you write the story of salvation, use us as the pages on which you write. As your words become ours, guide our hands and voices to spread the Good News of your saving love. Amen.

## Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students’ experience by asking the following questions:
  - How do you communicate? If you had a choice to contact a friend or relative, whether they’re across the street or across the planet, how would you do it?
2. **Invite** volunteers to share their answers. As different means of communication are mentioned, ask for a show of hands from those students who regularly communicate in this way.
3. **Raise** the following questions:
  - Which means of communication is quickest?
  - Which allows you to express yourself more clearly?
  - Which brings you closer to the other person?
  - Which lasts the longest?

#### 4. **Conclude** with these or similar words:

- Texting, photo sharing, social networking, and video chatting apps are popular ways to stay in touch with people. When our Church was young, there was one way to communicate with people at a distance—letters. Those letters have endured in the pages of the Bible. Today, we'll learn how they continue to guide us.

### Teaching Tip

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



**Digital Option:** Use your digital student response system to ask the questions and share answers.

### Core Content (10 minutes)



**Review** pages 439–440 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “Introduction” on the handout “Chapter 2 Reading Guide,” or use the handout as a homework assignment or as a review at the end of the week. Collect and grade the handout at the end of the week.
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Letters sent via messengers were the only way to communicate over long distances when the Church was young.
  2. Saint Paul and other leaders used letters to deal with problems in the communities of faith they founded.
  3. These leaders’ letters are an important part of the New Testament, and their wisdom has meaning even for today’s Church.

### Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

#### Keep in Touch!

**Objective:** To help the students understand that letter writing was a key way early Church leaders communicated with growing Christian communities.

#### 1. **Introduce** this activity in these or similar words:

- The oldest letter in the New Testament is the First Letter to the Thessalonians. Saint Paul brought the Good News to Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. As we’ll discover, his missionary work was rarely easy, and he often had to respond to problems back in places he’d left behind.

## Teaching Tip

Many of the New Testament letters are brief and likely not well known to the students. Encourage them to use their Bible's table of contents when locating these letters to save valuable class time. The letters also include mention of places that are difficult to pronounce. If a student stumbles over a word, be quick to pronounce it, and invite the class to repeat it.

2. **Distribute** two different colored paper squares to each student. Tell the students that they can select two responses to the question you will pose. They should indicate their first choice with the color you designate as "first choice" and their second choice with the color you designate as "second choice." Use the following question:
  - Suppose you spent three weeks visiting a faraway city and met new people. You'd like some way to remember them and keep in touch. What would you do before you went back home?
3. **Explain** that the students may vote for two options by using the colored squares to indicate their first and second choices. Answer options could include:
  - Take a selfie.
  - Exchange photo sharing app contact information.
  - Exchange video calling information.
  - Exchange phone numbers so you can text.
  - Exchange phone numbers so you can call.
  - Exchange postal mail addresses.
4. **Distribute** the Bibles, and invite a volunteer to find and read Acts of the Apostles 17:1–10 aloud. Then conduct a brief review, asking the students to summarize the farewell Paul and Silas had with the Thessalonians. Following the discussion, take a second quick poll, using the following as content:
  - Suppose Paul and Silas had a similar experience today. How do you think word of their departure might have spread the quickest?
5. **Instruct** the students to vote for two options using the colored squares to indicate their first and second choices. Answer options could include:
  - Jason's Facebook page
  - Paul's Twitter feed
  - an Instagram post
  - a TikTok video created by the city authorities of Thessalonica
6. **Assign** a volunteer to find and read 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:6 aloud. Then ask the following question and read the possible answers aloud to the students:
  - What did Saint Paul do when he was unable to return to Thessalonica?
    - He overcame the obstacles Satan threw in his way and went anyway.
    - He wrote them a letter and sent it with a messenger.
    - He sent Timothy in his place to get a full report.
    - He sent them a letter in a bottle.

### 7. **Conclude** with these or similar words:

- Paul and other early Christian leaders had fewer, slower, and less dependable options for communication.
- Paul sent Timothy in his place with a letter to show the Thessalonians how important they were to the Church. It was important to stay in touch with far-flung communities of Christians, but it was impossible for Church leaders to be everywhere. Letters were important for keeping in touch with the growing churches in each city and responding to their needs.



**Digital Option:** Use your digital student response system to ask the questions and share answers.

**Optional Activity:** “Think Fast!” (10 minutes), page 50

## Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

**Direct** the students to write their answers to the following questions:

- Name two main ways early Church leaders traveled to spread the faith. (*by boat and by foot*)
- How did early Church leaders communicate with distant communities? (*letters sent by messenger*)
- In what part of the Bible do we find these early communications? (*the New Testament*)



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** Connections can be made from this lesson to history classes by developing presentations or time lines based on research on the development of communications. Highlights could include:

- the use of messengers (the legend of Pheidippides and the Battle of Marathon)
- the rise and demise of the Pony Express in the United States
- the cost and speed of the postal service in the United States
- modern communication, from Morse Code to binary code

## Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 35.

## DAY 2

### Student Book

“Understanding the New Testament Letters,” pages 440–441

### Core Understanding

The twenty-one letters can help us to live as Christians today.

### Materials Needed

- “Chapter 2 Reading Guide” handouts (*optional*)
- Bibles, one for each student

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 35:

➤ Dear God:

It’s me, (Name).

I’m okay, though I’m never quite sure what to expect from you during this class.

Please help our class to be open to whatever comes, trusting that it will bring us closer to you.

I love you, I thank you, and I praise you.

Your Friend,

(Name)

### Teaching Tip

Explain that this prayer is purposefully different. It is written like a letter. Display it on the board and invite the students to recite it slowly in unison, inserting their names at the proper times.



## Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Ask** the students to find “Living the Gospel” on page 444 in the student book, and invite a volunteer to read it aloud.
2. **Engage** the students’ experience, using these or similar words:
  - Writing letters is a lost art. Almost everything is digital, from texting to sending digital birthday cards.
3. **Ask** the following questions, and invite volunteers to share their responses:
  - How long does it take to write a thank-you note for a gift you’ve received?
  - About how long does it take for a letter to get from a sender to the recipient? *about three to five days*
  - Why are letters better than digital forms of communication? *(The effort shows the writer cares. They have a sense of permanence.)*
  - How is digital communication superior to letters? *(You can quickly write much more content. It gets there instantly.)*
4. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The ease and speed of communication have increased substantially since the New Testament letters were written, but it’s hard to surpass the spirit we’ll discover in these letters.

## Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 440–441 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “Understanding the New Testament Letters” on the handout “Chapter 2 Reading Guide.”
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Most of the twenty-one New Testament letters begin with a greeting, continue with a message addressing the writer’s concerns, and end with personal messages and a blessing.
  2. We must often make educated guesses about the concerns to which the New Testament respond.
  3. The values found in the New Testament letters help us to live as Christians today.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### He Said What?

**Objective:** To illustrate the one-sidedness of the New Testament letters.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:

- As our student book says, the New Testament letters can be challenging to understand, for they are often one part of a larger conversation. Many of the letters respond to a problem or an issue, presented through a messenger or a letter, that we no longer have. The New Testament letters are often the response, and we are left to make educated guesses about the problem from the response.
- For example, assume your friend Jane (*use any name*) told you she is no longer speaking to Leah (*again, use any name*) because of their science fair project. Jane says that Leah made charts even though charts were not the best graphic to use, and their grade suffered because of them. Now Jane has to go home and tell her parents about their science fair grade.
- What might you assume about what caused the problem? What do you think was the result of the problem? (*Take some time to ask the students how they arrived at their conclusions.*)
- What clues in Jane's story led you to think this is the problem?
- These are all good guesses, made from the clues given, but they are guesses based on your friend's telling of the story. We have the same issue in many New Testament letters. We often have disagreements and concerns, but we are seeing only one side of the discussion.

2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the students to find Galatians 2:11–14. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud.

3. **Arrange** the students into five groups. Have each group select a reporter, a recorder, and a reader. Write the following questions (but not the answers) on the board where all can see. Direct each group to reread the passage from Galatians and answer the questions. Tell the students that each group should take notes and be able to share answers for all five questions with the class but that they will report back to the class on only one question.

- What does Paul say about Peter? (*Peter had been eating with Gentile believers but then changed his mind. Paul calls him a coward.*)
- According to the Letter to the Galatians, what does Peter believe about eating with Gentiles? (*He is afraid to eat with them because of the men sent by James.*)
- What does Paul report he said to Peter? (*"You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?"*)
- What can we know for certain from this Scripture passage? (*Paul's perspective: It is acceptable to eat with and live like Gentiles.*)
- What do we think we can safely assume (*but have no confirmation of*) from Peter? (*Peter thought it was acceptable to eat with Gentiles, but then he changed his mind and thought Gentiles should become like Jews.*)

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



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

**Optional Activity:** "Dear . . . Sincerely" (15 minutes), page 51

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Instruct** the students to write their name and three facts or concepts that are important to understanding the New Testament letters.
2. **Direct** the students to write a one-sentence greeting, as if they might be writing a letter to Christian communities today.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 35.

## DAY 3

### Student Book

"Themes in the Letters of Saint Paul," pages 441–444

### Core Understanding

Saint Paul addressed many concerns that confused and divided early Christian communities, including his important teaching that God's plan of salvation is for all people.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter 2 Reading Guide" handouts *(optional)*
- Bibles, one for each student
- a recent example of a famous or powerful person who experienced an embarrassing setback *(optional)*
- a classroom crucifix
- several copies of a supermarket tabloid or a website that focuses on celebrity gossip *(optional)*
- internet access *(optional)*

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 35:

- Lord, you changed Saint Paul from an opponent of the Good News to its more passionate proponent. Please change our hearts and minds today so that we might better understand and share your word with all whom we encounter. We make this prayer in your most holy name. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the students to find "What Do You Think?" on page 445 in the student book. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud.
2. **Lead** a discussion based on the questions presented in the student book.
3. **Ask** the students to name what they think would be the most pressing concern for the world today, if time allows.

### Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 441–444 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section "Themes in the Letters of Saint Paul" on the handout "Chapter 2 Reading Guide."

- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. Saint Paul's letters emphasize the importance of Jesus' death on the cross because through it our sins were forgiven.
  2. Paul's letters also emphasized that everyone who believes in Christ will be raised—body and soul—to new life.
  3. Paul's letters teach that Jesus came to save all people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### From So Good to So Bad So Quickly

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

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

#### Teaching Tip

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

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

#### Teaching Tip

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

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



**Digital Option:** If time allows, invite the students to search the internet for images of crosses and explore the different ways they can be artistically depicted. Invite the students to consider how a symbol of death and torture has become a deeply meaningful symbol for Christians.

**Optional Activity:** "Laying Down the Law" (15 minutes), page 52

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Ask** the students to respond to these prompts in writing:
  - How do the New Testament letters interpret Jesus' death on the cross?
  - After Jesus' Crucifixion, how do you think his early followers overcame the negative perception surrounding Jesus and his mission, in order to spread the Good News?
2. **Arrange** the students into pairs, and direct them to share their responses.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 35.

## DAY 4

### Student Book

“Themes in the Other Letters” to end of chapter, pages 444–448

### Core Understanding

Writers of the New Testament letters guided early Christians through many misunderstandings and conflicts, focusing on the importance of love. These messages were, and continue to be, transformational.

### Materials Needed

- five blindfolds
- five sticky notes
- “Chapter 2 Reading Guide” handouts (*optional*)
- Bibles, one for each student
- copies of the handout “Chapter 2 Quiz,” pages 57–58, one for each student

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 35:

- Dear Jesus, we face many challenges as we grow in faith, both inside and beyond the doors of this class. Help us learn through our struggles in faith, so that our focus might be firmly on you. We ask this in your most holy name. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Draw** a target on the board. Ask for five volunteers, and blindfold them. Give each volunteer a sticky note. Line the volunteers up, facing the target.
2. **Signal** the rest of the class to be quiet. Then erase the target and re-draw it elsewhere on the board.
3. **Ask** the volunteers, one at a time, to try to place their sticky notes on the target. When all five have tried, ask them to remove their blindfolds.
4. **Praise** the winner (the one closest). Then ask the volunteers to share why they did so poorly.
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - Sometimes our efforts to understand things can be like hitting a moving target. This is similar to the experience of the early Church, as people struggled through misunderstandings and disagreements. The early followers of Jesus were forging a path. They had to determine what this new life in Christ should look like, and the answers weren’t always immediately clear. The New Testament letters were written to clarify misunderstandings and to unify, or set firm, the target or goal.



## Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 444–448 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the section “Themes in the Other Letters” on the handout “Chapter 2 Reading Guide.” When the students finish, collect and grade the handout.
- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. The letter writers of the New Testament helped the early Christians understand and respond to challenges within and beyond their faith communities.
  2. The letters of Peter, James, and John helped Christians make sense of diverse topics such as suffering, integrity, and love.
  3. The New Testament letters tell people of every time and culture how to live as Christians.

**Optional Activity:** “Opposites” (10 minutes), page 53

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Faith in Action

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

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

### Teaching Tip

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



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



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the lists for credit or grading.



### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Distribute** the handout "Chapter 2 Quiz," and allow the students time to complete it.
2. **Collect** the quizzes for grading.



### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 35.

## Optional Activities

### DAY 1

### Think Fast! (10 minutes)

**Objective:** To recognize and simulate factors influencing communication in the early Church.

1. **Set** the scenario for this activity in these or similar words:
  - Imagine it is AD 51, and your friend is boarding a boat in the port of Thessalonica. He mentions his journey will likely take him to see Paul, who converted you to Christianity before he and Silas escaped the angry mob. Your friend offers to bring Paul a message from you, but the ship is about to sail. You have 3 minutes to think and write. What message would you send to Paul? Compose a short message of no more than twenty words.
2. **Ask** the students to raise their hands if they wrote messages of thanks to Paul. Then ask them to raise their hands if they expressed concern for Paul's well-being. Finally, ask them to raise their hands if they asked Paul questions about faith. Invite volunteers to share.
3. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - Communication was far from instant when the Church was young. Factors such as wind, tides, and the availability of messengers could speed or hinder the delivery of a message. The Church's leaders made the best of the situation to nurture the growth of faith communities.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the messages for credit or grading.

**DAY 2****Materials Needed**

- Bibles, one for each student

**Dear . . . Sincerely** (15 minutes)

**Objective:** To understand the structure of the New Testament letters.

1. **Begin** with this conversation starter:
  - How do you begin texting or instant messaging conversations?
  - How do you usually wrap things up?
  - Our modern conversations start fairly simply and end even more simply, if at all. We dive straight into conversations, and some never seem to end. Let's look at how they did things in New Testament times.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the students to find the first chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians. Ask a student to begin reading. You can stop the student after three verses, five, or all ten. Then say:
  - This lengthy greeting is typical of the New Testament letters. It's not only the "from" and "to," but usually a heartfelt spiritual message. How does it compare to how you initiate your texts or posts?
3. **Direct** the students to find 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Then say these words:
  - This lengthy ending is also typical. Paul and the other writers of the New Testament letters packed a lot of guidance between the beginning and the end. The structure of these letters reveals that the authors wanted to use their communication to build and nurture the communities to which they wrote.
4. **Conclude** by asking a volunteer to find and read aloud the first paragraph of "Living the Gospel" on page 444 in the student book.

**DAY 3****Materials Needed**

- Bibles, one for each student
- internet access

**Laying Down the Law (15 minutes)**

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

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - Do you know that there is an actual law in Missouri that makes driving with an uncaged bear in your car illegal? Many states have laws that sound strange and outdated to us today but that were actually written and became law.
2. **Invite** the students to do an online search for outdated laws that are still on the books in various states. Their goal is to find the strangest law and share it with the class.
3. **Begin** a conversation about all the Jewish laws found in the Old Testament, using these or similar words:
  - How many Laws did God give his Chosen People in the Old Testament?
  - Many people think there were ten, but the Torah outlines 613 laws by which the Jews lived. The first Christians were Jewish, just as Jesus was. Many conflicts arose as Church leaders discerned whether Gentiles (people who weren't Jews) had to become Jewish and follow Jewish laws if they were going to become Christians.
4. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the students to find Romans 3:22–31. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Then share these thoughts:
  - Some Jewish laws seemed pretty extreme, so there were strong feelings about whether the Gentiles would be made to follow them. Has your family ever experienced tension when the rules seem to be more or less strict for certain members?
  - Sometimes laws need to be rethought as times and experiences change. For Christians, the presence of Jesus—God's Son on Earth—brought about a necessary reevaluation of the Law that had been given by Moses in the Old Testament. Paul helped Christians of his time (and today) understand that God is the ultimate source of Law, and that faith in Jesus is central to how we should live.

DAY 4

**Materials Needed**

- Bibles, one for each student

**Opposites** (10 minutes)

**Objective:** To illustrate the simplicity of answers the writers of the New Testament letters used to address complex problems.

1. **Begin** by inviting the students to respond by saying the opposite of the word you say:
  - darkness (*light*)
  - hate (*love*)
  - Christian (*Responses will vary.*)
  - There is no true opposite for the word *Christian*. There may be opponents to Christianity or people who don't believe in Christ. Sometimes the greatest opponent to Christianity can be division among its own members. We've learned that the New Testament letters often provide hints about the problems the early Christian communities faced. The source of the conflict the letters of John address is unclear; however, it is clear that the community was bitterly divided.
2. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the students to find 1 John 2:9–11. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask:
  - What does the writer connect *hate* to? (*darkness*)
  - What does the writer connect *love* to? (*light*)
3. **Share** these or similar words:
  - This same writer later makes another connection to love, writing "God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him" (1 John 4:16).
4. **Conclude** in these or similar words:
  - In simple words, this writer makes an important point. If we're living without love for one another, we live without God, and that dark place is somewhere people of faith can't be. With the care of a father for his spiritual children, the writer tries to make peace amid conflicts.



## Chapter Project

### In the Footsteps of Matteo Ricci

#### Materials Needed

- the Catholic News Service video “Inculturation: The Case of Matteo Ricci,” available on YouTube *(optional)*
- a digital meme app *(optional)*
- art paper, one sheet for each small group of three or four
- markers
- digital illustration tools *(optional)*



**Objective:** To show how a more modern evangelist met the challenge of sharing the Good News with people of diverse cultures.

1. **Ask** the students to find page 448 in the student book. Invite a volunteer to read the first paragraph aloud.
2. **Continue** by having another volunteer read the remaining three paragraphs on page 448 aloud. If you would like to show the video “Inculturation: The Case of Matteo Ricci,” do so now. Then ask the following questions:
  - What two values or gifts did Matteo Ricci show to the Chinese people? (*love, respect*)
  - Why is love so important to the work of a missionary or evangelist? (*You can’t bring the Good News of God’s love to someone you don’t actually love.*)
3. **Introduce** the activity by rereading the first sentence of the last paragraph on page 448 in the student book. Arrange the students into small groups of three or four, and distribute the art paper and markers. Instruct the groups to illustrate the key points of enculturation in the student book (or video) by applying them to youth culture, using one of the following options:
  - Create a meme using an image and slogan illustrating how the Church can respect the culture of young people.
  - Develop a simple statement explaining how the demands of the Gospel might directly challenge an aspect of youth culture, making others uncomfortable, beginning with the popular phrase, “That awkward moment when . . .” Display your statement on a poster.
  - Adapt a cultural expression, such as a common texting abbreviation, to express the Christian faith, creating an “illustrated text” on paper or digitally.
4. **Encourage** the groups to share their favorite creations with the class.
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - We can learn ways to promote unity of faith among Christians throughout the world from the New Testament letters and through the example of people such as Matteo Ricci.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 2 Reading Guide

### Introduction

Circle the correct answer.

- When the Church was just beginning, the only way to communicate over long distances was by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. phone call                      b. letter                      c. smoke signals
- Letters were often used to communicate when a community was having \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. an important football game      b. fireworks      c. some kind of trouble
- Many of the early letters of Saint Paul and other Church leaders are now part of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. the Old Testament                      b. the New Testament                      c. government records

### Understanding the New Testament Letters

Complete the sentences.

- The New Testament Letters usually begin with a \_\_\_\_\_ that includes the names of the writer and the recipient.
- The body of the letter addresses the writer's main \_\_\_\_\_.
- The letter concludes with personal messages, followed by a \_\_\_\_\_.
- We have to make an \_\_\_\_\_ about the concerns the New Testament Letters were responding to.

### Themes in the Letters of Saint Paul

Complete the sentences.

- Paul's letters provided \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to communities that had problems.
- Paul helped Christians understand that Jesus' death by \_\_\_\_\_ was necessary for our \_\_\_\_\_ to be forgiven.
- Paul explained that Jesus came to save not just the Jews but \_\_\_\_\_.



## Themes in the Other Letters

Complete the sentences.

1. People had \_\_\_\_\_ and different \_\_\_\_\_ about how to live as a Christian.
2. Peter's first letter addressed the \_\_\_\_\_ that the first Christians experienced for living their \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. The Letter of James addresses the concern of living our faith with \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. The whole First Letter of John talks about the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. The New Testament Letters provide guidance for people of every \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .





Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 2 Quiz

### Multiple Choice

Write the letter of the best answer in the space provided before each number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Where can the letters of Paul and other Church leaders be found?
- a. Old Testament
  - b. New Testament
  - c. government archives
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. How many epistles are in the New Testament?
- a. 10
  - b. 613
  - c. 21
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Because we don't have the original messages that prompted the letter writers, we often have to \_\_\_\_\_ about the concerns of the early Christian churches.
- a. stop reading
  - b. give up trying to learn
  - c. make educated guesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What is the Greek word that means "letter"?
- a. resurrection
  - b. epistle
  - c. Gentile
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which of the following is the conviction that not only our soul but also our transformed bodies will live on after death?
- a. resurrection
  - b. Gentiles
  - c. epistle



## Fill in the Blank

Read the words in the word bank. Write the letter of the word that completes each sentence in the space provided before each number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Saint Paul helped Christians understand Jesus' death by crucifixion and our belief in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the body.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Saint Paul explained that God's plan is for all people and that the Gentiles need not become \_\_\_\_\_ to be saved.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The letter writers of the New Testament helped resolve \_\_\_\_\_ that naturally arose among new Christians and their communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The New Testament letters provide guidance for \_\_\_\_\_ in the first century and today.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Paul and other evangelists reached out to the \_\_\_\_\_ , baptizing them into the family of God.

- a. Jewish
- b. Gentiles
- c. Christians
- d. misunderstandings
- e. resurrection



# Chapter 2 Answer Keys

## Chapter 2 Reading Guide

### Introduction

1. b
2. c
3. b

### Understanding the New Testament Letters

1. greeting
2. concerns
3. blessing
4. educated guess

### Themes in the Letters of Saint Paul

1. advice, encouragement
2. crucifixion, sins
3. all people

### Themes in the Other Letters

1. misunderstandings, opinions
2. suffering, faith
3. integrity
4. love
5. time, culture

## Chapter 2 Quiz

### Multiple Choice

1. b
2. c
3. c
4. b
5. a

### Fill in the Blank

6. e
7. a
8. d
9. c
10. b



# Chapter A

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## Paul's Early Letters

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the students explore some of Saint Paul's earlier letters as an expansion of chapter 2, "The New Testament Letters." Paul established churches in communities throughout his missionary travels and then wrote letters to guide them on a variety of issues, both practical and complex. Building on themes that have been previously explored, the students further consider Paul's teaching that salvation comes through faith in Jesus alone. The students continue to witness Paul's struggle through conflicts that threatened to divide the Church and rejoice with him through the suffering he shared with Christ.

## Background for the Teacher

When the lector at Mass proclaims yet another second reading from one of Paul's letters, do you find yourself amazed at how much this man wrote? If so, you're probably not alone. Paul was a prolific writer, but his true contribution comes in the impact of his travels, preaching, and writing. Aside from Christ, of course, no one is more responsible than Paul for leading people to know, love, and serve the Lord.

Paul was a tentmaker by trade. His deeply held Jewish faith led him initially to persecute the followers of Jesus. His incredible conversion transformed him into the Church's greatest missionary. He walked and sailed around the Mediterranean region, founding churches along the way. Of course, as he moved on, the people he left behind would lose perspective and find themselves engaged in complex theological disputes. Paul, sometimes gently and often passionately, would provide direction through his letters.

Thirteen of the twenty-one New Testament letters are attributed to Paul. This chapter explores the seven earlier letters, which Paul himself is thought to have written. They can be warm or harsh, poetic or rambling. But through it all, Paul's love of Jesus shines through, along with heartfelt invitations to find our salvation by sharing in this love.

This chapter is designed to take the students deeper into the themes and biblical texts introduced in chapter 2. In many cases, the Scripture readings assigned here pick up where the students left off in chapter 2, reinforcing and deepening their consideration of the themes found in Paul's early letters, which were so central to the development of the Church as we know it today. It is stunning to think how this man, who faced great personal, political, and natural turmoil, managed to spread the faith and hold the Church together. Paul's words allow him to remain our companion on the journey with the youth we serve.

## Teacher's Prayer

Lord, give me the same missionary zeal with which you blessed Saint Paul. Give me wisdom, courage, and persistence in the face of the challenges that may come today. Help me inspire my students to follow in the footsteps of Paul as we seek to learn and share the Good News. Amen.

### Teaching Tip

Observant students might wonder about the odd arrangement of Paul's letters. The term *earlier* refers to when they were written. Of course, they don't appear in the order in which they were written, or First Thessalonians would appear first. Rather, the Bible first presents the nine letters written to faith communities. These are then arranged based on their length, so Romans, the longest, appears first.

# Chapter at a Glance

Core Text: Bible

## Core Understandings

1. Paul founded churches in his missionary travels, and then wrote letters to guide and encourage these communities. The Letter to the Thessalonians addresses the future and the second coming of Christ, while the Second Letter to the Corinthians encourages resilience and faith in the face of challenges.
2. Paul's letters resolve conflicts that emerge as people debate what is essential to faith. Paul tells the Galatians and the Corinthians that the Laws of Moses or individual preachers do not bring salvation. Only faith in Christ Jesus saves.
3. Paul addresses divisions and arguments with calls for unity, reminding people of their common gifts, given by God for service to his Church, "the Body of Christ."
4. In the face of hardships, conflicts, division, and despair, Paul instructs the communities in Rome and Philippi to be joyful, for nothing can keep them from the love of God.

## Catechism Connection

- Paragraphs 787, 790  
(The Church—Body of Christ)
- Paragraph 1001  
(Christ's Resurrection and Ours)
- Paragraph 1831  
(The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit)
- Paragraph 2020 (Christian Holiness)

## Key Scripture Passages

- Romans 8:28–39
- 1 Corinthians 3:1–9, 12:12–31
- 2 Corinthians 12:1–10
- Galatians 2:15–3:5
- Philippians 4:4–9
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4

## Key Words

- empathy
- missionary
- prison letters

*Key Words and definitions for this chapter can be found on the handout "Chapter A Reading Guide," on pages 81–82.*

## Chapter Project

- "Death on a Cross," page 80

## Prayer Suggestions

- **Prayer:** Lord, nothing can separate us from your love. Help us remember that in the end, love is the measure of all we have done. Help us grow deeper in love with Jesus, so that we may live in right relationship with you. Amen.
- **Scripture Reading:** 1 Corinthians 13:13
- **Music:** "We Are One Body," available on YouTube

# DAY 1

## Bible

1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4, 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

*It may be helpful to have the students read the Scripture passages before class.*

## Core Understanding

Paul founded churches in his missionary travels, and then he wrote letters to guide and encourage these communities. The Letter to the Thessalonians addresses the future and the second coming of Christ, while the Second Letter to the Corinthians encourages resilience and faith in the face of challenges.

## Materials Needed

- a penny or a five-dollar bill
- copies of the “Chapter A Reading Guide,” pages 81–82, one for each student *(optional)*
- digital presentation tools *(optional)*
- an image of Paul

## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 62:

- Lord, you provide for the birds and the flowers, and remind us that we have nothing to gain by worrying about the future. And yet we do. Friendships, family, school-work, activities, and peer pressure are just some of the things that give us plenty to worry about. Help us put our trust in you, today and every day. Amen.

## Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students’ experience, using these or similar words:

- Raise your hand silently when you realize who I’m talking about.
- His family was very poor, and he had only one year of formal education. He was only nine when his mother died.
- People made fun of him because he was tall and skinny, and his clothes didn’t fit him well.
- The love of his life died when she was just twenty-two, and he suffered from severe depression.
- He failed in business. As a politician, he lost far more elections than he won.
- Some people hated him so much that he was assassinated while at the theater with his wife.

2. **Ask** the first person who raised their hand to guess the name of the person you have described. Then show the penny or five-dollar bill as you say these or similar words:
  - Abraham Lincoln had a lot going against him, yet somehow he managed to be pretty successful. Two of the elections he did win were for president of the United States. In that role, he helped free millions of slaves. Many people believe his greatness as a leader was inspired by the hardships of his life.
  - Today, we'll learn about Paul, a great leader of faith. He faced personal hardships but helped countless others through their struggles, including us today.

### Core Content (10 minutes)

1. **Read** or review 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4 and 2 Corinthians 12:1–10, and highlight the following information at the appropriate points:
  - Paul founded churches in his missionary travels, and then wrote letters to guide and encourage these communities.
  - Paul's letters addressed many concerns, including anxiety about when Jesus would come again.
  - Paul reassures the Thessalonians that all the faithful, living and dead, will be joined with Jesus when he comes again.
2. **Ask** the students to use their Bibles to complete the section "1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4, 2 Corinthians 12:1–10" on the handout "Chapter A Reading Guide" if there is time, or use the handout as a homework assignment or as a review at the end of the week. Collect and grade the handout at the end of the week.



### Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

#### One of Us

**Objective:** To consider how Paul, who faced many challenges, used his gifts to spread the Good News.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words while displaying an image of Paul:
  - Paul is probably more responsible than any other person for the spread of Christianity around the world. He was proud of the great things he did to spread the Good News. But he also admitted to his flaws and his dependence on God's grace.
2. **Instruct** the students to find 2 Corinthians 12:1–10 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then say these or similar words:
  - Some translations refer to Paul's challenge as "a thorn in the flesh," and others call it "a painful physical ailment." We're left to wonder what this might mean. What do you think Paul's thorn was? (*Take responses, reminding the students of Paul's conversion story if necessary.*)
  - With God's grace, Paul's weakness became strength. In our time, many people move beyond thorns and challenges to celebrate their abilities and gifts.



3. **Arrange** the students into small groups of three or four. Instruct the groups to develop a one-page or one-slide presentation that tells the story of a person who faced significant setbacks and was able to overcome personal challenges to do good. The person can be a family member, an international figure, or even a literary character. If examples are needed, suggest Mother Teresa, Stephen Hawking, Susan B. Anthony, Maya Angelou, Helen Keller, or other relevant names.
4. **Invite** the groups to share their presentations. Then conclude by again displaying the image of Paul and by sharing these or similar words:
  - The Good News is proclaimed by blind lectors who use Braille. The deaf hear the Gospel translated into sign language. An elderly priest can roll his wheelchair up a ramp to the altar. There is hope for all of us to spread the Good News.
  - Other challenges, such as depression, anxiety, addiction, or dyslexia might hinder people, but nothing is impossible with God.
  - It is possible that the strength God created in Paul was the gift of empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. The people to whom Paul wrote letters were anxious, hurting, or persecuted. Paul endured all these things too. By admitting his weakness, Paul gained strength.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Create a rubric to assess the presentations for credit or grading.

**Optional Activity:** "When Will Jesus Come?" (20 minutes), pages 74–75

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Instruct** the students to write the following:
  - their name
  - a complete sentence describing a time when they struggled to connect or communicate with others.
2. **Direct** the students to share their responses with a partner.
3. **Circulate** among the students, and conclude by asking volunteers to share their responses. Ask how their struggles might help them identify with the struggles of Paul and the other disciples.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 62.

## DAY 2

### Bible

Galatians 2:15–3:5

*It may be helpful to have the students read the Scripture passage before class.*

### Core Understanding

Paul's letters resolve conflicts that emerge as people debate what is essential to faith. Ultimately, Paul tells the Galatians and the Corinthians that the Laws of Moses or individual preachers do not bring salvation. Only faith in Christ Jesus saves.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter A Reading Guide" handouts *(optional)*
- the video "Acts 15 The Council of Jerusalem" (3:52), available on YouTube *(optional)*
- a tray
- a few bottles of water
- several disposable Styrofoam cups

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 62:

- Good and loving God, you are ever patient with us as we often lose track of what is important in our relationship with you. Help us remember that our greatest call is simply to believe in your Son, Jesus. We ask for this grace in every part of our lives. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students' experience, using these or similar words:
  - Whether it is two friends making a bet or two world leaders agreeing on an important treaty, what gesture do people share to seal the deal?
  - A handshake is often the best way to come together or show your care or respect for someone.
2. **Ask** if anyone has a fun and appropriate handshake they would like to share with the class.
3. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - Paul reports in his Letter to the Galatians that a handshake sealed the deal in Jerusalem at the first major meeting of the Church. Paul and Barnabas shook hands with Peter, James, and John to show that they were partners.

## Core Content (10 minutes)

1. **Read** or review Galatians 2:15–3:5, and highlight the following information at the appropriate points:
  - Paul's letters resolve conflicts that emerge as people debate what is essential to faith.
  - One such conflict involved whether Gentiles needed to follow the same laws as the Jews who had become Christian.
  - Paul reminds the Galatians, and us, that we are made right with God not by obeying religious laws but by believing in Jesus.
2. **Ask** the students to use their Bibles to complete the section "Galatians 2:15–3:5" on the handout "Chapter A Reading Guide" if there is time.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Paul Is Appalled

**Objective:** To explore Paul's teaching that faith in Jesus is essential to salvation.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - The care of God's creation is an important principle for Catholics. To show our concern for the environment, our class will form a Nature Lovers' Club. All you have to do to join is drink a toast with me. *(Show the students a tray with bottled water and a stack of disposable Styrofoam cups.)*
  - Who will join me? *(Pause to see if anyone reacts.)*
  - What's wrong with this picture? *(Caring for creation includes monitoring our use of disposable items, especially those that leave a lasting effect on the environment. That would go against our principles.)*
  - The early Christians faced a far more serious and complex decision than this example. Peter and Paul and most of the first Christians were Jewish, just as Jesus had been. The people who weren't Jews (Gentiles) began to become Christians. Some people insisted that Gentiles should become Jewish before they became Christian. This meant following some Jewish Laws that seemed pretty extreme.

### Teaching Tip

At the heart of the debate regarding Jewish Law was whether Gentiles would be required to be circumcised. Though the passage for this lesson does not mention circumcision, it is mentioned in the video, which is based on Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15. Decide in advance how you wish to approach this subject or how you will respond to questions regarding it if you choose to use the video.



2. **Show** the video “Acts 15 The Council of Jerusalem” now if you would like to use this teaching tool. If you prefer, you can read Acts of the Apostles, chapter 15, with the class. Then say these or similar words:
  - The early Church leaders agreed that salvation came by the grace of Jesus and chose not to impose Jewish Law on the Gentiles. But the debate did not end there.
  - Paul had to rebuke Peter—the first Pope—in public when Peter had second thoughts about their agreement. That didn’t end the problem either. After Paul moved on from the Christian community in Galatia, other missionaries came and taught that Gentile Christians must follow Jewish Law. And the Galatians, who were mostly Gentiles, listened. Paul was angry.
3. **Instruct** the students to find Galatians 2:15–3:5 in their Bibles. Remind them that they studied Galatians 2:11–14 in chapter 2. Ask a volunteer to briefly summarize that passage. Then direct the students to silently read Galatians 2:15–3:5. When all have finished, dramatically read 3:1–5 aloud for the class.
4. **Arrange** the students into pairs. Ask the students to discuss these questions and record their answers, identifying a direct quote from the Scripture passage to support their answers:
  - What problem is Paul is addressing? (*how a person is made right with God*)
  - What is Paul’s answer to this question? (*faith, not the Law*)
  - What brings a person life? (*faith in Christ Jesus*)
  - Why does Paul say the Galatians are being foolish? (*They are placing their trust in the Law.*)
5. **Reconvene** the large group and discuss student responses. Then conclude with these or similar words:
  - Paul insisted that faith in Christ Jesus, not the Law, was most important.
  - Saint Paul’s bold efforts to preach the Good News to Gentiles made a huge difference in the growth and vibrancy of the Church, for it meant they didn’t need to follow Jewish Law but, instead, needed to have faith in Jesus.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

**Optional Activity:** “Christ Gets the Glory” (20 minutes), pages 76–77

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

1. **Instruct** the students to write one or two sentences describing the struggle between Peter and Paul in the early Church.
2. **Direct** the students to write another sentence explaining Paul’s position in the conflict.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 62.

## DAY 3

### Bible

1 Corinthians 12:12–31

*It may be helpful to have the students read the Scripture passage before class.*

### Core Understanding

Paul addresses divisions and arguments with calls for unity, reminding people of their common gifts, given by God for service to his Church, the Body of Christ.

### Materials Needed

- “Chapter A Reading Guide” handouts *(optional)*

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 62:

- “Amen” is our response whenever we receive your Body, Lord. For when we receive your Body, we become one Body, your Body. Our “Amen” states that we believe. Bring us together today as one Body in you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

**Engage** the students’ experience, using these or similar words:

- Who knows what a spleen is and what it does? *(It is a bodily organ that filters blood and fights infection.)*
- Can you live without it? *(Yes, other organs, such as your liver, will take over some of its work.)*
- If you had 10 seconds to choose, as a matter of life or death, one part of your body to lose, which part would that be? *(Wait 10 seconds, and then take a few responses, asking some students to explain their response.)*
- Even though we can live without certain body parts, and some people live courageously this way each day, most of us would rather not even think about it. We prefer to think of our bodies as whole, for they work better than when one part is hurt or missing. Paul felt the same way about the Church.

## Core Content (10 minutes)

1. **Read** or review 1 Corinthians 12:12–31, and highlight the following information at the appropriate points:
  - The way the people of Corinth were celebrating the Eucharist was dividing the Church there. Paul wrote to remind them what the Eucharist is meant to be.
  - Paul emphasizes that each part of the body has an important role to play.
  - Like a human body, the Body of Christ needs all its parts to function. No part is more important than another. Together, the weak and strong parts help one another, making the Body of Christ its best self.
2. **Ask** the students to use their Bibles to complete the section “1 Corinthians 12:12–31” on the handout “Chapter A Reading Guide” if there is time.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### What Could Go Wrong?

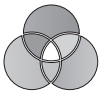
**Objective:** To explore how Paul used the image of the Body of Christ to encourage unity in the Church.

### Teaching Tip

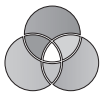
The image of the Body of Christ and this biblical text from First Corinthians in particular is often used (and is found multiple times in the *Connect!* teacher guides), as it speaks to many different aspects of “being Church” and encourages people to identify their own gifts to be used in service of a common mission. Encourage the students to approach the text with fresh eyes and an open mind, for there is always new insight to be gained.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - “The Body of Christ” is a simple phrase we hear each time we receive the Eucharist. It has deep meaning, but people sometimes take it for granted. The people of Corinth did, and Saint Paul needed to correct them.
  - When the Corinthians gathered for the Eucharist, they weren’t acting like one Body in Christ. Paul wrote: “When you meet in one place, then, it is not to eat the Lord’s supper, for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one goes hungry while others get drunk” (1 Corinthians 11:20–21).
  - Paul reminds them of the words Jesus shared at the Last Supper and encourages them to think carefully about the gift Jesus has given them and what it means for Christians to be unified as the Body of Christ.
2. **Instruct** the students to find 1 Corinthians 12:12–31 in their Bibles. Invite a volunteer to read verses 18–21 aloud. Then ask the following questions:
  - What does it mean when someone says, “I’m all thumbs”? (*They are clumsy, especially with their hands.*)
  - Is an opposable thumb much good without a finger to oppose it?

3. **Arrange** the students into four groups. Assign each group one of the following names:
  - We're All Ears
  - All Hands on Deck
  - The Eyes Have It
  - (Number of students in the group) Feet Tall
4. **Instruct** the groups to choose a recorder and a reporter and then spend 3 minutes brainstorming a list of positive things their assigned body part can do for the good of the Church, especially things the other body parts can't do. Then they should spend 1 minute brainstorming negative aspects about the other three body parts.
5. **Invite** each group forward, one at a time, to share positive aspects about their assigned body part.
6. **Ask** each group reporter whether the Body of Christ (the Church) would be better off if all its members did only what their group's body part does.
7. **Direct** the class to identify the most important body part for the Church.
8. **Share** these or similar words:
  - We might begin to understand the frustration and concern Paul felt when he saw the lack of unity among the Christians at Corinth. They were gifted individuals, but they weren't united. The division in Corinth was wounding the Body of Christ.
  - Paul reminds the Corinthians that they can't do without one another and still be the Body of Christ. It's a good reminder for us today as well.
9. **Conclude** by asking a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 13:25–27 aloud.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** A language arts activity can be created by searching online for idioms about the human body and applying these to ways we can strengthen the Body of Christ. For example, people might get sins “off their chest” by confessing them in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.



**Cross-Curricular Opportunity:** A science lesson can be created by searching online for people who have served the Church despite physical challenges, and learning how those challenges affected their physical body. For example, Pope Francis had part of a lung removed as a teen. Pope John Paul II continued in ministry despite Parkinson's disease.

**Optional Activity:** “Gifts We Bring” (20 minutes), page 78

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)

**Instruct** the students to write two sentences, one to describe the Body of Christ and the other to express what contribution they make to the Body of Christ.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 62.

## DAY 4

### Bible

Romans 8:28–39

*It may be helpful to have the students read the Scripture passages before class.*

### Core Understanding

In the face of hardships, conflicts, division, and despair, Paul instructs the communities in Rome and Philippi to be joyful, for nothing can keep them from the love of God.

### Materials Needed

- “Chapter A Reading Guide” handouts (optional)
- digital presentation tools
- copies of the handout “Chapter A Quiz,” pages 83–84, one for each student

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Display** the text of 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 where all can see. Highlight the word *love* whenever it appears.
2. **Begin** by saying “A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians,” and then invite the students to read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 slowly, in unison.
3. **Share** the following or similar words:
  - We say these words with a unified voice. But love doesn’t work if we don’t live it ourselves. Can you see yourself in these verses?
  - Let’s pray these words again together, one phrase at a time. But instead of saying “love,” say your name. We’ll pause after each phrase and conclude with an Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

**Engage** the students’ experience, using these or similar words:

- How do you feel when you’re really down and someone sends you a nice text?
- Saint Paul shared many encouraging words through his letters to people in need of hope. And he often did so while in prison, under threat of death or facing some other hardship. If he could find reason to hope, we all can.

### Core Content (10 minutes)

1. **Read** or review Romans 8:28–39, and highlight the following information at the appropriate points:
  - Paul teaches that although we may not always do the right thing, God wants a relationship with us through Jesus.





- Paul's Letter to the Romans provides a litany of obstacles to that relationship.
  - Paul concludes that nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus.
2. **Ask** the students to use their Bibles to complete the section "Romans 8:28–39" on the handout "Chapter A Reading Guide" if there is time. When the students finish, collect and grade the handout.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Clear the Way

**Objective:** To consider ways to remedy the challenges that create obstacles to the love of Christ in our lives.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - What's the worst thing that could happen today? Cafeteria mystery meat every day of your life? Losing your cell phone? Endless country music on the school loudspeaker?
  - None of these compare to the hardships Saint Paul endured for the love of God.
2. **Instruct** the students to find Romans 8:28–39 in their Bibles. Invite a volunteer to read verses 35 and 38–39 aloud. Then say these or similar words:
  - Paul's Letter to the Romans appears first in the Bible because it's the longest, but it was also written later than First Thessalonians and First Corinthians. Paul had been through a lot, including many struggles with people over questions of faith.
  - Though Paul hadn't yet been to Rome and wouldn't live forever, he wanted people everywhere and always to know that God wants a relationship with us through Jesus no matter what, even though we may not always do what is right.
3. **Direct** the students to prepare a digital comic titled "What I Won't Let Separate Me from the Love of Jesus." Encourage them to identify a personal challenge (such as bullying, peer pressure, or technology), and represent that in one window. Tell the students to focus on ways to overcome these challenges and show that in the second window.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the presentations for credit or grading.

**Optional Activity:** "Share the Joy!" (20 minutes), page 79

### Comprehension Checkpoint (5 minutes)



1. **Distribute** the handout "Chapter A Quiz," and allow the students time to complete it.
2. **Collect** the quizzes for grading.

### Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 62.

## Optional Activities

### DAY 1

### When Will Jesus Come? (20 minutes)

**Objective:** To explore Paul's response to an early Christian community's anxiety regarding when Jesus would come again.

#### Materials Needed

- the video "R.E.M.—It's the End of the World (As We Know It)—Disaster Movies Music Video" (4:03), available on YouTube (*optional*)
- a map of Paul's missionary journeys or other appropriate map



1. **Begin** with the video "R.E.M.—It's the End of the World (As We Know It)—Disaster Movies Music Video" if you have access. Otherwise, begin with these or similar words:
  - In Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, he addresses their concerns about the end of the world as we know it.
  - Let's take a look at Paul's answers and how he addresses their concerns.
2. **Direct** the students to the map of Paul's journeys and identify Thessalonica. Note the dates on the map's time line of Paul's second journey, if possible. Then say these or similar words:
  - Paul was a missionary, a person sent to promote Christianity in foreign lands. He brought the Gospel to the Thessalonians on his second missionary journey, around twenty years after Jesus' death and Resurrection. New Christians learned that Jesus had said he would come again before those living had all died.
  - The Thessalonians weren't getting any younger, and many other believers already had died. So they worried about whether their loved ones who had died would be raised when Jesus comes. And what will happen to those still living if they die before Jesus comes again? And when will Jesus come? It must be soon. It seems they had a lot to worry about, so they sent Paul a letter. Let's look at his response.

### Teaching Tip

If the students' Bibles do not include a map of Paul's missionary journeys, identify and display an appropriate map.

3. **Instruct** the students to find 1 Thessalonians 4:14–17 in their Bibles. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud, and then ask the following questions:
  - What is the problem Paul is addressing? (*Some have died before Jesus has returned.*)
  - How does Paul ease the Thessalonians' anxiety? (*He tells them that all those who die believing in Jesus will be raised, along with the living.*)
  - When does Paul believe that Jesus will come again? (*Paul makes it sound like it will happen in his lifetime: "we who are alive" [1 Thessalonians 4:17].*)
4. **Ask** the students to find 1 Thessalonians 5:1–4 in their Bibles. Direct a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask the following questions:
  - Does Paul know for sure when Jesus will come again? (*It can be any time. No one can be sure.*)
  - So what should believers do? (*Be prepared.*)
5. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - The early Christians worried about when Jesus would come and what would happen at the end of the world as they knew it. Paul told them to stay faithful and to not worry, insisting that Jesus will come again.
  - Nearly two thousand years later, we're still waiting, anticipating the second coming of Christ.

**DAY 2****Materials Needed**

- an image or video of the band The Beatles
- internet access or screenshots of social media fan pages

**Chapter A****Christ Gets the Glory (20 minutes)**

**Objective:** To explore Paul's efforts to diffuse rivalry that threatened unity among early Christians.

1. **Show** the image or video of The Beatles, and explain to the students the popularity of this band. Then say these or similar words:
  - The Beatles were a big deal when your grandparents were young. Fans, especially girls, went crazy for the band. And everyone had their favorite Beatle. Can you think of a band or sports team today that gets people excited like that?
  - Regardless of which member of The Beatles your grandma had a crush on, each member was his own person. However, his fame came from being part of the band. The band was made up of different members, but all four were needed to be The Beatles. As individual musicians, they could not sound like The Beatles. A great football player may be amazing but only as part of a team. If he were on the field apart from the rest of the team, he wouldn't get much accomplished.
  - The early Church had far more serious personality issues. People in Corinth were identifying themselves by their favorite preacher of the Good News—either Paul, Apollos, or Peter—above their common identity as Christians.
  - Paul founded the Church in Corinth and stayed there for eighteen months before Apollos came along.
2. **Instruct** the students to find 1 Corinthians 3:1–9 in their Bibles. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud. Then ask:
  - What is the role of each of the preachers named? (*They are God's servants.*)
  - Who really should matter to the Corinthians? (*God*)
  - What should be the relationship between all the preachers Paul names? (*They should be partners.*)
  - Why might some Corinthians have been more excited about their preachers than they were about Jesus? (*Their preachers were more interesting or exciting.*)
  - How might rivalry weaken the Church? (*Answers will vary.*)

**Teaching Tip**

Spend time before class searching for social media fan pages dedicated to Jesus Christ or Saint Paul. If your school blocks social media use, consider alternative ways to do the following activity. Take screenshots (off campus) that capture the elements of a fan page in order to help the students recreate a facsimile. Screenshots also could provide much of the information the students might glean through their own searching.



3. **Arrange** the students into small groups of three or four. Assign each group the following tasks:
  - Explore a social media fan page (e.g., Facebook or Twitter) for Jesus Christ or Saint Paul. See how many likes or followers they have. Read their posts or tweets, and assess whether they reflect a message that focuses on Christ or the page's author. Note other features such as influences or people they have influenced, books they have written or been mentioned in, professions, etc.
4. **Direct** the groups to create a social media fan page for the class, if time allows, using its features to project a Christian message to the world.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Have the students submit the social media fan pages for credit or grading.

**DAY 3****Materials Needed**

- gift tags, one for each student (*optional*)
- a gift-wrapped box (*optional*)

**Gifts We Bring (20 minutes)**

**Objective:** Paul tells the Corinthians, and us, that our gifts are all from God and are needed to build up the Body of Christ.

1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - To do the work of the Body of Christ, we need many parts, or people, working together to share their gifts.
  - The Corinthians had written Paul regarding the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. It seems that some people's unique gifts were seen as more valuable than others. Paul gave them his perspective to maintain balance.
2. **Instruct** the students to find 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 in their Bibles, and ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then share these or similar words:
  - Rather than emphasizing differences, Paul unifies people by showing them common ground.
  - Our gifts and abilities are all from God, to be used for service to God.
3. **Point** out that Paul writes, "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

**Teaching Tip**

Providing the students with gift tags, such as those used at Christmas, might make this activity more meaningful. Also, consider creating a prop, such as a large gift-wrapped box, to display the students' work.

4. **Tell** the students to pretend they are making a gift tag and write the following:
  - To: Jesus
  - From: (Their name)
  - the name of a gift they feel comes from God that they can use to serve God
5. **Ask** the students to come forward and share what they wrote on their tag. Affirm their work, and display their tags.
6. **Conclude** with these or similar words:
  - All parts need the others to make the Body of Christ.
  - There are many gifts but the same Spirit. We come together to make and serve the Body of Christ.

**DAY 4****Share the Joy! (20 minutes)****Objective:** To respond to Paul's call to be joyful amid suffering.**Materials Needed**

- the video "Pope to Youth: Forget about false idols. Only God offers true hope" (3:10), available on YouTube (*optional*)
- a digital meme app



1. **Begin** with these or similar words:
  - Paul was joyful, which is especially striking considering how much time he spent in prison. Does anyone want to guess how many letters Paul wrote from jail? (*He wrote four prison letters, including the Letter to the Philippians.*)
  - Unlike other letters we've explored, Paul wasn't experiencing frustration with the people of Philippi. Instead, they, like Paul, were suffering at the hands of people who opposed their new faith.
  - Paul encourages them to see suffering as a way of being closer to Christ, who suffered for them. Crazy as it seems, he tells them to rejoice.
2. **Instruct** the students to find Philippians 4:4–9 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then say these or similar words:
  - Paul's words of hope amid darkness have echoed over time. Pope Francis sounded like Paul when he spoke at World Youth Day in Brazil.
3. **Show** the video "Pope to Youth: Forget about false idols. Only God offers true hope," if you have access to it. Otherwise, share these or similar words:
  - Pope Francis tells us to maintain a positive outlook on reality and embrace hopefulness, openness to God, and joy. He says to not look like someone in constant mourning but to spread joy to everyone around us.
4. **Direct** the students to work individually or in small groups to create digital memes that share a message of joy to troubled people. The image can be their own face, Pope Francis, or any positive image. They should try to include a word or phrase from Philippians 4:4–9 in their work.

**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the presentations for credit or grading.



## Chapter Project

### Death on a Cross

#### Materials Needed

- poster board, one sheet for each small group of three or four
- markers
- digital presentation tools *(optional)*

**Objective:** To explore Catholic teaching about capital punishment.

1. **Distribute** the Bibles, and instruct the students to find Philippians 2:5–11. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Then share the following points:
  - Paul probably borrowed these verses from an ancient Christian hymn, but he made a point of adding the verse “even death on a cross.”
  - Jesus suffered a punishment used only on the worst of criminals, and this was shameful to early Christians. Paul wants the Philippians and all Christians to understand Jesus’ example of humility and obedience to his Father. He calls on them to respect and follow Jesus.
  - Murderers and other criminals are still executed. The Catholic Church generally opposes the death penalty.
2. **Distribute** the poster board and markers, and arrange the students into small groups of three or four to create presentations on the death penalty. Topics can include:
  - Catholic social teaching on capital punishment, including Scripture and statements from popes
  - statistics about its use in the United States and around the world
  - the work of advocates and groups that work to abolish capital punishment, such as Sr. Helen Prejean, the Catholic Mobilizing Network, Pax Christi, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
  - references from movies, music, and media about the death penalty



**Digital Option:** The small groups can create their presentations using digital presentation tools.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter A Reading Guide

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4, 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

Circle the correct answer.

#### 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4

- Paul writes to people concerned about those who have already \_\_\_\_\_.
  - died
  - seen Jesus come again
  - left the Church
- On the day of the Lord, we will hear the sound of God's \_\_\_\_\_.
  - trumpet
  - voice
  - harp
- Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to new life \_\_\_\_\_.
  - eventually
  - last
  - first
- The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - window
  - morning
  - night

#### 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

- How many times did Paul beg the Lord to keep him from being too elated about visions and revelation?
  - three
  - one
  - seven
- Christ tells Paul, “My grace is \_\_\_\_\_ for you.”
  - not enough
  - sufficient
  - weakness
- Which of the following is Paul completely content with?
  - weaknesses and insults
  - hardships and persecution
  - both *a* and *b*

#### Galatians 2:15–3:5

Complete the sentences.

- A person is justified only through faith in \_\_\_\_\_ .
- No one is justified with God by doing what the \_\_\_\_\_ requires.
- According to Paul, the life that he now lives, he lives by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God.
- Paul challenges the community, calling them “\_\_\_\_\_ Galatians”!



## 1 Corinthians 12:12–31

Circle the correct answer.

- Christ is like a body, with many \_\_\_\_\_.
  - parts
  - illnesses
  - vestigial organs
- If the whole body was just an eye, how could it \_\_\_\_\_?
  - function
  - see
  - hear
- “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘\_\_\_\_\_’” (1 Corinthians 12:21).
  - I can’t see you
  - I do not need you
  - Pick that up
- If one part suffers, then \_\_\_\_\_ the parts suffer with it.
  - some of
  - all
  - none of

## Romans 8:28–39

Complete the sentences.

- All things will work out well for those who \_\_\_\_\_ God.
- If \_\_\_\_\_ is for us, nobody can be against us.
- Nothing will \_\_\_\_\_ us from the love of Christ.

## Key Words and Definitions

**empathy** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

**missionary** A person sent to promote Christianity in foreign lands.

**prison letters** Four letters that Saint Paul is said to have written while in jail. These include Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter A Quiz

### Multiple Choice

Write the letter of the best answer in the space provided before each number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Paul tells the Thessalonians that those who died believing in Christ will be \_\_\_\_\_ on the Last Day.
- raised
  - buried
  - ignored
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When does Paul say Jesus will come again?
- as soon as possible
  - at any time
  - when the Mayan calendar ends
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Paul tells the Galatians that we are made right with God by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- following the Law
  - performing acts of service and tithing
  - having faith in Jesus
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Some people felt that the Gentiles needed to become \_\_\_\_\_ before they became Christians.
- smarter
  - Samaritans
  - Jewish
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Paul tells the Corinthians that they are the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
- Body
  - Blood
  - Chosen



## Fill in the Blank

Read the words and phrases in the word bank. Write the letter of the word or phrase that completes each sentence in the space provided before each number.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. The four epistles that Saint Paul is said to have written while in jail are called the \_\_\_\_\_ .

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Paul is frustrated by the lack of \_\_\_\_\_ among the Christians in Corinth.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Paul gives the Romans a list of challenges and hardships, and says that none of them will \_\_\_\_\_ us from the love of Christ.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person sent to promote Christianity in foreign lands.

- a. empathy
- b. missionary
- c. prison letters
- d. separate
- e. unity



# Chapter A Answer Keys

## Chapter A Reading Guide

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:4

1. a
2. a
3. c
4. c

### 2 Corinthians 12:1–10

1. a
2. b
3. c

### Galatians 2:15–3:5

1. Jesus Christ
2. Law
3. faith
4. stupid

### 1 Corinthians 12:12–31

1. a
2. c
3. b
4. b

### Romans 8:28–39

1. love
2. God
3. separate

## Chapter A Quiz

### Multiple Choice

1. a
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. a

### Fill in the Blank

6. a
7. c
8. e
9. d
10. b

