

Vocabulary for Unit 1

Advent: The four-week liturgical season during which Christians prepare themselves for the celebration of Christmas.

Christmas: The feast day on which Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus; also refers to the liturgical season that immediately follows Christmas Day.

Eastern Catholic Churches: The twenty-one Churches of the East, with their own theological, liturgical, and administrative traditions, in union with the universal Catholic Church and her head, the Bishop of Rome.

Epiphany: A feast day celebrating the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus and the revelation of the Savior to the Gentiles. Originally celebrated on the twelfth day of Christmas (January 6), Epiphany is now celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8.

icon: From a Greek word meaning “to resemble”; a pictorial representation or image of a religious figure or event typically painted on a wooden panel and used in the prayer and worship of Eastern Christians.

Lent: Traditionally, the span of forty days (excepting Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. In the official Church calendar, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday evening with the celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. It is followed by the Triduum, the three days of the Lord’s Passion, death, and Resurrection. Lent is the season during which believers focus on conversion, turning toward God more completely in their lives.

liminal: Of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition. A liminal experience is one of being between one significant moment and another; a threshold experience; for example, the time of engagement before marriage.

liturgical year: The Church’s annual cycle of religious feasts and seasons that forms the context for the Church’s worship. During the liturgical year, we remember and celebrate God the Father’s saving plan as it is revealed through the life of his Son, Jesus Christ.

liturgy: The Church’s official, public, communal prayer. It is God’s work, in which the People of God participate. The Church’s most important liturgy is the Eucharist, or the Mass.

Magisterium: The Church’s living teaching office, which consists of all the bishops, in communion with the Pope.

Ordinary Time: The time in the liturgical year that is *not* part of a special season like Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter.

Paschal Mystery: The work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ mainly through his life, Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.



Passover: The night the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites marked by the blood of the lamb, and spared the firstborn sons from death. It also is the feast that celebrates the deliverance of the Chosen People from bondage in Egypt and the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Pentecost: The biblical event following the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus at which the Holy Spirit was poured out on his disciples; in the Christian liturgical year, the feast fifty days after Easter on which the biblical event of Pentecost is recalled and celebrated.

ritual: The established form of the words and actions for a ceremony that is repeated often. The actions often have a symbolic meaning.

Tradition: This word (from the Latin, meaning “to hand on”) refers to the process of passing on the Gospel message. Tradition, which began with the oral communication of the Gospel by the Apostles, was written down in the Scriptures, is handed down and lived out in the life of the Church, and is interpreted by the Magisterium under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Triduum: The three days of the liturgical year that begin with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday and end with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday.

Trinity: From the Latin *trinus*, meaning “threefold,” referring to the central mystery of the Christian faith that God exists as a communion of three distinct and interrelated Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery that is inaccessible to human reason alone and is known through Divine Revelation only.

World Youth Day: Instituted by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1985, World Youth Days are convocations of youth held in Rome and in several cities around the world to celebrate and encourage the participation of youth in the life of the Church.

