

| The Twelve Apostles | Clues That the Apostles Were Ordinary People |
|---|---|
| Simon (Peter) | Peter was a fisherman. Known for being impulsive and emotional, he was also dearly loved by Christ. Though his faith in Jesus was deep, he also denied even knowing him during the time of Jesus' arrest. |
| Andrew | Andrew was Peter's brother and also a fisherman. |
| James | James, son of Zebedee, was probably a local fisherman when he met Jesus. |
| John | John, brother of James, was also a fisherman. |
| Philip | There isn't much information about Philip's background, but it is clear that he was one of the first followers of Jesus. He encouraged others, specifically Nathaniel, to do the same. |
| Bartholomew | Many people can relate to Bartholomew, who followed along after Philip without really knowing who Jesus was. |
| Thomas | Thomas was likely born in Galilee, which is mostly farming country. He most likely would have been a tradesman, craftsman, or farmer. He doubted Jesus' Resurrection until he saw and touched Christ's physical wounds. |
| James (sometimes referred to as James the Less) | We know very little about James. The fact that he is relatively obscure might be his most relatable characteristic. People can relate to him being a rather ordinary follower of Christ. |
| Matthew | Matthew was a tax collector for the Romans, and would have been looked down on for collaborating against the Jews with the Roman government. |
| Simon (the Zealot) | Simon was called "the Zealot." He was a member of a group known as political radicals, determined to overthrow the Romans. |
| Jude | Along with Simon the Zealot and James the less, Jude is among the least-known disciples. He has been characterized as a tenderhearted, gentle man. |
| Judas Iscariot | Judas was an outsider and stranger to all the other Apostles. Though he betrayed Jesus, we know he regretted his actions because he threw down the silver he had received for identifying Jesus, and committed suicide. |

Although Jesus entrusted the Apostles with sharing in his mission and leading the Church, they were not perfect. For example, they sometimes failed to understand Jesus' most basic teachings. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were overly concerned with rank and privilege (see Mark 10:35–40). Perhaps most notably, Peter, who was specifically chosen by Jesus to be the head of the Apostles, denied that he even knew Jesus at the time when Jesus needed him most: when he was facing death.

If the Apostles, despite their mistakes, imperfections, and even sinfulness, could be chosen by Jesus to serve as leaders of the Church and share in his mission, then so can all of us—so can you! Even if you feel like you have little or nothing to offer the Church, the example of the Apostles teaches us that God accepts and delights in *whatever* we offer. Are you a talented writer, singer, or visual artist? Do you have a gift for putting others at ease with a listening ear and a compassionate heart? Are you great at motivating and organizing people to accomplish something? God accepts each and all of our gifts, our talents, our best efforts, our time, and our very selves, and puts all of this at the service of his Kingdom. ✨

HMMMMM. . . .

What gift or talent can you offer to serve
and build up the Church?

Article 3

The Church Is Born: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

During Jesus' lifetime, his preaching and ministry planted the seeds of the Church, according to God's plan. However, the Church was born primarily out of the events that occurred near the *end* of Jesus' earthly life; that is, his total self-giving through his death on the cross and his Resurrection.

Jesus' Death

Jesus' death and Resurrection are the climactic events of the entire Paschal Mystery. By freely accepting his death on the cross, Jesus triumphed over death forever, redeemed us, and made it possible for us to share eternal life with him in Heaven.

All four Gospels tell the story of Jesus' Passion and death on the cross. However, the Gospel of John contains a unique detail that the other Gospels lack. When a Roman soldier puts a sword in Jesus' side, "blood and water flowed out" (John 19:34). This detail is not meant to be gruesome. Rather, its symbolism is meant to teach us something about the Church.

This detail tells us that the Church was born from the side of the crucified Christ. In other words, the Church came about because of the suffering that Jesus freely underwent on the cross for the sake of our salvation. Perhaps in your health or biology class, you have seen a video of a woman giving birth.

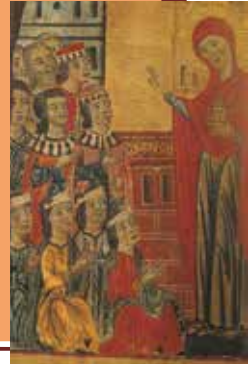


How is the birth of a baby a symbol for the birth of the Church?

The birth process is painful, and, when the baby is born, the blood and water that have kept him or her alive for nine months in the womb flow out of the woman's body. In and through this suffering, new life—a new human being—emerges. Similarly, in and through Christ's suffering on the cross, new life—the Church—begins.

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

In all four Gospels, one woman is among those who first receive the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection: **Saint Mary Magdalene** (first century). Mary Magdalene has sometimes been confused with other Gospel women named Mary, such as Mary of Bethany (the sister of Martha and Lazarus). She has also been mistakenly identified as a prostitute. However, the Gospel witness is clear: Mary Magdalene was her own person. She was among the group of women disciples who accompanied Jesus during his ministry and who used her resources to help provide for him (see Luke 8:3). She was present with Jesus when he died, even though many of the other disciples had run away in fear (see Matthew 27:55–56). And, the Risen Jesus entrusts her with the task of proclaiming the resurrection to the Apostles (see John 20:17–18). For this reason, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) gave Mary Magdalene the title “Apostle to the Apostles.” Those who think that women have not been important in the life of the Church need look no farther than Mary Magdalene to correct this mistaken assumption. She is truly, in the words of Pope Francis, “the Apostle of the new and greatest hope” (“General Audience,” May 17, 2017).



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The reference to water and blood also symbolizes two of the sacraments. Water is meant to remind us of **Baptism**, and blood is meant to remind us of the **Eucharist**. Baptism is the sacrament by which we are reborn in Christ and become members of the Church. The Eucharist is the center of life in the Church, because sharing in it unites us with Christ and with the Christian community and reaffirms our commitment to live as Jesus' disciples. By symbolically referring to Baptism and the Eucharist in the account of Jesus' death on the cross, the Gospel of John portrays these sacraments as a sort of “parting gift” from Jesus. They allow us to share in the new, resurrected life that Jesus' death brought about.

Baptism ➤ The first of the Seven Sacraments and one of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation (the others being Confirmation and the Eucharist) by which one becomes a member of the Church and a new creature in Christ.

Eucharist, the ➤ The celebration of the entire Mass. The term can also refer specifically to the consecrated bread and wine that have become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Jesus' Resurrection

You know from your study of the Gospels that Jesus' death on the cross is not the end of the story. Rather, the story continues with the discovery of the empty tomb, the appearances of the Risen Jesus, and the Apostles' growing faith in the Resurrection.

The Risen Jesus appears to the Apostles (and some other disciples) for forty days after his death. In some of these appearance stories, he shares a meal with them (see Luke 24:30 and John 21:10–13). In others, he teaches them what it means to believe in him (see John 20:24–29). These appearances help the Apostles to understand what being part of the Church involves: gathering to celebrate the Eucharist, recognizing the presence of the Risen Christ in one another, keeping faith even in difficult or confusing times, and sharing the Good News with others.

The appearance stories clarify that Jesus' Resurrection is what makes the Church possible. The presence of the Risen Jesus with the Apostles and disciples empowers them to take on the leadership of the Church. After Jesus ascends to the Father, they are responsible for sharing the Good News, with the reassurance that Jesus will be with them always, “until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).



A crucifix is a reminder of Christ's suffering and sacrifice for us. But the empty cross is also a powerful symbol, a reminder that Jesus' Resurrection is what makes the Church possible.

Today, the Risen Christ continues to be present in and with the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is Christ who meets us in Word and sacrament, Christ who unites through the Church's leaders and ministers, and Christ who guides us toward wisdom and holiness. ✨

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HMMMMM.

In your own experience, how has suffering sometimes led to new life and hope?

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How is the birth of a baby a symbol of the birth of the Church?

Article 3

The Church: Foundations and Mission

Name _____

**Breaking News:
Jesus Lives! The Church Begins!**

Your group is in charge of creating the first page of a newspaper at the home page of a newspaper's website that has been published shortly after Jesus' Resurrection. The page must contain four articles, each of which is based on one of the four Gospel passages that your group members have been studying.

In each article, include:

- the basic facts of what occurred in the passage, rewritten in the style of a news article
- a news analysis explaining how Jesus' resurrection (as described in the passage) helped to establish the Church
- a discussion of the significance of the events described in the passage for members of the Church today

At least one article must include a photo or illustration. You may use the back of this handout to take notes or to sketch out your ideas.

Note: If your group selects the digital option (home page of a newspaper's website), one or two of your four articles may be embedded videos or interactive infographics. Follow your teacher's directions regarding how to create, save, and submit your work electronically.

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Empathize

LEARNING EXPERIENCE 4 (Chapter 1)

Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Lead the students in examining the significance of Jesus' death and Resurrection for the establishment of the Church. (U1, Q1, K3, K4, S1, S2)

1. **Prepare** by ensuring that all the students have read article 3 in the student book prior to this learning experience and that they will have access to their Bibles (print or e-books) during class. Photocopy or download and print the handout "Breaking News: Jesus Lives! The Church Begins!" (TX006429), on page 41, one for each student. If you want the students to create a hard copy of their newspaper, you will need sheets of newsprint or poster board and glue sticks for each group of eight students. If you want the students to create and submit their work electronically, ensure that they will have access to computers or tablets.
2. **Begin** by reminding the students that this first chapter is focused on how Jesus Christ established the Church by his preaching and ministry, by his death and Resurrection, and by sending the Holy Spirit to guide the Twelve Apostles. Explain that this learning experience will focus on how the Church was born out of the events that occurred near the end of Jesus' earthly life—that is, his death on the cross and his Resurrection. Because these are the climactic events of the entire Paschal Mystery, their significance in the establishment of the Church cannot be overestimated.
3. **Direct** the students to open their Bibles to the Gospel of John's account of Jesus' death: 19:28–37. Ask a student volunteer to read the passage aloud. Help the students to recall the following key points from the student book's discussion of this passage:
 - The detail about the water and blood flowing from Jesus' side is present only in John's Gospel. This imagery is meant to remind us of two significant things:
 - First, it reminds us of birth. Like a woman who suffers labor pains in order to bring forth a new human life, Jesus' suffering on the cross brings forth the Church.
 - Second, it reminds us of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. John portrays these sacraments as a sort of "parting gift" from Jesus to the Church.
4. **Transition** to a consideration of Jesus' Resurrection, using these or similar words:
 - As you know, Jesus' death on the cross was not the end of the story. Rather, the story continues with Jesus' Resurrection. All four Gospels contain accounts of the discovery of the empty tomb and of the Risen Lord's appearances to his disciples.
 - Examining selections from the Resurrection accounts will help us to understand how Jesus' Resurrection made the Church possible by empowering the disciples to share the Good News and to take on the leadership of the Church.

5. **Arrange** the students into pairs, assigning each pair one of the following passages from the Resurrection narratives (more than one pair will work with each passage):
 - Matthew 28:1–10
 - Luke 24:1–12
 - Luke 24:36–49
 - John 21:1–14
6. **Direct** the students to follow these steps as they study their assigned passage (you may wish to write these on the board or project them on a screen):
 - Read the passage.
 - Take notes on what occurs in the passage— four or five bullet points are sufficient.
 - Respond to these questions:
 - How would this event have empowered the people who experienced it to be leaders in the Church?
 - How might this event empower us as members of the Church today?
7. **Allow** 10–15 minutes for the pairs to work.
8. **Rearrange** the students into groups of eight, consisting of four pairs of students who worked on each of the four passages. Distribute the handout. Read the directions aloud together.
9. **Allow** at least 30 minutes for the groups to work on their newspapers or home pages.

TEACHER NOTE

If the number of students in your class is not exactly divisible by eight, you will need to have some groups of either six (with one passage not represented) or ten students (with two pairs who worked on the same passage).

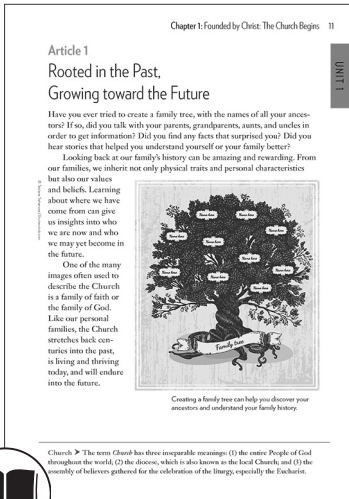
TEACHER NOTE

If you believe that your students do not typically read newspapers or visit news sites, you may wish to show them a few examples to use as models for their work.

TEACHER NOTE

If time is short, you may allow the students to finish this assignment for homework and present their work during the following class session.

- 10. Reconvene** the class as a large group, and allow each small group to present its work (electronic work will need to be projected on a screen or interactive white board), perhaps with a member of the group reading one of its articles aloud.
- 11. Conclude** by reiterating that although Jesus planted the “seeds” of the Church during his earthly life and ministry, his death and Resurrection are what truly made the Church possible. When Jesus rose from the dead, he was no longer bound by the physical realities of space and time. He could be present with his disciples always—in all places and at all times, including in our own time—empowering them to proclaim the Gospel and to grow the Church.



Articles 1–4

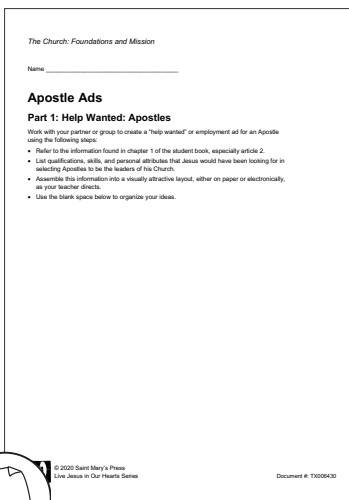


LEARNING EXPERIENCE 5 (Chapter 1)

Apostle Ads

Direct the students in creating and responding to ads for an Apostle. (U1, Q1, K5, S3, S6)

- 1. Prepare** by ensuring that all the students have read articles 1–4 in the student book prior to this learning experience and that they will have access to their Bibles and student books (print or e-books) during class. Photocopy or download and print the handout “Apostle Ads” (TX006430), on pages 42–43, one copy for each student. If you want the students to create ads on paper, gather poster board, markers, and other art supplies. If you want the students to create digital ads (or if you want to offer them the option of creating a video résumé), ensure that you have technology available in your classroom that will support this.
- 2. Begin** by inviting the students to recall the third and final way in which Jesus established the Church: by sending the Holy Spirit to guide the Twelve Apostles. Explain that the Holy Spirit’s role in sustaining, strengthening, and sanctifying the Church (both in the Church’s early days and today) will be the focus of chapter 2. In this learning experience, they will look closely at how and why Jesus’ selection of the Twelve Apostles was essential for establishing the Church.



TX006430

The Church: Foundations and Mission

Name _____

Breaking News: Jesus Lives! The Church Begins!

Your group is in charge of creating the front page of a newspaper or the home page of a newspaper's website that has been published shortly after Jesus' Resurrection. The page must contain four articles, each of which is based on one of the four Gospel passages that your group members have been studying.

In each article, include:

- the basic facts of what occurred in the passage, rewritten in the style of a news article
- a news analysis explaining how Jesus' resurrection (as described in the passage) helped to establish the Church
- a discussion of the significance of the events described in the passage for members of the Church today

At least one article must include a photo or illustration. You may use the back of this handout to take notes or to sketch out your ideas.

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