

# Chapter 7

## Teaching Scripture to Middle Schoolers

According to the Gospels, Jesus clearly wants children and young people to come to him. We can fulfill his desire by leading them to Scripture. Jesus, the Word, is present in the words of Sacred Scripture. Through them he speaks to the hearts of middle schoolers just as he speaks to ours. There are ways to facilitate this encounter for his young disciples.

### Creating a Christian Environment

As you begin Bible study, impress on the middle schoolers the holiness of what you are doing. Explain that you and they are the Church in miniature. You are gathered to hear the Good News about Jesus that Scripture contains, to think about what he is saying to you, and to grow in your friendship with him. Remind the young people of these facts periodically.

The room where you meet is holy space. As such, it should be neat, attractive, quiet, and free from distractions. Religious pictures and statues help to set the tone, and a Christian song playing softly before the session helps middle schoolers to focus on God. Praying before and after the sessions sends the message that this is special time.

### Creating a Loving Atmosphere

Christians are one with Jesus and one another. Our gatherings with young people should be characterized by love, the hallmark of Christians. As instructors or leaders our bearing, our tone of voice, the way we move, and even how we dress convey our love for Jesus and the young people as much as the words we speak. As soon as possible, learn the young people's names and something about each individual. Play icebreaker games to help the young people get to know one another. Be quick to praise the group as a whole and individually. Point out the gifts of each young person and show appreciation for them.