

Get CONNECTED

with family and friends

The Early Church: People of Pentecost

Jesus intended his teachings and work to continue until the end of time. In this chapter, you will learn how Paul and the other Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, taught the early Church to follow Jesus. Today, all members of the Church, under the leadership of the Pope and bishops, are called to spread the message of Salvation.



Do one of the following.

1. Survey your relatives to find out how they live their faith each day. Identify ways that your family can support and help one another live your faith.
2. With your family or friends, organize a drive in your parish or community to collect clothing and other necessities to benefit people in need.

Activity

My relatives come to our house on all the special holidays. We never eat dinner before six o'clock because my aunt Ellen is always late. Most of my friends eat earlier and want me to hang out with them afterward. I always have to say no, which used to make me mad.

Then my mom told me that Aunt Ellen volunteers at a soup kitchen on holidays, and my attitude changed. One time, my aunt even took me with her to help serve the meals. Now it doesn't bother me at all to say no to my friends. And I feel so proud telling them about Aunt Ellen.

Trivia

● Church History

● Social Studies

● Arts & Culture

● People & Places

To elect the Pope, the College of Cardinals meets in a locked room for a private meeting known as a conclave, which is from the Latin word for "key." The cardinals are not allowed contact with the outside world. The election continues until a two-thirds majority vote is reached. Then, white smoke rises from the Vatican chimney, signaling that the new Pope has been elected.

Quotable Scripture

"The last will be first,
and the first will be last."
—Matthew 20:16

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Scripture Background

In the Time of Jesus

The Imagery of Light The imagery of light and darkness is found frequently in both Testaments of the Bible. In the Old Testament, God is described as covering himself with light like a garment (Psalm 104:2) and God's people are called to walk in the light of the Lord (Isaiah 2:5). In the New Testament, light is linked to Jesus, describing him as the true light for all people (John 1:9). Those who respond to him with faith are transported out of the darkness and into the light (1 Peter 2:9).

Read Matthew 5:14–16 to discover Jesus call to his followers to be light in the world, that people may see their goodness and turn to God.

WEEKLY PLANNER

On Sunday

At the end of Mass, pay special attention to the priest's words "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." Decide to do one thing during the day to follow this call.

On the Web

blestarewe.com



Visit our Web site for the saint of the day and the reflection question of the week.

Saint of the Week



Saint Thérèse Lisieux
(1873–1897)

At age 15, Thérèse became a Carmelite nun. She believed that she could become a saint by doing little things for God with great love. She wrote about her spiritual journey in her autobiography, *Story of a Soul*.

Patron Saint of: France, missionaries

Feast Day: October 1



A Prayer for the Week

Thank you, Lord, for the leaders of our Church. Bless them with wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Bless our family, too, so that we may lead others to you through our acts of love and kindness. Amen.

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I formed you, and set you /as a covenant of the people, /
a light for the nations.

Isaiah 42:6

Share

At her teacher's request, Stephanie joined the conflict resolution team at school. She tries to help her peers find reasonable solutions to problems that arise about students relating to one another.

Chad's mother is a single parent. To help his family, Chad watches his younger sister once a week while his mother goes food shopping.

Lindsey volunteers with physically disabled children. Young people with physical limitations enjoy the friendship and assistance of volunteers, such as Lindsey.

Activities

1. Together, discuss what Christian values Stephanie, Chad, and Lindsay model by their actions.
2. Write about ways in which you are a witness to Christ at home, at school, or in your community.



How is the Church a witness to Christ?



Hear & Believe

Scripture A Letter from Paul to the Corinthians



I, Paul, am a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle and set apart for the Gospel of God (based on Romans 1:1).

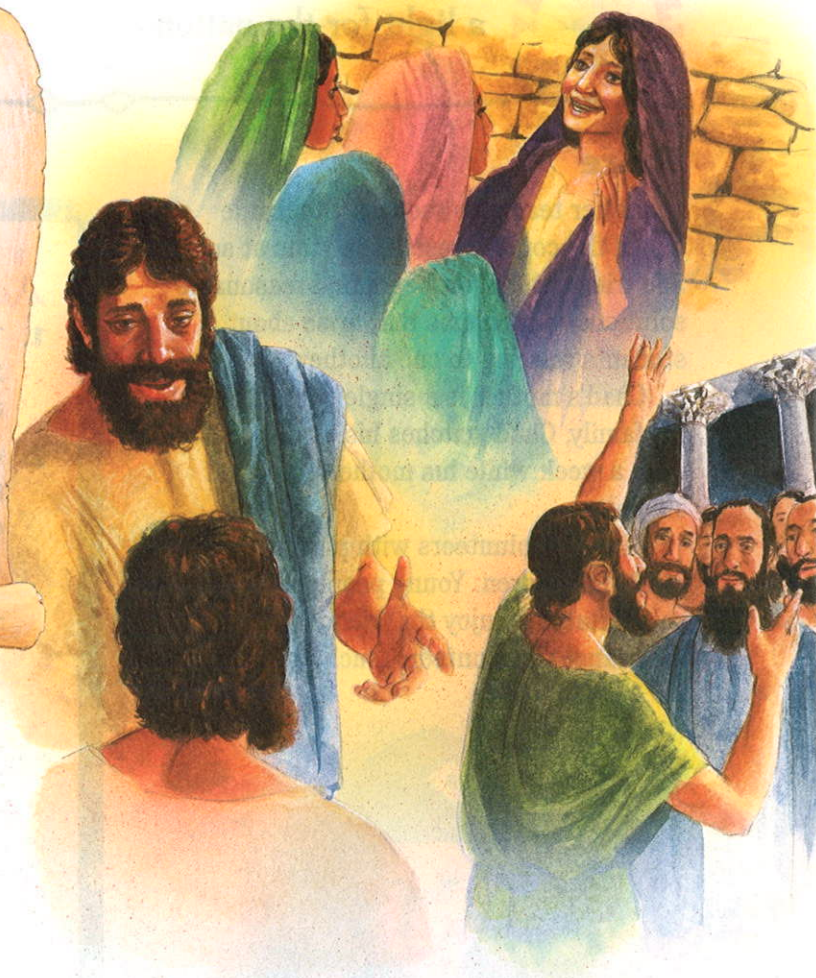
I wrote letters to individuals, communities, and the Church as a whole. I generally included in each letter a greeting to the community, a prayer of thanksgiving, and a presentation on some Christian teaching. Then I discussed a moral teaching and provided the community with information about my upcoming travels. I concluded with some final advice.

No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues. . . . But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:3–13, 27, 31



Guidance from Saint Paul

Saint Paul would visit and write letters to the early Church, such as the Church in Corinth, to help them live as Christians. He wrote letters to encourage people to become believers and to help believers become more united in Christ. These letters are called **epistles**.

Paul wrote the preceding epistle to explain to the Church in Corinth that all things of the Holy Spirit and God are equally important. On Pentecost, the Apostles began the work, or mission, Jesus gave them. Filled with the Holy Spirit they began speaking in many languages. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they went forth and preached the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people in Jerusalem, converting many of them.

The Christians at Corinth

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Saint Paul brought the Gospel to Corinth, a great seaport held by a community of people from different social, economic, political, and religious backgrounds. Because of this, members of the Church in Corinth began to experience division. They began to deny poor people membership into the Church. Christians who prayed with great devotion in the Holy Spirit were more highly valued than those who did works of charity. People began to value certain Christian teachings over others. Paul's teachings helped the Corinthians to understand the importance of the unity of the Church.

The Mission of the Church

Jesus founded the Church so that his teachings and work would continue until the end of time. Jesus appointed the Twelve Apostles to be the first **missionaries** of the Church. Paul, at first a persecutor of Christians, became a missionary. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles and other early disciples joyfully spread the news of the Risen Lord. The Apostles and the other members of the early Church taught others the love of Christ by the way they lived. They shared what they had with others, particularly the poor and those in need.

Today, the Church continues the missionary work given to her by Christ. The Holy Spirit guides the Church in preaching the Gospel of Salvation. God loves all people and wants them to come to know his truth and be saved. The Church's mission is to preach the Gospel to people of all cultures and races throughout the world in every age. Because no one is excluded, the Church is catholic, or universal.

The Church is also apostolic. This means that the Church passes down the teachings of the Apostles, which are from Christ himself. Jesus **commissioned** Peter and the other Apostles and gave them the authority to continue his mission and to act in his name. Today, the Pope and bishops have the same role as the Apostles in proclaiming the Gospel. When the Pope, or the Pope and bishops together, officially teach on matters of faith

and morals the teachings are infallible, or without error. By remaining faithful to the teachings of the Apostles, the Church preserves the truth of Christ throughout the ages.



Activity

The teachings and traditions of the Church have been handed down from generation to generation for more than 2,000 years. Describe a family tradition or story that has been passed down to you. What makes this tradition or story special to you?

Faith Words

epistle An epistle is a formal letter. The New Testament contains epistles written to Christian communities by Saint Paul or other disciples in the early Church.

missionary A missionary is a person who shares his or her faith through preaching and charitable works. Catholic missionaries preach Christ's message of Salvation to all people.

commissioned To be commissioned is to be entrusted by someone with the power to fulfill a particular task in that person's name. Christ commissioned the Apostles and their successors with the task of leading and serving the Church.

What is the mission of a parish community?

Hear & Believe

Sharing the Missionary Work of the Church

All members of the Church are called to share in her mission.

By giving Peter the “keys of the kingdom,” Christ gave Peter the special task of leading the other Apostles and being head of the Church. Peter was the first bishop of Rome. Today, the Pope, the bishop of Rome, continues to represent Christ as the visible head of the Church. He has the full and supreme responsibility to lead the members of the Catholic Church and to care for their souls.

Bishops succeed the Apostles and establish unity among the churches they oversee. Priests, co-workers with bishops, also teach the faith, celebrate the Mass, and guide parish communities. Deacons help the bishops and priests. People who have taken religious vows, as well as the laity, also participate in the mission of the Church. Laypeople are called to holiness in their personal, familial, and social lives.

Parishioners, or members of a parish, support one another in living their life in Christ in many ways. They participate in the Liturgy and



Sacraments. They share their faith through a wide variety of educational programs for children, youth, and adults. They serve one another and the wider community by living the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. They work for peace and justice, bring comfort to the ill, share food and clothing with those experiencing financial difficulties, pray with those grieving over the loss of a loved one. It is not uncommon for a parish to have many programs for parishioners to seek and prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God as Jesus commanded.

Look at a parish in action and you will discover the Holy Spirit at work. The wide variety of programs in a parish enables parishioners to use the gifts with which God has blessed them. Teachers, musicians, carpenters, accountants, electricians, lawyers, baby-sitters, nurses, social works—the list of members with special gifts goes on. Together they build up the Body of Christ on earth and advance the work of God’s Kingdom.

Our Church Teaches

An essential teaching of the Church is that of the resurrection of our bodies at the end of time. Although we do not know when this will occur, we believe that we will rise on the last day, just as Jesus rose from the dead. Christ’s Resurrection is the source for faith in our own resurrection. Christ lives in our hearts while we await this fulfillment.

Christ ascended into Heaven and will appear again on the last day.

At that time, he will judge those who are still living as well as those who have already died. Jesus Christ, having entered Heaven once and for all, intercedes constantly for us and assures us of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At his Second Coming, Christ will judge each of us according to our works and how well we accepted God’s grace in our lives. We wait for Christ in joyful hope.

We Believe
Christ established
the Church. The Holy
Spirit guides the Church
in spreading the
Gospel to all people
until Christ comes again.

Activities

1. At his Second Coming, Christ will judge us according to our works and according to how well we accepted God's grace in our lives. Name two ways that God's grace works in the lives of members of a parish community.

2. When did you accept God's grace in your life? In the left column below, list situations in which you have accepted God's grace. In the right column, list situations in which you might show more openness to God's grace.

I accepted God's grace when . . .

I should accept God's grace when . . .

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3. How is it that, even though we are sinners, we can wait for Jesus' Second Coming and the Final Judgment with "joyful hope"?



What can happen when we put our faith into action?

Respond

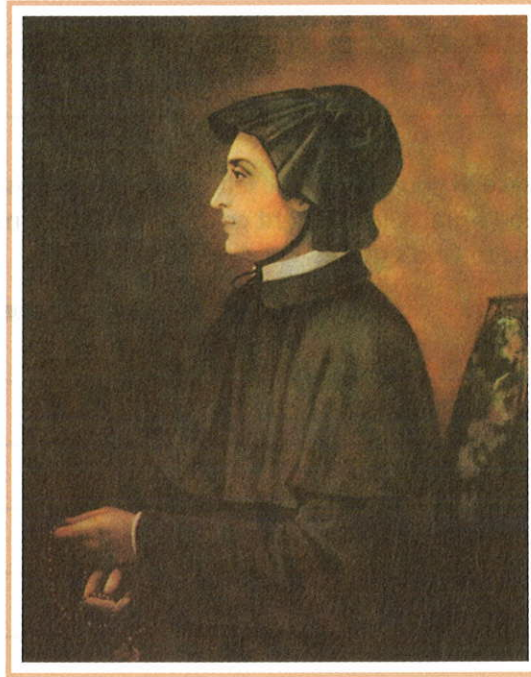
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton was born into a wealthy Episcopalian family in New York City in 1774. As a child, she enjoyed reading about historical and religious subjects. Her parents raised her to share her blessings with people who were sick or in need.

After marrying William Seton, a successful shipping merchant, Elizabeth continued serving others. While raising five children, Elizabeth helped found the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. People lovingly called her the “Protestant Sister of Charity.”

When she was about twenty-nine years old, Elizabeth’s life changed dramatically. Her husband’s business failed and he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Elizabeth sailed with him to the warmer climate of Italy, but he died soon after their arrival. During this difficult time, Elizabeth was able to stay with the Filicchi family, longtime friends of her husband,

who comforted and supported her. She was moved by the strong faith of this Catholic family and became both interested in and inspired by their ways of prayer and worship.



About a year after she returned to the United States, Elizabeth joined the Catholic Church. Her family did not approve, but Elizabeth was committed to her new faith. She devoted her energy to serving the Church, and she eventually opened the first Catholic school in the United States in Maryland. Elizabeth also formed a community of Catholic women called the Sisters of Charity. They operated many schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

Just before she died, at the age of forty-six, Elizabeth told the sisters in her community, “Be children

of the Church.” Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first native-born American to be canonized. Her feast day is January 4.

Activities

1. What did Elizabeth Seton mean by the advice “Be children of the Church”?

2. Elizabeth Seton was inspired by the strong faith of the Filicchi family. Who inspires you in your faith? Describe what this person or group of people does that inspires you to live your faith in Christ.

3. All the baptized are called to bring Christ's love to the people around them. Name someone who may be inspired in his or her faith by knowing you. In what ways have you positively influenced this person to grow in their faith?

4. What challenges do young Catholics face when trying to live their faith?

5. Explain some ways in which young Catholics might overcome these challenges.



How can we celebrate our call to be disciples of Jesus?





Prayer Celebration

A Prayer for Faithful Discipleship

Leader: Through Baptism, we become disciples of Christ. As members of the Church, we are called to be the light of Christ for others and to carry out his mission. We are ambassadors for Christ, invited to accept the responsibilities of discipleship with courage and to shout his name from the mountaintops for all to hear.

Reader: Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples and told them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned. Those who believe will be able to meet any challenge. They will drive out evil in my name. They will speak unfamiliar languages. No matter what dangers confront them, no harm will touch them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Based on Mark 16:14–18

Leader: Reflect on your experiences of discipleship. Name the obstacles that you face, your challenges, and signs you have received that have helped you know and trust in God’s presence in your life.

A

Explain what it means to be a witness or ambassador for Christ and why it is a challenge.

B

Complete the sentences, using words from the box.

1. In today's Church, the Pope and bishops succeed _____ and the Apostles.
2. Peter was the first _____ of Rome.
3. Laypeople are called to _____ in their personal lives.
4. At his Second Coming, Christ will judge each of us according to our _____ and how well we accepted _____ in our lives.
5. Jesus founded the _____ so that his work would continue.
6. Healing, faith, and _____ are the spiritual works mentioned in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.
7. In his letter to them, Paul compares the Corinthians to a human _____.
8. Because the message of the Gospel is meant for all people everywhere, we say that the Church is _____, or universal.
9. All members of the Church are called to share in her _____.
10. Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the _____.

Church
Peter
catholic
bishop
holiness
works
God's grace
prophecy
mission
Sisters of Charity
body

- C** Match Column A with Column B by writing the correct number in the space provided.

A

1. Second Coming
2. Pope
3. commissioned
4. missionary
5. epistle

B

- ___ a letter written by Paul or another disciple in the early Church
- ___ entrusted with the power to fulfill a particular task
- ___ a person who shares their faith through preaching and charitable works
- ___ Christ's representative as visible head of the Church
- ___ the time when Christ will judge everyone according to their works and how well they accepted God's grace in their lives

- D** Respond to the following.

1. When Jesus commissioned his disciples, what powers or gifts did he grant them?

2. What accomplishments of Elizabeth Ann Seton helped fulfill the mission of the Church?

3. In what ways can you help fulfill the mission of the Church?
