

Get **CONNECTED**

with family and friends

Apostolic: Founded on the Apostles

The Apostles devoted their lives to following Jesus and passing on his teachings to others. Jesus commissioned Peter to be the leader of the Apostles and the first leader of the Church. In every age the Church shares in the mission of the Apostles to proclaim to the world the Good News of Jesus Christ.



Activity

Have you ever had some exciting news that you couldn't wait to tell someone about? The Apostles did. After Jesus ascended to his Father in Heaven, the Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, set out to tell the whole world about Jesus. We too are called by God to share the Good News of Jesus with others.

Do one of the following.

1. Have a family discussion in which family members share how they are challenged to live out their Catholic faith in their daily lives. Be sure to offer each other support and encouragement.
2. Pass on your Catholic faith to a younger sibling or cousin by teaching them the Rosary (see page 160), the Stations of the Cross, a novena, or another prayer.

Trivvia

Church History

Social Studies

Arts & Culture

People & Places

The Azores, a group of nine subtropical Portuguese islands in the Atlantic, are a place where the Catholic faith imbues countless aspects of the landscape and of everyday life. Azoreans have a special devotion to the Holy Spirit. Dozens of *imperios* (small chapels dedicated to the Holy Spirit) dot the islands and welcome visitors for prayer.

Quotable Scripture

"You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it."

—Matthew 16:18

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+ Scripture Background

In the Early Church

The Christian Community in Jerusalem In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke describes the growth of the early Church. Acts contains three passages (2:42–47, 4:32–37, and 5:12–16) that describe the early Church in Jerusalem. The Church at this early stage was comprised largely of Jews who kept their traditions and did not see themselves as following a new religion. For them, Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. To teach that Jesus was the Messiah, Peter referred to the Old Testament. The early Church preached that everyone received the call to repentance and Baptism. This call required accepting the teachings of the Apostles, daily prayer in the synagogue, a Eucharist-centered life, and the sharing of one's possessions to meet the needs of the entire community.

WEEKLY PLANNER

On Sunday

Pay special attention to the prayers that are spoken at Mass by the priest. These prayers remind us again and again of who we are and what we believe.

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 Peter the Apostle

Saint Peter appears in the Gospels more than any other disciple and was at Jesus' side at many key events in Jesus' ministry. Jesus appointed Peter the "rock" on which he would build his Church. Saint Peter was martyred in A.D. 64.

Patron Saint of: the universal Church

Feast Day: June 29



A Prayer for the Week

Lord, help us learn what our Catholic faith teaches, and help us live it faithfully. Guide us to be good Catholics in all that we do and in all that we say. Amen.

1 Apostolic: Founded on the Apostles



[Jesus' followers] devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread, and to the prayers.

Acts of the Apostles 2:42

Share

Catholics belong to a local faith community called a parish. Each parish member has certain responsibilities to fulfill.

Think about the groups you belong to: family, parish, school, clubs, teams, neighborhood, and so on. Each of these groups forms a community with a

particular purpose and goals. For a community to thrive, each member must understand and work responsibly toward the goals of the group and use their time wisely to support the other members. When each member tries to fulfill their responsibilities, the group can be successful.

Activity

Choose a group to which you belong or one to which you would like to belong. Imagine that you have been chosen to recruit new members. Design a poster that would attract new members to your group. Include the following: the name of the group, its goals, the duties of members, the benefits of membership, and the most important thing you want others to remember about your group.

GROUP NAME

GOALS

DUTIES

BENEFITS

REMEMBER

Why is the Church apostolic?

Hear & Believe

Scripture Peter and the Early Church

The Catholic Church is **apostolic**. This means that the Catholic Church is founded by Jesus Christ on the Apostles.

The first followers of Jesus were primarily Jews. Before they came to understand that Jesus was indeed the Savior of all people, of both Jews and non-Jews alike, these first followers of Jesus truly believed that only Jews were included in the divine plan of Salvation.

The Acts of the Apostles, however, describes that Peter and others came to understand that God invites and calls all people to Salvation in Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke describes both the vision of Peter and the vision and conversion of Cornelius, a centurion in the Roman army, and his household to Christ.

[An angel of the Lord God appeared to Cornelius, saying,] “ ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your almsgiving remembered before God. Send therefore to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter. He is a guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ So I sent for you immediately, and you were kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to listen to all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word [that] he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and [in] Jerusalem. They put him to

death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised [on] the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

While Peter was still speaking these things, the holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?” He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for a few days.

Acts of the Apostles 10:31–49

Many wonders and signs were done through the Apostles. The number of followers of Jesus increased as the disciples of Jesus stayed true to the teachings of Jesus that were passed on to them by the Apostles.



The Holy Spirit Guides Peter

A man named Cornelius sent a message to Peter. Cornelius had heard that Peter was teaching people about Jesus, and Cornelius had a great desire to learn about the Lord. He invited Peter to come to his house to teach him and his family and servants. Peter was troubled by this invitation. Cornelius was not Jewish, and it was against Jewish law for a Jew to enter the home of a Gentile.

Peter was not certain about what he should do, but the Holy Spirit prompted him to go to Cornelius. Then Peter realized that Jesus wanted him to teach not only Jews, but all people. In Cornelius' house, Peter taught that Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit. He taught about Jesus' ministry of doing good and about his death and Resurrection. Peter told that Jesus appeared to the Apostles after his death and how they ate and drank with him. He taught the people that all who believe in Jesus could receive forgiveness of their sins through his name. Peter could teach all these things because Jesus had given him the authority to do so.

The authority of Peter and the other Apostles to teach the Word of God has been passed on to the Pope and bishops. The Pope and bishops serve the Church by instructing the Church and leading her members to holiness. The Pope and the bishops form the **Magisterium**, the teaching office of the Church. As the Pope and bishops teach, they are guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit ensures the Church's fidelity to the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles in matters of faith and morals. When the Pope or the bishops together with the Pope officially proclaim a teaching on morality or faith, such a teaching is infallible. We, the faithful, trust the teaching of the Church and follow it. We live in unity as the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This unity reflects the **Trinitarian** nature of the Church.

A Church Community Is Born

Peter and the other Apostles taught that Jesus Christ had died to redeem sins so that all who believe in him might be saved. Jews and Gentiles responded to the Apostles' teachings by repenting for their sins, being baptized, and living together

united in love. They cared for each other's needs, prayed together during the day, and in the evening gathered in someone's home to share a meal. They remembered Jesus' life by sharing stories of his life and his teachings. The reading of the Scriptures of ancient Israel was also an important part of their worship life, just as the reading of God's Word is essential to our life today. The disciples remembered Jesus' Death and Resurrection and celebrated his presence with them in the Breaking of Bread, the Eucharist.

Activity

List three things the early Church did that showed they understood the message of Jesus and his Apostles.

As Christians today, how do we show that we understand and practice this message?

Faith Words

apostolic The Catholic Church is apostolic because Jesus founded the Church on the Apostles, and the Church is faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ passed on to her by the Apostles.

Magisterium The Magisterium is the teaching office of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, to authentically and accurately interpret the Word of God—Scripture and Tradition.

Trinitarian *Trinitarian* means "reflecting the unity of the Blessed Trinity."

How does the Church grow?

Hear & Believe

+ Scripture Peter Is Chosen

The early Church looked to Peter as a leader. Peter spoke with special authority because Jesus had chosen him to lead the Church. We read in the following Scripture passages how Jesus singled out Peter to hold a position of great trust.

The Apostles traveled with Jesus as he preached and taught. One day Jesus asked his disciples who people thought he was. The Apostles replied that people thought he might be John the Baptist or another Prophet.

Then Jesus asked them directly, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon spoke up and said, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus said to him, "Simon, you are blessed. Only my Father in Heaven could have revealed this to you. From now on, your name will be Peter, which means 'rock,' I will build my church on you and I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind or loose on earth will be bound or loosed in Heaven."

At the Last Supper on the night before he died, Jesus singled out Peter and said to him, "I have prayed that your own faith will be strong. You must strengthen your brothers."

Based on Matthew 16:13–19, Luke 22:31–32

Jesus prayed for Peter's faith to be strong because he understood the challenges and hardships that Peter would face. Peter did become a strong and effective leader, a man of great faith and vision. Peter guided the early Church wisely and well.



A CLOSER LOOK

The Altar Table



In the Old Testament the first altars were piles of stones. Animals were placed on the stones and sacrificed. The first Christian altars, however, were the tables at which people ate their meals. In the first 200 years of the Church, Christians gathered in private homes. People would gather around an ordinary wooden table, where they would eat supper, pray, read the Scriptures of ancient Israel, listen to the teachings of the Apostles, and share in the Breaking of Bread as Jesus had commanded them to do.

Our Church Teaches

Jesus sent his Apostles and other disciples out into the world to teach the Good News. He chose Peter to lead the disciples and proclaim to the world that all Salvation comes from Christ through the Church.

The People of God recognize that Peter was the first Pope. The Pope is the leader of the universal Catholic Church and is responsible for the care of souls throughout the Church. There is an unbroken line of succession

from Peter, who received his authority from the Son of God, to the Pope today. The bishops, the successors of the other Apostles, are the chief teachers of the Church, in union with the Pope.

The Holy Spirit guides the Church to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus. Through her life, teaching, and worship, the Church passes on to every generation all that she is and all that she believes.

We Believe
The Church, led by
the Pope and the
bishops, continues
the mission
of the Apostles.



Activities

1. Like Peter, every Pope has faced challenges while leading the Church. Think about the challenges that our present Pope faces. Then complete the activity below.



List three challenges that the Pope faces today.

List some ways in which the Pope shows leadership in these areas.



2. Because we belong to the Catholic Church, we are called to support the Church. What are some ways that young people can support the Church?

Who carries on Peter's work today?

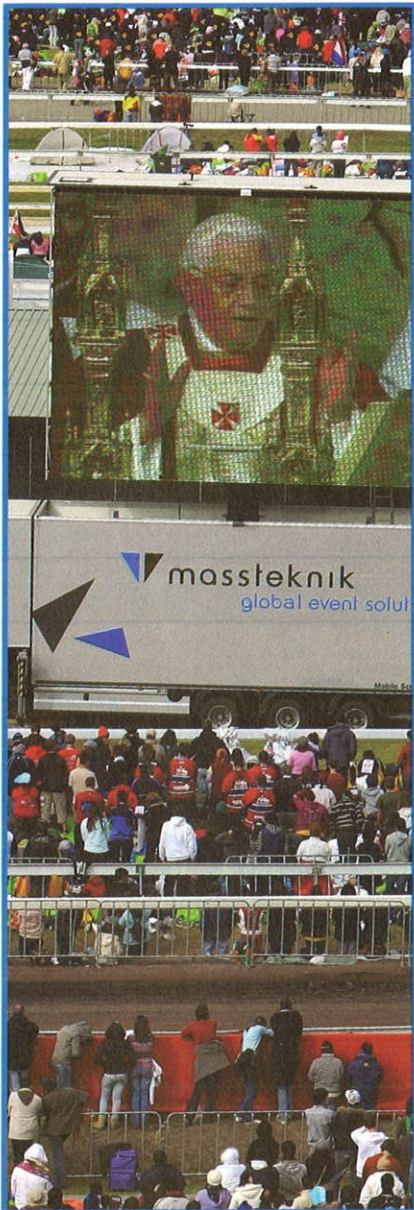
Respond

Peter's Message Continues

Much has changed in the world since Jesus said to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Catholics now live on every inhabited continent, and worldwide membership totals more than one billion people. The Pope today teaches the Good News of Jesus using modern technologies, such as the Internet, TV, and audio and video recordings. The Pope also travels throughout the world by plane, train, ship, helicopter, automobile, or "popemobile."

The message carried by the Pope is the same message carried by Saint Peter. It is the Good

News that God the Father so loved the world that he sent us his only Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was put to death, but rose from the dead on the third day. Appearing to the Apostles, the Risen Jesus commissioned them to preach and teach the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins and to baptize people. This work has been passed on to the Church from the Apostles. The Church continues this mission today and will proclaim the Gospel to all people to the end of time.



Activities

1. What makes it easy for the Church to continue spreading the Gospel in the twenty-first century? What makes it difficult?

2. What message from the Gospels would you like to pass on to the believers of tomorrow?

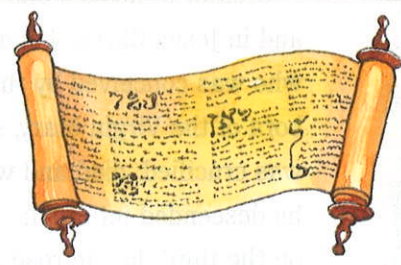
Why do you feel this message is important?

How can you help spread this message?

3. The early Christians shared their possessions with one another. They spent time together praying, reading the Scriptures, listening to the teachings of the Apostles, and sharing in the Eucharist. Each image on this page represents an activity of the early Church. On the lines below each image, describe how your family or parish community participates in the activity.








4. Sometimes people might question your Catholic beliefs. Peter had the same problem. His critics believed his teachings were something he had made up. How do you think Peter answered them? (*Hint: Read 2 Peter 1:12–21.*)

How did the early Church pray?





Prayer Celebration

The Apostles' Creed

Catholics pray the Apostles' Creed because it is the true summary of the Apostles' faith. It is an ancient creed that has been taught for almost 2,000 years. When we pray the Apostles' Creed, we are united with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the whole Church.

Let us stand and unite our voices with those of the Apostles and Catholics around the world as we proclaim our faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died and was buried;
 he descended into hell;
 on the third day he rose again from the dead;
 he ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
 from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and life everlasting. Amen.

1

Chapter Review

A Complete the sentences with words from the box.

1. Jesus' early followers believed that people who were not _____ could not take part in God's _____.
2. A prayer of beliefs that the Church has said from earliest times of the Church is the _____ Creed.
3. The early Christians devoted themselves to communal life, the teaching of the Apostles, the Breaking of Bread, and _____.
4. The _____ guided Peter to reach out to the _____.
5. There is an unbroken line of _____ from _____ to the present Pope.

succession
 Holy Spirit
 Jews
 Gentiles
 prayer
 Peter
 Salvation
 Apostles'

B Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. The _____, or teaching authority of the Church, is made up of the bishops in communion with the Pope, the bishop of Rome.
 - a. synod
 - b. Magisterium
 - c. Gospel
 - d. diocese
2. The Church is _____ because it is founded by Jesus Christ on the Apostles.
 - a. catholic
 - b. Trinitarian
 - c. holy
 - d. apostolic
3. The Church is _____ because it reflects the unity of the Trinity. The Church is the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. the Light of the World
 - b. Trinitarian
 - c. apostolic
 - d. universal
4. When the Magisterium officially proclaims a teaching on morals or faith, such a teaching is _____.
 - a. apostolic
 - b. understandable
 - c. temporary
 - d. infallible

1

Chapter Review

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

A

1. Cornelius
2. Jesus
3. Peter
4. The Pope
5. The Holy Spirit

B

- ___ prayed for Peter's faith to be strong
- ___ received the keys of the Kingdom from Jesus
- ___ has guided the Church throughout the centuries to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus
- ___ invited Peter to come to his house and teach him and his family and servants about Jesus
- ___ teaches the same message carried by Peter

D Complete these statements from the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the _____ almighty, . . .
and in Jesus Christ, his _____, our _____, . . .

I believe in the Holy _____,
the holy catholic _____,
the communion of _____,
the _____ of sins,
the _____ of the body,
and life _____.

E List some ways in which you might share the Good News of Jesus with others as Peter did with Cornelius.
