

2018 - 2019

SPiRiT *Guide*

Pastoral Vision

***SPiRiT* brings the Sunday gospels of the Church year to teens.** It sows the Word of God in the good ground of their lives, where it can multiply a hundredfold in our world.

***SPiRiT* develops the bishops' curriculum framework.** *SPiRiT* develops the content of the first course outlined in the 2008 Curriculum Framework from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, namely, the "Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture" and highlights content from other courses as it flows from the Sunday gospels.

***SPiRiT* aims to teach.** Every *SPiRiT* issue brings the Sunday gospel and Catholic tradition into dialog with young people and invites them to question, pray, think, and share about what Jesus' message asks of them in our world.

***SPiRiT* is a transforming process that brings young people together in groups** where they can make friends who call forth their faith and support their commitment to living the gospel in our world.

SPiRiT's stories and articles bring teens' own life experience, doubts, conflicts, joys, and anxieties into their religion class or youth group. Every *SPiRiT* issue calls teens to put their faith into action.

The *SPiRiT* program imitates the way the liturgy teaches the whole Church—by cycling the mystery of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection into our lives Sunday by Sunday. Any single gospel can claim our commitment. Reflecting on the Sunday gospels is a prayerful habit that aims to transform the Christian into Christ over a lifetime.



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WELCOME to SPIRIT 2018-2019

From its beginning *SPIRIT* has focused its issues on the Sunday gospels, October to April, following the Church's three-year cycles of scripture readings for the Sundays of the liturgical year. *SPIRIT* is really a three-year, not a one-year program

SPIRIT integrates its gospel-centered approach with the content outlined in the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops 2008 Curriculum Framework, course one, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture." Over its three-year program *SPIRIT* incorporates in its issues:

- The thirst for God
- God's self-revelation in creation
- God's self-revelation in Israel's history
- Oral tradition
- Scripture in the life of the Church
- Ways to interpret scripture
- Bible and science
- The Old Testament—Pentateuch, historical books, Prophets, Wisdom Writings
- The New Testament—letters, Acts, Revelation
- The character of the four gospels, their content and the communities for which they were written
- Literary forms—miracle stories, parables, sayings, apocalyptic
- Formation of the gospels

SPIRIT also posts online key concepts from course one, such as inerrancy, revelation, inspiration, canon, literalist, fundamentalist, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, exegesis. This online reference allows young people to look up doctrinal concepts when they have questions and assures access to all that the framework outlines.

How *SPIRIT* Works

Each *SPIRIT* issue provides four pages written just for teens that include stories about life, the Sunday gospel in reader parts, and presentations of Catholic tradition.

- **Stories and interviews** anchor each session in teens' experience.
- **Questions** invite teens to interpret what the gospel asks of them.
- **Our Catholic Faith** is a feature that helps teens explore Catholic tradition in their language.
- **Faith in Action** activities challenge teens to put the gospel into action globally and locally in their schools, parishes, and neighborhoods.

The *SPIRIT* Program

SPIRIT is all about your success as a catechist and engaging your teens' in Catholic tradition. The *SPIRIT* program includes not only its 28 issues and 28 lesson plans, but also these essential additional components.

Practicing Prayer

Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens *SPIRIT* lessons will identify prayer experiences from this companion book to the program to conclude each lesson. *Alive in God* introduces teens to many prayer forms to help them discover ways to practice prayer that fit them. **\$20.00**

Gospel Themes in Music

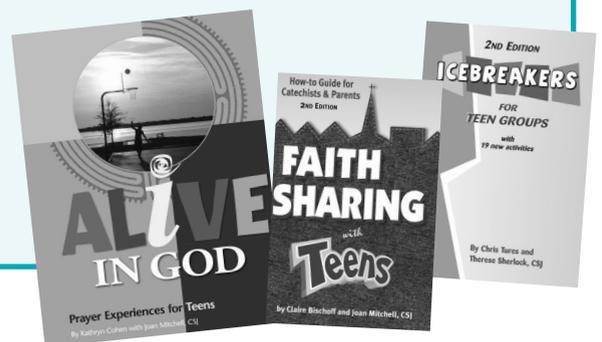
Each week *SPIRIT* suggests a popular song that reflects the Gospel theme. Go to the *SPIRIT* page at goodgroundpress.com to find key lyrics and a video of the song.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers for Teen Groups, 2nd Edition collects 50 icebreakers for introducing young people to each other, energizing groups, challenging groups to get to know one another better, and helping groups recognize and value diversity. **\$5.00**

Facilitating Groups

Faith Sharing with Teens: A How-to Guide for Catechists and Parents Talk can transform, especially conversation that connects the scriptures and life and moves faith into action. *Faith Sharing* offers practical help in leading groups, helping teens learn from one another, and ensuring teens gain skill in the roles and dynamics that make conversation a doorway to deep and active faith. **\$9.95**



How to Use a SPIRIT Issue

SPIRIT is a teen-friendly catechetical program that centers around the Sunday gospels of the liturgical year. This makes SPIRIT a lectionary-based program; the lectionary is the book that organizes the Church's reading of scripture into three yearly cycles.

The SPIRIT program is catechetical, 28 weekly issues that aim to instruct teens in the faith the Catholic community lives.

Each SPIRIT issue has a one-page lesson plan that outlines a 60- to 90-minute session with teens. These lesson plans are the key to using every SPIRIT issue effectively.

Lessons are numbered and dated, so catechists can find the lesson plan for each SPIRIT issue with ease.

Each SPIRIT session follows a three-step plan:

- 1 **Sharing Life Stories**
- 2 **Reflecting on the Gospel**
- 3 **Living Our Catholic Faith.**

Step 1 Sharing Life Stories

Prayer SPIRIT provides a prayer on its cover for each session. The prayer opens the theme of the gospel and lesson. Lesson plans suggest gathering your teens in a prayer circle and inviting them to bring any concern they have about people in their lives or events in the news into the prayer. Some teens may always keep these concerns in their hearts; some may welcome praying about them in the group.

Music Each week suggests popular music to fit the gospel theme of each weekly issue. SPIRIT's music editor describes the theme of each song, provides key lyrics, and suggests questions that teens can discuss after listening to the song. Find music suggestions on the SPIRIT page at goodgroundpress.com.

Icebreakers SPIRIT lessons often provide easy and fun activities to help groups feel at ease and connect with themes in the issue.

A good icebreaker gives each group member a chance to speak, to hear his or her voice aloud talking about something non-threatening. Checklists, short games, remembering exercises, and preference questions invite participation rather than right answers. Icebreakers help groups

bond in fun. *Icebreakers for Teen Groups*, is available from Good Ground Press: 800-232-5533 or goodgroundpress.com.

Stories, Articles, Interviews

SPIRIT provides fiction, articles, and interviews by or about teens. These stories and articles provide teens a common medium for discussion and a catalyst for surfacing their own experiences. These stories are not an end in themselves but a means for teens to talk about their own issues.

Stories work like magic in helping young people explore their own experience. By struggling with the dilemmas of believable fiction or real-life characters, teens gain practice in making their own moral judgments and expressing their own spiritual values.

Familiarize yourself with the story or article before the session. Always let teens respond freely to the piece when the group finishes reading it. Let their responses be a starting point for discussion.

Look over the questions in each issue. Make them your own, so you can work them into a session creatively. Look over the answer section in the guide to confirm what a question is getting at.

To read the stories, articles, or interviews, have teens take turns

reading the piece aloud, breaking for a new reader at each large capital letter. Some stories lend themselves to silent reading. Some lesson plans suggest that teens read aloud to each other in small groups.

Many adolescents have difficulty talking about themselves in any way or finding words for their feelings. Being able to talk about a story or interview can be a stepping stone to faith sharing in the group. Teens need to talk because they often feel isolated and alone; without talking they won't know others have similar feelings.

Building up the trust that will make teens comfortable talking about their real struggles takes time. It can take a year for them to realize you as a catechist or teacher will listen and help them think things through, not just put them down or tell them an easy right answer.

Questions SPIRIT questions invite teens to interpret the story. Make the questions your own, but don't be afraid to ask them as written. Ask your own questions, too, and invite teens to do the same. Don't have group members write answers out. That makes a faith-sharing group too much like school.

Step 2 Reflecting on the Gospel

Gospel *SPIRIT* puts the gospel in drama form to invite teens to step into conversation with Jesus and the other people in the stories. Putting the gospel in reader parts allows several teens to take an active part in proclaiming the gospel each week.

Be creative in proclaiming the gospel. Invite members of your group to create a gospel skit or do a contemporary version of the gospel situated in our time. If you have teen liturgies, have teens dramatize the gospel for these eucharistic celebrations.

Invite teens to respond to the gospel. Notice if someone has a

question or an insight. Use the questions to interpret the gospel but not to limit faith sharing. If something in the gospel hits a chord, let the Spirit speak in the teens. Every lesson plan provides scripture background for the catechist.

Questions Questions ask teens to interpret the gospel and challenge them to make links between the *SPIRIT* story or article, the gospel, and their lives. Talking about the gospel helps teens interpret it at their own level and explore its meaning for them in today's world.

The few questions *SPIRIT* raises in no way exhaust the possible meanings of the gospel but are questions the editors think relevant to teens. Don't hesitate to go beyond these questions.

The aim of *SPIRIT* is conversion and transformation in Christ. The questions invite faith sharing—reflecting on one's own life experience. This is a transforming process. Teens and catechists open themselves to the possibility of Jesus and his teachings claiming their hearts, giving them direction, vision, and hope. A single insight may be enough to change a teen's life.

Step 3 Living Our Catholic Faith

Our Catholic Faith Page 4 of each *SPIRIT* issue is about our Catholic faith and Catholic practice. These topics follow from the theme of the gospels and the liturgical seasons. For young people accustomed to the relentless chapter by chapter approach of textbooks, this is a welcome change. It also puts them more in touch with the worshiping communities of which they are a part. Because the Gospels are about Jesus and his mission among us, the *Our Catholic Faith* part of the lesson helps teens to understand more about the scriptures, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the centrality of the Eucharist, and the bishops' teaching at the Vatican II Council. These page-4 features are also where *SPIRIT* integrates the topics the bishops' curriculum guidelines require. See the list of doctrinal topics on page 2.

Faith in Action *SPIRIT* lessons lead teens toward action in their communities. *Faith in Action* activities especially call young people to do or act on the word Jesus speaks. *SPIRIT* faith-sharing groups can become small Christian communities that reflect on and practice the gospel in an ongoing process.

Faith in Action features often emphasize Catholic social teaching and concrete ways to do the work of both charity and justice. The work of charity involves addressing immediate needs for basics, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care. The work of justice involves changing systems that leave people out or behind. Many of these references provide Internet sites that link teens to national and international groups working for human rights.

Prayer: Alive in God

As the concluding prayer for each session, *SPIRIT* identifies a prayer experience in its companion book, *Alive in God, Prayer Experiences for Teens*. The book provides ready made, easy to use prayer experiences on the gospel themes. Leaders can prepare to lead the prayer experiences by reading over the Introduction and Preparation sections of each experience and gathering any necessary materials. Votive candles are a handy staple in many of these experiences.

A catechist's or teacher's willingness to pray with teens gives powerful witness to the importance of God in our lives. It is a concrete way of sharing our deepest faith and of bonding together as a community. By participating in these prayers, teens can discover kinds of prayer that work for the each of them.

Walking Jesus' Way of Love and Service

Jesus is on the road in the Sunday gospels of October and arrives in Jerusalem to teach in the temple in the Sunday Gospels of November. Jesus' road trip with his disciples is a journey that models the journey all Christians make in following Jesus.

Mark's gospel characterizes Jesus' first disciples as both afraid and amazed (10.32). For Mark, fear and amazement create the threshold where faith begins. For women and men who follow Jesus and for the people they meet on the road, faith can begin at every turn—in dialog and debate with Jesus, in asking for healing or help.

Jesus teaches about discipleship by responding to people's questions and needs. A Pharisee asks about divorce. A young man seeks eternal life but can't give up his wealth to follow Jesus. A beggar believes Jesus can give him sight. James and John learn greatness lies in service.

As he teaches daily in the Jerusalem temple, Jesus puts more value on the pennies a widow gives to the temple than on the ostentatious gifts of richer people. Jesus' teachings will not pass away but inspire our own faith journeys.

SPIRIT calls teens to journeys of love and service like those others have made. St. Kateri Tekakwitha

values Jesus' self-giving on the cross and its celebration in every eucharist. Students use the Empty Bowls project to raise money for Heifer International—over \$65,000 in ten years.

In *Our Catholic Faith*, usually page 4, *SPIRIT* explores discipleship, marriage as a sacrament, eucharist, the Catholic social teachings of solidarity and human dignity, and the major documents of the Second Vatican Council. We find Jesus' way of love and service in our own time by walking with those in need and finding ways to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers in our global world.

Unit 1 Walking Jesus' Way of Love and Service

Sundays/Seasons	Gospel/Theme	Teens' Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
October 7, 2018 27th in Ordinary Time	Mark 10.2-12 Two become one flesh	Friendship	Sacrament of marriage, annulment
October 14, 2018 28th in Ordinary Time	Mark 10.17-27 Rich young man	St. Kateri Tekakwitha	Catholic social teaching: solidarity with the poor
October 21, 2018 29th in Ordinary Time	Mark 10.35-45 To serve is greatest	Empty Bowls Project	Living the Eucharist Vatican II: Liturgy
October 28, 2018 30th in Ordinary Time	Mark 10.46-52 Bartimaeus follows Jesus	Facing Disability	What being a Catholic Christian means
November 4, 2018 31st in Ordinary Time	Mark 12.28-34 Jesus' Law of Love	Working toward inclusion	Church, the body of Christ
November 11, 2018 32nd in Ordinary Time	Mark 12.38-44 A widow gives her all	"What Friends Do"	We live in mystery, the desire for God
November 18, 2018 33rd in Ordinary Time	Mark 13.24-32 Son of man will come	Cyberbullying	Vatican II: Church and world, conscience
November 25, 2018 Feast of Christ the King	John 18.33-37 Jesus' kingdom	Pope Francis: Leader for Our Time	Vatican II: Church and world, solidarity with the poor

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

“We can,” James and John insist, when Jesus questions whether they can drink the cup he is about to drink or be baptized in the same bath. They see Jesus as a warrior messiah whom they will daringly follow into triumphant combat and assist in his messianic rule. Ambition for status in Jesus’ messianic commonwealth has hold of their minds and impels their loyalty.

Jesus turns out to be a different kind of messiah than James, John, and the people of Israel expect. Sunday’s gospel follows the third passion prediction (Mark 10.32-35), in which Jesus tells his followers he will suffer, die, and rise after three days. His warnings do not disturb the image of Jesus the two brothers have fixed in their minds. They are too eager for glory-filled combat in the army of God, but as their sleeping through Jesus’ prayer in the garden and fleeing at Jesus’ arrest shows, they are not at all ready for Jesus’ shameful death by crucifixion. Only after Jesus’ death and resurrection do they fulfill their earlier pledge and give their lives to spreading the gospel and serving the Christian community.

Jesus defines greatness in Sunday’s gospel. To be great is to serve all. To serve is to give one’s life as he does. *SPIRIT* invites young people to explore why service experiences are valuable.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Music: Visit the *SPIRIT* page online for a song that fits today’s Gospel theme.

Objective: The young people will pray for people in need in the news.

Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens To prepare for this session, use “Catholic Social Teaching, Praying the News,” page 6. This will require current newspapers, magazines, or online posts. Conclude with Pray, cover, top left.

Icebreaker: Invite your teens to name a person who inspires them with their service.

Objective: The young people will explore the value of doing service projects together.

Article: Empty Bowls (pages 1-3) Ask your teen to share what they know about Empty Bowls and Heifer International.

- To introduce the article, have your teens look at the photos and speculate about what is happening. Look together at the seven lines of the chart, page 3, *Imagine the World Has 100 People*. Ask which percentages are new to them.
- Look together at the animals Heifer International gives to families that are poor, page 3. Ask if any students have visited Heifer’s Learning Centers. Read aloud the cutline, which stresses Heifer’s tradition of giving back.
- Have your teens take turns reading aloud about the Empty Bowls project, which this high school uses to raise money for Heifer International.
- Discuss questions 1-5 on page 3. 1. *Open-ended; it’s a tradition of both school and family that students like to keep going.* 2. *The*

students know that Heifer International isn’t a one time donation to Band-Aid a hunger problem. Heifer provides animals that help produce long-term solutions like milk, eggs, and income. 3. *Open-ended.* 4. *Open-ended.* 5. *Open-ended.* Food Fast from Catholic Relief Service and Bread for the World offer possibilities.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will explore how Jesus defines service.

Gospel: To be great is to serve all. (page 3) Have four readers proclaim the gospel aloud for your group or class. Discuss questions 6-7. 6. *Jesus said whoever wants to be first, or greatest, must serve the needs of all.* 7. *Jesus wants a community in which disciples serve rather than lord it over one another, in which they respect and love their neighbor rather than grab all each can from everyone else.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objectives: The young people will recognize we pledge to serve at Eucharist. The young people will identify ways Vatican II calls Catholics to participate in Eucharist.

Our Catholic Faith: Second Vatican Council: Liturgy

Vatican II: Jesus is always with us (page 4) This feature explores both the meaning of the cup we drink at Eucharist and the many ways the Second Vatican Council encourages active participation in Eucharist in its reforms.

- Divide your group into six. Have each group find one of the citations in the Bible Study and report what they find.
- Have four teens take turns reading aloud the first four paragraphs as a summary of their Bible Study. Respond to *Faith in Action*, question 1.
- Discuss as a whole group the meaning of the cup, the pledge James and John make to drink the cup, and the pledge we make when we drink from the cup in communion. *The cup at the last supper is a new covenant in Jesus’ lifeblood; Jesus pledges to pour out his life on the night before he dies. It is the cup of martyrdom. Jesus’ pledge is the same as his definition of service—giving his life to redeem many. For James and John to share the cup is to make the same pledge. In the garden Jesus prays to have the cup—passion and death—taken away. James and John flee when Jesus is arrested. James fulfills his pledge when King Herod has him put to death in Acts 12.1-2. John gives his life to preaching and ultimately writing the gospel.*
- Have teens read aloud the rest of the feature one paragraph at a time. Ask for questions. Ask how the Church would be different without these reforms.
- Discuss *Faith in Action*, questions 3-4.

Closing Prayer Gather in a prayer circle. Make a popcorn prayer of thanksgiving by inviting the young people to call out the names of people or groups they know or know about who serve others. Conclude by thanking God for all who serve and asking to learn how to contribute ourselves.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The evangelist Luke has a bias for the poor that shows in Sunday's gospel passage. When Jesus teaches the beatitudes in Matthew's gospel, he says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the reign of God is theirs." Luke takes out the phrase "in spirit." Blessed are the real poor, Luke says, the ones without enough food, without clothes and shelter, without sustaining relationships.

Luke's bias for the poor shows many places in his gospel. For example, in her *Magnificat*, Mary praises God for striking down the proud and lifting up the lowly; for filling the hungry with good things and sending the rich away empty (1.52-53). Only Luke tells of the rich man who dies and lives in torment while Lazarus, the beggar at his gate whom he never gave a scrap, lives happily in the everlasting bosom of Abraham (16.19-31). The man who gives a dinner to which his guests refuse to come invites instead the poor, crippled, blind, and lame to his table (14.12-24).

In Luke's beatitudes, Jesus teaches clearly that the poor, the sorrowing, the hungry, and those persecuted for his name's sake have a place in a kingdom of God. God remembers and blesses people in the midst of their struggles. Jesus' teachings ask us to reassess our notions of success. In the kingdom of God welcoming the poor, comforting the sorrowing, and respecting all people are signs of success.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore teens' experiences of living the beatitudes.

Music: Visit the *SPIRIT* page online for a song that fits today's Gospel theme.

Gather your teens in a circle and pray the prayer on page 1, top left, together.

Read the responses of the teens from St. Francis Xavier, left column, front page. Ask the teens to keep the question, "What kind of beatitude person do you aspire to be?" in mind as you explore this issue.

Story: Still Me (pages 1-2)

- Read the beatitude quote in red on page two aloud; "Blessed are those who weep now, they shall laugh." Have strong readers read "Still Me" aloud, changing at every large, green capital letter.

- Discuss questions 1-2. *1. Openended. Katie was brought back to 'normal'—to her own dignity and place in the community—in an unexpected way. Encourage the teens to look for blessings in unexpected places. 2. Openended. Telling someone "I love you, and I promise to do all I can to help you through this," is probably more helpful than platitudes.*

Article: Student Peace Alliance (page 3)

- Break into small groups of three or four. Read the beatitude quote on page three aloud: "Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God." Have the teens read the article aloud in their groups.

- Discuss question 3 in small groups. Have each group make a list. Regroup as a class and compare lists. *3. Openended. Working for peace on a national level like Nicole and Rachell is one way to fulfill this beatitude. But there are also abundant opportunities to work for peace in our own families and communities: learn methods of conflict resolution and put them to work in peer ministry at school, invite someone you don't know to sit at your table at lunch, resolve to work out a solution to a nagging problem between you and your siblings.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will reflect on Jesus' beatitudes.

Gospel: Who Does God Bless? (page 2) Have four teens proclaim the gospel. Discuss questions 4-6. *4. Some poor people learn to have fun together, talking and singing, doing things that don't cost money. Poor people have to be more themselves if they have too little money to keep up with in styles. Many poor people learn to stick together and help one another, to take each other in. People who have experienced hunger may be more willing to share what they have. Hunger is a metaphor for people who desire justice and truth. People who have experienced sorrow and loss understand how to walk with others through this experience. Jesus values the persecuted for standing up for justice and unpopular opinions; sometimes what people do to prophets wakes others up to their message. 5. People who are rich, full of food, and happy may be fine or may be superficial. Those who have never failed or experienced need or loss may develop little capacity to feel with others and interrelate. 6. True prophets speak God's values; false prophets tell people what they want to hear. True friends stick with a person through hard times because of who one is; false friends fall away in hard times or when they don't get something or some status from the relationship.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Our Catholic Faith: What forms the foundation of the Catholic Church? (page 4) Divide your group into five, assign each a section, and give them time to decide how to describe their piece of the foundation of the Church to the other groups. Note that it is Jesus and his teachings that are the foundation, not other accretions that have entered the Church over time.

Live It! These are both thoughtful suggestions for your group that you may or may not have time for now. Consider using them later in the year.