

2019-2020

SPiRiT *Guide*

Using SPiRiT is a transforming process that encourages teens to wrestle with what the Sunday gospels and Church tradition ask of them in their lives.

PASTORAL VISION

SPiRiT sows the Word of God in the good ground of teens' lives, where it can multiply a hundredfold in our world.

SPiRiT is a teaching tool for catechists and youth ministers. Every issue invites young people into dialogue with the Sunday gospel and Catholic tradition—to question and imagine, to find words and speak for themselves, to share and pray.

SPiRiT makes faith sharing easy and worthwhile. Who will help teens do soul work if parish and school groups don't? Many families will—and who else?

If your teens are talking about everything but religion, *SPiRiT* stories and articles can change that. They prime the



pump for authentic God talk. They help teens value their own God moments and life questions, work through conflicts and doubts. *SPiRiT* stories spark the deep sharing that allows teens to get to know and trust one another and over time share their own concerns. *SPiRiT* issues call teens

to put their faith into action—to live it!

SPiRiT initiates a habit of reflecting on the gospel that cycles the mystery of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection into teens' lives and over a lifetime transforms the Christian into Christ.

CONTENTS

HOW TO USE SPiRiT

2-4

UNIT 1: Practicing Prayer, Working for Justice

Overview, scope and sequence chart 5
Lesson Plans 1-8 6-13

UNIT 2: Building Peace on Earth

Overview, scope and sequence chart 14
Lesson Plans 9-12 15-18

UNIT 3: Living Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

Overview, scope and sequence chart 19
Lesson Plans 13-21 20-28

UNIT 4: Living Our Baptisms into Christ Jesus

Overview, scope and sequence chart 29
Lesson Plans 22-28 30-36

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 Christian tradition.

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



Using *SPIRIT* Step by Step



How to Use a *SPiRiT* Issue

S*PIRiT* 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 Christian community lives. *SPiRiT* instructs

through faith sharing, through stories and questions that get teens talking to one another about their experience, values, and all the gospel asks of them in their lives. *SPiRiT* aims to build Christian community among teens through breaking open the Word, reflecting, and praying together.

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 guide to the *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**

SPiRiT's clear design makes preparing for sessions as quick and easy as reading through the issue and guide.

Step 1 SHARING LIFE STORIES

Pray *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 want to keep these concerns in their hearts; some may welcome praying about them in the group.

Music *SPiRiT*'s *MUSIC XTRA* utilizes a popular song to illuminate the gospel theme as an icebreaker each week. The *XTRA* provides a video, summarizes the theme, highlights lyrics, and suggests questions for connecting the gospel theme and the song after listening to it. The *SPiRiT MUSIC XTRA* can be found on the *SPiRiT ONLINE* home page.

Icebreakers *SPiRiT* lessons often provide easy and fun activities to help groups feel at ease and connect with themes in the issue. Some of these icebreakers are part of the lesson plan. Many of them come from the *SPiRiT*

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

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.

Read In every issue *SPiRiT* provides fiction, articles, or 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.

The purpose of the story or article is to provide the group a common starting point for surfacing experiences in teens' lives to which the gospel may speak.

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.

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 Besides a story and the Sunday gospel, *SPIRIT* issues include each week a feature presenting Christian tradition—the doctrines of the *Apostles' Creed*, the sacraments, Christian moral life, ways to practice prayer. These features flow from the gospel. *SPIRIT* supplies hyperlinks to quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) in each issue. The links take you to the CCC home page. Quotations from the Catechism are always identified by paragraph numbers. Type the number in the white box at the top of the page and press the SEARCH button next to it. Other numbers besides the one that identifies a quotation offer additional content on the doctrinal subject.

Faith in Action *SPIRIT* lessons lead teens toward action in their communities. The *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.

Social Action *Faith in Action* features often emphasize Catholic social teaching and concrete ways to do the work of both charity and justice. Social action takes both forms. 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.

Concluding Prayer The *SPIRIT* lesson plans provide prayer for the end of each session. In some cases, *SPIRIT* issues provide whole prayer services or directions for teens to create prayer services together. Lesson plans suggest that teens gather in a prayer circle. Catechists and teachers can follow the plan's suggestions for prayer or lead teens in making their own.

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. Do a simple prayer conclusion for every session.

Unit 1:

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time to the Feast of Christ the King
 October 6, 2019—November 24, 2020
 Vol. 32, Nos. 1-8

Practicing Prayer, Working for Justice

By centering each issue on the Sunday gospel, *SPIRIT* emphasizes the revelation of Jesus Christ in scripture, the core building block for high school curriculum in the U.S. Catholic Conference guidelines (2008). During this liturgical year the Church is reading semi-continuously from Luke’s gospel, Cycle C.

In every *SPIRIT* issue teens practice reflecting on the gospels, in which Jesus speaks to us still. In its first issue *SPIRIT* explores the meaning of faith as both relationship with God and as the doctrinal creeds we profess.

SPIRIT takes advantage of Luke’s emphasis on Jesus as a man of prayer to explore prayer in the life of believers, a second building block of high school curriculum. In its first four issues *SPIRIT* presents the traditional purposes

of prayer—blessing, praise, thanks, petition, intercession as well as a variety of ways to practice prayer—doing contemplative or centering prayer, walking the labyrinth, journaling, finding solitude, doing Eucharistic adoration, running or walking, mindful choring, naming moments of grace.

To be a follower of Jesus is to practice prayer, responding to God’s love for us in creation, in Jesus, in being alive. *SPIRIT* provides prayer for beginning and ending every session and invites teens to become persons of prayer.

In Luke’s gospel Jesus holds up outsiders as models. A Samaritan leper gives us an example of a thankful person. A widow seeking her rights in court is an example of persistence in prayer. One tax collector embodies an example of a right

attitude in prayer; another tax collector (Zacchaeus) models conversion from cheating to caring about the poor and the common good.

In the gospel for Christ the King, a thief gives us an example of asking forgiveness. For Luke Jesus’ signature act on the cross is forgiving the thief. Jesus reveals God’s power in his actions of healing, befriending, and forgiving.

Jesus challenges us in these gospels to reach out to others beyond our comfort zones as *SPIRIT* stories suggest—to find models of team spirit on the bench, to find a model supporter in a teacher challenged by cerebral palsy, to follow a friend beyond racial boundaries.

Sundays/Seasons

Gospel/Theme

Teens’ Lives

Catholic Faith, Practice

Sundays/Seasons		Gospel/Theme	Teens’ Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
October 6, 2019 27th in Ordinary Time	Unit 1 Practicing Prayer, Working for Justice	Luke 17.5-10 What is faith?	Testimonies of faith	Prayer: Creeds
October 13, 2019 28th in Ordinary Time		Luke 17.11-19 Ten Lepers	Bringing outsiders in	Prayer: Thanks, petition, intercession
October 20, 2019 29th in Ordinary Time		Luke 18.1-8 A widow persists	Kibera Girls Soccer Academy	Prayer: Eight ways to seek God
October 27, 2019 30th in Ordinary Time		Luke 18.9-14, Who prays?	Attitudes	Prayer: Labyrinth, Contemplation
November 3, 2019 31st in Ordinary Time		Luke 19.1-10 Zacchaeus	Racism and privilege	Promoting the Common Good
November 10, 2019 32nd in Ordinary Time		Luke 20.27-38 God lives	Grieving	Bible: Two testaments
November 17, 2019 33rd in Ordinary Time		Luke 21.5-19 End Times	Where is God in an accident?	Bible: Apocalyptic writing, genres
November 24, 2019 Feast of Christ the King		Luke 23.35-43 Good Thief	Forgiveness	Sacraments: Reconciliation

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus' disciples ask him to increase their faith. Catholic doctrine distinguishes between two kinds of faith—the faith *by which* we believe and the faith *which* we believe. Faith is first a relationship, the way we lean into reality, set our hearts, trust or distrust all that is, trust God is and loves us. This is the faith *by which* we believe, our response to the love God reveals in creation, in Israel's history, in Jesus.

The gospels, doctrines of the Church, and the beliefs of our Creeds form the content of faith—that *which* we believe. *SPIRIT* develops both concepts in this issue and helps young people trust their personal faith and expand their understanding of doctrine to keep pace with their developing intellects.

A little faith can uproot a tree and plant it in the sea, Jesus says in the gospel, his exaggeration gently making fun of faith that wants to work wonders and show off its power. In Jesus God comes among us humbly as one of us.

The second parable in Sunday's gospel insists service is the ordinary duty of Christians. Jesus doesn't call his disciples to work wonders or gain status but to give their lives in love for others as he does.

Group rules for faith sharing.

- Share in a circle, so everyone can see each other.
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- A catechist listens rather than lectures, lets teens teach each other, and steps in when group can't get going, stall, or make statements one doesn't agree with.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will get to know one another.

Music: Use the popular song that *SPIRIT MUSIC XTRA* links with the gospel theme. Use the video on the *SPIRIT ONLINE* home page, along with background, lyrics, and reflection questions.

Pray (cover) Pray the prayer at top left together.

Icebreaker: M&Ms Fill a bowl with M&Ms. Invite group members to take some; then break it to them that they have to tell one thing about themselves for each M&M they have.

Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens (available from www.goodgroundpress.com) offers a great way to introduce this *SPIRIT* issue on faith. See pages 15-17, "Where I Stand."

Objective: Young people will recognize their God moments.

Story: "Natural High" (cover) Ask your group when and how they have experienced being part of something bigger than themselves. Have them doodle or close their eyes and think.

- Have volunteers read "Natural High" aloud. Share a God moment of your own. Then invite the group to form pairs and respond to question 1, page 2. *1. People have many flashes of awe and insight. Sharing them fosters reflection on them and memory of changing significance.*

- Discuss question 2 as a group. *2. Playing or hearing music can open our hearts and carry us beyond ourselves. To encounter the holy requires openness just as encountering another person does. The Spirit of God coexists and interacts with our spirits.*

Article: Keeping Faith (pages 2-3) Read aloud the quotation on page 3, bottom, which describes two kinds of faith—faith as relationship and faith as doctrine or beliefs. Have three teens take turns reading the feature, changing readers with each initial capital letter. Ask what they learn about faith in this article.

- Discuss questions 3-4. *3. Openended. The author stresses how deep, trustworthy, and abiding her relationship with God is. 4. Openended. A death or illness can make us think about questions we avoid and open us to reflect on who God is.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will explore the power of faith in Jesus and our duty to serve.

Gospel: What is faith? (page 2) Have five young people take parts and proclaim the gospel aloud. Discuss questions 5-6. *5. Like a seed, faith has growth potential, a sustaining power planted within us that can grow and unfold as we grow and the whole human race evolves. Like a seed, faith is living, an active relationship. It is a verb, our believing and trusting God, creation, our purpose in this whole. 6. Jesus asks us to love and serve as he does. We have an obligation as Christians to work that the hungry may eat, the poor get educated, and the excluded have access into our society.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore and express their faith.

Our Catholic Faith: Faith has two meanings (page 3) Read the article aloud. Ask the teens to describe the two meanings of belief. *1. To give one's heart to, to trust, to be in deep and sustaining relationship with. 2. To accept something as true, to have an opinion about.* Ask the teens what believing means for a Christian. *1. To give one's heart to God, to trust and be in relationship with God. 2. To test and seek to understand the doctrines and traditions that Christians hold.* Visit the paragraphs on faith in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* cited on page 3. Use the hyperlink in the issue.

Our Catholic Faith: What do you believe? (page 4) Tell the young people that they will now have a chance to create a creed of their own. Read aloud the two paragraphs at the top of the page. Have them read and circle the statements they most identify with. Have them choose their top ten or twenty statements and copy them out on a separate sheet of paper.

Faith in Action Give the teens time to consider what actions may flow from their statements of belief, as item 1 suggests.

Concluding Prayer Use *Faith in Action* item 2. Repeat the cover prayer.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Shalom, the word that Jews use as their hello, means peace, wholeness, completeness. The scriptures picture shalom as the desert blooming, lame people walking, debtors set free, and the blind seeing. Shalom is God giving new life where life has withered.

In Jesus, divine power becomes transparent, not in a burning bush or churning thunderhead but in a human like us. The gospel healing stories are shalom stories of Jesus making people whole. They express God’s intent for the full flourishing of humankind.

Miracle stories like the one in Sunday’s gospel share a common literary form that is simple:

1. Jesus and a person in need meet;
2. the person in need asks Jesus for help;
3. Jesus gives help and sends the person away;
4. the person and/or witnesses react.

Miracle stories also have twists, variations from the simple form, that hold the key to a story’s meaning. The twist in Sunday’s gospel lies in the ways the healed lepers respond—ten are healed, only one expresses thanks. Jesus’ generous healing of all ten reveals God’s attitude toward us—free, generous love that none of us deserve. The grateful leper models the ideal response to God’s grace—gratitude. The grateful leper is a Samaritan, a heretic in the eyes of most Jews—a second twist in the miracle story.

SPIRIT explores how a class changes from making fun of a differently-abled teacher to loving and standing up for him.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will reflect on who fits and doesn’t fit in their school.

Prayer (cover) Invite your teens to think quietly about things for which they are grateful. Then, lead the prayer on the cover, top left, which ends with an invitation for them to add on their own thanks.

Opening Prayer: “Valuing God’s Presence in Our Lives,” *Alive in God, Prayer Experiences with Teens*, pages 1-2.

Music: Use the popular song that *SPIRIT MUSIC XTRA* links with the gospel theme. Use the video on the *SPIRIT ONLINE* home page, along with background, lyrics, and reflection questions.

Starter Question: Who Fits? (cover) Teens respond to the question, “What is the biggest reason some kids don’t seem to fit in any group?” Have your teens discuss this question and identify their own reasons, using the responses at left. This is an issue close to most young people’s experience and sensitivities.

Story: Of Freaks and Friendship (pages 1-3) Have your class or group take turns in small groups reading this story aloud together. Allow time for teens to react to the story. Discuss questions 1-2. 1.

Ask them to share any experiences they have had of getting to know someone they at first considered an outsider for some reason. 2. Personal response.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize that Jesus reaches out to include outsiders.

Gospel: Faith & gratitude are miracles (page 3) Have two members of your class or group take the parts of the Narrator and Jesus to read the gospel aloud. Have the rest take the part of the lepers. Invite them after the reading to repeat a word or phrase that struck them.

- Then discuss question 3. *No one is an outsider to Jesus. Outsiders like the Samaritan and Gentiles were sometimes more ready followers of Jesus than those who belonged to God’s people and knew the story of God’s love for Israel.* 4. Open-ended.

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will appreciate different kinds of prayer as personal responses to God’s love.

Our Catholic Faith: Prayer is responding to God’s love (page 4) Introduce the topic of prayer by reading the quotations from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. One is about the prayer of blessing, the other about prayer of petition. Have your teens note the high-lighted phrases in the feature. The feature explores four of the five basic forms of prayer identified in the *Catechism*: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise (#2644). Start a discussion with your teens about how they pray. As they respond, ask them to identify which category their prayer falls under.

- Have volunteers read the feature aloud. Invite teens to add their examples of the kinds of prayer. It’s easy to fall into the habit of using only one or two kinds of prayer. Remind the teens that a full response to God’s love will involve using all the forms of prayer—gratitude as well as emergency petitions.

- Invite your teens to compose a prayer in a form they don’t usually use.

Faith in Action (page 4) Read items 1-4. Invite the teens to reflect on item 4. Identify a few groups that could use their friendly blessings. *New kids at school, immigrants, those in poverty, those with physical or mental disabilities.*

Concluding Prayer Form a prayer circle. Invite each teen to complete the sentence with a one or two word response: Creator, we ask your blessings on
We ask for your help with
We ask you to help
We thank you for
We praise you for