

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.

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HOW SPiRiT WORKS

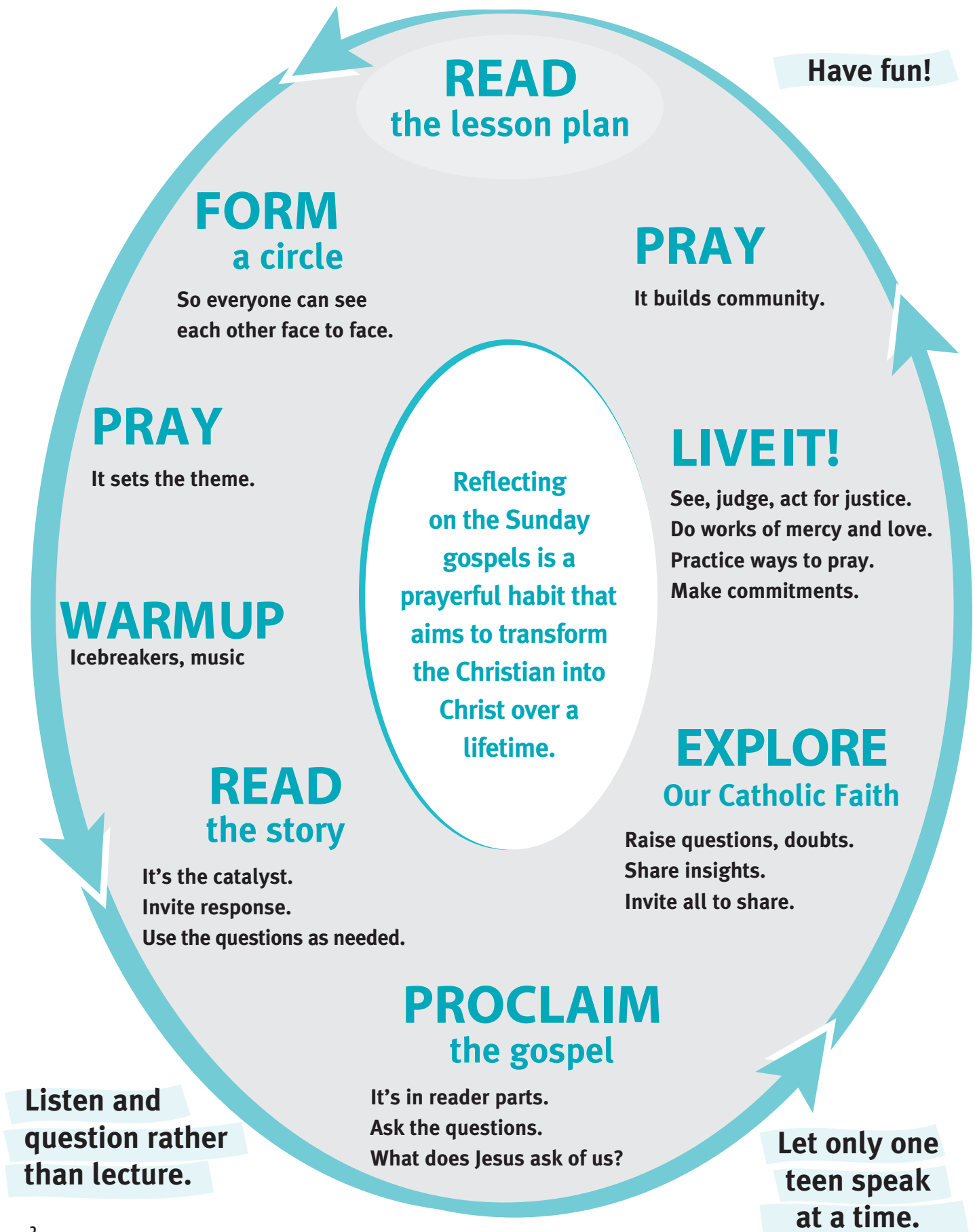
Each **SPiRiT** issue provides four pages written just for teens that include stories about life, the Sunday Gospel in reader parts, and presentations of Christian tradition.

- **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.

Lesson plans inside



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

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. *Open-ended. 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

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus gives his disciples and us a model of how to pray and how to seek justice—always and without losing heart. The model Jesus offers is a poor widow who persists in seeking her rights from an unjust judge until he settles her case. In Jesus' time a widow had no social status or money. A widow had little way to pressure or influence an unjust judge except by her persistence.

The judge in Jesus' example settles rather than risk disgrace. Jesus contrasts the unjust judge with God. If a widow can bring an unjust judge to do justice through persistence, how much more likely is God to do justice to those who ask in prayer.

Persistence measures what one really wants. Jesus recommends praying persistently. Many young people may be unsure about their deepest goals. But persistent prayer can be a help in critiquing shallow goals and setting sights higher or deeper. Often we meet God right in the moments when our own abilities fail us or when we reach a goal which proves empty. Persistent prayer can open us to God's greater desires for us.

SPIRIT explores the persistence of Abdul Kassim, who brings education and empowerment to young women in Kenya through soccer.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore Catholic social teaching and ways to seek justice.

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 this prayer aloud together as a class to begin your time together.

17 Ways to Persist in Changing the World (cover) Ask your teens to look at the photos and read the Sustainable Development Goals at bottom left. Ask which goal the photos illustrate.

- Ask group members to share what they know about the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Then have volunteers read the text at right. Ask which goals involve children and young people. *In the end all do.*
- Ask what value the young people see in nations making commitments to these goals together. Ask which goals the teens have helped work toward in the past 10 years.

Article: Kibera Girls Soccer Academy (pages 2-3) Have your group look at the title and photos. Have volunteers take turns reading a paragraph aloud for the group. Have the group listen for the power of persistence and the difference one person is making in girls' lives. Talk about examples of persistence, especially Abdul's.

- Discuss questions 1-3. 1. *His grandmother motivates Abdul. She*

spent her money to give him educational opportunities she never had. KSGA is successful because Abdul listens to the girls and tries to help remove barriers that prevent them from being dedicated and successful. 2. The girls face great financial challenges. They have to struggle for food and basic hygienic needs. They come from a culture that does not support the education of women. 3. Open-ended. Educated girls tend to build up their families and villages and help everyone prosper. They feel better about themselves and want to make positive changes for themselves and the world.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate Jesus' challenge to persist in prayer to reach goals.

Gospel: A widow persists in seeking justice (page 3) Ask group or class members to identify people today they think have little social status like the widow in Jesus' time—*divorced women with children who often wind up on welfare for a time; a teen mother; elderly people on low, fixed incomes; people who have experienced foreclosures, downsizing, or bankruptcy.* Have them think of families that have lost children to injustices such as violence in our cities or drunk drivers.

- Have four youths take parts and read the gospel. Discuss questions 4-5. 4. *Prayer reminds us we are not alone in our fight for justice. We work for it and do all we can but God is also in on the work. Prayer may change us more than we anticipate and open new ways to make a difference. 5. Open-ended. Organizations such as Free the Children, Catholic Relief Services, OXFAM, people who teach the MDGs to others. Perhaps people in your diocese have organizations that help.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore and practice ways to pray that fit them and help them toward goals.

Our Catholic Faith: Persisting in Prayer (page 4) Ask your teens to name activities they have persisted in doing or practicing and describe the results. Invite volunteers to read the article aloud.

Prayer: Ways to Seek God (page 4) Have your youth work in fours to read and share any experience they have had of trying any of the eight ways to practice prayer. Ask teens to consider making a week's or month's commitment to pursue regularly one of the ways of seeking God. Make a class list of groups with whom teens can participate in action for justice, especially parish groups.

Concluding Prayer Form a prayer circle. Invite teens to name people for whom they want to persist in praying. Join hands and pray the *Our Father*.

Visit "Social Justice Resources"
 online at GOODGROUNDPRESS.COM.
 Click on SPIRIT

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Prayer is the focus in Sunday's gospel, a parable Jesus tells about a Pharisee and a tax collector praying in the temple. The Pharisee stands before God and praises himself; the tax collector throws himself on God's mercy. [www.usccb.org/Catechism/2562-63, 2709-2719, 2724](http://www.usccb.org/Catechism/2562-63,2709-2719,2724)

Many of us bring a negative stereotype to Pharisees in the gospels. We view them as stock hypocrites. In Jesus' time Pharisees were an influential, respected group of religious educators; in fact, bible scholars think Jesus had more in common with Pharisees than any other religious group. Like Jesus, Pharisees taught ordinary Jews in the villages of Israel; they were the school teachers who taught Jews their religious traditions and helped them wrestle with their everyday moral and legal questions. The Pharisee in Sunday's gospel is one person with a self-righteous attitude, whose smugness should not color the way we understand the entire group.

Actually, Jesus is criticizing a man whom most people of his time considered an ideal Jew, a good man such as a devout businessman today who attends daily Mass and teaches religion classes. This Pharisee keeps the law, fasts, and tithes his earnings to the temple. He's certain he is right with God because he does the things good, religious people do. Jesus criticizes only his certainty that he is right with God and better than the tax collector—a man whose very work puts him outside Jewish law.

In this issue *SPIRIT* explores contemplative prayer as a way of resting in the mystery of God, from whom we have life and in whom we find sustaining energy. This issue explores the difference attitudes make.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore forms of contemplative prayer—the labyrinth and centering prayer.

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) Invite your teens to pray together the prayer at top left.

Walking the Labyrinth (cover) Have your teens recognize the circular maze cut into the grass in the cover photo. It is the same pattern as the labyrinth design on the cover and the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth (www.Chartreslabyrinth.com). Have a volunteer read aloud the cover feature about walking the labyrinth as a mode of prayer. Note the teen's description of her experience. Visit and walk a labyrinth in your area if possible, or rent one. Or, use "Walking Meditation," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pages 34-35. It has a larger labyrinth illustration for a finger meditation.

- Invite your teens to use their fingers or a pencil to find their way to the center in the labyrinth design on the cover and journal briefly in response to one of the questions at top right.

Story: Attitudes (pages 2-3) Have your teens read the story aloud in threes or fours, and then discuss the narrator's attitude, using questions 1-2. Bring the groups together to share their responses to question 2.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate God loves them because they are, not because of all they accomplish.

Gospel: How should I pray to God? (page 3) Note the photo on page 3, top, that shows Jewish men praying at the Western Wall in Jerusalem; this wall formed part of the temple, where the Pharisee and tax collector pray in Sunday's gospel.

- Have four young people proclaim the gospel aloud.
- Then discuss questions 3-6. 3. *The Pharisee focuses on himself and how much better than the tax collector he is rather than on God. The Pharisee looks down on the tax collector, whom he stereotypes as a sinner. He invites God to approve of him and discount the tax collector. Probe with your group why some people look down on others as a way of building themselves up.* 4. *The tax collector is humble before God.* 5. *Openended. Praying involves thanksgiving for God's gifts to us but not judging others.* 6. *Openended.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will practice contemplative prayer.

Our Catholic Faith: Contemplative Prayer (page 4) Introduce contemplative prayer by having your teens read the two *Catechism* quotations. Begin with the quotation at bottom left. Ask them what words in the quotation strike them and why. Invite your teens to recall from the first *Spirit* issue of the year that faith is both relationship with God and the truths we believe. Invite them to point out the relationship words in the quote—*gaze, attentiveness, silent love, union*. Conclude that contemplative prayer invites a deeper relationship with God.

- The second quotation explores the human heart. Ask your teens what the word *heart* expresses for them. Read the quotation at top center. Ask your teens for questions or for what parts of the quote they especially like.
- Have volunteers take turns reading the feature on page 4 aloud. Ask what is appealing about this kind of prayer.
- Be prepared to lead your group in an experience of centering prayer, following the seven-step directions on page 4.

Faith in Action (page 4) Consider organizing a contemplative prayer time with those among your teens who want to pray together regularly once a week. Many teens appreciate this experience. Note that contemplative prayer can be done walking or running instead of sitting. One integrates body and spirit and opens one's self to rest in the midst of God's creation.

Concluding Prayer Invite your teens to get comfortable and repeat a sacred word for three minutes.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Zacchaeus is a person surprised by grace. His willingness to climb a tree, even if he looks foolish in his effort to get a look at Jesus, is an openness to the mystery of God present in Jesus. Zacchaeus's story is every Christian's story of grace.

Zacchaeus meets Jesus face to face and spends an afternoon with him that changes his life. No longer will Zacchaeus gouge people when he collects their taxes but rather he will repay money he has taken unfairly and care for the poor. Jesus' respect for Zacchaeus has the effect of calling Zacchaeus to respect others. He must befriend others as Jesus befriends him.

Jesus' visit surprises Zacchaeus out of his self-centered focus on making money into the openhearted, generous world of God's love for all people. Friendship, beauty in art or nature, liturgy that catches people up in a common heart—such events bring us face to face with the mystery of God's presence. Our part is openness to the mystery, like the curiosity that impels Zacchaeus out on a limb.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore how friends influence us and call us beyond our own circles.

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) Invite your teens to pray the opening prayer at top left together. It stresses the power of friendship to influence us as Jesus does Zacchaeus.

Icebreaker: What makes a real friend? (page 4) Have your group take turns reading aloud the student responses to the question. Invite them to express their own responses to the question.

Story: A Great Silence (pages 1-3) Invite your teens to think about what they have in common with friends and what differences they have. Perhaps one friend is someone who went to the same elementary school but is no longer in the same classes, or one friend likes to work out for track but has no interest in music. This is the story of two guys who write poetry but who discover race and stereotypes complicate their friendship. Invite the young people to listen to the story, asking, "How do my friends influence me?"

- Read the story aloud; have volunteers take turns. Discuss questions 1-2. *1. The author recognizes his white friends stereotype and misjudge black people as drug-dealing gangbangers, and he would, too, if he didn't know Eli. He experiences what life is like for Eli. He experiences white privilege and expectations that Eli shouldn't be in the coffee shop. 2. Openended. Apologize. Thank Eli for opening his eyes. Choose more diverse friends and experiences. Thank Eli for his friendship.*

- Have your teens respond to question 3 in pairs.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will interpret how his friendship with Jesus changes Zacchaeus.

Gospel: Jesus befriends Zacchaeus (page 2) Have four members of your class or youth group take parts and proclaim the gospel. Have the rest of your group play the part of the crowd. They can do creative grumbling and backbiting. Invite them to ask questions or give comments on the gospel.

- Discuss questions 4-5. *4. Jesus sees Zacchaeus not just as someone who hurts others but as someone who is himself hurt. Jesus sees someone in need of compassion, not judgment. Most people dislike Zacchaeus for collecting taxes for the Romans, who occupy his homeland, and for extorting excess taxes for his own gain. His work puts him outside Jewish law. The risk Zacchaeus takes to see Jesus discloses an openness to Jesus that the crowd misses because they stereotype him as an opportunistic tax collector. Having dinner with Jesus transforms Zacchaeus from a greedy tax collector to a compassionate person who recognizes his obligations to the poor. 5. Personal response.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will identify concrete ways to promote the common good.

Our Catholic Faith: Promoting the common good (pages 3-4)

Ask your teens, "What is a commons?" Have them identify what is happening in the photo on page 3. Have volunteers read aloud the first three paragraphs.

- Read aloud the next four paragraphs to introduce the concept of the common good in Catholic social teaching. *Note that this concept builds on the two primary principles: the human person is sacred, made in God's image, and the human person is social.*

Faith in Action Have your teens finish reading in groups of four and discuss their ideas about *Faith in Action*, item 1. Direct them to make a list of rights on newsprint and brainstorm how teens can promote these rights for others. They can use the examples in the illustrations of the two feet of social justice to start their lists.

- Summarize by reading the quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, on our obligation to work for the common good. Encourage teens to use the hyperlinks to the Catechism.

- Encourage teens to visit and report on the PovertyUSA.org or paxchristiusa.org websites.

Concluding Prayer: Invite your young people into a prayer circle and join hands. Invite them to ask in petition form for help in making and keeping friends and for being an influence for good on their friends. Respond to each petition, "Loving God, hear our prayer." Include prayer for the common good of our nation as election day arrives and for the safety of all candidates.

- Or, use the guided meditation "Speaking the Truth," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pp. 26-28. Available from goodgroundpress.com.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus enters into one of the heated religious debates of his day—resurrection of the dead. His opponents are Sadducees, an elite group of priests and landowners, who accepted as their authority only the written law of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). They disagreed with the oral traditions that the Pharisees developed to interpret the law in their work of teaching in Israel's villages and synagogues.

To argue against belief in resurrection, the Sadducees create an extreme case about practicing the levirate marriage law (Deut. 25.5-10). To refute their arguments, Jesus quotes Exodus 3.15, when God in the burning bush tells Moses, "I am the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The passage shows that these ancestors, long dead in Moses' time, are alive to God.

SPIRIT explores how a brother and sister grieve when their father dies.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will reflect on the meaning of resurrection.

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) Invite the teens in your class or group to name people important to them who have died. Pray the prayer at top left together.

Story: A Day With Abbey (pages 1-3) Introduce the story by inviting your group to interpret the photos and callout on pages 1-2. Have group members take turns reading the story aloud and react to it. Questions 1 and 2 on page 3 invite personal response. Allow time for teens to think or journal about them; then share responses in fours. Be sensitive to teens with family members who are sick or have died.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize all are alive to God.

Gospel: All are alive to God (page 2) Note the burning bush illustration calls attention to the passage from Exodus that Jesus quotes in the gospel. Have four teens proclaim the gospel.

- Discuss questions 3-4. 3. *God relates to every human being as a living person. Our lives begin and end in God. God is the giver of our lives. God sustains us in life day by day.* 4. *We are alive to God when we recognize God's presence holding together the web of all life. We are alive to God in prayer and celebrating Eucharist together, in loving our neighbor as ourselves.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The teens will reflect on the dignity of life.

Our Catholic Faith: Holding life sacred (page 3) Read aloud the quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 3, top right, which summarizes the Church's teaching on life issues. Have volunteers read the feature aloud. Consider inviting a speaker to class if your teens have questions.

- Invite your young people to notice and comment on the art depicting Jesus' crucifixion and the cutline that reminds them Jesus was a victim of the death penalty.

Objective: The teens will explore strands of bible tradition.

Our Catholic Faith: The bible contains two testaments (page 4) Introduce this feature by explaining the bible is like a library or scrap book. Read aloud the first three paragraphs.

- Write the three dates in paragraph four on a chalk or whiteboard: 721 B.C., 587 B.C., and 540 B.C. These dates mark events key in Israel's history as a kingdom. The priests in exile (587-540) became "holy scrap bookers" who collected and wrote down Israel's traditions.

- Have teens take turns reading paragraphs aloud. Encourage questions. www.usccb.org.catechism/140

Faith in Action Item 1 Divide your group in two, one to read Genesis 1 (priestly tradition) and one to read Genesis 2 (Yahwist tradition). Have each tell the creation story they read. Discuss the two questions. *Genesis 1 is a majestic proclamation of faith in God as creator, who speaks and things come to be. In Genesis 2 God breathes life into clay to make a human, talks with the humans intimately like a friend.*

Item 2 The teens will need bibles or copies of Exodus 19-20. Read aloud Exodus 19.3-6 and note the verses come from Deuteronomy. Then have teens tally in pairs which verses refer to God as God and which as Lord. Yahwist (Lord) verses 19.7-15, 20-25; 20.2-17, 22-26; Elohist (God) 19.16-19; 20.1, 18-21, 22. *Flavors: Deuteronomy is personal, loving. God carries Israel on eagle's wings. Israel is a treasured possession among all peoples. In the Yahwist Moses is the mediator of the covenant, going up and down the mountain to get the commandments. The Elohist provides lightning, thunder, fire, earthquake.*

Concluding Prayer: Invite your group members to respond to the following petitions,

"Creator God, hold them in your love."

For all those who are grieving the loss of someone close to them.

For those struggling with pregnancies that they find the support and courage they need to have the child.

For those who are ill and facing the end of life.

Ask the teens if they have any petitions they want to add.

- Or, "Better Than Chicken Soup," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pp. 9-10.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Some people see the beginning of the end in world events, such as the AIDS epidemic or conflicts in the Middle East. When Luke wrote his gospel many people thought that way, too. Up until A.D. 70, Christian Jews, like other Jews, worshiped in the temple; celebrated holy days and prayed in its incense-filled, inner courts; and visited in its shady outer courts. The Romans' destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 cried out for interpretation in the 80s when Luke wrote. The temple was destroyed 40 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, when the Romans put down a four-year Jewish rebellion. Destroying the temple and city ended temple-centered worship for all time and prodded Christians to understand themselves as the new temple of God, one not made with human hands.

In Sunday's gospel Luke makes clear that the upheavals some interpret as signs of the end—war, disasters, famines, pestilence, the destruction of the temple—are to be expected. They are not the end. Luke's gospel anticipates a long delay before the end; in fact, Luke writes a second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, to tell the history of the Church as a sequel to Jesus' own ministry. Luke counsels the hearers of his gospel to endure in faith when they face wars, violence, earthquakes, famine—all that threatens human existence.

In this issue *SPIRIT* explores the choices and circumstances that lead to a car crash and the reflection of those involved in how God is present with them.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore how God is present in a crisis.

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 together the prayer at top left, which focuses on the gospel theme.

Story: Choices & Circumstances (pages 1-3) Have your group read the story aloud together. This true account sparked the author to discuss God's presence with her friends. Let your teens react to the story; some of them may have been in car accidents or had close friends who were. Let them talk about their own experiences and questions.

- Divide your young people into fours or fives to discuss the questions 1-2. 1. *Personal experience.* 2. *Some of your teens may be superstitious; others may recognize God's continuing presence in all times. Ask if they feel more like Steph in the story or more like the author. Tragic events are not punishments. God does not abandon us when we make wrong or hurtful decisions, nor depend on our actions to be present. God is present whether we recognize God's presence or not.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize Jesus calls us to face disasters and wars with trust in him.

Gospel: Jesus says, "Trust me." (page 3) Have six members of your class or group proclaim the gospel, taking the parts of narrator, Jesus 1-4, and disciples.

- Discuss questions 3-5. 3. *Many teens today are aware of apocalyptic predictions of the end of the world in 2012. Remind your teens that people have always feared the end of the world; today is no different. God is with us no matter what. Wars and disasters are not signs of the end and Jesus' imminent return but experiences Christians can live through and endure. Christians know how to live—helping neighbors, reaching out, praying.* 4. *Personal response.* 5. *Personal response. By acting as Jesus did: helping others, including others, praying.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will recognize the Bible contains various forms of literature.

Our Catholic Faith: What is apocalyptic? A message of hope (page 3) This short feature explains the literary form of Sunday's gospel—apocalyptic—and compares this ancient form to science fiction and African American spirituals. Have a strong reader read the first four paragraphs aloud. Field any questions.

- Have your teens read Daniel 7.1-14 in small groups of four and find the full descriptions of the four beasts. Then read aloud the remaining three paragraphs.
- Have group members explain in their own words why apocalyptic writing gives us hope. Then have them discuss *Faith in Action*, items 1-3, page 4, and report their ideas to the whole group.

Our Catholic Faith: Basics about the bible (page 4) Read aloud the first three paragraphs. Invite teens to discuss what they know about different genres in the Bible and how they should be read differently. Read paragraph four about Old Testament literary forms. Ask how they would read a sermon, a poem, a proverb, an historical account. www.usccb.org/catechism/110-114

Faith in Action: New Testament literary forms Write the five literary forms mentioned in item 5 on slips of paper. Have your group divide into five small groups and each draw a slip of paper. Direct the small groups to continue reading about New Testament literary forms, and find examples of the literary form on the paper they drew, using the gospel citations listed in item 5.

- Have each small group explain their literary form and their example of it.

- Conclude by discussing item 4.

Concluding Prayer Have teens form a prayer circle. Invite all who wish to tell about a person who gives them hope. Then invite them to pray to resist an evil they experience in our world. Have all respond to each prayer, "Deliver us, Lord, from evil."

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The Feast of Christ, King of the Universe, puts Jesus before us as the one in whom the Church year culminates and in whom all history flows together. Pope Pius XI established this feast in 1926 to promote Christian leadership in shaping world order after the first World War.

Sunday's gospel, in which the crucified Jesus forgives the good thief, gives us Jesus' gospel message in cameo. Only Luke gives us the story of the two criminals crucified with Jesus in which we see forgiveness as Jesus' ultimate kingly act. One criminal joins the leaders and soldiers in taunting Jesus as the devil did in the desert (Luke 4.1-13) to use his divine powers for worldly success, to save himself, and show he is really king. The other criminal recognizes Jesus' innocence and true identity. This criminal, whom Christians traditionally call the good thief, believes God will vindicate Jesus and his kingdom will come. Jesus responds with the assurance that the thief will be with him that very day in paradise, in the new creation.

Although the passersby, leaders, and soldiers see a criminal on the cross, Luke sees the king of the Jews, the messiah, who gives his whole self in death to stand with humankind. Jesus begins and ends his ministry standing with sinners and reconciling them with God, bringing among us the time of God's favor.

On the cross Jesus stands for a new paradise beyond the power of death to defeat and destroy. This gospel calls Christians to continue the work of the crucified and risen Jesus—forgiving sinners, reaching out to outcasts, refusing to use power for personal glory, and making Jesus' ethic of forgiveness and restoration a reality. *SPIRIT* explores forgiveness in this issue.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will weigh what they can forgive.

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 upper left together to focus on the theme of the issue.

Story: Hard to Forgive (pages 1-3) Invite teens to notice the photos, which help set the story in homecoming week, and to read the callout on page 2, bottom.

- Ask volunteers to take turns reading this story aloud. Teens may react to Margaret as the story moves along. Encourage comments. *SPIRIT* intends to help teens think of their own similar experiences in the roles of any of the students in the story.

- Discuss questions 1 and 2. *Margaret supports the zero tolerance that many schools have for drinking or weapons. Anthony accepts drinking. Margaret takes a stand. Diane is forgiving. Teens will have opinions. Learning consequences is vital to becoming aware, moral people. The consequences are not only the two weeks of suspension from school activities but wounded relationships like Derek's with Margaret.*

- Students in some schools may not value student council activities, the setting of this story. However, most have strong opinions about what consequences are right for athletes who get caught drinking.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize Jesus forgives all who ask and choose to change.

Gospel: Forgiveness is Jesus' ultimate power (page 3) Have four teens take the parts of Narrator, Jesus, Criminal 1, and Criminal 2. Have half of the rest of the group take the part of the Leaders and the other half the part of the Soldiers. Proclaim the gospel together.

- Discuss questions 3 -5. 3. *In Luke's gospel Jesus' final, signature action is forgiveness. In it, he acts as king, promising a criminal release from his guilt by promising him paradise that day.* 4. *Openended* 5. *Jesus reigns where people love, forgive, include, bring opponents together as he did, where people break down barriers and forgive crippling debts.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will practice righting relationships.

Our Catholic Faith: Seeking Reconciliation (pages 3-4) Introduce this feature by reading the description of the sacrament of reconciliation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on page 4. www.usccb.org/catechism/1442-1460

- Explain that the most frequent ways we ask and receive forgiveness are in celebrating Eucharist. Have your teens note the highlighted words. Have volunteers read the feature aloud up to the "I" on page 4.

- Have volunteers read aloud the rest of the feature, which is on the sacrament of reconciliation. Note the photo on page 3 of face-to-face conversation with a priest as a way to receive the sacrament.

Faith in Action Take quiet time for item 1. Conclude by praying together Psalm 139.

- Suggest that teens ask their parents to try item 2. Some of teens' worst conflicts arise around issues they cannot imagine talking to their parents about. Item 2 comes from a pastoral minister who had families hugging in the parking lot after clearing the air on the way to church.

Concluding Prayer Pray "Life-giving God, your Son Jesus shows us the importance of forgiveness by forgiving the good thief on the cross. You call us to imitate Jesus in being people who restore and repair relationships among us when we hurt and harm one another. Bless us in our desire and actions to forgive and heal. Amen." Join hands, pray the *Our Father* together, and offer one another a sign of peace.

- Consider using "Unholy Spirits," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pages 11-12. Have your teens create scenes that indicate temptations with alcohol and whatever other unloving, unholy spirits they encounter in their lives.

Advent, Building Peace on Earth

On the 1st Sunday of Advent the Church begins its new liturgical year and begins telling the story of God becoming one of us in Jesus all over again. In 2020, the Church turns to Matthew's account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, using the Cycle A scripture readings.

Advent is the liturgical season that prepares Christians to celebrate Christmas and reflect on the mystery of the incarnation of God in our world. The word *advent* means *coming*. The season of Advent celebrates three comings:

- the coming of God among us in the birth of Jesus;
- Jesus' promised coming among us in glory at the end of time;
- Jesus' coming in word and sacrament to us today.

The first Sunday of the Church year looks toward Jesus' coming in glory. Jesus challenges us to stay awake and alert to God's presence in our world.

On the 2nd to 4th Sundays of Advent the gospels transport us back in history before Jesus' first coming. In these gospels John the Baptist urges his listeners to turn toward God and sends messengers to ask Jesus if he is the One who is to come. Jesus replies that the lame leap, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor hear the good news God cares for them. These are the signs that reveal who Jesus is.

In the gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent Matthew tells the story of Joseph accepting and naming Mary's child. The name Jesus anticipates the child's significance in Israel's history and in our lives of faith; it means *he saves*.

SPIRIT takes its Advent theme from the Old Testament readings of Cycle A, in which the priest and prophet Isaiah envisions peace for his people and the nations of the world. Isaiah knew the human cost of war as refugees from the northern

kingdom of Israel fled to the south when Assyria defeated its armies, ruined its vineyards and olive groves, and resettled its villages with foreign peoples.

Isaiah's visions of peace inspire us still. He imagines the nations streaming up the paths to Jerusalem to learn to live God's law and returning home to pound their spears into pruning hooks and their swords into plowshares. Isaiah envisions a leader filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whose rule establishes a peaceable kingdom in which the lion and lamb lie down together. In the face of the faithless King Ahaz, the prophet puts his hope in God's faithfulness, for a new king who will be God-with-us, Emmanuel.

Isaiah's visions challenge us to imagine positive peace, to listen to each other's life stories, to communicate without escalating conflicts. The Advent issues aim to help teens envision the peace on earth Jesus comes among us to bring.

Sundays/Seasons		Gospel/Theme	Teens' Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
December 1, 2019 1st Sunday of Advent	Unit 2 Advent, Building Peace on Earth	Matthew 24.37-44 2nd Coming	Resentment	Envisioning positive peace
December 8, 2019 2nd Sunday of Advent		Matthew 3.1-12 John Baptist	Family, belonging	Building peace
December 15, 2019 3rd Sunday of Advent		Matthew 11.2-11 Jesus, the messiah	Learning to dialogue Seeds of Peace	Communicating for peace
December 22, 2019 4th Sunday of Advent		Matthew 1.18-24 Joseph	An unusual friend	Jesus, Emmanuel, prince of peace

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In the first readings of Advent, the prophet Isaiah speaks of a kingdom of shalom; in English, peace. These Cycle A readings give *SPIRIT* the overall theme of its Advent issues: Isaiah's challenge to welcome Emmanuel and bring peace and justice to our world. God's peace is a synonym for God's kingdom. As an image, it emphasizes the harmony and wholeness God intends for human beings in making us social and interdependent.

This Sunday Isaiah envisions peoples of all nations streaming up the paths to the temple in Jerusalem to study God's law, the ten commandments, which he sees as a path to peace among nations. During Advent, *SPIRIT* explores the theme of peace in the Old Testament readings from Isaiah and the work of peace in our personal lives and our conflicted world.

Jesus compares himself to a thief in Sunday's gospel. A home owner who knows a thief is coming locks the doors and windows. But thieves surprise us. They catch us asleep. Jesus warns us he will come like a thief, so we have to stay awake. The word *resurrection* means *to awaken*. A resurrection attitude is awake to God present in every moment. Jesus' first coming among us shows us that our human capacity to love and forgive, to reach out to outcasts and help the poor, are building toward a day when all will thrive in peace.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will work for personal peace during Advent.

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.

Advent Prayer Make an Advent wreath, a circle of evergreen boughs with four candles. The circular wreath represents eternity; the candles, the four weeks of Advent. Catholics light one candle the first week, two the second, and so on to mark the days until Jesus' birth.

- Form a circle around the wreath, or begin class in church and gather around the parish Advent wreath. *Pray, "As we begin a new year in Christian history, we ask you, life-giving God, to help us see and experience your love surrounding and holding us on good days and on bad." Have your teens pray the prayer on the cover at the top together.*

A.D. Matching (page 1) A.D. is the abbreviation for the Latin words *anno Domini*, the year of the Lord. Invite the young people to write the letter associated with the name or event in the right column in the blank in front of the phrase that identifies it in the left column. Answers are on the bottom of page 2. This activity builds awareness of Christian history.

Objective: The young people will recognize we struggle for peace both individually and communally.

Story: Resentment vs. the Power of Forgiveness (pages 1-3)

Invite the young people to take turns reading paragraphs aloud. Discuss questions 1-5 as a class. Answers: 1. *The adrenaline which accompanies anger gives us courage but numbs our pain. Anger taken too far is dangerous because it can suppress our awareness of how our words or actions are hurting others.* 2. *Resentment is suppressed anger without an outlet, so it can flare without warning.* 3. *Personal response.* Answers might include bullying; betrayal; lying. 4. *A good apology takes clear responsibility for an action.* 5. *The prayer strategy might help us see the person for whom we pray in better light, in God's light.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize the importance of living as witnesses of Jesus' love.

Gospel: When will Jesus come again? (page 3) Have four volunteers proclaim the gospel for your group or class. Discuss questions 6-8. 6. *Our everyday loving actions count. Staying awake involves attention to people in our live and their needs, praying and reflecting on our choices, joining with other to do the work of charity and justice that leads to peace.* 7. *Openended.* 8. *Jesus' first coming shows human activity is of divine value. Jesus awakens us to our potential and the power of love to build community among the people of the world.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will interpret what Isaiah's messianic prophecies envision for their future.

Our Catholic Faith: Isaiah, Prophet of Peace: Envisioning peace (page 4) Explain the prophet Isaiah saw the ten commandments as God's ways of peace. Discuss what we today need to learn to build peace among us.

- Have your teens look at the photo and read the quotation on page 4. Christians build peace actively in the practice of respect and friendship. www.usccb.org/catechism/2304-05

- Read aloud the first four paragraphs of *Envisioning peace* (page 3). Choose four teens to read the four paragraphs of Isaiah's prophecy. Before they begin, explain that when the reading is finished, you invite them to say aloud a word or phrase that strikes them in Isaiah's words. Have two volunteers finish reading page 4 to the group.

Faith in Action (page 4) Lead your teens in the reflection process outlined in Items 1-4. Most likely your group will find imagining war easier than imagining peace. The media gives us so many violent and bloody images, so take time to imagine the ingredients of peace—*families enjoying one another; having good food, water, sanitation, medical care; being able to seek higher education; living in a democracy under the rule of law.* Consider making an Advent banner to lift up Isaiah's images of peace.

Concluding Prayer Share teens' visions of peace around the Advent wreath or at a Sunday parish liturgy.

- Also, make "Advent Word Clouds," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pp. 36-37.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

John the Baptist doesn't like the hardened differences among the people of his time. He compares the Pharisees and Sadducees who come to hear his preaching and seek his baptism to a brood of vipers. By comparing these teachers and leaders to a tangle of slithery poisonous snakes, John suggests their arguments and differences are deadly; they prevent the law from leading people to holiness.

John the Baptist warns his hearers that the messiah will take an axe to trees that bear no fruit. He preaches reform, a change of heart. He wants his contemporaries, who are children of Abraham and Sarah by blood, to be their children by faith and commitment.

In the Cycle A scripture readings, the prophet Isaiah continues to call us to build God's peace among us. Last Sunday Isaiah called us to imagine the nations of the earth all learning the ten commandments, becoming a world community of shalom, and pounding their spears into plowshares. In the first reading for this Sunday, Isaiah promises that Israel's faithful God will send a Spirit-filled leader to make the wise and just decisions that bring peace and keep people and all creatures safe from harm. This leader will be filled with the gifts of the Spirit, the same gifts with which the bishop seals every Christian in the sacrament of Confirmation.

SPIRIT's Advent theme is: *Building Peace on Earth*. This issue explores how a child causes a frustrated teen to change his heart and how Isaiah challenges us to be leaders who use the gifts of the Spirit to work for peace and justice.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will recognize who loves them.

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.

Advent Actions (cover) Have your teens examine the actions in the Advent tree and identify any they would like to do together or an Advent tradition they wish to start. Pray the cover prayer together.

Story: Down for the Night (pages 2-3) Ask your group if any have missed flights or gotten snowed in at an airport. Ask them to describe their experiences and how they felt.

- Have volunteers take turns reading the story aloud to the group. As they finish, ask what's the pun in the title—*Alex is both grounded and depressed for the night before the baby changes his attitude*.
- Discuss questions 1-3. 1. *Alex is thoroughly bummed, slamming his fist on a table. He feels bored, angry, and cheated out of his skiing time. He complains pizza is a poor excuse for Thanksgiving dinner. He sulks.* 2. *Open-ended.* 3. *Alex considers his situation from the baby's point of view and sees his parents in a different light.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will interpret John the Baptist's message.

Gospel: John the Baptist attacks hypocrisy (page 3) Have three young people proclaim the gospel for your group.

- Discuss questions 4-7. 4. *John calls people to become committed believers in Israel's God, not just Jews by birth and blood.* 5. *If John were speaking to us, he might invite us to claim the baptism parents asked for us as our own commitment.* 6. *We bear fruit as Christians in works of charity and justice. During Advent parishes have many opportunities. The SPIRIT cover suggests many fruitful actions.* 7. *Encourage teens to celebrate Advent in the spirit of gratitude for all they have and commitment to be responsive to others' needs.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore the work of the Spirit in the Christian community.

Our Catholic Faith, Isaiah: Prophet of Peace: Discovering leaders for peace (page 4) Have your teens read the quotation from the *Catechism*. It illuminates the connections between peace, justice, and charity. www.usccb.org/catechism/2304

- Read aloud to your teens the beginning of the feature; then invite volunteers to continue reading the feature aloud. Have the group listen to identify the gifts the Spirit gives us for leadership and building the peaceable kin*dom of Isaiah's vision.

Faith in Action (page 4) Have your teens divide into fours and choose to discuss items 1 or 2. Have groups share their ideas.

A Force More Powerful Read aloud about this film and consider watching it. The website (aforcemorepowerful.org) also offers a simulation game that teaches the strategy of nonviolent conflict. The game works with a dozen scenarios, inspired by recent history, including conflicts against dictators, occupiers, colonizers and corrupt regimes, as well as struggles to secure the political and human rights of ethnic and racial minorities and women. Do items 3 and 4.

Concluding Prayer Form a shalom circle sitting on the floor around the Advent wreath. Use "Praying Our Creation Stories," a prayer using the Universe Story to prepare for Jesus coming and our human desire for peace and unity. *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, pages 38-39.

**Consult SPIRIT online
resources at
GOODGROUNDPRESS.COM.**

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel John the Baptist, imprisoned and unable to see Jesus, sends messengers to ask Jesus if he is the One who is to come, the one from God. Rather than saying yes or no, Jesus answers indirectly. He alludes to the healing the prophet Second Isaiah said the messiah would do (Isaiah 35.5-6). "Tell John," Jesus says, "the blind see, the deaf hear, dead people are raised to life, the poor have the good news preached to them."

Second Isaiah saw God's presence in the victories of Cyrus, king of the Persians, when he defeated the Babylonians, who had held many Israelites in captivity for 50 years. For Isaiah, Cyrus is God's instrument who will release the captives. God will lead the captives home through the desert. The desert will run with streams and bloom. The blind will see, deaf hear, lame leap. These are signs of God's peace, a wholeness of body, a restoration of community, a fruitfulness in the land. In alluding to Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus is telling John the Baptist, "I am restoring the community to wholeness and peace in which all, including the poor, flourish."

In this issue *SPIRIT* tells the story of how teens who grow up in countries in conflict make friends of enemies through dialogue and become Seeds of Peace.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore the healing power of dialogue.

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) Have your teens gather around your Advent wreath and name people they know or people in the news who need healing. Pray together the prayer at upper left. Note this Sunday is the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Ask your teens to share all they know about her appearance to Saint Juan Diego in 1531.

Story: No Other Side (pages 1-3) Invite your teens to think of conflicts in the daily news and list the sides people take. Have them speculate about the meaning of the article title "No Other Side." Have them look at the photos, which picture interactions at Seeds of Peace Camp in Maine.

- Have a strong reader read aloud the paragraphs up to the capital D, which introduces Seeds of Peace, its purpose, and Evgenia, the interviewee who refuses to take sides. The name Evgenia is pronounced *Ev-gen-ya* with a hard g and accent on the second syllable. Ask your teens to tell about their experience if any have lived in nations in conflict.

- Read aloud the last paragraph on the cover and note the photo at center page 2 is a Daily Dialogue Session. Continue having your teens read the article aloud, taking turns at each paragraph. Tell teens to do the best they can on pronouncing unfamiliar names.

- Discuss questions 1-4. 1. *Listening to others' stories helps Seeds recognize that others want the same things they do—peace, safety, prosperity. Debating facts and history escalates conflicts.* 2. *Taking sides tends to demonize the other, make them evil and inhuman rather than people like one's own friends and family.* 3. *The story gives four examples of teens—Ahmed, Ophir, Yasser, and Ibrahim—who learned to dialogue and made friends with enemies. Encourage teens to share any similar experiences, perhaps with immigrants new to their area.* 4. *Opened. Evgenia gives a powerful testimony to how Seeds think.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize Jesus brings signs of healing and peace among the people.

Gospel: Are you the one we've been looking for? (page 3) Have four teens take parts and proclaim the gospel.

- Discuss questions 5-6. 5. *He heals and restores people—the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cured, the poor hear the good news. These physical actions symbolize the wholeness Jesus seeks for all.* 6. *John the Baptist has been preaching and baptizing people, calling people to turn toward God and preparing them to hear Jesus. John is a man of integrity who has sought God in the desert and become a prophet rather than a person of wealth or status.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will practice communicating for peace.

Our Catholic Faith: Communicating for peace (pages 3-4)

Have your group take turns reading this feature which talks about Sunday's first reading and the prophet Second Isaiah, who wrote chapters 40-55 of the Book of Isaiah. Invite your teens to name their favorite imagery of peace in the three Advent readings from Isaiah.

Faith in Action Have your teens work in threes or fours to read about the four steps of nonviolent communication and discuss either items 1 and 2 or question 3 in their group. Allow time for discussion and visit each group. Have the groups report some of their reflections to the whole group.

- Consider creating a peacebuilder wall in your meeting space (Item 3). The theme of peace will recur in the Sundays of February and March when the Church reads Matthew's sermon on the mount. Invite teens to learn about youth peace groups.

Concluding Prayer Celebrate the peace dreams of the people's of earth with the Native American Prayer to the Directions. See "Celebrating Seasons and Directions," *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*, page 40.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Both Matthew and Luke tell stories of Jesus' birth. Although we hear Luke's account every year on Christmas, the Church hears Matthew's account only on this 4th Sunday of Advent, Cycle A. It focuses on Joseph, a man of the house of David, who gets the troubling news that his betrothed is pregnant. He knows he is not the father. Jesus' mother is an unmarried, pregnant teen.

The Mosaic law considers a betrothed woman's becoming sexually involved with another man as adultery, just as if she were already her promised husband's wife. By law, death is the punishment for adultery. Joseph doesn't want to subject Mary to the law. Perhaps he cannot imagine her as an adulteress and suspects the deeper spiritual realities that surface in his dream. Joseph decides to divorce Mary quietly. Scholars don't know how often people actually carried out the punishment of the law. We can't be sure what might have happened to a quietly-divorced, very-pregnant girl in 1st-century Palestine.

After God speaks to Joseph in a dream, he decides to bring his betrothed from her family's home to his home, the final step in marriage. By doing so, he not only saves Mary's reputation and perhaps her life but agrees to be part of an entirely new relationship, that of father to his foster son, Jesus.

The dream that changes Joseph's mind opens up for him God's dreams for humankind and his place in achieving this dream. *SPIRIT*'s feature story is about a young woman who, like Joseph, chooses to enter into a unique relationship.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore our human capacity for friendship.

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 together.

Icebreaker: Have your teens look at the photos of Marky and Katie. Invite them to write a list of relationships they find both challenging and rewarding. This could be relationships with parents, siblings, friends, older people. Invite them to share from the list one relationship that has helped them grow the most.

Story: Marquell's Hands (pages 1-3) Katie Kromer traces the progression of her relationship with a 15-year-old, developmentally-disabled woman named Marky. By opening herself up to a relationship many people would consider difficult, Katie finds a part of herself. Have your young people read the article in groups of threes or fours.

- Invite them to share responses to questions 1 and 2.
1. *Marky gives Katie love and acceptance and therefore freedom to be more herself.* 2. *Katie has learned about who she is from her relationship with Marky. She learns from observing how Marky draws*

others into friendship. Katie learns a new form of love and how to let go and trust.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will identify God's dream for Joseph and Jesus.

Gospel: Joseph decides to care for Mary, Jesus (pages 2-3) Have three teens take parts and proclaim the gospel.

- Discuss questions 3-5. 3. *Joseph could accuse Mary of adultery, subject her to punishment, or at least back out of their betrothal. Instead Joseph chooses to be Jesus' father and to see the hand of God in Mary's pregnancy. Through Mary and Jesus, Joseph finds a family, a community, and a deeper relationship with God.* 4. *Marky is a special child that her family welcomes and who reveals God in her spirit of love, welcoming, and joy. In a sense Marky gives new life by helping Katie discover her true self more deeply.* 5. *Jesus is God with us in his expressions of love, peace, and healing. Jesus shows us all God wants for us—healing from oppression, sickness, and sin. As one of us, Jesus shows us God in a way our human minds can begin to understand. The birth narratives in the gospels want us to see Jesus is the prince of peace, the Spirit-filled prophet, the child Emmanuel of Isaiah's prophecies.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will appreciate Jesus' call to be compassionate as he is and continue the mission of his incarnation.

Our Catholic Faith: Gaudium et Spes (page 4) To explore Jesus' incarnation and his challenge to us to continue his mission, read aloud this famous passage from the Vatican II document *The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*.

Our Catholic Faith: Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us (pages 3-4) Have teens read silently the beginning of the feature from page 3 to the capital M on page 4. Ask if they have questions. Explain that the rest of the feature explores the call to us to continue Jesus' mission as Emmanuel. Have them read it.

Faith in Action (page 4) Have teens work in threes or fours to respond to items 1-3. Bring materials so your teens can cooperate in making a banner to summarize their reflections on Isaiah's visions of peace. Play Christmas music while they work.

Dreaming peace, praying for peace (page 4) This feature reviews suggestions for action from the first half of the *SPIRIT* year.

- Give your group time to dream, to draw, or doodle their deepest desires for our world and its peace. Invite teens to consider individual commitments they want to make to collaborate in work of charity or justice.
- Invite suggestions for a group commitment to peace. These commitments might unfold over the second half of the year.

Concluding Prayer Sing a verse of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." www.usccb.org.catechism/521,525

Unit 3:

Christmas/Epiphany to 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time
January 5, 2020 –February 23, 2020
Vol. 32, Nos. 13-20

Living Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

The Sundays in Ordinary Time tell the story of Jesus' public ministry. In 2020 the Church reads Matthew's gospel, the evangelist who likes to organize Jesus' words and actions by type like a library—sayings in chapters 5-7, miracles in 8-9, parables in 13. Matthew not only collects Jesus' most significant sayings in chapters 5-7, but also sets a scene on a mount to picture Jesus as the new Moses, the teacher of the new law.

As John baptizes Jesus and Jesus begins his teaching and healing ministry on the first two Sundays of Ordinary Time, *SPIRIT* explores with teens who Jesus is and what he asks of us today in his teaching. On the 3rd Sunday Jesus calls his first disciples, gathering

a community around him. Then Jesus teaches sayings that challenge us to live the beatitudes, to be salt of the Earth and light to the world, to do more than the commandments of the old law ask, even to love our enemies, certainly to recognize we cannot serve God and money. Jesus teaches us to see in the lilies of the field and birds of the air reason to trust God's providence. He cautions us to build our lives on rock rather than sand.

During this season *SPIRIT* explores the fourth core topic the U.S. Catholic Conference guidelines for high school curriculum outline, namely, "Jesus Christ's Mission Continues

in the Church." Our membership in the Church begins with baptism and its call to holiness. Our faith grows with our human hearts, which have the capacity to go beyond ourselves and encounter God and one another.

The Church is the People of God with the characteristics of a people—law, leaders, history, rituals, four marks. The Eucharist is the foundation of the Church's life.

Sundays/Seasons		Gospel/Theme	Teens' Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
January 5, 2020 Christmas/Epiphany	Unit 3 Living Jesus' Sermon on the Mount	Luke 2.1-21 Matthew 2.1-12, Magi	Peace House	God, our beginning and end
January 12, 2020 Baptism of the Lord		Matthew 3.13-17 Jesus' baptism	Who influences me?	Grace
January 19, 2020 2nd in Ordinary Time		John 1.29-34 Jesus baptizes with Spirit	Experiencing God's presence	The human heart
January 26, 2020 3rd in Ordinary Time		Matthew 4.12-23 Jesus calls disciples	A passion for service	Church: our vocation
February 2, 2020 Presentation		Luke 2.22-40, Jesus dedicated to God	Theater of the oppressed	Church: our mission
February 9, 2020 5th in Ordinary Time		Matthew 5.13-16 Salt and light	Living Consciously	Church: four marks
February 16, 2020 6th in Ordinary Time		Matthew 5.17-37 Old law/new law	Cruel friends	Church: People of God
February 23, 2020 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time		Matthew 5.38-48 Love your enemies	Healing children of war	Church: Called to nonviolence

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Only the gospels of Luke and Matthew contain stories about Jesus' birth. In Luke's account Mary gives birth to Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem. He is God's long-promised messiah anointed to bring peace on Earth. In Matthew's account, written for Gentile Christians about A.D. 85, three magi journey from the East to seek out the newborn king, Jesus, and worship him. This is the Gentiles' Christmas story.

The magi represent the peoples of the world coming to Jesus. In history, many Gentiles came to believe in Jesus in response to the preaching of early missionaries such as Peter and Paul. Jesus' disciples spread the good news of his death and resurrection in the four directions during the first century.

The magi from the East represent all non-Jewish peoples—the Gentiles. The magi's reputation for wisdom and learning shows in their study of the stars. Their journey to find the significance of a new star rising moves them from observing the natural world to accepting the revelation that for Christians is ultimate truth: in Jesus, God becomes human. The magi embody the Gentile readiness and openness to honor the holy where they find it.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will share ways they celebrate Christmas in their families.

Music See *SPIRIT XTRA* for music to fit the theme of this Sunday's gospel.

Pray together the prayer at upper left.

Christmas Gospel (cover): Have group members take parts to read the Christmas story aloud. Ask who has a crib scene up at home. Invite the group to listen to the story of Jesus' birth and let the story recall ways they celebrated Christmas this year. Have the group proclaim and listen to the gospel. When done, announce a minute of quiet to recall Christmas memory to share with the group. Take time for each to share one memory.

Objective: The young people will recognize in whom they welcome Christ today.

Story: Peace House (page 2 box) Have a teen read aloud the paragraphs in the bottom box, which introduce Peace House, the welcoming community for street people, where the author of "Three Epiphanies" extends hospitality. The story tells about Sister Rose's experiences on Christmas Eve. The drawing beneath the story title shows Peace House.

Story: Three Epiphanies (page 2-3) Ask who knows what an epiphany is. *It's a revelation, a way the mystery of God and Jesus shows through in our lives.* Have your young people read the story aloud to each other in threes or fours. Invite them to discuss questions 1-2. 1. *The man from Bethlehem suggests Jesus to the*

group. Sasha greets Rose and kindly walks her to the shelter, recalling for Rose Jesus' saying that prostitutes might enter the kingdom of God before people who think they are righteous and holy. Billy is like Jesus in having no place to lay his head. 2. Homeless people value relationships like everyone else. Peace House gives them a community in which to form friendships and a basis on which to look out for each other on the street as two people do for Rose.

Bring your small groups together to talk about question 3. *Sister Rose's frozen tears express the same sadness the poem does, the loneliness of Christmas for homeless people, or as Billy's remark about no shelter for the night. Her tears express amazement and gratitude at the three epiphanies of Christ—the Palestinian man explaining Jesus' skin color, Sasha walking Rose to the shelter, Billy walking her to the bus. The experience of street people seems close to Jesus' being born in a manger among the poor.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize the magi are seekers.

Gospel: All nations worship Jesus (page 3) Have four teens take the parts of the Narrator, magi, Herod, and Micah. Have the whole group be the priests and scribes. Proclaim and listen to the gospel together. Discuss question 4-5: 4. *The magi learn about Jesus from their study of the stars in the natural world just as all creation reveals God to us. 5. The magi come from people who are not Jewish. They symbolize the people of many nations who learn about Jesus from the apostles and become believers. Page 4 follows up these questions.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will compare the magi and scientists today as seekers.

Our Catholic Faith: God, our beginning and end (page 4) Draw attention to the evolution timeline in the middle paragraph and the art at the bottom. Ask your teens what questions they have about the gospel: Was there really a star? What's a magi? What questions do they have about religion and science? Read aloud the responses to these questions on the back page. Read meditatively a paragraph at a time and pause for questions and insights.

Faith in Action Be ready with hymnals or Paul Winter's *Earth Music* for your teens to use if time allows. Encourage your teens to identify ways to work for peace in their own lives and journal about it.

Concluding Prayer Gather in a circle. Invite the young people to gather in a circle and pray for peace in the world, in their schools, and families.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The Sundays of Ordinary Time begin this Sunday, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the event in Jesus' life that launches his public ministry in each of the four gospels. Five short verses tell the story of Jesus' baptism. Jesus leaves his home and seeks out John the Baptist, who is preaching repentance at the Jordan River and baptizing people who want to turn to God. John the Baptist objects to Jesus seeking his baptism of repentance. But Jesus insists and explains he must fulfill all God's demands, words that can also be translated all righteousness or God's will. In his first public act Jesus seeks out and stands with sinners who are turning to God.

Jesus' baptism has an outer and an inner dimension. In the outer action, Jesus goes into and washes in the waters of the River Jordan. But the scene also discloses Jesus' inner relationships, his interiority. The heavens open. The Spirit descends upon Jesus and stays upon him. A voice from heaven affirms of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son. My favor rests upon him." These words identifying Jesus as a beloved and favored son echo Second Isaiah's songs describing the Israelites in Babylonian exile as God's suffering servant.

SPIRIT explores a young man's plunge into his life after his parents' divorce. His decision to change and swim resonates with the baptismal imagery of the gospel.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will inventory and identify patterns in who influences their choices.

Music See *SPIRIT XTRA* for music to fit the theme of this Sunday's gospel.

Pray together the prayer at upper left.

Grid Activity: Who Influences Me? (cover) Direct you students to look closely at the influence grid. Note the list of actions at left in green and the five columns naming possible influences at top. Step one is to check one or more the five influences for each action. Ask which column has the most checks. Then have the group work in threes or fours to look for patterns. On which actions do peers have the most influence? Parents, guardians?

Story: From Chris to Christopher (pages 2-3) Introduce the story by asking teens to use the two photos and title to speculate on what the story is about. A decision to change. The medal in the title is a St. Christopher medal. Have teens read the story aloud in pairs, changing at the capital letters. Two readers can dramatize the extensive dialogue in the story.

● Discuss questions 1-4. 1. *The question requires personal response. Perhaps at 8th grade, or at a summer camp, or on a trip, or in the face of a change like divorce.* 2. *Requires personal response. Perhaps after a move and new school, or after a school consolidation, or in the wake of family crisis such as loss of parents' jobs or illness.* 3. *Swimming*

demands the active use of arms and legs, of lungs and muscle to move in the water. In the story Chris sits and wants to stop change. When he plunges into the water as he did as a child, he decides to participate fully in his changing life, to dive in. 4. *Chris is scared, depressed, immobilized, benched, alone. Christopher has a friend in Les, regains his energy, and decides to participate in his changing life.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will interpret Jesus' relationship to the Spirit and voice at his baptism.

Sunday Gospel: His baptism shows who Jesus is (page 3) Have four teens take parts and proclaim the gospel. Have your group discuss questions 5-7. 5. *His baptism shows God blessing Jesus, affirming his relationship as Son with Father and Spirit. Their love embraces Jesus in this event.* 6. *A dove traverses the heavens, a symbol of the Spirit's presence with Jesus, inspiring the public ministry he is about to begin.* 7. *The voice echoes a servant song from the prophet Second Isaiah, affirming Jesus is God's beloved servant and favored one.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will appreciate their relationship with God is a free and undeserved gift.

Our Catholic Faith: Grace is where God is (page 4) Ask your teens what meaning of the word grace they see in the photo at top right. Read aloud the definition of grace below the photo and in the third paragraph of the feature.

● Ask your group to speculate about what Mountain Dew has to do with grace. Then have volunteers read the feature aloud for your group, taking turns at each paragraph. Invite and field any questions your group has.

(page 4) Invite your group or class to reflect silently on a moment of grace in their experience. Ask if all have identified an experience each can share. If not, tell one of your own experiences to help them. This activity is part of *SPIRIT*'s continuing effort to have young people recognize the Spirit's activity in their lives, to become more literate about spiritual experience.

● Direct your teens to take a partner for sharing. Give each two minutes to talk, during which the other cannot talk. Time the conversation. Announce the time to switch who talks.

● Brainstorm with your teens about Live It! item 2. Consider using the imagery of puzzle pieces or the web of life.

Concluding Prayer Consider ending the session with five minutes of centering prayer, which *SPIRIT* describes in issue 4. Or, invite your teens to remember and share something their parents have taught them about following Jesus as they promised when they had their children baptized.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In John's gospel John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him, points him out as the Lamb of God, and testifies that the Spirit has come upon Jesus.

The title Lamb of God anticipates Jesus' mission of pouring out his life for us in his teaching, healing, and ultimately his death on the cross, his final moment of giving his whole self. Lamb is a key Passover symbol. Lambs' blood saved the Hebrew slaves from the tenth plague, the killing of the first born, which convinced Pharaoh to free the slaves. In John's gospel Jesus dies on the cross at the exact hour the priests in the temple sacrifice the lambs for Passover. Every Eucharist gathers us to remember Jesus in the signs of his love for us—bread broken and shared, a cup of wine poured out.

Jesus is also God's chosen one. John's testimony insists Jesus is the one God promised to send. The Spirit fills Jesus. Jesus ministers out of this irrepressible, creative divine energy that is love.

In this issue two young people describe transcendent God moments, experiences of going beyond themselves—a first sweat lodge for a young Ojibwe man and athletic competition for a young woman runner. A Native American legend urges us to find our creative selves within. *SPIRIT* aims to help teens recognize they experience the mystery of God in going beyond themselves.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore their experience of transcendent God moments.

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

Pray (cover) Invite your teens to pray together, asking help in living out their baptismal calls.

Icebreaker: A Dakota legend (page 2) Have your teens read and interpret this Native American legend, which tells us we have within us the ability to think, choose, and love—to create our meaning and reality, to pray in friendship with God and partner with God in cocreating our future.

Story: Wind from an eagle's wings (pages 2-3) Explain that Kristan Staub's first experience of a sweat lodge is remarkably like the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus. Both involve the sheltering, powerful presence of a bird as an expression of spirit.

- Have your teens read this account in fours and discuss question 1. *Experiencing a Native tradition for the first time is great—its cleansing power, the company of adults who know what to expect, the feeling of gratitude that marks it as spiritual.*

Poem: Soaring (page 3) Read this prose poem aloud, changing readers at each paragraph. Discuss question 2. *Open-ended. Invite athletes to describe their experiences of giving all in games*

and competitions. Help them identify this as an experience of transcendence.

- Then direct your teens to respond to question 3 in pairs, allowing each person two minutes to talk. Conclude by asking for volunteers to share their responses to question 3 with the large group.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize the Holy Spirit anoints and supports Jesus, who is God's beloved servant.

Who is Jesus and what is he up to? (cover) Ask your teens what the cover photos communicate about who Jesus is. *We have no photos of Jesus, but art gives Jesus many human faces that show he is one of us. The photo suggests we each give Jesus a face.*

- Invite your teens to respond to the two cover questions, which give them a chance to draw on the gospels they have reflected on during the first half of the year. The *Scripture Background* on this page explains that in John's gospel Jesus is the lamb of God and God's chosen servant. The servant image echoes Isaiah's servant songs.

- The question, What is Jesus up to?, leads into the gospel. *Jesus is mingling with people who have come to hear the Baptist and turn their lives toward God.*

Sunday Gospel: Jesus is God's chosen One (cover) Have two teens proclaim the gospel for your class or group. Discuss question 4. *John the Baptist testifies that the Spirit anoints and supports Jesus. He is also God's beloved servant. The lamb imagery suggests Jesus has come to free people as the lambs' blood freed the Hebrew slaves. The servant imagery suggests Jesus will spread justice among the nations. Both images suggest Jesus' impending public ministry of preaching and healing and his mission to bring good news to the poor.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will recognize their own capacity to experience God.

Our Catholic Faith: Experiencing the mystery of God (page 4)

This feature aims to help teens recognize the activity of the Spirit in their lives. Have your teens read the article aloud, changing readers at each paragraph. www.usccb.org/catechism/27

Faith in Action (page 4) The young people may want to record their experience in a journal as item 1 suggests. Invite them to try items 2-4 on their own and journal their experiences and feelings.

Concluding Prayer A sweat lodge is a spiritual event in Native American culture; drumming is a prayerful activity in many cultures. Lead the young people through the Drumming Prayer on pages 22-23 of *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*. You will have to gather percussion pieces prior to coming to class.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus is on the move in Galilee, beginning his ministry. Jesus makes Capernaum, a small fishing village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, his headquarters. Matthew sees Jesus fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah—in Jesus a light has shone upon the people of Galilee, who have walked in the darkness and lived in the gloom of their defeat at the hands of the Assyrians since 721 B.C. Assyria settled five foreign peoples who worshiped gods other than Yahweh in these lands. See 2 Kings 17.24-33. Matthew sees Jesus changing this history, reaching out to include people with a history of shame and defeat in his new community.

Three verbs—teaching, proclaiming, healing—characterize Jesus' Galilean outreach ministry. Jesus calls four fishermen to follow him as he teaches in synagogues, proclaims the good news of the kingdom, and heals people of their illnesses. Peter, Andrew, James, and John attach themselves to Jesus and learn discipleship in his footsteps. Jesus calls them to leadership in gathering together a new community.

As Jesus begins his ministry in the Sunday gospel, *SPIRIT* explores how Jesus calls us as he called his first disciples. *SPIRIT* tells Michael Daly's experiences of call through his family, his service to orphans in Honduras, and to the dying in Calcutta.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore how their capacities and gifts call them to serve, reflect, and act.

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

Pray (cover) Invite your teens to gather in a prayer circle and name gifts they see in others in the circle. Pray together the prayer (top left).

Icebreaker: Who's calling? Ask your teens to jot down on a piece of paper the last five calls they received. They'll ask, "Phone calls?" Respond, "Yes, or any other kind of call." Have them keep their responses in their pockets.

Story: Michael Daly, A Passion for Service (pages 1-3) Invite your teens to look closely at the cover photos in Michael's name and the photos with the story inside that show him in various activities. Have teens read the story aloud taking turns at each paragraph.

- Discuss questions 1-3. 1. *In fulfilling his own personal passion for service, Michael grows in his ability to be compassionate to suffering people. His faith strengthens as he comes to rely more on God and less on the things of the world. His heart opens to other cultures and religions.* 2. *Michael journals about his faith journey, he participates at Mass and adoration, he seeks out mentors and guides.* 3. *His parents, the suffering people he serves, Fr. Rick, the sisters in Calcutta.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will explore why Jesus calls disciples.

Gospel: Jesus is light to people in darkness (page 3) Note with your teens that the photos set the scene for Sunday's gospel. Have four teens proclaim the gospel.

- Discuss questions 4-6. 4. *Jesus wants the fisherman to follow and learn from him, so that they can call others. They will become fishers of people, who call and gather people into Jesus' new community.* 5. *Jesus calls us not just to become individual followers but a community that continues his work in the world. Following Jesus means making love, forgiveness, and outreach to others our way of life.* 6. *Michael loves and serves others, a basic characteristic of Jesus' followers.*

Optional Discipleship Meditation To lead your group into the *Our Catholic Faith* feature (page 4), retell the gospel in a contemporary mall setting. Take the role of Jesus. Have your teens breathe deeply two or three times, sit straight with their hands on their laps, and close their eyes. Describe Jesus walking through a local mall and seeing groups of teens hanging out along the way. Present a challenge: *Jesus is walking through a shopping mall in your town, saying, "Change your lives. The kingdom of God is within you, not in bottles and boxes, not in stores and shops. Follow me. I want to go the God direction. I'm all about real relationships between people. In fact, I'd like you to think about shopping in a new way—not accumulating material goods or the right look but recognizing what you have to give within yourselves, then shopping for people and drawing them together in my community. Will you come, follow me?"*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will recognize calls to ministry in their lives.

Our Catholic Faith: How does God call us? (page 4) Introduce the baptismal call of every Christian by reading aloud the quotation from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 4. Note the photo shows a young woman tutoring. Have your teens form groups of threes or fours and read the feature aloud to each other. As they read, have them underline the many examples of concrete calls in the text. www.usccb.org/catechism 2013, 2028, 2930

- Call the group together and invite the young people to share the calls with the larger group—both those they wrote down in the icebreaker and those the feature made them recognize. Note Michael Daly was ordained a priest on May 28, 2016.

Faith in Action (page 4) Discuss item 3 as a group. Pre-select possible service projects in your area your group could take part in. Conclude by inviting teens to respond to question 4, what service are they proud of doing?

Concluding Popcorn Prayer Form a circle. Hold hands. Pray to begin, "You, Jesus, are the light that shines on people in darkness, guide us in carrying your light to people in need in our time. Let us pray for them." Invite any teen who wishes to express a prayer. Pray the *Our Father* together to end.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In the flow of the liturgical year, the Feast of the Presentation concludes the celebration of Jesus' birth with its focus on the incarnation, God becoming one of us humans. This year we celebrate the Presentation on a Sunday. In the gospel Joseph and Mary bring the child Jesus to the temple to dedicate him to God as the law of Moses directs faithful Jews to do. They make an offering of two turtledoves, the usual offering of people who are people who are poor. This a homey family event.

Luke introduces a Spirit-filled man name Simeon into the scene in the temple. The Holy Spirit has given Simeon the sense he will see the Messiah before he dies. Indeed as soon as Simeon sees Mary and Joseph in the temple he takes the child in his arms. The prayer-poem that Luke puts in Simeon's lips anticipates who Jesus is in his adult life—the Messiah, who will be not only the glory of Israel but a light of revelation to the Gentiles. Gentiles is the word for the nations in Hebrew. Jesus is a light o us today in how to interact in our relationships and work for the common good.

SPIRIT honors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on its cover and explores how his commitment to nonviolence grows out of his commitment to Jesus and his teachings. Jesus actions continue to offer light about how to interact with others. In the article on no the Theatre of the Oppressed, teens identify ways practical ways to confront what they consider oppressions in their lives

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will appreciate nonviolence as a way to seek justice.

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

Article: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (cover) Have your teens look closely at Robert Lentz's icon of Dr. King, which pictures him as a saint, holding his jail number as a prisoner and a scroll with a question that puts the civil rights issue in a Christian context: How long will justice be crucified and truth buried?

- Have your teens read the article aloud, taking turns reading paragraphs. Look together at questions 1-3 on page 3. Give introverts five minutes to think or journal about their responses to the questions. Discuss them. 1. *Nonviolence draws on spiritual love and soul energy rather than force. It draws people to consent. Violence breeds fear and leads to more violence.* 2. *A law is unjust when it does not respect every person's full dignity and equality as a human being and his or her rights under law.* 3. *Many injustices don't affect us directly. People tend to protest issues that affect them or people they know and love.*

Article: Theater of the Oppressed (pages 2-3) Have your teens read this article aloud together in fours and decide and discuss question 4, which ask them to share examples of oppression they have experienced. Invite the small groups to try this process. Direct them to choose an oppression their group wants to work up a skit about. Have each group declare their topic.

- Walk groups through steps 2-5 for using the Theater of the Oppressed strategy. Have each group present its skit and proceed in each case to step 6, a second presentation of the skit in which the audience can stop the action and take an actor's place with another alternative. Evaluate the experience: What have you learned from this process?

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will identify Jesus' importance to Jews and Gentiles.

Gospel: Jesus is a light to all peoples (page 3) Explain to your teens that Jesus' parents dedicate him to God in Sunday's gospel, according to Jewish custom and law. Have three teens volunteer to read the three narrator parts. Have the group listen for who Simeon announces Jesus will be. Proclaim the gospel. Then ask who Simeon says Jesus is—the *messiah, salvation, peace for Simeon, light for Gentiles, glory for Jews*. Discuss questions 4-5. 4. *Jesus teaches love and forgiveness. He makes friends and gathers followers. He debates his opponents but doesn't fight.* 6. *Openended. Encourage your teens to describe a teaching that affects them, that they try to keep and follow.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore the Church's mission to live the beatitudes.

Our Catholic Faith: The Church continues Jesus' mission (page 4) This feature on the Church's mission is the first of a series on the Church. Have your teens look at the painting of Franciscans in the Amazon jungle and read the paragraph below it that defines the word *mission*. Have your teens read the text aloud in threes or fours.

Faith in Action (page 4) Direct each groups to discuss item 3; then choose a second item to pursue. Allow the groups time to work; then have each small group report to the whole group.

- Conclude by reading aloud the quotation from the *Catechism* at top right.

Concluding Prayer Have a strong reader read the beatitudes aloud, Matthew 5:4-10. Invite volunteers to talk about the beatitude that most inspires them or a beatitude person like Dr. King that inspires them.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus offers us ordinary but vital self-images as Christians. To be salt of the earth is to be common, to participate at the everyday level in social groups—to be a good neighbor, a caring classmate, a capable citizen. Salt calls us to flavor or season our families, classes, friends, teams, neighborhoods. Salt also preserves, so today salt calls us to preserve Earth and the human community as salt preserves bacon or pickled foods.

Jesus also teaches us to let our lights shine. We associate light with consciousness and understanding. Beacons of light give directions. To shine as a Christian calls us to practice and develop our capacities to love, create, think, and share, so that we give light to and brighten the lives of those around us.

Jesus' salt and light sayings immediately follow the beatitudes, which begin Jesus' sermon on the mount in Matthew. The image of salt calls us to participate in life. The image of light calls us to lead and direct. The beatitudes insist the kingdom of God will belong to the lowly and holy, to the poor of spirit and merciful, to peacemakers and those who thirst for justice. We each have the capacity to be salt and light.

SPIRIT tells the story of a young woman whose travels have flavored her life with different foods and cultures. These experiences have motivated her to shine her light on ethical issues concerning the environment and food sources.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore their experiences of salt and light.

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

Pray (cover) Pray the prayer at upper left together. It introduces the gospel imagery.

Icebreaker: Does your light shine more like...? (page 3) Invite the teens to read and circle their answers to the five questions listed on the side-bar. Explain there are no right answers, only the fun of awakening their own experience of the images of salt and light, which are central to the message of Sunday's gospel.

- When teens have made their choices, go through each pair and ask those who chose sun to raise their hands, then those who chose moon. Ask for at least one speaker for each choice to explain his or her reasons. Do this for each of the choices.

Objective: The young people will weigh the ethical choices a sustainable Earth require.

Article: "If I Don't, Who Will?" (pages 1-3) Introduce ethical issues in this article by inviting the teens to read and circle their answers to

the five questions listed on the side-bar of page 3. Use the photos to introduce Christina Gutierrez and speculate about her interests. Have teens take turns reading the article aloud, changing with each paragraph.

- Discuss questions 1-4 on page 3. 1. *Christina was twelve when her uncle picked up a piece of trash in front of her and asked her, "If I don't, who will?" She recognized this as a call to be intentional about her choices with food, water, and the environment.* 2. *She witnessed how people in different cultures, especially those with fewer resources, have to make more mindful decisions on what they ingest and what they waste.* 3. *Water and air are shared resources that we can't waste or abuse them without negatively affecting others. Wasting food or taking more than our share can create scarcity for others. These are ethical issues because our actions have an effect on others.* 4. *Open-ended.*

- Invite the teens to share their answers to the side-bar survey on page 3. Ask if anyone would change their answers in any way after reading the story.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate Jesus' challenge to be salt and light in the world.

Gospel: What if salt loses its flavor? (page 3) Have three teens proclaim the gospel. Have your group divide in to threes and fours to discuss questions 5-7. 5. *Salt in the gospel is a preservative. Christina's actions work to preserve the environment and resources of the world.* 6. *Christina's example acts as a light reminding others of the importance of making environmentally responsible decisions.* 7. *Open-ended.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will respond to Jesus' challenge to be salt and light.

Our Catholic Faith: Church, a community called to flavor and shine (page 4) Introduce the topic of Church by reading the quotation about Jesus' disciples as his family and the first Christian community. Note the word *church* means an *assembly*. Church is the people who gather in Jesus' name. www.usccb.org/catechism/764

Faith in Action (page 4) Have group members read the *Faith in Action* questions and choose the one that most interests them. Have them form five small groups, each around one of the questions.

- Have the teens read the feature aloud in their small groups and discuss the question of their choice. Have them report to the whole group when they finish (10-15 minutes).

Concluding Prayer This lesson has focused on themes including food, flavor, salt, and spice. With this mind, lead the young people in "Love Is in the Food," pages 22-23 of *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

This Sunday the Church reads a short version of a long section in Jesus' sermon on the mount in which he contrasts the old law with his teaching. Jesus insists that he has come not to abolish but to fulfill the law of Moses. Jesus wants his followers to go beyond keeping the commandments and the actions the commandments forbid or require. He challenges us to examine our inner conscious selves, our feelings and motivations.

The fifth commandment makes an absolute statement, "You shall not kill." Jesus wants followers to take responsibility for feelings and acts of anger that lead to conflict. His followers should give their word with a firm yes or no rather than swear oaths by God that mask false intents. The sixth commandment forbids adultery. Jesus challenges us to take responsibility for lustful feelings as well as our sexual acts.

SPIRIT explores popular girls control over and cruelty to a girl who does what they ask because they now know her name. Such torment is a common problem among young people in high school.

Stories or people bullied to the breaking point at which they commit suicide or hurt others make frequent headlines. When is bullying a sin, a shame, a crime? Consider bringing articles about bullying of cases to class.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore the power of cruelty to hurt and ways to stop it.

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

Pray (cover) Pray the prayer at upper left to ask God's help in accepting one another.

Icebreaker (cover) Put the cover activity in the context of Sunday's gospel. Remind your teens that the law of Moses has ten commandments. Jesus summarizes the law in two commandments: Love God with your whole self and your neighbor as yourself. In Sunday's gospel Jesus challenges us to go beyond the negative commandments not to kill or commit adultery and to take responsibility positively for anger, for sexual feelings, for keeping our word. Caribou Coffee features an advertizing campaign full of sayings about how to wake up to life. Have your teens work in threes or fours to use the visuals to respond to the question: What two commandments would you add to the original ten?

Story: They Know My Name (pages 2-3) Invite volunteers to read the story aloud, taking turns every half column or so. Ask the class members to listen with the following question in mind: Why do people tolerate bullying and tormenting others?

- Discuss questions 1-4. 1. *Kathy no longer feels invisible in her school when popular girls know her name. She has a new place in*

the cafeteria and status among students. 2. Cici and Cari entertain themselves by making Kathy their slave and humiliating her. They want to see what they can make her do and what they can put over on her. 3. Kathy so wants to be popular and be somebody. 4. Open-ended. Your teens may have practical suggestions from their experience.

- Discuss as a group what teens can do to stop those who bully or torment others. Emphasize the importance of letting adults in charge know what is happening.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize Jesus' challenge to take responsibility for their everyday interactions with others.

Gospel: Jesus raises questions about law (page 3) Have five teens proclaim the gospel. Discuss questions 5-6. 5. *The challenge to deal with anger asks us to take responsibility for all the ways we experience conflicts in our interactions with one another, including bullying and hurtful meanness. 6. This is a question for the courts to decide; however, young people should think and develop opinions about this. Are people guilty of a crime if they bully someone to the point of committing suicide or inflicting violence on others? School shootings have had bullying in the background. School shootings have had bullying in the background.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will appreciate the Church as the People of God.

Our Catholic Faith: The Church Is the People of God (page 4)

Introduce the concept of the People of God as a description of the Church. The Second Vatican Council reclaimed this title to stress the Church is all of us, all equally called to holiness. Vatican II also saw the Church as a seed of unity of the whole human race. Have your teens read the feature aloud, taking turns at each paragraph. www.usccb.org/catechism/776,777-780,592

Faith in Action (page 4) Have your teens read the *Faith in Action* questions and choose the one that most interests them to discuss. Divide the teens into small groups around the questions each chooses. Have the groups report to the whole after 10-15 minutes.

- Conclude by reading aloud the quotation from the *Catechism*. It stresses three names for Church: People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit. Use the photo (page 4) to suggest some teens might want to attend World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain.

Concluding Prayer Often times bullying begins with misunderstanding and fear. With this mind, lead the young people in "Meeting the Stranger," pages 18-19 of *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Law has evolved in our Judeo-Christian history and continues to evolve. Former child soldier Ishmael Beah testifies at the United Nations that revenge never ends. Blood begets blood is the point of the three Greek tragedies authored by Aeschylus. King Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia to gain fair winds for his ships to invade Troy. His wife and love kill him when he returns. His son Orestes kills his mother to avenge his father. Finally Athena imposes law to end the thirst for vengeance.

In Israel the law of talion puts limits on vengeance. Jesus cites this law in Sunday's gospel, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." But in his teaching Jesus challenges us to a whole new standard: "Offer no resistance to injury." This call to nonviolence does not operate on fairness like the law of talion nor on empathy and compassion like the golden rule that teaches us to treat others as we want to be treated.

Nonviolence asks us to return injury with love, to stop cycles of getting even. Moreover, Jesus calls us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, help the beggar, and love our enemies and persecutors. This is a tall order, a lifelong challenge to Christians.

SPIRIT explores a young man's journey from fighter to peacebuilder. *SPIRIT* includes two stories of child soldiers reclaiming their childhoods and explores both nonviolence and legitimate self-defense.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will appreciate the challenge to live nonviolently.

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

Icebreaker: Write the words "Turn the other cheek" on a sheet of newsprint. Invite your teens to say all the stereotypes they associate with this saying.

Pray (cover) Pray the prayer, upper left, which asks for help in responding to the difficult challenges of Jesus' teaching in Sunday's gospel.

42 (cover) Invite volunteers to take turns reading aloud the side-bar about Jackie Robinson, Number 42 for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Invite the teens to talk about the courage being first to desegregate the major leagues took. How does Robinson's example affect their understanding of Jesus' teaching "turn the other cheek."

Story: Healing Children of War (pages 1-3) Have your teens use the war toy photo to recall war toys they played with and video games they played as little kids. Have them flip the page to see children with real guns in Africa. Have strong readers read the story aloud, switching at capital letters.

Revenge Never Ends (page 2) Read aloud this former child soldier's profound statement at the United Nations. His memoir testifies against those who regard child soldiers as war criminals. *SPIRIT* recommends his book *A Long Way Gone*. It describes violence from the perspective of a 10 year old; it tells movingly of his losing his family, his survival in the forest, and his rehabilitation.

- Discuss questions 1-4. 1. *Open-ended.* People disagree about the effects of war toys and violent video games on us. Children who grow up hunting see the effect of real guns; virtual killing has no real effect and may condition us to accept violence as normal. Children spend little time learning conflict resolution skills. 2. Receiving eucharist converts the author, who winds up unable to punch other kids out without seeing Christ in them. 3. Ishmael and Dukuly are kids of 10 when they are forced to become child soldiers. Both lose their childhoods and opportunity for schooling. Rebel soldiers drug and threaten child soldiers to keep them killing. 4. Revenge leads to more revenge.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will respond to Jesus' moral teaching.

Gospel: Turn your cheek; love your enemies (page 3) Have three teens proclaim the gospel. Invite them to respond to this difficult challenge.

- Discuss questions 5-7. 5. *Open-ended.* Encourage any teens who have tried to resist violence to tell about the experience. Many may have no experience like this. Cell phones have created the phenomenon of helicopter parents whose kids don't have to learn conflict resolution because parents handle their conflicts for them. 6. *Open-ended.* Recall the experience of Seeds of Peace participants who learn each others' stories rather than debate each others' political stands. This is the opposite of demonizing a supposed enemy. 7. *Open-ended.* We all want acceptance, friends, education, health care, safety, family.

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore ways to practice nonviolence and break cycles of violence.

Our Catholic Faith: Church: Called to Resist Violence (page 4) Read the *Catechism* quote and note the Church offers at least two ways to end cycles of violence, hatred, and revenge. Have your teens listen for the two, and consider also as they listen the three personal questions in the last paragraph. Have them read the feature aloud, taking turns at each paragraph. www.usccb.org/catechism/2321,2303-2306

- Have your teens journal their responses to the three personal questions at the end of the feature and put these reflections where they will read them occasionally.

Faith in Action (page 4) These suggestions each require research. Consider collecting and creating a display of people who have lived nonviolently. Note the photo of the annual march to remember the march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. As an example for item 1, the film *Invictus* shows Nelson Mandela using simple skills like knowing people's names and family concerns as a strategy for peace building. The film also shows the power of sports to build community across racial and social barriers. The display could include Ernie Banks, the first to bridge the racial divide in baseball. Peace organizations include Pax Christi, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nonviolent Peace Force, Amnesty International.

Concluding Prayer Nonviolence requires self-awareness and self-control. Meditative prayer is a great tool in developing both. Lead the young people in "Helping the Voice in the Dark," a meditation, pages 31-33, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

Unit 4:

Sundays of Lent and Easter
March 1, 2020— April 26, 2020
Vol. 32, Nos. 21-28

Lent/Easter, Living Our Baptisms into Christ Jesus

Lent begins each year with the same two scenes— Jesus’ temptation and his transfiguration. In these stories Christians can examine what tempts them and what inspires them to grow during this season of preparing to celebrate Jesus’ death and resurrection and renewing our Christian commitment.

In the Cycle A gospels for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sunday of Lent we encounter Jesus in dramatic conversations from John’s gospel that the Church uses to prepare catechumens for baptism at the Easter Vigil.

A Samaritan woman encounters Jesus at Jacob’s well. In their conversation the woman journeys from misunderstanding to faith in Jesus and his living water. She becomes the evangelist of her village.

A man born blind must speak for himself about who gives him sight. His parents won’t speak for

him when Pharisees and neighbors question him. Like catechumens and teens in a *SPIRIT* group, the man deepens his faith the more he responds to questions and engages in dialogue. He realizes his healer must be a prophet, a man from God, the messiah.

Martha and Mary find their faith stretched when their brother Lazarus dies. Jesus insists he is the resurrection and the life. His raising Lazarus to life causes religious officials to seek his arrest.

On Palm/Passion Sunday *SPIRIT* follows Jesus step by step through his arrest, passion, and crucifixion. *SPIRIT* provides a Freedom Supper to celebrate with teens and suggests expanding the stations of the cross into places where people suffer today.

On Easter and its Octave the Church hears the good news of Jesus’ resurrection from John 20. Mary

Magdalene finds Jesus’ tomb empty. The beloved disciple sees the empty tomb and believes. Mary Magdalene hears the risen Jesus call her name, believes, and announces to Jesus’ disciples, “I have seen the Lord.” The community itself finds the risen Jesus in their midst, bringing them peace and commissioning them to continue his mission. Thomas experiences Jesus’ wounds for himself and believes. We are the Body of Christ, the Church, that continues Jesus’ mission today.

During Lent/Easter we reflect on our faith journeys. *SPIRIT* stories challenge teens to reflect on who loves them, how to deal with bulimia, how to test for healthy dating relationships, how Archbishop Romero finds no middle ground, how a young man make relationships, and how a young woman finds faith and seeks baptism.

Sundays/Seasons		Gospel/Theme	Teens’ Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
March 1, 2020 1st Sunday of Lent	Unit 4 Living Our Baptisms into Christ Jesus	Matthew 4.1-11 Who is Jesus?	Unconditional love	Human can choose
March 8, 2020 2nd Sunday of Lent		Matthew 17.1-9 Transfiguration	Overcoming bulimia	Who tells me who I am?
March 15, 2020 3rd Sunday of Lent		John 4.5-30, 39-42 Samaritan Woman	Healthy relationships	Bible: Breaking boundaries
March 22, 2020 4th Sunday of Lent		John 9.1-41 Man Born Blind	Archbishop Romero	Bible: Seeing with faith
March 29, 2020 5th Sunday of Lent		John 11.1-45 Raising of Lazarus	Life-giving friendship	What is death for Christians?
April 5, 2020 Palm/Passion Sunday		Matthew 26.14-17.66 Jesus journeys from death to life	Freedom supper	Liturgy: Holy Week
April 12, 19, 2020 Easter/2nd Sunday of Easter		John 20.1-31 Easter	Teen baptism	Church: Body of Christ
April 26, 2020 3rd Sunday of Easter		Luke 24.13-35 Emmeus	This Is My Body	Eucharist: Jesus’ risen presence

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The devil in Sunday's gospel tempts Jesus with popular images of Israel's messiah. The devil urges Jesus to show off the powers he must have if he is the Son of God. He must be able to turn stones to bread, to leap from the temple and have angels catch him, to take over the world. As Jesus hung on the cross, passersby taunted him with the same popular ideas—if you're the Son of God, show us by coming down from the cross. Jesus chose instead to share our humanity and its limitations, even death. He did this to call us to use our own Godlike powers—loving others, forgiving one another, sharing what we have, working to include all in the human family.

The first reading for the 1st Sunday of Lent comes from Genesis 2 and 3, the story of God creating a *human* from the *humus*, the earth, and of the first human temptation and choice. The *New American Bible* calls this passage "The Fall of Man." The *Good News Bible* calls it "The Disobedience of Man." This story really tells the story of the first human choice. It tells us that humans learn good from evil through their experience and through the community's wisdom expressed in its laws.

In the story in this issue a young man puts pressure on himself to excel and is tempted to think his achievements are why his parents love him.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will recognize pressure they put on themselves and appreciate parents' or guardians' unconditional love and support.

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

Lenten cross (cover) Invite your group to look at the actions in the cross on the cover, and identify actions they want to do during Lent. Explain the practice of fasting during Lent is meant to break compulsions. Breaking a habit or developing a good habit are great Lenten practices. Encourage your teens to post this page, do an action each day, and check them off. Note there are more than 40 for the 40 days of Lent.

Story: Only the Gold (pages 1-3) Pat Marzolf tells a story that may be close to home for many in your class or teen group. He's a high achiever—gifted athletically and academically. Have your young people take turns reading the story aloud to the whole class.

- Have your teens respond to question 1 with a partner; change partners to respond to question 2; change partners again to respond to question 3. To conclude, invite volunteers to share their insights with the whole group. 1. *Pat puts maximum pressure on himself. He wants the top honor roll, top standing in tennis and swimming, and quality conversations with his friends.* 2. *Encourage the teens to talk*

about their own pressures. Unlike many teens, Pat talks to his parents about his frustrations and discouragement. The conversation affirms their unconditional love for him. Encourage your teens to talk to their parents. 3. *Open-ended.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize who Jesus chooses to be.

Gospel: Jesus chooses his identity (page 3) Have three teens dramatize this gospel dialog between Jesus and the tempter.

- Discuss questions 4-6. 4. *The tempter wants Jesus to be Son of God and ruler of the world, to display his divine powers, and repudiate his humanity.* 5. *Jesus insists on staying in relation to God, finding food in the Word of God, not testing God but rather worshiping God. Jesus refuses to deny his humanity and show off his divinity; he refuses to claim worldly power.* 6. *Caring for the poor, loving your neighbor, forgiving, healing.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will interpret the first human choice in Genesis 3.

Our Catholic Faith: Who are we human beings? (page 4)

Introduce this feature by reading the quote at center. Read aloud the first four paragraphs; then have a teen read Genesis 3.1-7, at right. www.usccb.org/catechism/387,408.

- Have the teens work in fours to finish reading the feature and discussing *Faith in Action* 1-2. 1. *The tempter suggests the woman will be like God, knowing good and evil, if she eats the fruit that appears lovely and delicious. The serpent represents the temptation to overreach and be like God. The man in the story remains silent, passive, and uninvolved, but follows the woman's lead and eats.* 2. *The man represents the temptation to be less than human. The woman exercises freedom in making a choice; this is a step-up from the way animals operate. We have no evidence there ever was an innocent world in which humans were immortal. This story shows humans as we are, having to learn what is good and what is evil.*

Objective: The young people will celebrate Ash Wednesday and choose a Lenten practice.

Faith in Action (page 4) Give your teens time to make a Lenten commitment as item 3 suggests. Then have them choose one action on the cover they will do during Lent.

Concluding Prayer Follow the directions for *Faith in Action* item 4 to celebrate an ashes prayer service. Another option is the "Temptations" prayer, pages 43-44, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Jesus' transfiguration gives three of his disciples a vision beyond his suffering and death, as they follow him to Jerusalem and inevitable conflict. The gospel vision pictures Jesus in glory, radiant with light, talking with two of Israel's greatest prophets, Moses and Elijah, and claimed as son by a heavenly voice that speaks from a shining cloud.

The presence of the prophets Moses and Elijah in the vision suggests that like them Jesus will face rejection from his people. But his trusting closeness to God will sustain and transform Jesus as it did Moses, whose face began to shine like God's, and as it did Elijah, who was ultimately carried into heaven in a fiery chariot. Their presence hints that Jesus' future, too, will take him beyond rejection to vindication.

In the flow of Matthew's gospel, the transfiguration envisions Jesus' post-Easter future. In the flow of the Church year, this gospel follows the temptation story and calls us to transforming growth in Christ during our Lenten spring housekeeping of ourselves. This gospel sets our eyes on Easter, just as Peter, James, and John glimpse the risen Jesus for a passing moment on their journey to Jerusalem. They follow a prophet who will make no divine end run around death but will become the life-giving risen one.

The prefix *trans* expresses *movement across*. To trans-figure means to move from one shape to another, to change, grow, and develop in the risen Jesus. In the gospel the word *transfiguration* describes the change the disciples see in Jesus, whose humanity usually conceals his divinity. The vision changes his human figure so his divinity shows through his humanity, suggesting his risen glory. Lent invites us into this process in ourselves.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Pray (cover) Pray the prayer at upper left together in the spirit of the gospel theme.

Objective: The young people will work cooperatively to identify ten followers of Jesus.

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

Icebreaker: A.D. Matching (page 4) Invite your teens to work together to match saints on whose words and deeds others have come to believe Jesus. Answers are 1-b; 2-d; 3-f; 4-e; 5-i; 6-c; 7-a; 8-g; 9-h.

Objective: The young people will evaluate their attitudes toward their self-images.

Story: A Battle with Bulimia (pages 1-3) Katie Struckel describes dealing with her eating disorder as a struggle. Recent research suggests some people may have a genetic predisposition to bulimia that society's expectations and personal perfectionism aggravate.

● Invite your teens to read the story aloud in threes or fours, and respond in these small groups to question 1. *Media stars and advertising provide us ideal self-images. They criticize our real selves in order to sell us the products that will make us perfect.*

● Then invite your group to share their insights and discuss question 2 together. *Control over body size is comforting because a person can transfigure him or herself and need depend on no one else for how one looks, although Katie explains her boyfriend's expectations influence her. Both men and women work out and value control over their bodies.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will interpret the transfiguration gospel and its meaning for them this Lent.

Gospel: Jesus' friends see him transfigured (page 3) Call attention to the photo of the stained-glass window, which pictures the transfigured Jesus with the prophets Moses (left) and Elijah (right). Have six teens proclaim the transfiguration gospel.

● Discuss question 3. *Jesus' real self is fully human and fully divine. Last Sunday's temptation gospel examined Jesus' choice to be human like us and to face conflict. This Sunday's gospel shows him in glory, the dazzling light of his face and clothes expressing his divinity. His conversation with Moses and Elijah, two of Israel's most important prophets, identifies Jesus as a prophet. The voice from the cloud claims Jesus as son. His conversation with Peter, James, and John shows him as a teacher and friend.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will evaluate their consumer habits in light of Jesus' message.

Our Catholic Faith: Who tells me who I am? (pages 3-4)

Introduce the theme of consumerism by having your teens call out the labels they are wearing—Nike, GAP, OLD NAVY. Have your teens form small groups of three or four, and read the feature aloud to each other. www.usccb.org/catechism/555.

Faith in Action (page 4) Direct your teens to discuss and work on any two of the five items in *Faith in Action*. Invite them to share their responses with the group and discuss ways to align their social habits with the gospel—whether this be by buying less, by buying only products not produced in sweatshops, by addressing the businesses they do support with letters either commending their good practices or asking for reform in cases of low wages, poor benefits, negative working conditions, environmentally destructive practices.

Concluding Prayer Gather your teens in a prayer circle. Share the meaning of transfiguration in the fourth paragraph of *Scripture Background*. Lead the young people in "What Is Your Vision," a Lenten prayer, pages 45-46, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

The Cycle A gospels for Lent give us four model believers: the Samaritan woman (John 4), the man born blind (John 9), and Mary and Martha (John 11). Their faith journeys help catechumens in making their final preparation for baptism at the Easter Vigil and call us who are baptized to deepen our faith.

The Samaritan woman's faith journey happens in a conversation. She misunderstands, questions, objects, challenges—until in the end boundaries break down and she recognizes Jesus is a prophet and the messiah. She models for catechumens and for teens the value of asking questions, struggling with doubts, and trying to make sense of what Jesus says. A question is not a sign of ignorance but a sign of engagement with the gospel. The Samaritan woman's misunderstanding and questions draw us into the story. When we readers understand what Jesus is saying before she does, her misunderstanding calls us to put our faith into words.

In Sunday's gospel Jesus, who is a Jew, breaks political, religious, and social boundaries. To most Jews, Samaritans were mixed-blooded, heretical foreigners with whom they had a long history of antagonism. When Jesus accuses the Samaritan woman of having five husbands, he is making a prophetic judgment on her people who have intermarried with settlers from Babylon, Cuthah, Hamath, Avva, and Sepharvaim and worshiped their gods (2 Kings 17.24).

The woman recognizes Jesus speaks as a prophet, that his words accuse her people of infidelity to God. She recognizes the boundary-breaking initiative Jesus is making in calling the long-excluded Samaritans into his new community of followers. When she recognizes Jesus is the messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an apostle to her people. She leaves her water jar—the symbol of her former work—and goes immediately to evangelize her townsfolk.

SPIRIT explores what makes healthy relationships between teens.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will appreciate identity as a life task for teens and intimacy as a life task for young adults.

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

Pray (cover) Invite your teens to name boundaries they are aware of between people. Lead them in praying the prayer at top left together.

Article: Growing Toward Intimacy (pages 1-3) Have your teens preview the article by looking at the photos on pages 1-3. Read aloud the first two paragraphs to introduce the article focus on peer pressure and sexuality. Ask your group if they agree that peer pressure rarely lets up around sexuality.

● Have your teens read the article aloud in small groups, taking turns reading each section. Direct them to discuss questions 1-2 and report their reflections to the whole group.

Article: Who do I want to be? (page 2) Have your teens stay in threes or fours to read this short piece and share responses to the questions in column 3. Walk around and take part in the conversations.

● Conclude by having the whole group discuss questions 3-4. 3. *Young people are texting and Facebooking so much they are losing skill in face to face interrelating. Probe about what is easier about texting and what conversations they really value.* 4. *This open-ended question invites teens to analyze the questions they discussed in small groups about who I want to be.*

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will interpret the gospel story.

Gospel: Samaritans believe a woman's word (page 3) Have five teens volunteer to take the parts of *narrator, Jesus, the woman, Samaritan 1, and Samaritan 2*, and proclaim this gospel, in which Jesus goes outside the boundaries of Galilee to Samaria.

● Ask your teens what questions about the gospel they have. Make a list. Page 4 input may answer the questions.

● Discuss questions 5-6. 5. *Jesus and the woman begin as strangers. Jesus invites her to recognize him, a Jew, as the messiah and invites Samaritans into his community. The woman believes him and becomes not only a disciple but an apostle to her villagers.* 6. *The spring is the Spirit of God within us, the Spirit that coexists with our spirit and gives us a thirst for the transcendent, for God.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will identify in prayer the boundaries the gospel calls them to break through.

Our Catholic Faith: Breaking boundaries in spirit and truth (page 4) Have your teens identify questions on their list they still have about the gospel, then read the feature in threes or fours to see how it answers the questions. To prepare as a catechist, read the scripture background above. Bring your group together to share reflections. www.usccb.org.catechism

Prayer Service (page 4) Brainstorm all the social and political boundaries your group can identify in their school, neighborhood, world. *Israelis and Palestinians are struggling for peace; Catholic and Protestants working to heal their differences in Northern Ireland. Gangs claim turf and fight to protect it. Racial differences fuel hate incidents.* Alert teens that the prayer service invites them to add their own statements at the end.

● Place a water pitcher on a cloth at the center of your prayer circle. Give teens slips of paper and pens to write the names of people on whose word they believe. These will be used in the prayer service.

● Assign parts and celebrate the gospel prayer drama together.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Not only does John 9.1-41 tell the story of Jesus healing a man born blind, it also tells the story of a Christian community struggling to speak for itself in the difficult decades after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70. The man born blind discovers his faith as he answers his neighbors' and teachers' questions about how he received his sight. He gains insight as he speaks for himself. As he interacts with others, he reflects and finds words for what and in whom he believes.

In his book *History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel*, J. Louis Martyn sees in the silence of the blind man's parents the key to placing this story in its historical context. The narrator says, "the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue" (9.22). Martyn sees this agreement as evidence of increasing tension between Jews who follow Jesus and those who follow other rabbis in the A.D. 80s and 90s.

Many Jews fled Jerusalem when the Romans laid siege to the city and eventually destroyed it in A.D. 70. Until then, Jews who followed Jesus' way worshiped in the temple with other Jews. After the temple was gone, many Jewish teachers gathered at the village of Jamnia, started a school, and began writing down their traditions to preserve them. Eventually this group of rabbinic teachers and the community of Jewish Christians who give us John's gospel came into conflict.

As the man born blind speaks with the Pharisees and his neighbors, he becomes increasingly committed to his healer. *SPIRIT* explores how Archbishop Oscar Romero's story parallels the gospel. As the archbishop speaks out against violence, opposition rises against him.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore the value and cost of speaking out on social justice issues.

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

Pray (cover) Invite your teens to pray this prayer together. It focuses on the gospel theme.

Article: No Middle Ground (pages 1-3) Introduce this article by noting for your teens that 34 years ago on March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass, Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot and killed. This article tells the true story of the courageous ministry that led to his martyrdom.

● Have your group read his story aloud. Discuss questions 1-2. 1. *Like Jesus, Romero took a course of controversial action that he knew could end with his death. The struggle for power was too violent and polarized to tolerate enemies or find middle ground. The spirit*

of Romero continues to live, inspiring people across the world. 2. Romero spoke to all in his society to end violence. He taught the Church's social teaching of preferring the poor, empowering them to take a place in the country's economic life.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate speaking out as a way of finding what one believes.

Gospel: A man born blind speaks for himself (pages 2-3) Have eleven teens proclaim this gospel drama. Only the man born blind appears in every scene.

● Discuss questions 3-5. 3. *As the man born blind uses his reasoning and reflects on how he got his sight, he progresses in insight about who Jesus is. In scene 2, he simply recounts that Jesus put mud on his eyes and told him to wash in the pool at Siloam. In scene 3, he reasons that the man who gave him sight can't be a sinner; he must be a prophet. In scene 4, the man has to stand without his parents' support. In scene 5, the man reasons his healer must be from God; he sides with the man who healed him. In scene 6, he professes faith in Jesus. 4. Those who followed Jesus were to be put out of the synagogue. His parents don't want trouble with religious leaders. 5. Believing is seeing spiritually—it is the way we sense God, just like sight is one way we sense one another.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will interpret John 9.

Our Catholic Faith: Study the gospel (pages 2-3) Have your teens work in threes or fours to do the bible study at the bottom left of page 2. *The man retells his story in scenes 2, 3, and 5, each time in a shorter form. His parents summarize his story in scene 4. Jesus speaks only in scenes 1 and 6; in between the man, like later Christians, is on his own in Jesus' absence. The man in scene 3 sees Jesus is a prophet; in scene 5, a man from God; in scene 6, the Son of Man and Lord. Have the groups report their insights to the whole group.*

Our Catholic Faith: Faith calls us to action (page 4) To conclude their study of John 9, have your teens read the feature on page 4. Consider having your teens create a skit that dramatizes a conflict today that might bring out what one believes about human dignity, about Christian values, about the responsibility of Christians to work for justice. They can use the steps they learned in the Theater of the Oppressed article (February 2). www.usccb.org.catechism

Faith in Action (page 4) These four suggestions invite your teens to participate in furthering United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for children. Encourage interest in any one of these actions, which involve teens in working with international organizations. Encourage individuals to pursue interest, do research on the web, and report to the group.

Concluding Prayer This Sunday's gospel talks about Jesus restoring sight to a man who is blind. Lead the young people in "Will You Let Your Light Shine?" a prayer that focuses on darkness and light, pages 50-51, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the members of the Johannine community, and we ourselves are all disciples whom Jesus loves. We are all friends of Jesus whose sicknesses and deaths concern him.

In John 11, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are, first of all, three well-known disciples who play important parts in Jesus' ministry and in the last events leading to his crucifixion. Martha's dialog with Jesus also articulates the faith questions and insights of the Johannine community of the A.D. 90s. The gospel double-exposes their questions and reflections upon the story of Jesus' journey through death to resurrection.

In John 11.6-16 (not included in the short form of Sunday's gospel in *SPIRIT*), Jesus delays going to help Lazarus. Lazarus dies in Jesus' absence, which is the situation for all us later generations of Christians. For them and for us, the death of those we love challenges us to find and speak our own faith in Jesus. Martha's confession in her John 11.20-27 dialog with Jesus is the voice of the later community whose reflection that Jesus is resurrection and life expresses their faith and ours. John 11 is a pivotal chapter between what Raymond Brown calls the Book of Signs (John 1-11) and the Book of Glory (John 12-21). In John's gospel the raising of Lazarus precipitates the decision of the high priests, scribes, and elders to put Jesus to death. The miracle leads to his condemnation; the raising of Lazarus to the death of Jesus.

SPIRIT explores the life-giving relationship between two brothers.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will identify worries.

Music Icebreaker: (cover) Use the popular song that *SPIRIT MUSIC XTRA* links with the gospel theme. Access the video on the *SPIRIT ONLINE* home page along with background, highlighted lyrics, and reflections questions.

Pray (cover) Follow up listening to the music by saying the prayer on the top left together.

Worry Checklist: What worries? (cover) Have your young people look closely at the checklist and notice the list of worries. Each worry has five star shapes. Have them color in the star shapes to indicate how much they worry about each item. When they have finished, ask how many five star worries each has. Have volunteers name their five-star worries.

Objective: The young people will explore how we give life to one another in our relationships.

Story: Big Brother (page 1-3) Have teens take turns reading this story aloud. Young people in your group may have friends or family members who have struggled with cancer. Encourage them to share their stories if they wish. Discuss questions 1-2. *1. Jason is competitive, strong, and athletic before cancer and chemo treatments weaken and age him leaving him without hair and looking old. He doesn't change in*

how he thinks Dannie should be, insisting he keep pushing his basketball prowess. 2. Jason teaches Dannie not to stop competing because he can't. Dannie learns from how Jason contends with cancer how to be truly courageous in real life, not just victorious in sports.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate that Jesus faces death and promises all who believe in him risen life.

Gospel: Jesus is the resurrection and the life (page 3) Have five teens proclaim the gospel drama.

● Discuss questions 4 and 6. *for life anew, the relationship between Greicys and her family with Cameron and his family will provide her a new physical life.. 5. The genuine emotion between them is the strongest indicator of their friendship. The sisters are quick to inform Jesus of their loss and sadness. They also don't step back from blaming him for not being there when they needed him. Jesus weeps over the passing of his friend. 6. Faith and friendship with Jesus not only gives our lives purpose, but also gives us the gift of eternal life.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will appreciate the value of each human life.

Our Catholic Faith: What is death? (page 4) Preview this feature by looking at the photo of a bean sprouting and reading the quotation which connects baptism and one's birth into eternal life at death. Ask your teens what they think death is. Accept all responses. Have your teens work in threes or fours to read the page-4 feature. When they finish, direct them to respond to the question again. *Death is a mystery. For Christians death is rebirth into life with God. Life is the seed of incorruptible life that continues in and with God.* www.usccb.org.catechism

Faith in Action (page 4) If your parish cemetery is near your meeting space, have your teens do the first activity or suggest they do it independently. Use this in a prayer service as item 3 suggests. Encourage your group to plan and make Easter banners that can hang in your parish church or in your meeting area.

Concluding Prayer: Live It! Use item 3 to prepare a final prayer. Provide quiet time to conclude your session during which teens write their own contemporary versions of Paul's words in Romans 8.35, 38-39. Form a prayer circle and invite volunteers to read their versions of Paul's reflection about nothing being able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Freedom Supper Preparation Look through the *SPIRIT* issues for next week, Palm Passion Sunday. The issue provides a Freedom Supper that requires special foods and could involve a meal. The teens can review the music, find the suggestions, or make substitutions of their own. The issue also provides Stations of the Cross, which can be done simply or can involve going to places in your area where people suffer. Talk with your teens about who can help with these projects.

PREPARATION

This *SPIRIT* issue breaks from the usual format and provides two Holy Week prayer services, which each require preparation. Involve teens in planning and setting up the experiences.

1 The Freedom Supper, a Christian Passover meal, requires matzo crackers, catawba juice, and wet washcloths.

2 The Passion Gospel requires music and can include either a visit to see traditional stations of the cross in church, or a trip to local places where people suffer today. The stations prayer experience will benefit from the group making a large cross of wood as a focus. Teens can collage the cross with news photos and headlines that describe people who are suffering today from war, child abuse, child labor, homelessness, hunger, splits in families, shallowness from consumerism.

If your area has a memorial to victims of violence such as the cross on page 4, consider making the site one of the stations.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Jesus' passion resonates with themes of earlier Lenten gospels. Bystanders taunt Jesus as he hangs on the cross with the same temptation the devil put before him in the desert on the 1st Sunday of Lent, "Save yourself, why don't you? Come down off that cross if you are God's Son."

Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the mourners lamented that Jesus had healed the eyes of the man born blind but couldn't help his friend. In the passion the chief priest shares this view, saying, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself." We hearers of the gospel know by hindsight what no one at the time of Jesus' crucifixion knew: that what he had done for others *did* reveal what God would do for him. But Jesus does not save himself from death. He dies, crying out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Note that it is the chief priests, some elders, and some scribes, not all Jews, who want Jesus out of the way. The passion narrative is not only a sequence of actions but a battle of words. The words for who Jesus really is wind up as ironic scoffs on the lips of Roman soldiers: this is the king of the Jews; this is truly God's Son.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will recognize that the liturgies of Holy Week reenact the last events of Jesus' life.

Holy Week (cover) Palm Sunday begins the holiest week of the Church year. The liturgies of Holy Week create unforgettable experiences of our Christian faith: the blessing, distributing, and waving of palms; washing one another's feet or hands; venerating or kissing the cross; the Easter candle, symbolizing the risen Christ, illuminating the darkened church. Break your group into fours and assign each subgroup to read the cover copy about one day of Holy Week—Palm/Passion Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil. Ask them to share their own memories of participating in

these liturgies. Have each of the four groups report about what the Church remembers and celebrates on each day.

CELEBRATING THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will celebrate a Passover supper.

Holy Thursday: Freedom Supper (pages 2-3) The *Freedom Supper* is a short Christian Passover meal that requires matzo crackers and catawba juice. An actual meal is optional. The handwashing requires warm wet washcloths for each person.

- Plan the supper before your group meets. Involve teens in preparing the celebration. Assign volunteers to take the 13 parts: *Leader, Blessing 1, Blessing 2, Blessing 3, Toast, Bread Blessing, Question 1, Miriam, Question 2, Moses, Question 3, Christian, and John*. Have them note directions in italic type for when to eat the symbolic foods and drink the toasts.

- Help teens recognize the wine toast and bread blessing are meal prayers like those for preparing the gifts at Mass. Miriam and Moses are brother and sister. The stories they tell explain their parts in the exodus, the escape of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt. John is the writer of the fourth gospel. Invite teens to add suitable music; for example, with the blessing of light, perhaps "How Can I Keep From Singing?" from Enya's album *Shepherd Moon*. Singing "One Bread, One Body" from your parish hymnal can conclude the blessing of bread and wine. Or, listen to "Are My Hands Clean?" by Sweet Honey in the Rock's *Live from Carnegie Hall* album or Marty Haugen's "Who Will Speak?" from the album *Agape*.

PRAYING THE PASSION GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will pray their own contemporary Stations of the Cross and recognize ways people are crucified today.

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

Passion Gospel: Jesus journeys from death to life (pages 2-4) *SPIRIT* invites teens to proclaim and reflect on Sunday's gospel, the passion according to Matthew, by praying it in seven stations. Find the names of the seven stations in the issue. Note the photos show different ways to proclaim the gospel—art, shadow drama, mime. Young people made the cross on page 4, upper right, as a memorial to child victims of violence in their city—Chicago. Stations 2-7 each include parts of Matthew's passion in reader parts; each ends with a prayer your teens can use or follow as a model for writing their own prayers: 1) Betrayal; 2) Charges; 3) Handed Over; 4) Ridicule; 5) Carrying the Cross; 6) Crucifixion; 7) Death.

If your group is large, divide into groups to each prepare one of the stations by creating a place that remembers in news clippings, photos, and music a kind of human suffering that confronts us in the news today. Plan an Easter station, too.

- "Washing One Another's Feet" is another appropriate prayer option, pages 54-55, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Easter celebrates the heart of the Christian mystery. Easter celebrates Jesus' resurrection to new life and the promise of our own eternal life with God. Easter opens up this new future for every believer. His resurrection transforms the meaning of Jesus' death. Jesus passed through death to life and changed its meaning for all of us. Easter is the original Lord's day, the one that gives every Sunday its meaning.

The Christian community celebrates Easter for eight days, from this Sunday to the Second Sunday of Easter. On both Sundays we read the gospel from John 20. On Easter, Mary Magdalene finds Jesus' tomb empty at dawn on the first day of the week, three days after his crucifixion. Mary brings Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb. Each disciple responds differently. Peter goes home. The beloved disciple sees and believes. Mary stays near the tomb, weeping, and meets a man she recognizes is Jesus when he calls her name. She hears and believes. *SPIRIT* includes John 20.10-18, the passage in which Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus. The Church does not read this section.

In the gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter, the risen Jesus breathes his Spirit upon the community of his disciples and sends them, scared as they are, to bring God's love, forgiveness, and healing to the world. These disciples experience Jesus' forgiving and inspiring presence as a gathered community, who become a forgiven and healing people. Jesus makes the love and forgiveness he brings to his followers the gift and mission they must carry to others. Thomas's doubts and questions offer teens a model of the value of questioning and seeking.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore their experience of death and resurrection.

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

Prayer: Gather around your parish Easter candle or a candle at the center of a prayer circle. Light the candle as a teen prays from the Easter Vigil: *May the light of Christ rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.* Sprinkle your class with newly blessed Easter water from your parish baptismal font or holy water font. Then pray together the prayer on the cover, top left.

Objective: The young people will recognize what brings a young woman from atheism to faith.

Interview: Finding Faith and Community (pages 1-2) Have your teens preview the interview by examining the photos, which each feature Emily Anderson. The cover photos show her in Guatemala with her AIDS patients and her boyfriend's family. The photos on pages 2 show Emily's baptism and confirmation at the Easter Vigil.

- Have group members take turns reading the interview aloud.
- Discuss questions 1-3. 1. *Emily meets real believers, experiences a Christian culture, and recognizes one can't prove faith. Ivan believes in eternal life with God. Her boyfriend's family makes prayer and time together most important at Christmas. Whole villages participate in honoring Mary.* 2. *Open-ended. Emily doubts, questions, seeks answers.* Have your teens respond to question 3 in small groups so each gets time to share responses to these important questions.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will recognize Easter celebrates Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Easter Sunday: Jesus gives his peace and his spirit (page 3) Have five teens dramatize the Easter Sunday gospel, taking the parts of Narrators 1 and 2, Mary Magdalene, the Angel, and Jesus, ending with Mary Magdalene's words, "I have seen the Lord." Discuss how Jesus' disciples each react to the empty tomb. See *Scripture Background*. Invite teens to share what they believe about the promise of Jesus' resurrection for us.

Gospel 2nd Sunday of Easter (purple dot, column 2) Have four teens take the parts of Narrators 1 and 2, Jesus, and Thomas, and proclaim the gospel. Have the whole group take the part of Other Disciples. Discuss questions 4-6. 4. *The beloved disciple believes when he sees Jesus' tomb empty.* 5. *Mary Magdalene is eager to find and anoint Jesus' body; then recognizes him risen when he calls her name. Peter and the whole community believe when Jesus appears in their midst.* 6. *Thomas doubts until he places his hands in Jesus' wounds.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore the Church's mission, identity as a community, and likeness to a body.

Our Catholic Faith: The Church continues Jesus' mission (page 4) Have three volunteers read this feature aloud for the group, switching at the large capital letters. Alert your teens to listen for three definitions of Church—*believers who continue Jesus' mission to the world, a community that breaks bread in Jesus' name, the body of Christ.* www.usccb.org.catechism

Faith in Action (page 4) Ask your teens as a group to respond to the first question concerning which image of church best describes their experience of parish life. Invite everyone who wishes to speak. Allow negative as well as positive comments. Perhaps teens' comments will make clear ways to further their participation in parish life.

- Break your group into threes and fours to discuss questions 2-4. Give each group three sheets of paper. Have them label the sheets—hands, support, feet. Have them collect and write down in large print their group members' responses to the questions under these three categories. Post the sheets and let your teens mill around and read other groups' ideas.

Concluding Prayer: Form a prayer circle, have a volunteer read aloud the passage from 1 Corinthians (page 4, lower left), and invite your teens to share their responses to *Faith in Action* items 3 and 4.

- "Seeds of Hope, Cycles of Change" is another appropriate prayer option, pages 52-53, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens.*

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Two disciples head home from Jerusalem to Emmaus in Sunday's gospel. Their high hopes and expectations that Jesus would usher in the reign of God are dead. They want to forget Jesus' crucifixion and the disturbing reports of several women that he has been raised up.

Throughout much of Luke's gospel, Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem and a frequent guest of people along the way. He enters many people's lives as a guest and teacher at their tables on his journey. The two disciples expected their journey with Jesus to climax in earthly triumph, not in the bewildering events unfolding around them. On the road home Jesus journeys with them as a stranger, who listens as they pour out their hearts, reinterprets all the scriptures say about the messiah, and accepts their invitation—"Stay with us."

Hospitality toward a stranger rewards the two disciples, who recognize Jesus in breaking bread with him. As soon as they recognize him, he vanishes. Their recognition is the seeing of faith. They remember how their hearts burned within them as they listened to the one who walked with them and revived their hopes. Their moment of recognizing Jesus comes at the table of hospitality, where they welcome Jesus as a guest.

SPIRIT explores the real life story of all a daughter teaches her mother about the Body of Christ, both in her life and her death.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will explore the meaning of the Body of Christ and the hospitality to which the Lord's table calls us.

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

Prayer: Gather your teens in a prayer circle. Pray the prayer at the top left of the cover together.

Story: This Is My Body (pages 1-3) Use the cover art and the page 2 photo and cutline to introduce the theme of the story. Ask your teens to share their thoughts as you begin about what Eucharist is. Invite them to read the story as a way to explore all Eucharist can mean. Have volunteers take turns reading this story, switching at large capital letters. Invite their questions or responses to the story, which is a reflection on real events. Discuss questions 1-4.

1. *Karin can't walk past a hungry person. Compassion and justice motivate her.*
2. *Karin recognizes and teaches her mom that sharing Jesus' table at Eucharist involves sharing our tables with the hungry in the world.*
3. *Sharing food is eucharist in the small-e sense of breaking bread with the hungry in our lives. But unlike Jesus who ate with sinners, she and her mom only provide food.*
4. *In donating*

her organs for transplant, her mom sees Karin giving her body for others as Jesus gave his life. The diversity of the people who attend Karin's funeral and go to communion gives her mom a vision of the full communion with each other to which our celebrations of the sacrament call us.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will appreciate Jesus' continuing presence with us in the scriptures and the breaking of bread.

Gospel: Disciples recognize Jesus (pages 2-3) Ask four students to take the parts of Narrator, Stranger, Cleopas, and Disciple and proclaim the gospel. Have the group take the Company part at the end of the gospel. Discuss questions 5-7.

5. *The disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of bread, the sign Jesus had made his own at his last supper with them.*
6. *Just as Jesus was with the disciples physically, he is present to us today through the Body of Christ shared at Eucharist.*
7. *By sharing the Body of Christ, we create relationships and celebrate a joined purpose with those gathered around the table. These relationships build not only parish community, but often spill outside the walls of the church into social justice groups.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore the Church's mission, identity as a community, and likeness to a body.

Our Catholic Faith: Eucharist: Where do we experience the risen Jesus? (page 4) Read the first paragraph of this feature aloud to your teens; it makes three parallels between what happens in the Emmaus story and what happens in very Eucharist. Prepare your teens to read the rest of the feature by explaining the first half talks about how Jesus is with his disciples in the gospel and the second half describes teens today looking for Jesus at their parish liturgy. Have your group work in threes or fours to read the feature, discuss *FAITH in ACTION*, item 1, and create a role-play ending to the modern Emmaus story. Bring your teenx together to hear these endings. Raise *FAITH in ACTION* items 2-5 to help the teens reflect on their experience of parish Eucharist. Let them speak to one another about what draws them into or keeps them from participating in parish Eucharist. www.usccb.org/catechism 1333, 1337, 1346.

Concluding Prayer: This is the final *SPIRIT* lesson of the year. Help the teens carry what they've learned forward by praying "Seeing God's Presence," pages 56-57, *Alive in God: Prayer Experiences for Teens*.