

# 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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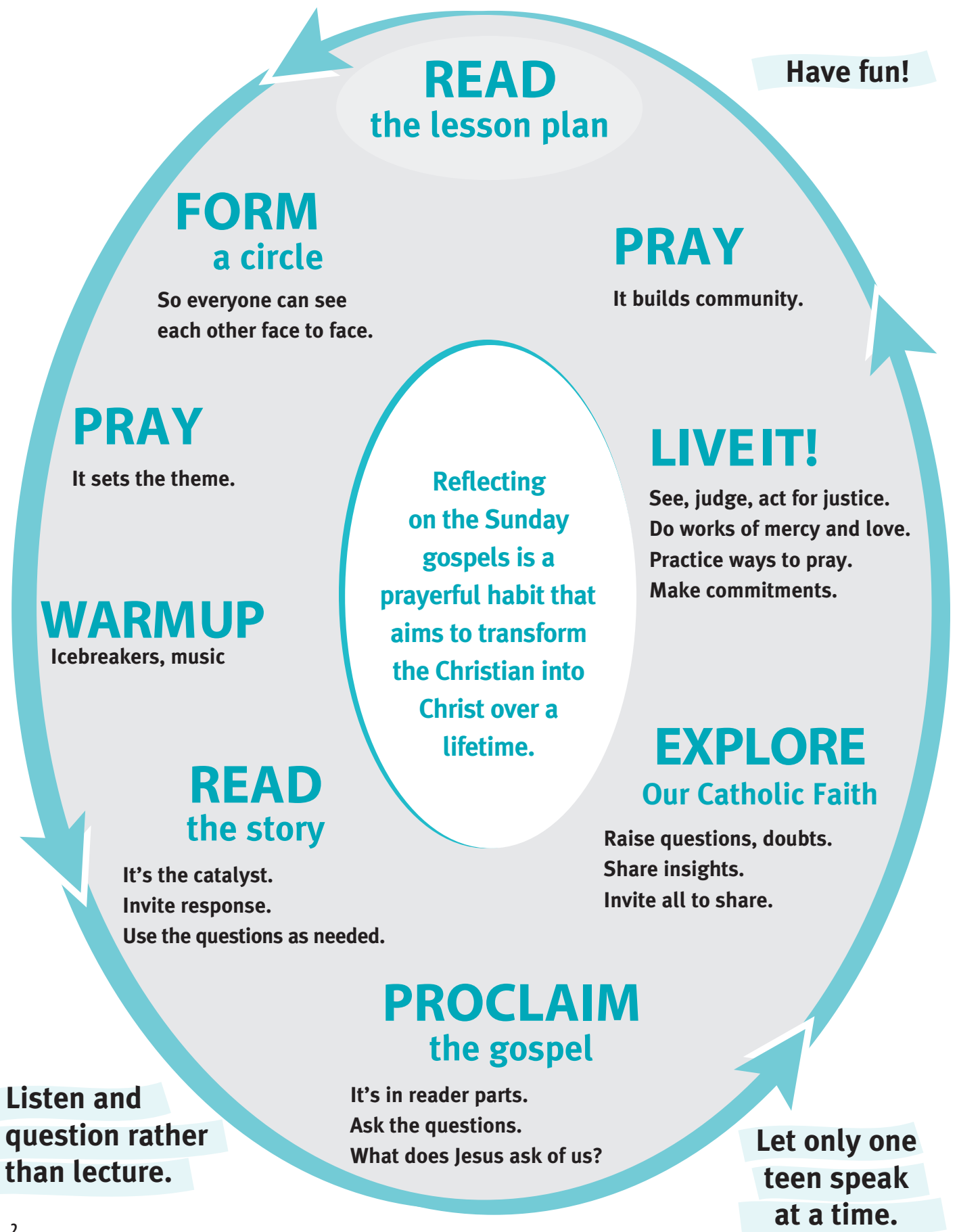
## HOW SPiRiT WORKS

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.



# 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](http://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.

## 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	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

Unit 4  
 Living  
 Our  
 Baptisms  
 into  
 Christ  
 Jesus



## 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](http://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](http://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*.