

# ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 7

Jesus Christ and the New Testament

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Our Sunday Visitor

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**Nihil Obstat**

Rev. Fr. Jeremiah L. Payne, S.Th.L.  
Censor Librorum, Diocese of Orlando

**Imprimatur**

✠ Most Rev. John Noonan  
Bishop of Orlando  
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# The Word of God in Sacred Scripture

## Let Us Pray

**Leader:** O Lord, your Word is alive in our hearts. It is our guide, a light on our journey to you.

“You will show me the path to life,  
abounding joy in your presence.” **Psalm 16:11**

**All:** God, we want to know you better. May your Word light our paths.

## Scripture

Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.”

**Hebrews 4:12**

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facta. sorte domini electionis numerus  
compleretur: sicut paulus consumma-  
tionem apostolicis actibus daret. quem diu  
contra stimulum recalci-  
set. Quod et legentibus  
deum. et si per singula expediri a nobis  
mille fuerat. sciens tamen in operantem

Have you ever thought...

- How is the Word of God living?
- How can you learn more about God?

# Getting Started

In this chapter, you will learn about how God speaks to us and tells us about himself and his plan for us. God is the author and inspiration of the sacred words of Scripture, and he continues to speak with us today through his Word that we proclaim at Mass, pray with, learn from, and share.

- Catholic Faith Words**
- Sacred Scripture
  - Divine Inspiration
  - canon of Scripture
  - Gospel
  - Evangelists

In the chart below, describe some people, places, and events you already know from both the Old Testament and the New Testament.



Who, Where, and What in the Bible	
People	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____
Places	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____
Events	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____
	• _____ _____

## REFLECT

**Let God's Word into Your Heart** Look up the following Scripture passages and use these questions to guide your reflection.

**Hebrews 4:12** How is God's Word alive in the things I do?

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**Psalms 118:6** How is this passage meaningful to me now?

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**Ephesians 5:8** In what ways has God's Word helped me live as a disciple of Jesus?

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## God Speaks in Human Words

### What are some of the ways that God speaks to us?

When we meet someone for the first time, our ideas about the way that person talks or looks can sometimes get in the way of understanding him or her. But once we start to hear that person's story, we have a better understanding of him or her. In a similar way, once we get to know God's story, our friendship with him grows.

### God Inspires

God wanted humans to get to know him, so he gradually made himself known to us over time. God chose to speak to his People with human words. Although no word can capture everything about God, these words do tell us what God want us to know about him and his hopes for us. **Sacred Scripture**, also called the Bible, is God's Word to us written by humans acting under the

Holy Spirit's direction and guidance. This direction and guidance is known as **Divine Inspiration**.

Scripture records the story of the relationship between God and his People and the communication that he had with them through history. By the Holy Spirit's action, the authors of Scripture faithfully wrote what God wanted to reveal and taught without error the truth about his plan for us.

## Interpreting Scripture

The Church accepts and honors a set number of books as being inspired by God. This body of sacred texts is called the **canon of Scripture**. It includes forty-six books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. "The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #140).

The Old Testament tells the story of God's relationship with Abraham and his descendants. It includes the laws, history, and stories of the Israelites.

After Jesus' Resurrection, many different people wrote about his life and ministry.

### Catholic Faith Words

**Sacred Scripture** the Word of God written by humans acting under the Holy Spirit's inspiration and guidance; another name for the Bible

**Divine Inspiration** the gift of the Holy Spirit which assisted the human authors in writing the Bible to ensure it contained the truths God wanted us to know

**canon of Scripture** the Church's complete list of inspired books included in Sacred Scripture

The New Testament begins with the Gospels, which tell us about Jesus' ministry and teachings. It includes many Epistles, Letters written by Saint Paul and other disciples so the early Christians could learn about Jesus.

Because God is the author of Scripture, the interpretation of Scripture should help us understand what he wants to tell us in the

Biblical text and what he desires for us. The Holy Spirit helps the Church to interpret and apply Scripture.

The Bible contains a variety of literary forms. A literary form is the way something is written. Knowing the form of a written work helps us to understand the meaning of what is being said.

### Literary Forms in the Bible

• <b>Narrative stories</b> recall in a straightforward way something about God's relationship with the world.	See Matthew 2:1–12
• <b>Parables</b> are short stories Jesus told, using examples from everyday life or nature, to illustrate moral or spiritual truths.	See Mark 4:1–20
• <b>Teaching</b> enlightens people to understand how to live the Christian life.	See Luke 6:20–36
• <b>Miracle stories</b> teach how God's power and healing transform people.	See John 4:46–54
• <b>Laws</b> portray the rules of conduct that God has set for us in living in right relationship with him and others.	See Mark 12:28–34 and the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
• <b>Hymns and psalms</b> show the joy and struggle of being in relationship with God.	See the Book of Psalms
• <b>Proverbs</b> are short sentences of wisdom.	See the Book of Proverbs
• <b>Apocalyptic literature</b> reflects the expectation of decisive intervention of God in history, especially at the end of the world.	See the Book of Daniel

### OUTLINE

Working with a classmate, create an outline for a screenplay or podcast on "The Story of God and His People." The story must span from creation to the present time. Choose what you think are the main points, and outline them here.

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# The Importance of the Gospels

## How do the senses of Scripture help us understand its message?

Scripture is so rich in expressing Divine truth that there are many senses, or layers, of Scripture. Two layers of meaning that can be seen in Scripture are the *literal sense* and the *spiritual sense*.

The literal sense of Scripture refers to the actual words that have been recorded. Understanding the literal sense involves studying the culture in which the words were written—the meaning of those words to the people of that time and place.

The spiritual sense has three subcategories:

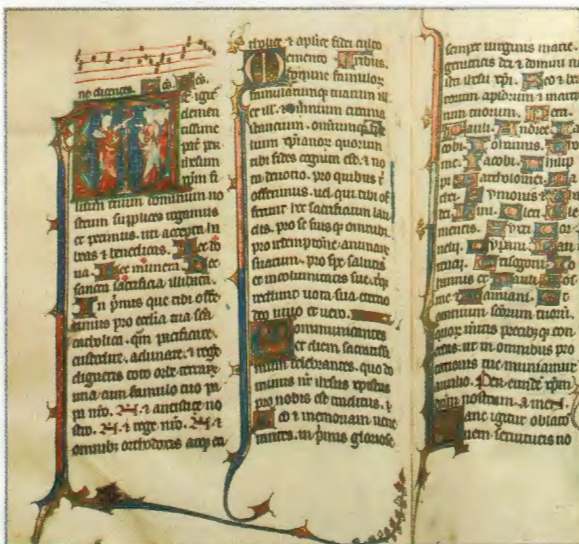
- The allegorical sense shows how certain events pointed to Christ, even before his birth. The crossing of the Red Sea, for example, is a sign of Christ's victory over death.
- The moral sense gives instruction on how to live justly before God.
- The anagogical sense shows how human events and realities are signs of our

heavenly future. The word *anagogical* comes from the Greek word *anongoge*, which means “leading.” The Church, for example, is understood as leading to the New Jerusalem of Heaven.

## Christ the Good News

The word **Gospel** means “good news.” The four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John contain the Good News of God's Kingdom and his saving love. They have the central place in Scripture because they present Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching. We revere the Old Testament, too, because the events recorded in it point to the salvation that God would bring when he sent his only Son to become man.

When the author of the Gospel according to John wrote that the Word was with God and the Word was God, he meant the living Word that is Jesus Christ (see John 1:1). Jesus Christ is the single Word through whom all the other words in Scripture have their meaning. Because Jesus himself is the living Word of God, the Gospels present the ultimate truth of Divine Revelation. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's Word and of God's promise.



**Go to the Source**  
Read *John 1:1–14*. In what way is Jesus the Word of God? What is given to those who believe the Word?

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JOHN, CHAPTER 1

- 1 In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be
- 4 through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.



## A Different Emphasis

Inspired by the Spirit, all four **Evangelists** center their writing on Christ, and emphasize different aspects of his life or mission.

➤ Think of a time when you heard a single story told by more than one person. Why do you think there can be differences in the way two people tell the same story?

### The Gospels and their Authors



**Matthew** addresses a Jewish audience and wants to show them that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament accounts and promises of a Messiah. This Gospel emphasizes Jesus as the new covenant who fulfills the old covenant.



**Mark**, in a brief but detailed way, stresses the announcement of God's Kingdom. Mark shows how the disciples did not always understand Jesus, and only gradually came to know who he is. When they did, they were ready to proclaim him to the world.



**Luke** focuses on practical and ordinary things so that people will be open to Jesus' message of salvation in their life. Written for Gentiles (Greek Christians), this Gospel emphasizes Jesus as a Savior who helps us overcome the evil of sin, suffering, and death. He often shows Jesus in prayer.



**John** focuses on spiritual things, and readers can see they are entering into an intimate relationship of love with God. In this Gospel, Jesus is shown answering questions that people pose to him. When they misunderstand his answers, he tells them more so that they can understand his truth.

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### Catholic Faith Words

**Gospel** a word that means "Good News." The Gospel message is the Good News of God's Kingdom and his saving love.

**Evangelists** the four inspired human authors of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

### READ AND DISCUSS

In a small group, read a passage from one of the Gospels. Write about what it means to you. Then, as a group, discuss the meanings each member found in the passage.

- What do you learn about God's Word when you see the way different people respond to it?

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"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

## Conversation With God

### How does God speak to us today?

To this very day, God continues to speak to his People. When the Word of God is proclaimed at Mass, it is the voice of God that the assembly hears. This Word proclaimed from the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, a living Word. Even though human readers proclaim this Word, God speaks through them.

The proclamation of the Scriptures at Mass takes place during the Liturgy of the Word. This is just one way in which Catholics today dialogue with God. Through Psalm responses, the homily, and silent reflection, we respond to God and commit ourselves to follow his Word. The worship of the Church relies on God's Word, as do the personal prayer life of Catholics and our growth in virtue, modeled by Jesus.

## The Word as Light

When the prophet Isaiah spoke of God's goodness to the Hebrew people, he said that a "people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (**Isaiah 9:1**). In a similar way, Jesus explained that people who walk in the darkness will stumble, because people in darkness cannot see where they are going. This is why the Word of God is a light to all people.



### Scripture

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

**Matthew 5:14-16**

## Following the Light

By listening to the Word of God, you develop a conscience—the God-given ability that helps us judge right from wrong—that makes it possible for us to live a right and just life.

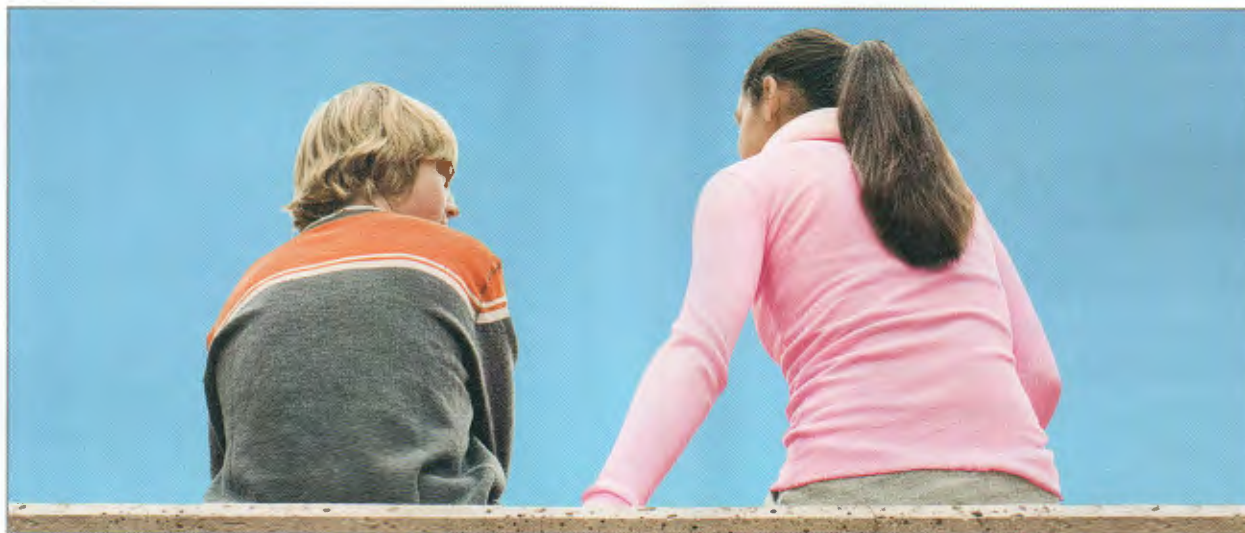
A conscience formed by God's Word

- challenges us to live a good life and avoid evil.
- helps us judge between choices that are right or wrong, good or bad.
- strengthens us to put God's Word into action and to be signs of his goodness.
- gives us the confidence we need to live with faith. God speaks to followers of Christ through their conscience and the teachings of the Church.

## CATHOLICS TODAY

Scripture plays an important role in our lives.

- We proclaim and reflect upon it in communal worship.
- We discover more about Jesus and his message as we read it by ourselves and in religion class.
- We discuss its message for us today in Bible study.
- We pray with it personally and with our families.
- We turn to it for wisdom and for guidance.



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## IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

God speaks to us and tells us about himself and his plan for us.

- God is the author and inspiration of the sacred words of Scripture that humans have recorded under his guidance and direction.
- The four Gospels, which developed over the course of time after Jesus' Resurrection, are the center of the Bible because they record the truth of the life, teaching, and saving actions of Jesus.
- God continues to speak to us today through the Scriptures, as we proclaim them at Mass, reflect on them personally, rely on them for making choices, and study them to learn more about the life and teachings of Jesus.

## Our Catholic Life

Sacred Scripture is a rich source of **wisdom** that can guide you in all aspects of your life. As one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, wisdom helps us see God's purpose and plan for our lives. Wisdom leads us to see things as God sees so that we might live holy lives. When you have a difficult decision to make, think about how some people you have read about in Scripture may have acted. How were they open to God's direction in their lives?

One easy way to begin to find wisdom and hope in Scripture is to pray one of the Psalms. You may want to use a concordance or index in your Bible to find a Psalm that speaks to what's going on in your life. Read it a few times. Then pray your chosen Psalm and see what help you gain from it.



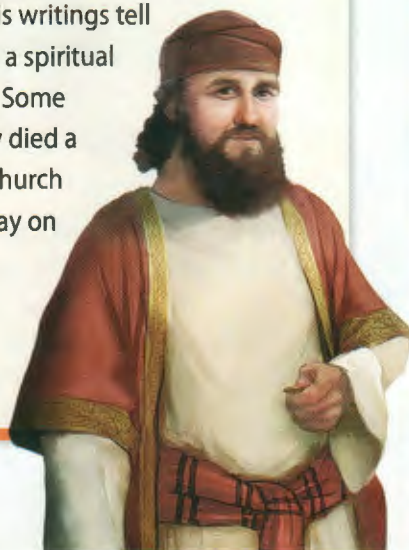
➤ **What wisdom can you learn from Scripture?**

## People of Faith

### Saint Matthew, first century

As a tax collector, Matthew worked for the Roman governor, the enemy of the Jewish people. Fellow Jews saw Matthew as a traitor, but Jesus called him a close friend. Matthew saw the miracles Jesus performed and witnessed his Resurrection and Ascension. His Gospel was written to convince Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah. His writings tell how God established a spiritual Kingdom for his Son. Some believe that Matthew died a martyr's death. The Church celebrates his feast day on **September 21**.

For more, go to  
[aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com)



## RESEARCH

Choose one of your favorite Scripture passages. Write what the Scripture is about, or what it means to you. (Some examples are relating to a new person, choosing values you want to live by, or dealing with conflicts.)

**What does it mean?**

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**How does it affect my life?**


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## Prayer of Petition

**Leader:** Let us now pray, asking God our Father to help us hear, see, listen, live, and learn from the wisdom of Scripture.

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*Read Luke 4:16–22.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Side 1:** God of love, open our ears to always hear your voice—fill us with your Word.

**All:** Fill us with your Word.

**Side 2:** God of light, open our eyes to always see your path—fill us with your Word.

**All:** Fill us with your Word.

**Side 1:** God of wisdom, open our hearts to always act as we should—fill us with your Word.

**All:** Fill us with your Word.

**Side 2:** God of goodness, open our hands to always reach out and serve—fill us with your Word.

**All:** Fill us with your Word.

**Leader:** Loving Father,

You alone have the words of everlasting life.  
Send us your Spirit and give us the grace  
so that we always welcome your Word,  
your wisdom and guidance,  
and your love.

May the gifts we have received  
be gifts we freely share with others.  
We ask this through your Son,  
who is Jesus Christ, our friend and brother.

**All:** Amen.

 *Sing or play: "God Has Chosen Me"*

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**A Work with Words** Complete each sentence with the correct term from the Word Bank. Not all terms will be used.

Sacred Scripture	Apostles
Sacred Tradition	Gospels
canon	Divine Inspiration
Evangelists	conscience

- \_\_\_\_\_ records the story of the relationship between God and his People.
- The complete list of sacred texts accepted by the Church as inspired by God is called the \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture.
- The authors of the Gospels, called \_\_\_\_\_, wrote about Jesus' life and ministry.
- It is important for us to know God's laws so our \_\_\_\_\_ can help us make good decisions.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ present Jesus' life, ministry, and teachings.

**B Check Understanding** Indicate whether the following statements are true or false. Then rewrite false statements to make them true.

- Even though the Bible was written by humans, God is the author because he inspired the writers. **True/False**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- When John writes in his Gospel that the Word was God, he is referring to the Holy Spirit. **True/False**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- The primary sense of Scripture refers to the actual words that have been recorded. **True/False**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- The spiritual sense of Scripture includes the allegorical sense, showing how certain events pointed to Christ. **True/False**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- The Letters of Paul are the central books of Scripture because they present Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching. **True/False**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**C Make Connections** Write a one-paragraph response to the question. Each Gospel presents the life and teaching of Jesus, but each places emphasis on a different aspect of Jesus. Choose one of the four Gospels and explain how it fulfills Jesus' command to spread the Good News.

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