

ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 7

Jesus Christ and the New Testament

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Our Sunday Visitor

Christ Present Among Us

Let Us Pray

Leader: O God of every good gift, help us to love your people by sharing our gifts with each other.

“How good and how pleasant it is,
when brothers dwell together as one!” **Psalms 133:1**

All: Lord, you are the God of all unity.

Scripture

“As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,’ it does not for this reason

belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body,’ it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended.”

1 Corinthians 12:12–18

Have you ever thought...

- What does being part of the Body of Christ require?
- How do people’s individual gifts and talents contribute to the Church?

Getting Started

In this chapter you will gain a deeper understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ, made up of a diversity of members united by the Holy Spirit. You will also consider how individuals' gifts and talents contribute to the whole Church.

Catholic Faith Words

- Mystical Body of Christ
- hierarchy
- one, as a Mark of the Church

In the web below, name different gifts and talents our Church needs in order to continue Jesus' work. *



DESCRIBE

Needs and Gifts What are three gifts or talents you have? Write about them on the lines below. Then describe how you can use one of your gifts to help meet the needs of another person—such as a family member, friend, classmate, or neighbor—or to help your parish or school.

- _____

- _____

- _____





The Church Is the Body of Christ

How are all the different members of the Church united in one Body?

People gather into groups for many other reasons, but friendship is often the result. It could be that a group forms because there is a job that needs to be done. Sometimes a group forms because of common interests or problems. Some groups become known and visible to others.

Visible and Spiritual

Like Jesus, the Church he founded—our Catholic Church—is both human and divine. The Church is both visible and spiritual. For Jesus told us, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” (**Matthew 18:20**).

Visible The word *church* means a “gathering” or an “assembly.” Jesus has

gathered all who believe in him into a visible group with leaders and members. In our visible gathering as the Church we are the People of God.

Spiritual In Christ we become more than just a visible assembly of people. In the Eucharist Jesus feeds us his own Body, and we become his Body. As a spiritual group, the Church is called the **Mystical Body of Christ**, for Christ is present among us, and through the Church, people come in contact with Christ.

The Church brings us in touch with the sacred, but she is made up of human beings, with all our imperfections and potential.

It is easier to understand the visible part of the Church. You can see how people gather in buildings for worship, for education, and for service. And you can see how the Church is organized into a **hierarchy**, with levels of leadership and membership.

However, the visible part of the Church is not enough. Without the spiritual part, the Church would be like any other organization. Our spiritual part is Christ’s presence among us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- > **When are some times people gather together in Jesus’ name?**
- > **How do you think Jesus makes his presence known among them?**

Catholic Faith Words

Mystical Body of Christ a name for the Church, whose baptized members are all united to Christ and one another through the Holy Spirit, forming one holy people with Christ as her head

hierarchy the organization of the Church into different levels of leadership and membership

One in Christ

Jesus died, but he rose again to new life. Now, through the Holy Spirit, and through his actions in the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, Jesus establishes the Church as his own Body. Christ is the Head of this Body. The Church lives from him, in him, and for him; Christ lives with and in the Church. Here is how Saint Paul, who was also called “Saul,” found out that Jesus considers the Church his Body.

Scripture

“Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord . . . on his journey . . . a light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ He asked, ‘Who are you, sir?’ The reply came, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’”

Acts 9:1–5

Go to the Source

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–31. What is most comforting to you in this passage? Most challenging?

Paul realized that he was persecuting Jesus himself by persecuting the Church. In letters he wrote to various groups of early Christians in Ephesus, Rome, Corinth, and Colossae, Saint Paul mentions often that we (the Church) are “One in Christ,” or that we are “His Body”: “For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ” (**Romans 12:4–5**).



Students from LaSalle Catholic High School in Miami celebrate with the late Archbishop Agustin Roman at his street naming ceremony in 2011.

EXPLAIN

Give some examples of how the Church is both visible and spiritual. Then in small groups make a list of how the Church is visible and spiritual in your school.



One Body, Many Members

What are some signs of our unity as the Body of Christ?

The Church is a body of many members, and each individual is important to the working of the whole Body. Each of us is needed, and we don't lose our individuality as part of the whole. And each member also needs to remain part of the Church and faithful to her mission. We are one Church united in Jesus. Being **one** is another Mark of the Church. The Gospel according to John tells us that Jesus explained it this way at the Last Supper.

Scripture

[Jesus] said, "Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing."

John 15:4-5

All Parts of the Body of Christ Work Together

There is no use being part of a group if we do not work together with the other members of the group. When even one member of the Church does not participate with the rest of the Church, we are all affected. And when even one member remains faithful and bears the fruit of good works, the whole Church is also affected. All over the world today, the Church is bearing good fruit. The many parts are all connected in Christ. The reception of Holy Communion strengthens the union we have with Christ and others in the Church—locally, nationally, and worldwide. The Eucharist therefore is a sign and a source of our unity.

- **How do you participate in the Church right now? What can you do to improve the role you have?**

Catholic Faith Words

one a Mark of the Church. The Church is one because the power of the Holy Spirit unites all the members through one faith and one Baptism.

Many Gifts for the Good of All

How are each person's gifts and talents important to the whole Church?

God gave each individual person different gifts. If we were all good at the same things, we would probably all be bad at the same things, too. Some things would not be done well, or at all.

Often people use their gifts to compete with each other. But God did not give us gifts just for competition. As the Church, he wants us to share our gifts to bring Christ to others and to share the message of his Good News with the world.

Because of this diversity, the Church is able to help God build his Kingdom in many ways. The gifts of every member are needed.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul tells us that the gifts God gave to his People were “some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers”

(**Ephesians 4:11**). God still gives those gifts in the Church today.

➤ **What would your parish or the whole Church be like without the gifts of all her different people?**

For Those Who Are in Need

Jesus tells a story about the Last Judgment to teach us that we will be judged by how we show our love in the ways we help him. In his story, the people are surprised to hear Jesus say that they are going to be rewarded for helping him on Earth. They wondered when they had helped him. “. . . whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (**Matthew 25:40**). He goes into more detail:



Scripture

I was hungry and you gave me food.
I was thirsty and you gave me drink.
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
I was naked and you clothed me.
I was in prison and you visited me.
I was ill and you cared for me.

Based on **Matthew 25:35–36**



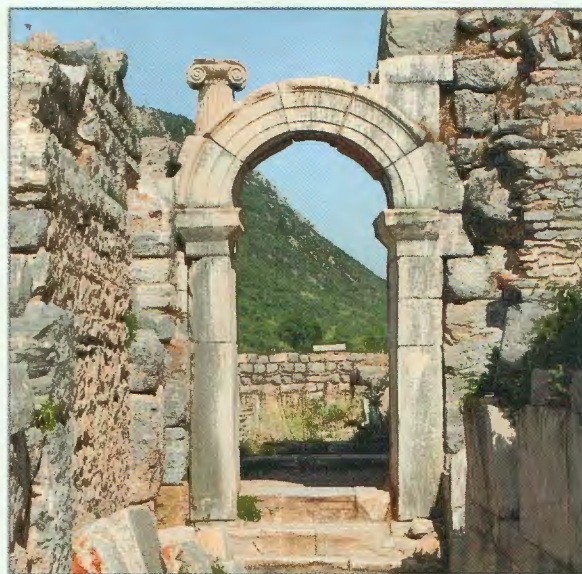


WHERE IT HAPPENED

Maybe it was because there were so many different kinds of people and occupations in Ephesus that Saint Paul wrote to the Church there about different gifts. Ephesus was a big, important seaport of ancient Greece, in an area that is now western Turkey. Travelers to Turkey today can see the ruins of the ancient city, including those of the Basilica of St. John, which was built over the alleged burial site of Saint John the Apostle. Travelers can also visit a museum, and a Church shrine to honor Mary.



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Because we are members of the Body of Christ, everyone in the Church is linked to everyone else, especially to people who are suffering, poor, and persecuted. In these people we can most closely see Jesus, who suffered and died for us. When we reach out to help others who are in need, we are doing what Jesus did and what he told us to do.

You might recognize Jesus' words as the Church's Corporal Works of Mercy, actions that care for the physical needs of people. The complete list adds another work, burying the dead.

LIST

Find a copy of your parish bulletin and identify some of the ways that Church members are using their gifts to be a sign of God's Kingdom and to care for those who are in great need. List some of the ways below, and place a check mark beside two ways you can contribute your own gifts to these efforts.

IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

The Church is both visible and spiritual, made up of people with many gifts and talents who are united by Christ in the Holy Spirit to continue Christ's mission in the world.

- We call the spiritual part of the Church the Mystical Body of Christ. Jesus is the Head of his Body, the Church.
- Each individual member is united with all members as part of Christ's Body; we need one another and Christ to bear fruit in the world.
- The Church needs the diverse gifts of all members to be a sign of God's Kingdom.

Our Catholic Life

Sharing your gifts and talents is one of the easiest ways to feel part of your parish and school community. As a young person, you can use your **personal gifts** to form friendships, help or mentor younger children, assist in the liturgy by reading, singing, or being an altar server at Mass, or performing some of the Corporal or Spiritual Works of Mercy. But you may wonder about what gifts you have to share. Ask your friends and an adult at your parish or in your school about what they see as some of your gifts, and then think about how you could share them in your community. If you're still not sure about your own gifts or what use they could be, pray to God for guidance. The Church needs the gifts of all her members—including you—to continue Christ's work in the world.

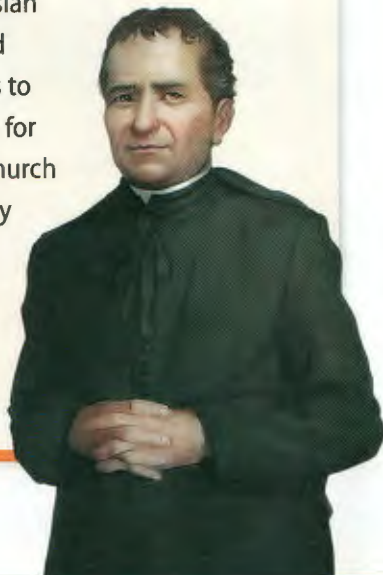


➤ What is one gift you can share in your community this week?

People of Faith

Saint John Bosco, 1815–1888

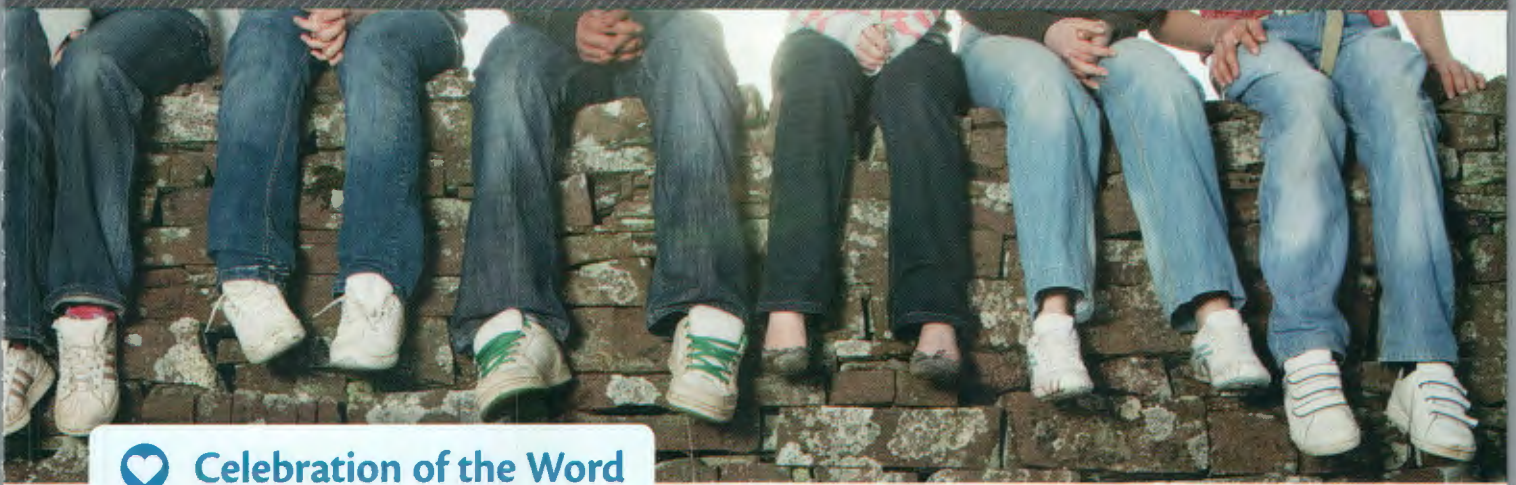
At the age of nine, John Bosco of Turin, Italy, began having dreams that would reveal God's plan for his life. John knew that his life's work would be to help troubled children to become more Christ-like. As a priest, he ministered to poor and neglected boys, taking them to Mass, and founded the Salesian Society, which opened homes for young boys to be educated and train for the priesthood. The Church celebrates his feast day on **January 31**.



For more, go to
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IDENTIFY

Explore the hymnbook your parish uses to celebrate liturgies. Make a list of hymns that mention the Body of Christ, our oneness in Christ, our giving of our personal gifts, or our outreach to those in need.



Celebration of the Word

Leader: Let us pray.

O God, of every good gift,
we praise you and we thank you for this
time of prayer,
this time of quiet, this time to ask ourselves
the question,
“What are the gifts you have given me?”

Reader 1: A reading from the Letter of Paul
to the Corinthians.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–11.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reader 2: Open our hearts to receive and
understand.

Open our minds to trust in your plan.
Open our hands to take hold of all you
give us.
Open our lives to share what you offer.

Reader 3: Let us pray to the God who gives
us what we need.

Pray aloud your intercessions, one by one.

After each, respond:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Help us see how we all fit together,
how each of us offers a different piece, a
different gift to strengthen the whole.

Teach us to know the Holy Spirit is with
us, guiding us and giving us courage and
wisdom.

Help us recognize our gifts and use them
with care.

All: Amen.

 *Sing or play “Alive in One Spirit”*



Go to aliveinchrist.osv.com for an interactive review.

A Work with Words Complete each sentence.

1. The word _____ means a gathering or assembly.
2. As we gather as the Church, we are the _____.
3. As a spiritual group, the Church is called the _____.
4. The Church is organized into a(n) _____ with different levels of leadership and membership.
5. The Church is _____ because the power of the Holy Spirit unites all the members through one faith and one Baptism.

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

6. Through the Holy Spirit, Baptism, and the Eucharist, Jesus forms the Church as his Body. **True/False**

7. Jesus taught his disciples that they were the roots and he was the branches. **True/False**

8. The Church is both invisible and spiritual. **True/False**

9. Everyone in the Church is responsible to care for those in need. **True/False**

10. Jesus taught that people would be rewarded at the Assumption for the ways they helped him on Earth. **True/False**

C Make Connections Write a one-paragraph response to the question below. What do we need to do so that our efforts “bear fruit” as Jesus instructed?
