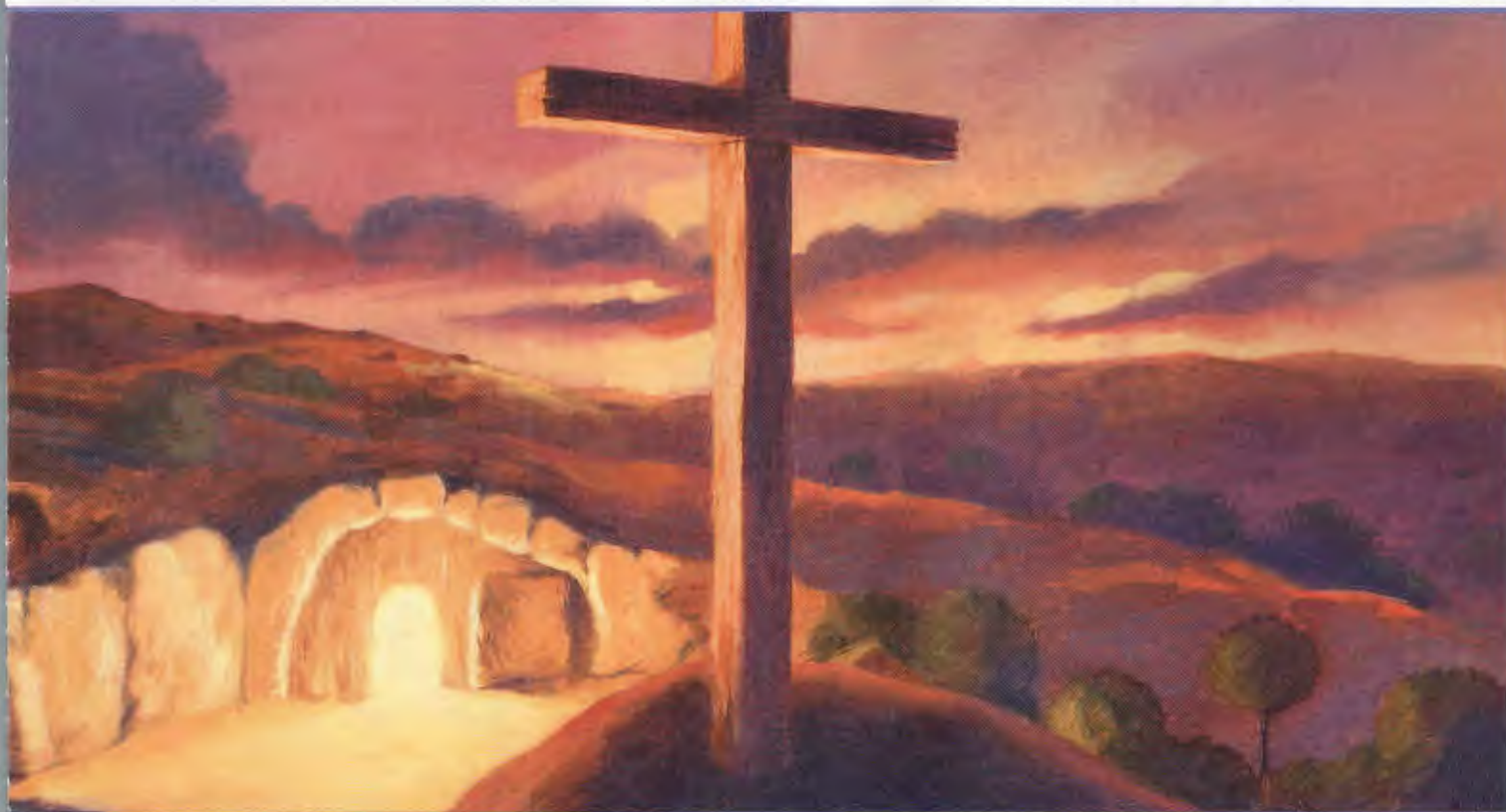


# ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 7

Jesus Christ and the New Testament

[aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com)



Our Sunday Visitor

# Source of Life

## Let Us Pray

**Leader:** God of peace and justice, you call us to be your holy people. May the Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to you today and throughout our lives. May we be your witnesses to the ends of the Earth!

“Blessed are those who dwell in your house!  
They never cease to praise you.” **Psalm 84:5**

**All:** Help us continue your saving work, O Lord.  
Hear our prayer.

## Scripture

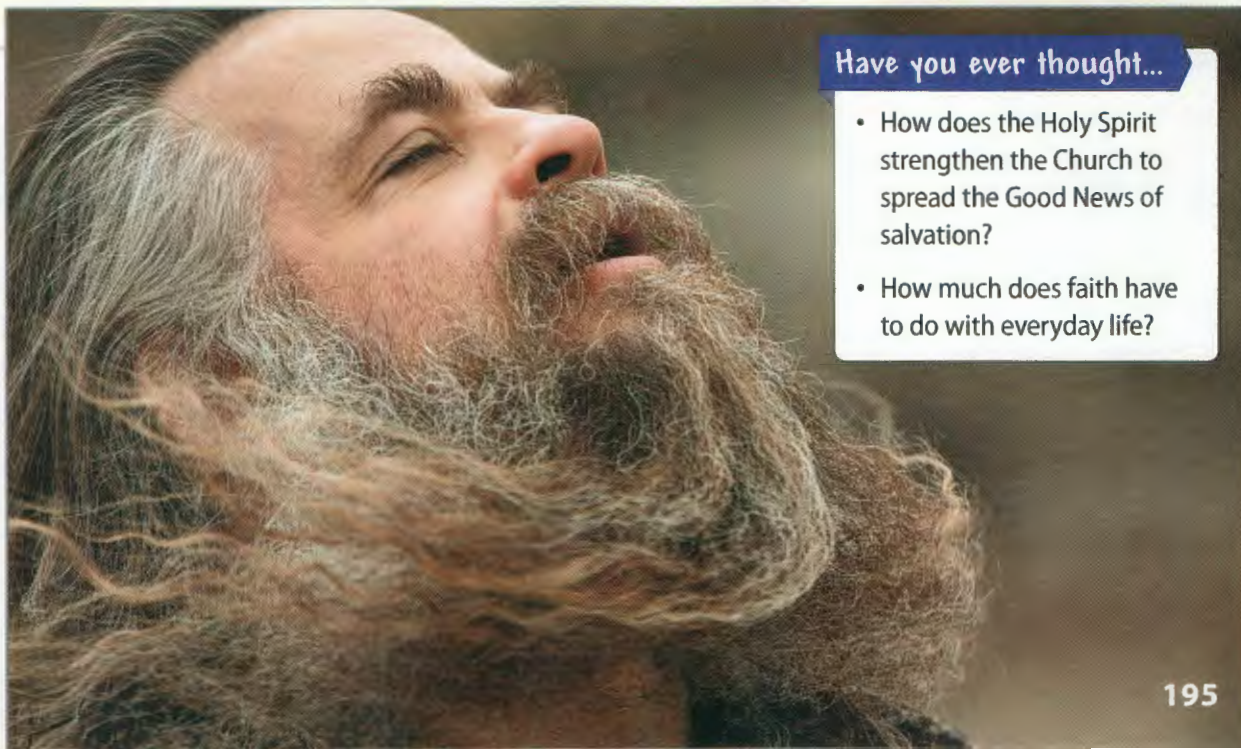
When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?”

**Acts 2:1–7**

### Have you ever thought...

- How does the Holy Spirit strengthen the Church to spread the Good News of salvation?
- How much does faith have to do with everyday life?



## Getting Started

In this chapter you will learn about the need for faith and Baptism, and the ways the Church helps us restore our friendship with God. The Church keeps us close to God, showing us how to pray and helping us open our minds and hearts to God.

### Catholic Faith Words

- free will
- Baptism
- eternal life
- catholic, as a Mark of the Church

In the web below, name ways that the Church brings people close to God, and how she is a sign of God's grace to the world.



**The Church ...**

brings people closer to God by:

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is a sign of God's grace to the world when:

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continues Jesus' mission by:

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**LIST**

**Live the Good News** List five things that your school does to continue Jesus' work. It could be things within the school or for others in the community.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Then describe how you are or can be involved in one or more.

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## That All May Have Life

### Why does the Church continue Jesus' saving work?

We are made in God's image. And God created us to be with him—completely happy and whole. But, he wanted us to choose to be in relationship with him. So he also created us with **free will**, the ability to act freely in making choices. Because humans are free to choose, and because each person is born with Original Sin, they sometimes choose hurtful, sinful actions. But God can help us learn to use free will to choose what is good. Free will is one of God's greatest gifts to us, but it is very easy to misuse it.

After Jesus died, Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the salvation God offered us through Jesus: "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). If we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, and

have faith in him, we will be reconciled, or restored, in our relationship with God. But it is our free will to choose. And not everyone accepts Jesus as his or her Lord, not even those who believe in God. Until they do, the world will not be in full communion with God.

- When have you used your free will to decide to do something good?
- When has it been hard for you to choose good instead of evil?

## Faith and Baptism

Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sins. When he returned to be with his Father in glory, he left on Earth his Body, the Church, to continue bringing people hope, new life, and salvation. The Second Vatican Council explains that, "all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body." The Council based this statement on Sacred Scripture and

Sacred Tradition. Christ is the one Mediator who can bring us to salvation. He is present in the world now in his Body, the Church.

We cannot be restored to the right relationship with God without faith. Jesus said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). We can see that faith is not enough. We need to be baptized into new life in Christ. We receive **Baptism** in and through the Church, so again we see that the Church is needed for salvation.

But what about those who have never heard of Christ and his Church? Living a good life and following his or her conscience can still save a person who, through no fault of their own, has not heard of Jesus and the Church. And Jesus is still bringing such a person new life. The same is true for those preparing to become Catholic, but who for some reason are not baptized before they die. Some

people die for the faith even though they are not baptized, and they, too, can be saved.

We might also wonder about children who have died without Baptism. It is best for babies to be baptized, but if they die before they are baptized, we can trust our loving God to have mercy on them and save them. That is what we pray for all unbaptized infants and children.

> **What else do we need besides our faith?**

**Catholic Faith Words**

**free will** the God-given freedom and ability to make choices. God created us with free will so we can have the freedom to choose good.

**Baptism** the Sacrament in which a person is immersed in water or has water poured on him or her. Baptism takes away Original Sin and all personal sin, and makes a person a child of God and member of the Church.

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**NAME**

Imagine you have just been asked by an exchange student at your school who is a Hindu to explain what Catholics believe. Name the five most important things you would say about your faith.

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## Communion with God

**How does the Catholic Church help people be close to God?**

The Church is the Sacrament, or sign, of our salvation. She is also the way of getting to know God, or having communion with him. We are in communion with God when we are members of the Church. Only through the Church do we receive the Eucharist, which deepens our union with Christ. The Eucharist is Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. The Eucharistic sacrifice is offered to make reparation for people's sins and to gain both material and spiritual gifts from God.

We celebrate the Holy Trinity, the mystery of one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We celebrate that mystery through, with, and in Christ. We are drawn to God the Father through the Son's sacrifice and the Holy Spirit's action.

On our own we could never even imagine being this close to God. The Holy Spirit



### Catholic Faith Words

**eternal life** life forever with God for all who die in his friendship

**catholic** a Mark of the Church. The Church is catholic because she is universal, meant for all people in all times and in all places.

brings about this communion between God and all of us in the Church. Jesus has poured out his Holy Spirit on all the members of the Church. This Spirit builds the Church, brings her to life, and makes her holy.

### The Church's Treasury

We have a “treasury” in the Church—not a collection of money, but a spiritual treasury of all the holiness and goodness from Jesus, and from the prayers and good works of Mary and all the Saints. There is “an abundant exchange of all good things” among the Saints in Heaven, the souls in Purgatory, and all of us on Earth (CCC, 1475).<sup>1</sup> Jesus gave the Church the authority over this spiritual treasury.

The forgiveness of sins removes eternal punishment, but it is still necessary to be purified, either on Earth or in Purgatory, of the unhealthy attachment of sin. This purification frees us from the temporal punishment of sin. The Church has the power to grant indulgences based on this spiritual treasury. Indulgences, such as particular prayers or actions, allow faithful Catholics who have met certain requirements to avoid some of the temporal punishment that is the consequence of our sin. We can obtain indulgences for ourselves and for souls waiting in Purgatory. This helps us work toward the salvation and **eternal life** that God offers all who respond to his grace.



Pope Francis meets with Hispanic community and immigrants in Philadelphia, PA.

## Missionary Church

Another Mark of the Church is that she is **catholic**, or universal. Jesus did not found his Church to exist in only one time or place. He sent her out to all nations to preach the Gospel to everyone. She is the universal Sacrament of salvation.

### Scripture

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

**Matthew 28:19–20**

Salvation is not meant for just a select few people. God wants everyone to come to him because he loves all human beings. The Church believes in God’s universal plan of goodness, salvation, and redemption, so she has to be a missionary Church.

Salvation is found in the truth. Even before people know about Jesus and his Church, or come to faith in God, they are drawn to seek the truth. They have begun to move toward salvation without even knowing it. They are following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

God has entrusted the truth about himself to the Church. While people are searching, she goes out to bring them the truth.

- Where do missionaries work in the Church today?
- What are some things they do to help bring the truth and Good News about Jesus to people?

### IDENTIFY

List some ways that you are close to God. Then think of who or what helps you to be close to him. How can you help others realize that God wants to be close to them?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



## The Church Prays

### Why is prayer an important part of the Church's life?

We cannot give ourselves a share in God's life. Salvation is a gift from God, not something we can either cause or earn. God uses the Church to give us the hope of life forever with him.

But we do not have to wait until we are in Heaven to be united with God. We can already be in communion with him while on Earth. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to say: "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven" (**Matthew 6:10**).



The Lord's Prayer brings us into communion with God the Father, and his Son, Jesus. When we pray it, it is a bit like holding up a mirror—the Lord's Prayer shows us who we are as children of God and members of his Church.

God tirelessly calls each of us individually to meet him and live in his love. He never stops loving individuals and wanting each one to be in communion with him. Salvation history also tells how God has repeatedly called out to individual human beings and how they have answered his call in the quiet of their own hearts.

It is not always easy to pray, so people might be tempted to stop or even to skip praying. We can get distracted while we are praying, but God wants us to stay in prayer even when we are distracted. With practice, we can send distractions out of our minds and pay more attention to God.

Sometimes good feelings come to us in prayer, but not always. Sometimes people feel nothing while they pray, unsure if they are really praying. We don't need to have special feelings when we pray. All we need to have is faith. God will speak to us and listen to us if we remain faithful to have a time of prayer.

- **When do you like to pray alone?**
- **How can you find a certain time of day or a certain place that is best for you?**

#### **Go to the Source**

Read *Matthew 6:9–13*. What do you think the world would be like if all humans truly desired what we ask for in this prayer?

## The Church's Forms of Prayer

In a prayer of **blessing and adoration**, we acknowledge our dependence upon God and respond to his goodness with joy and gratitude.

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Prayers of **petition** ask God for something specific, turning to him for help with things we need, such as forgiveness or guidance.

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Prayers of **intercession** are requests made on behalf of someone else. For example, you might ask God to bring healing to someone who is ill.

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In prayers of **thanksgiving**, we acknowledge God as our Creator and thank him for his goodness. We can also offer prayers of thanksgiving for specific gifts God has given us.

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Prayers of **praise** give God honor and glory not for what he does, but simply for who he is.

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Write examples of each kind of prayer on the lines below.



## DISCUSS

Think about the following questions and discuss your answers with a partner. When do you pray best? What are some things that make it hard for you to pray? What forms of prayer do you find yourself praying most often? How do you feel after you have prayed?



## IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

The Church has a mission to bring all people to believe in God and to be baptized.

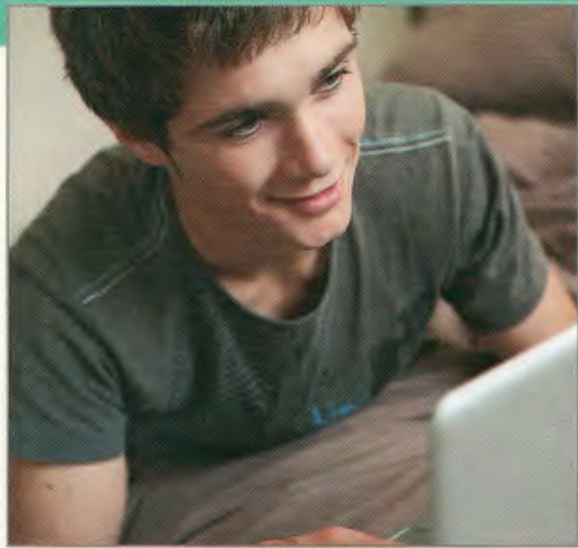
- Faith and Baptism are necessary for the freedom and new life that come from salvation.
- The Church is both a sign and instrument of the communion between God and his

People; it is through her actions that people can come to know God and share in his life.

- We must have a personal relationship with God nourished by prayer in order to answer our call to bring his love and truth to others.

## Our Catholic Life

The Catholic Church encourages bishops, priests, and others to share her message in many ways. In the United States, most parishes and dioceses have websites that share information with God's People. Blogs, podcasts, and other **forms of social media** can play a positive role in teaching and informing Catholics. In 2013, millions around the world waited for news of the Papal Conclave that elected Pope Francis, and social networks were quick to share his first messages to the faithful. Pope Francis soon counted millions among his followers on social media sites. No matter how the message of the Church is sent out to the world, it is important to present it faithfully.



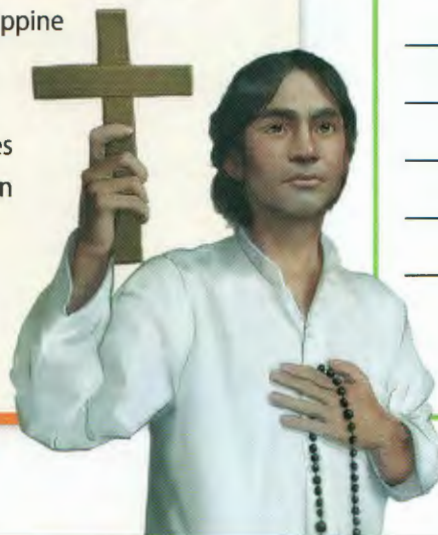
➤ How would you present the Church's message through social media?

## People of Faith

### Saint Lorenzo Ruiz, c. 1600–1637

Saint Lorenzo Ruiz of the Philippines served as an altar boy and later was a helper and clerk-sacristan in his parish Church. In 1636, he was accused of a serious crime. While proclaiming his innocence, he fled to Okinawa, Japan. The Japanese rulers didn't like the Christians. Lorenzo and his companions were taken to Nagasaki and given the choice of renouncing their faith or being executed. All six were tortured, but they refused to deny Christ. In 1981, Pope Saint John Paul II beatified Lorenzo Ruiz along with other Philippine and Japanese martyrs. All were canonized six years later. The Church celebrates Saint Lorenzo's feast day on **September 28**.

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



## TEXT

You have just been appointed the person in charge for sending out text messages from your parish Church this week. These messages need to tell people about the work that the Church is doing to serve others. Research seven different things you could text for seven days. Remember each message can only be 140 characters!

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## A Prayer for Peace

**Leader:** Lord Jesus, Saint Francis of Assisi was just a young man when he responded to a call to become your great instrument. Although we are young, help us to see how we too can be instruments of your peace. Let us pray:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

**All:** God, help me to sow the seeds of love by...

**Leader:** where there is injury, pardon;

**All:** God, help me to sow the seeds of pardon by...

**Leader:** where there is doubt, faith;

**All:** Jesus, you understood that even good people have doubts about you. Help me to encourage the growth of faith by...

**Leader:** where there is despair, hope;

**All:** God and Father, I am growing up in a world where many people have lost hope. Help me to be instrumental in planting seeds of hope by...

**Leader:** where there is darkness, light;

**All:** Jesus, you are “the Light of the World.” Give me the courage to reflect your light by...

**Leader:** and where there is sadness, joy.

**All:** Jesus, you knew all the joys of life and wanted to share them. Show me how to be your joyful witness by...

**All:** O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

**Leader:** Let’s sing the Prayer of Saint Francis together.

 *Sing or play “Make Me A Channel”*

Go to [aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com) for an interactive review.**A Work with Words** Circle the letter of the choice that best completes the sentence.

- God created human beings with \_\_\_\_, the freedom and ability to make choices.
  - free will
  - open will
  - good will
  - free choice
- Along with faith, \_\_\_\_ is necessary for salvation.
  - Free will
  - Baptism
  - Reason
  - Penance
- The Church is \_\_\_\_ because she is universal, meant for all people in all times and places.
  - holy
  - temporal
  - apostolic
  - catholic
- The Church has a spiritual \_\_\_\_ of all the holiness and goodness from Jesus, and from the prayers and good works of Mary and all the Saints.
  - inheritance
  - treasury
  - library
  - account
- When waiting in the state of Purgatory, the soul suffers \_\_\_\_ punishment for sin.
  - final
  - earthly
  - eternal
  - temporal

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

- The Church is a sign or Sacrament of John. **True/False**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- For the world to be in communion with God, all people must have received Communion. **True/False**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Lord's Prayer brings us into communion with God the Father and his Son, Jesus. **True/False**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Eucharist makes present on the altar Christ's sacrifice on the Cross offered to make reparation for people's sins. **True/False**  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Prayers of petition are prayers that thank God for specific gifts. **True/False**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C Make Connections** On a separate sheet of paper, write a one-paragraph response to the questions. How does the missionary Church bring people into communion with God? How does the prayerful Church do so?