

# ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 8

The Church

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**Our Sunday Visitor**



# Faithful Living

## ♥ Let Us Pray

**Leader:** Faithful God, you are always with us. Teach us to be faithful to one another and to you. May we be witnesses to your love and faithfulness.

“I keep the LORD always before me;  
with him at my right hand, I shall never be shaken.  
You will show me the path to life,  
abounding joy in your presence,  
the delights at your right hand forever.” **Psalm 16:8, 11**

**All:** Lord, help us keep our promises.

## Scripture

“Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe . . . Be diligent in these matters . . . so that your progress may be evident to everyone.” **1 Timothy 4:12, 15**

### Have you ever thought...

- How are you an example of a faithful person?
- What does it mean to be faithful to God, to yourself, and to others?

# Getting Started

In this chapter, you will examine the Sacraments at the Service of Communion. You will learn about the promises of the Sacrament of Matrimony and study Holy Orders. You will also study the Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

**Catholic Faith Words**

- Matrimony
- fidelity
- vows
- Holy Orders
- *in persona Christi*

In the spaces provided, write information about each Sacrament at the Service of Communion.



The Sacraments at the Service of Communion	
Matrimony	Holy Orders
<p><b>Who Receives It:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Who Receives It:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Symbols:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Symbols:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>The Commitment:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>The Commitment:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



## WRITE

**Promises Made. Promises Kept** Write about four promises you have made: to yourself, to family, friends, and to God. Then, tell how you have kept these promises.



Promise I Made to Myself: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I Kept It: \_\_\_\_\_

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Promise I Made to My Family: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I Kept It: \_\_\_\_\_

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Promise I Made to My Friends: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I Kept It: \_\_\_\_\_

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Promise I Made to God: \_\_\_\_\_

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How I Kept It: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Marriage as a Sign of Christ's Love

### What does a couple promise in marriage?

When you make a promise to do something with or for someone, that person plans on you keeping your promise. Keeping your promises strengthens your relationships by showing that you can be trusted. Making a promise enriches your life, but it sometimes makes life a little more complicated.

The same thing applies to your relationship with God. Making and keeping promises with God deepens your friendship with God. It also brings challenges.

God is a Trinity. His very being is communion. Because we are made in

God's image and likeness, God did not create humans to be alone. From the beginning, men and women have been partners. We find our true selves in relationship with others. In other words, we know ourselves better when our ties with family, friends, and others are strong.

We become our best selves when we strengthen those ties by keeping our promises to others, whether the promise is small like helping around the house or large like committing our lives permanently to another person in marriage.

The Seven Sacraments give us grace to be faithful to our commitments and relationships. By his presence at the Wedding at Cana, and by performing his first miracle there (see John 2:1–11), Jesus showed the goodness and importance of marriage. Christian marriage is a Sacrament, an effective sign of Christ's presence.

## The Promises of Marriage

In Catholic marriages, a baptized man and baptized woman freely vow to be faithful and true to each other forever. **Matrimony** is a visible sign of the union of Christ and his Church. In this Sacrament, God gives spouses special graces to make their love more perfect and holy, and strengthen their unity.

### Catholic Faith Words

**Matrimony** the Sacrament at the Service of Communion in which a baptized man and a baptized woman make a permanent covenant of love with each other and with God

**fideliy** faithful presence; it is the most important rule of loving and lasting relationships

**vows** solemn promises that are made to or before God



As a sign of Christ’s love for his people, married couples have a tremendous responsibility. They freely choose to make a permanent covenant of faithful love with each other. This covenant was founded by God the Creator and given special laws. The couple must be to each other and to all they meet what Christ is to the Church—totally loving and sacrificing, maintaining total **fidelity**, giving themselves in service, faithfully working to keep their marriage unbreakable. They also commit to be open to any children God may give them, and to be faithful stewards of this gift of life.

In a public celebration within the liturgy, before a priest or deacon, witnesses, and family, the couple **vows** to love each other as God loves us. Sometimes it’s hard to believe that God is always with us, forgives us, cares about us, and loves us beyond our understanding. When in doubt, we can look to happily married couples and say,

## CATHOLICS TODAY

Some of the Eastern Catholic Churches use crowns at their marriage rite. In fact, the Sacrament is referred to as “holy crowning.” The priest prays prayers of blessing and places the crowns on the heads of the bride and groom. The crowns symbolize that the couple are the king and queen of their home, that they should give themselves to each other, and that they are part of the Kingdom of God.

“That gives me a glimpse of God’s love. If Dave and Maddie are that forgiving, that compassionate, that caring, how much greater must God’s love be!”

- > **What does a loving and faithful marriage teach us about God’s love?**
- > **How can your commitment to someone or something show God’s love?**

## REFLECT AND WRITE

Wedding vows are the solemn promises you make to the person you marry. What kinds of values and ways of behaving do you think are important in a successful marriage? List some of those values and behaviors here.

### Values

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### Behaviors

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Eastern Catholic Holy Crowning





Seminarians participate in World Youth Day celebrations.

## The Ordained Life

### How is Holy Orders a Sacrament of Service?

Matrimony is not the only Sacrament that involves making a vow or being at the Service of Communion. The other is the Sacrament of **Holy Orders**, in which a baptized man is ordained to teach the faithful, lead divine worship, and govern the Church; ordained ministers serve as bishops, priests, or deacons.

Like Matrimony, Holy Orders involves making promises that deepen relationships to God and others through service and giving witness to faith in daily life. Although all followers of Christ must serve, bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained into the service of authority for the Kingdom through teaching, worship, and pastoral governance.

All the people in the Church are part of the priesthood of Christ. This is sometimes referred to as the “common priesthood of the faithful.” However, some men are called to participate in the mission of Christ in another way, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders,

where bishops and priests act in the name and in the person of Christ the Head in the midst of the community. Deacons are ordained to serve the People of God in liturgy, Word, and charity. In the ministerial priesthood the priest receives a sacred authority for the service of the faithful.

How does a man know he is called to serve as a deacon or a priest? Here are some ways:

- The man discerns through prayer, careful thought, and many conversations with others in the community, God’s call to live out his baptismal promises in Holy Orders. He is invited by and receives this calling from a bishop (deacon and priest) or the Pope (bishop).
- The man has a solid spiritual life and the personal gifts needed by the Church. He must have certain talents and abilities that would help the Church family. The Sacrament of Holy Orders grants a special role of leadership on the priest. He has a distinctive relationship with Christ and the Church.



## Catholic Faith Words

**Holy Orders** the Sacrament at the Service of Communion in which a baptized man is ordained to teach the faithful, lead divine worship, and govern the Church; ordained ministers serve as bishops, priests, or deacons

**in persona Christi** term referring to the mission and ability of priests and bishops, granted through Holy Orders, to act in the person of Christ

## The Celebration of the Sacrament

After years of discernment, studying theology, working in a parish, and performing different ministries, the candidate for the priesthood is ordained. The Sacrament of Holy Orders usually takes place in the diocesan cathedral, and the bishop is the minister. After the Litany of the Saints, the bishop lays his hands on the candidates' heads, prays in silence, and then sings or recites a prayer of consecration, asking the Holy Spirit to bless the man with the graces needed to fulfill his ministry.

Like Baptism and Confirmation, ordination prints an indelible character, or permanent mark, upon the one ordained. He enters into a permanent relationship with the Church, as he acts in the person of Christ as a leader in the Church community.

➤ **Why do you think all three of these Sacraments mark the recipients?**

## Acting in Christ's Name

Priests act **in persona Christi** (in the person of Christ) and *in persona ecclesiae* (in the person of the Church). Through their membership in the Body of Christ and the special graces of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, priests are special signs of Christ, the Head of the Body. A priest's leadership

should inspire the faith of the community. This happens when a priest's ministry flows from a heart transformed by the Spirit and open to God and his People. In choosing to live a celibate life in imitation of Jesus, the priest grows in deeper intimacy with God. In choosing obedience, in imitation of Jesus who was perfectly obedient to his Father, the priest obeys the bishop and Pope, knowing that Jesus works through them.

Everyone is called by God to serve. But God calls some to serve a deeper commitment as an ordained priest or as a religious brother or sister. Speaking to your priest or pastor or to a religious brother or sister is one way to begin identifying whether God might be calling you to the consecrated life. While speaking to others is an important part of the discernment process, continually turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance. To learn more about vocations and charisms, turn to page 378 in the Our Catholic Tradition section of your book.

### NAME

Name three ways a parish priest can make a difference in the lives of his parishioners.

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



## Living Faithfully

### How can you live out the Sixth and Ninth Commandments?

Faithful living in marriage means that you will be able to count on the goodness of your partner every day until old age. Being faithful in marriage involves many things.

Living out the marriage covenant requires the couple to follow the Sixth Commandment, “You shall not commit adultery,” and the Ninth Commandment, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.”

The Sacrament of Matrimony gives the couple the grace to be faithful and true to their marital vocation. Most importantly the husband and wife

- commit to each other and only each other. This results in a unique unity between the couple. Polygamy—the practice of having more than one spouse at a time—opposes this unity.

- make a permanent and unbreakable commitment that is blessed by God. Divorce would separate what God has joined together. It goes against God’s plan and his laws. In order for a divorced person to remarry in the Catholic Church, the marriage must be annulled (a formal declaration by the Church that the marriage vows were not valid).
- are open to having children if they are blessed with them. The unwillingness to have children turns marriage away from its greatest gift—a child.

For a variety of reasons, sometimes couples separate and even divorce. This is often very painful for everyone involved. Making vows makes life richer, and sometimes more complicated. Our faith tells us that making a spouse, parent, or stepparent “the enemy” only makes the pain worse. The Church recognizes that those in pain need our prayers and support.





## Commandments for All of Us

The virtue of chastity helps you maintain the right balance of body and spirit in human sexuality. Your sexuality is part of who you are. It's more than whether you are biologically a male or female. Chastity helps you express your sexuality in the right way. It helps you remain pure in the ways you act and think. It helps you show love in the appropriate ways.

Some thoughts and actions harm a person's dignity and go against the virtue of chastity to such a degree that they are sins: masturbation, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, pornography, and homosexual actions. We all have the responsibility to develop the self-discipline necessary to live chastely. God's grace will help us if we are open to it.

The Ninth Commandment reminds us that the proper attitudes toward sexuality involve the ways people think, too. Desiring to act in improper ways can lead people to do the thing they desire, causing disrespect to their own bodies or those of others. Focusing your heart on what is good and practicing temperance are important.



The virtue of modesty is all about decency. It's about being discreet in the way you dress, and the things you say (or choose not to say).

The more you practice the virtues, like modesty and chastity, the more you'll be able to rely on them. Participating in weekly Eucharist and the frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation can give you the strength to practice self-control and make good judgments.

## IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

The Seven Sacraments strengthen us to be faithful to our commitments and our relationships. The Sacraments at the Service of Communion celebrate people's commitment to serve God and the community and help build up the People of God.

- The Sacrament of Matrimony strengthens the couple to live out their promises to be true and faithful, to be open to the gift of children, and to be models of the love Christ has for his people.
- Holy Orders is the Sacrament in which a baptized man is ordained to teach the faithful, lead divine worship, and govern the Church; ordained ministers serve as bishops, priests, or deacons.
- Practicing and living by the virtues of modesty and chastity can help all people, no matter whether they are married, ordained, or single. The grace of the Eucharist and Reconciliation can strengthen all of us to be pure and self-respecting.



## Our Catholic Life

The Sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony honor the commitments of Catholics to be faithful to God and to each other. Even before you are old enough to enter into these kinds of commitments, you can make others. **Faithfulness** means being true and loyal, and your faithfulness to God should be one of the most important aspects of your life. Honor your commitments by being faithful to yourself (remembering who you are and what you believe), being faithful to God (following his Commandments and showing your belief to the world), and by being faithful to others (honoring their friendship, love, and lives). Think before you make promises, and honor your commitments.

➤ **What commitments can you make to God, to yourself, and to others this week?**

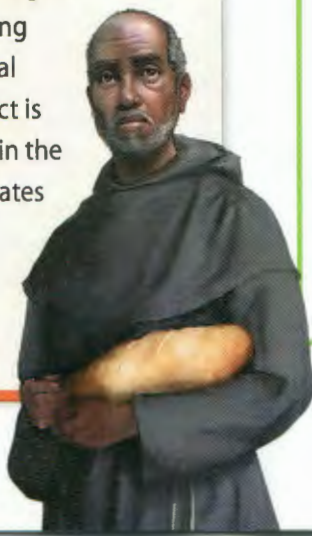


## People of Faith

### Saint Benedict the Black, 1526–1589

Benedict was a slave until age eighteen, but he still worked for his former master. Eventually he joined an order of hermits, then a friary, and was given the role of cook. At the friary Benedict was chosen to oversee reforms. He could not read or write and was not a priest, but he obeyed. Benedict led wisely, and spent the rest of his days cooking for his brothers and sharing the love of Christ. Upon his death, King Philip III of Spain paid for a special tomb for the simple friar. Benedict is the patron of African Americans in the United States. The Church celebrates his feast day on **April 4**.

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## IDENTIFY

Think about the promises you are living with now. Fill in the lines below to explore how you make and keep your promises. Answer the following questions:

What promises have you made?

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What responsibilities come with them?

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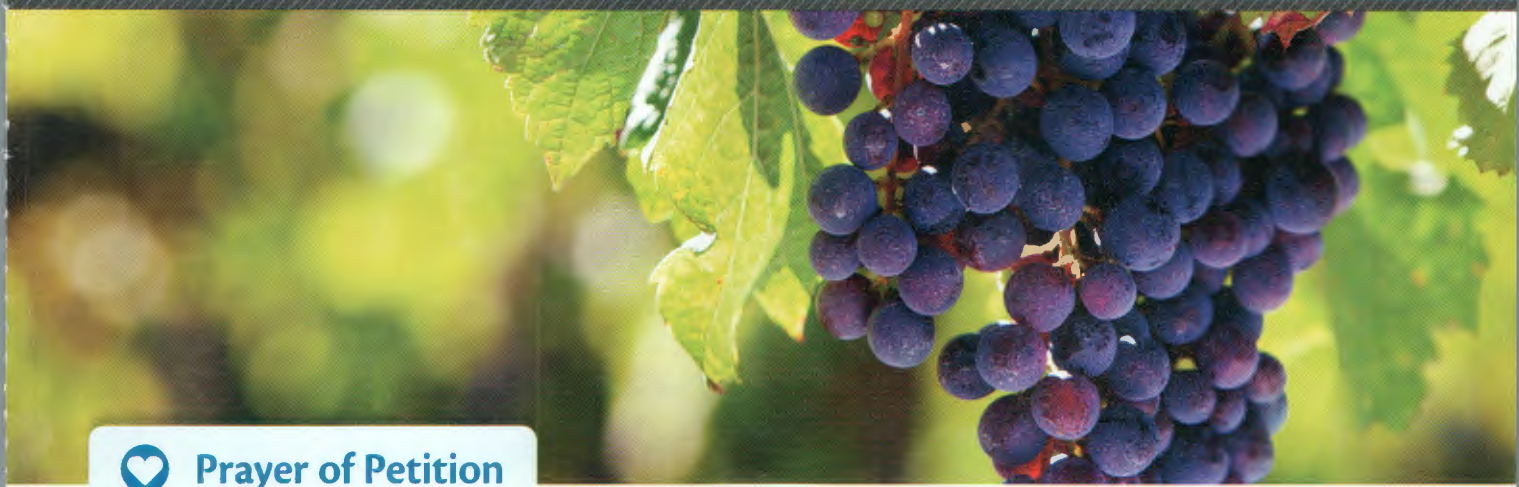
How are you doing in keeping them?

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## Prayer of Petition

**Reader 1:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

*Read Mark 12:28–33.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

**Leader:** Loving God,

Be with us now as we call out to your greatest gift, Jesus, and ask for strength and guidance.

Our response is . . . Jesus, give us strength.

**Reader 2:** To keep the promise of faithfulness:

in times of question and doubt.

For this we pray . . .

**All:** Jesus, give us strength.

**Reader 3:** To keep the promise of love: of our God, of self, and others.

For this we pray . . .

**All:** Jesus, give us strength.

**Reader 4:** To keep the promise of friendship: with those we walk with each day, with those we find hard to love.

For this we pray . . .

**All:** Jesus, give us strength.

**Reader 5:** To keep the promise of service, in times of indifference, when we are busy, self-involved, or distracted.

For this we pray . . .

**All:** Jesus, give us strength.

**Leader:** Lord, Jesus,  
Give us strength today and always,  
to serve you in all we do,  
and to faithfully follow wherever you lead.

**All:** Amen.



*Sing or pray "I Love You, Lord"*



