

ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 8

The Church

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Our Sunday Visitor

The Liturgical Year

Let Us Pray

Leader: Holy Lord, you are with us always. In every day of every season of every year you draw us closer to yourself. You call us to love you, each other, and ourselves more deeply.

“Glory in his holy name;
let hearts that seek the LORD rejoice!
Seek out the LORD and his might;
constantly seek his face.” **Psalms 105:3–4**

All: God, help us know how to live.



Scripture

The works of God are all of them good; he supplies for every need in its own time.

No cause then to say: “What is the purpose of this?”
Everything is chosen to satisfy a need.

The works of God are all of them good;
he supplies for every need in its own time.

There is no cause then to say: “This is not as good as that”;
for each shows its worth at the proper time.

So now with full heart and voice proclaim
and bless his name!

The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Sirach) 39:16, 21, 33–35

Have you ever thought...

- What is life's purpose?
- What does the Church celebrate through the year, year after year?

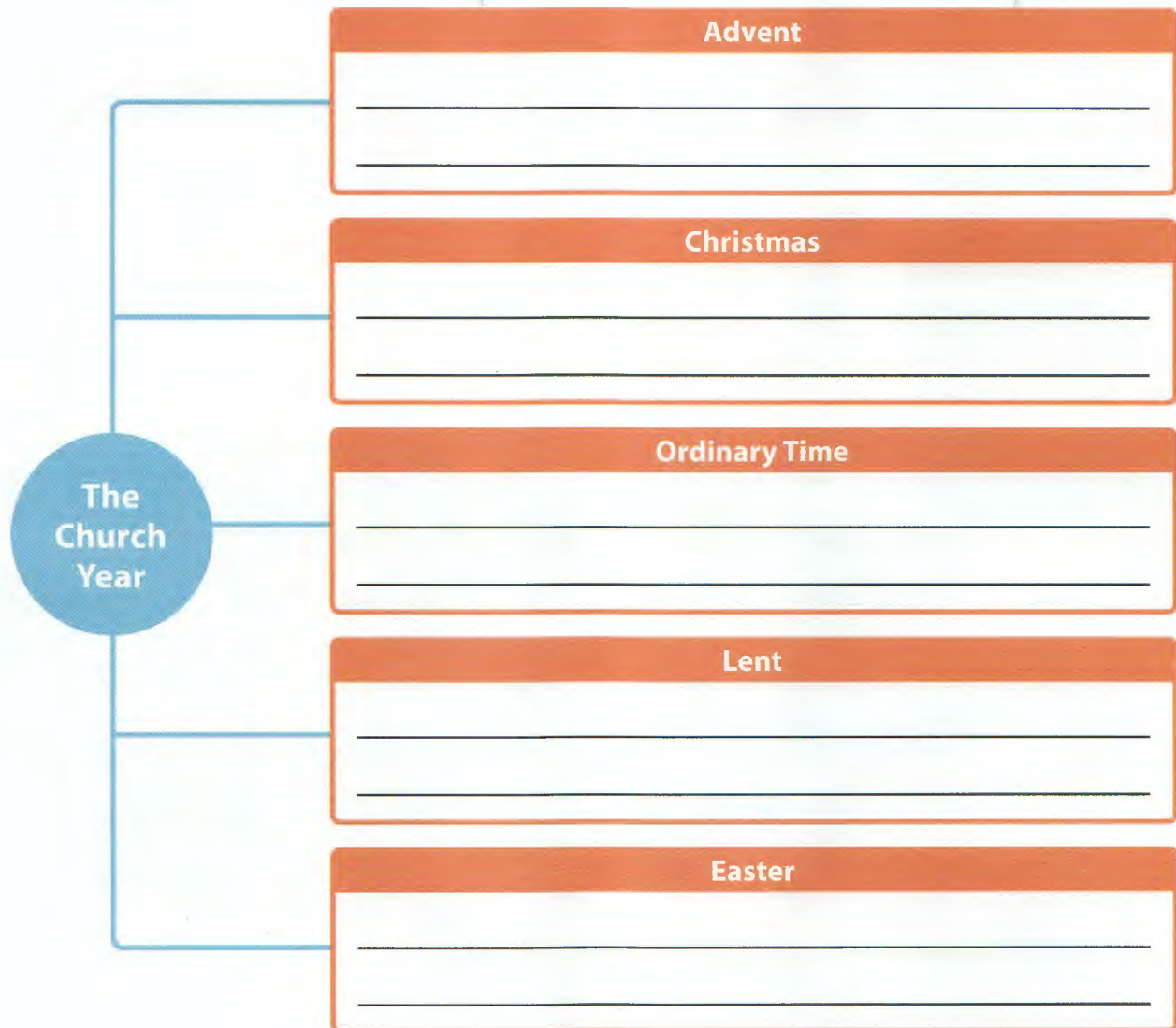
Getting Started

In this chapter, you will explore what the Church celebrates through the year and look at how the liturgical year changes, yet remains the same. You will also come to understand the importance of regular prayer and regular reception of the Eucharist.

Catholic Faith Words

- liturgical year
- consecration
- Saints
- Holy Days of Obligation
- Liturgy of the Hours

In the web, write about the different seasons of the Church year, briefly explaining each one.



IDENTIFY

Through the Years Think of some of the changes that have happened over the course of your life thus far—the predictable things, and the unpredictable. Use the questions below to help you reflect on the past and look forward to the future.

What new beginnings have you experienced?

What “works of God” (**The Wisdom of Ben Sira 39:16**) have you seen or experienced?

What changes are you looking forward to in the future?





An Easter Vigil procession with the Paschal Candle

The Church Year

What does the Church celebrate through the year?

So many things in our lives change with each new year. Did you ever look back at last year and realize how different you are today from how you were a year ago? Things you worried about then may look easy now that you've been through them. It's like winning the big basketball game or passing final exams. You get ready for them by practicing or studying, and when the time comes, you take what you've learned and use it to win a victory.

When you've finished what you started, you celebrate—you might hang your final exam on the fridge or save a team photo in your album. You want to hold on to something that helps you remember how it all happened.

Remembering and Celebrating

The Church does the same thing. We want to remember special events in the story of

Jesus' life and our own story. We celebrate the Paschal Mystery through a cycle of seasons and feasts called the **liturgical year**.

One reason we call it the liturgical year is because the Scripture readings, prayers, and songs of the liturgy reflect what season or feast we are in. In the cycle of 365 days, the Church remembers the whole life of Jesus from his Incarnation and Nativity to his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. We remember his continued presence with us through the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the expectation of his coming again at the end of time.

As Catholics, you might say that we have our own calendar. Instead of celebrating President's Day, Valentine's Day, or the first day of spring, we celebrate different events from the life of Christ: his birth, miracles, prayer, preaching, suffering, Death, and Resurrection. On Passion (Palm) Sunday we emphasize his Death; on Easter we celebrate in a special way his Resurrection; and on other Sundays we may listen to the stories of Jesus' miracles and teaching.

The Whole

Every day we celebrate everything that Jesus accomplished for us through his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Whether it's a holiday or the feast of a Saint, we celebrate the same thing in our liturgy: the Paschal Mystery. Every Sunday we celebrate the Risen Lord and what he has done for us.

The liturgical year begins in Advent, usually in late November or early December, moves to the Christmas season, then to the first, shorter part of Ordinary Time, on to Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter Season, then to the longer part of Ordinary Time that lasts many weeks. We end the year with the Feast of Christ the King.

Even though each season emphasizes one part of Jesus' life, ministry, or saving work, each also celebrates the whole of it.

In every season and feast, the Scripture we proclaim, prayers we pray, and songs we sing all come back to the great mystery we celebrate each and every Sunday of the year.

> **What is the religious significance of your favorite Church season or feast day?**



Catholic Faith Words

liturgical year the feasts and seasons of the Church calendar that celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ

DESCRIBE

Work with a classmate to describe what you already know about the Church's seasons in the two categories.

Season	Symbols/Colors	Parish and Family
Advent	_____	_____
Christmas	_____	_____
Ordinary Time	_____	_____
Lent	_____	_____
Triduum	_____	_____
Easter	_____	_____

A Time for Everything

How is the celebration of the liturgical year the same but different?

The liturgical year helps you pattern your life on Jesus' life. It helps you live the life of Christ a little more deeply year after year.

Every year your experiences, needs, and dreams change. So do your relationships with your family and friends. Your relationship with God changes, too. Some years you find yourself really relating to Christmas; another year, you find yourself really paying attention to Lent, or All Saints Day, or simply "going to Communion."

Past, Present, Future

So what you hear, feel, and think about during liturgical worship and family rituals may change, but you will continue to celebrate the same important seasons and feasts. We need that continuity in our lives. It's comforting to know that "There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens" (**Ecclesiastes 3:1**).

Catholic Faith Words

consecration the part of the Eucharistic Prayer in which the priest prays the words of Jesus over the bread and wine, and these elements become the Body and Blood of Christ

The Church celebrates these special times no matter what else is going on in our lives or in the world. While we are busy experiencing different things in our lives, she helps us join those experiences with the experience of Christ and the Church. The community of the Church and her customs keep us connected—to ourselves and to each other.

The Trinity in the Liturgy

The Holy Trinity is present and active in our worship, making our liturgy possible, bringing about the mysteries of faith we celebrate throughout the liturgical year.

Father

In creating the world, God the Father gave us all the gifts the Church uses in the Seven Sacraments: wheat, wine, oil, water, and



Go to the Source

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1–8. How many contrasting "seasons" are there in these verses? Can you think of any others? What does "under the heavens" mean to you?

more. More importantly, he gave us the gift of his Son, whose saving work is the source of all the grace flowing from the Seven Sacraments. In every liturgy, we bless and praise God the Father for these gifts. We acknowledge that he gave us the blessing of creation and the gift of salvation through his Son, Jesus. The Father has shared the Holy Spirit with us so that we might share in the new life his Son has made possible.

Son

Jesus is the origin of the Sacraments. He is also the principal priest in every Sacrament. Bishops, priests, and deacons serve as his ministers. When the Church baptizes, Christ baptizes. When the Church confers Holy Orders, Christ ordains the priests. In every liturgy, Christ and his mystery of salvation are present through the work of the Holy Spirit and his own Body, the Church, that is a sign of hope, a means of grace, and a way to meet God.

When we participate in the Sacraments, we participate in Jesus' offering of himself to his Father. He established the Eucharist at the Last Supper and offers it through the work of the priest who leads the celebration. Only ordained priests can preside at Mass and consecrate the bread and wine, changing



them into Christ's Body and Blood. The **consecration** takes place during the part of the Eucharistic Prayer in which the priest prays the words of Jesus over the bread and wine, and these elements become the Body and Blood of Christ.

Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit prepares the assembly to meet Christ at Mass. His mission in the liturgy is to show us Christ, making him and his mystery of salvation present, and to work in the Church so that the gifts of Holy Communion can bear fruit.

RECALL

Do you know by heart the words of consecration? Write here one phrase from the prayer and explain what it means to you.

To Live the Life of Christ

Why is participation in the Eucharist and regular prayer important?

We are always becoming what the Church already tells us we are: children of God, witnesses of our faith, forgiven people. The Mass makes this possible. We know it's a memorial of all God has done for us: Christ's Passover, his work of salvation finished through his Death on the Cross and Resurrection, and made present in the liturgy.

The Eucharist is at the very center of the liturgical year and all of the Church's life. Everything we do leads to and flows from the celebration of the Mass. In it Christ connects all of us to the sacrifice he made on the Cross and gives us new life.

The liturgical year commemorates the saving work of Christ. This is more than remembering Jesus' deeds recorded in the Gospels. It means we feel, act, think, and love in such a way that others can see what



We celebrate the feast of Saint Teresa of Calcutta on September 5

Catholic Faith Words

Saints those whom the Church declares led holy lives and are enjoying eternal life with God in Heaven

Holy Days of Obligation all Sundays, as well as designated holy days that Catholics are required to participate in the Mass

Liturgy of the Hours the Church's public prayer offered at set times during the day and night to mark each day as holy

Christ's actions and character are like when they observe our actions. That is the whole point of our memorial: to be transformed by remembering what Christ is like, to become like him.

Throughout the Church year we celebrate the lives of the **Saints**, who help us model Christ: Mary the Mother of God, the Apostles, the martyrs. Their feast days show that the Church on Earth is joined to the liturgy of Heaven. Our deceased relatives and friends can also help us see the connection between Heaven and Earth.

An Invitation to Regular Prayer

Exercise programs and healthful diets have something in common: They are regular patterns or routines that are good for your physical health. The Church, too, has her regimen of regular prayer that helps keep Catholics in good spiritual health. Participation in the Sunday Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the feasts of the Church year can help us grow spiritually and be strengthened to live as Christ did.

Catholics are required to participate in the Mass on all Sundays and on **Holy Days of Obligation** such as Christmas and All Saints Day. For a list of all six days, see page 372



in the Our Catholic Tradition section of your book.

Daily prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours are two more ways we can enter into a conversation with God and open our minds and hearts to him.

The **Liturgy of the Hours** is the Church's public prayer to mark each day as holy. This prayer is offered at set times during the day and night. In some monasteries and convents, monks and nuns gather throughout the day to praise God in the Liturgy of the Hours for his gifts and to mark the holiness of the day. Although women and men religious pray these

prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours is also the prayer of the whole People of God. All are encouraged to pray the principal hours, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer. Some parishes gather together to do so. Some use a special book called the Office containing the prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours.

However, any prayers of praise, thanks, and petition are great daily or weekly prayer routines. Your own personal daily prayers keep you in touch with God. You may have some favorite prayers like the Our Father and Hail Mary. Perhaps you simply sit in quiet or talk to God in your own words. What matters is the time spent with God.

IN SUMMARY Catholics Believe

We grow in our understanding of Jesus and in our relationship with him as we celebrate the different seasons of the liturgical year, which helps us pattern our lives on the life of Christ.

- The seasons and feasts of the liturgical year emphasize different aspects of the Paschal Mystery, connecting us more closely to Jesus' Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
- Because we are different each year, we enter into the Church's seasons and feasts with different needs, hopes, and relationships with God and others.
- The Eucharist is at the heart of what it means to be Catholic. Participation in Sunday Mass and our own regular personal prayer help us live the life of Christ.

Our Catholic Life

In this chapter you learned about the **Liturgy of the Hours**, the Church's public prayer that marks each day as holy with prayers, readings, hymns, and psalms. The Liturgy of the Hours also reflects the seasons and times of year, connects them to the Church as a whole, and reminds Catholics of their connection to the Paschal Mystery. Along with the readings from Psalms, other parts of Scripture are proclaimed, with commentaries on the readings by Fathers of the Church such as Saint Augustine. There are Catholics praying as part of the Liturgy of the Hours every day all around the world, constantly praising God and giving him thanks for all his gifts.



➤ How can you make prayer an essential part of your life every day?

People of Faith

Blessed Maria del Transito de Jesus Sacramentado, 1821–1885

Maria's family was wealthy, but her father had a deep Christian faith. One of her brothers became a priest, and three sisters became nuns. When her mother died, Maria entered a Franciscan Order, then a Carmelite monastery. Illness forced her to leave that convent and another soon afterward. During this time of sickness and loss, Maria turned to God. With encouragement and help from friends, Maria started the Congregation of the Franciscan Tertiary Missionaries of Argentina to help the poor and orphans. The Church celebrates her feast day on **August 25**.



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REFLECT

Reflect on and answer the following questions.

What joys have you had in life so far?

What losses or failures have you gone through?

What part of your faith do you need to develop in order to keep making your way through the Paschal Mystery of your life?



Prayer of Blessing

Leader: God, your Church is the Body of Christ. The Church, established by Jesus, lives on with his life and his mission here on Earth. We pray now for our Church, which is our family of faith.

Side 1: God please bless . . . our journey as young Catholics.

Side 2: God please bless . . . the faith journey of everyone in our families.

Side 1: God please bless . . . all the parishioners of our parish.

Side 2: God please bless . . . the pastor and parish staff of our parish.

Side 1: God please bless . . . all who serve in parish ministries.

Side 2: God please bless . . . the bishops and clergy of our diocese.

Side 1: God please bless . . . all bishops and cardinals of our country.

Side 2: God please bless . . . all schools and programs that help us learn about our Catholic faith.

Side 1: God please bless . . . all Catholic ministries and missions serving those in need.

Side 2: God please bless . . . all religious sisters and brothers.

Side 1: God please bless . . . our Catholic brothers and sisters around the world.

Side 2: God please bless . . . the Pope and all who serve the worldwide Church.

Reader 1: Now let's pray together this Prayer for the Church written by Saint John Chrysostom, an early Church Father and Doctor of the Church from the fourth Christian century.

Reader 2: Remember, Lord, the city in which we dwell, and every city and region, and the faithful that inhabit it.

Remember, Lord, those that voyage, and travel, that are sick, that are laboring, that are in prison, and their safety.

Remember, Lord, those that bear fruit, and do good deeds in your holy churches, and that remember the poor.

And send forth on us all the riches of your compassion, and grant us with one mouth and one heart to glorify and celebrate your glorious and majestic name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to ages of ages.

And the mercies of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ shall be with all of us.

All: Amen.

 *Sing or play "Christ, Be Our Light"*

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

A Work with Words Complete each sentence with the correct term from the Word Bank.

Son	Hail Mary
liturgical year	Trinity
Liturgy of the Hours	Father
Advent	Christmas

1. We celebrate the Paschal Mystery through a cycle of seasons and feasts called the _____.
2. The liturgical year begins with the season of _____.
3. The _____ is present and active in the liturgy of the Church, bringing about the mysteries of faith we celebrate.
4. In each and every liturgy, we bless and praise God the _____ for the blessing of creation and most importantly the gift of salvation.
5. The _____ is the Church's public prayer throughout the day to mark each day as holy.

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

6. In the cycle of 365 days, the Church remembers the earthly life of Jesus from his Incarnation and birth to his Death. **True/False**

7. Jesus is the origin of the Seven Sacraments and the principal priest who celebrates them. **True/False**

8. The Holy Spirit's mission in the liturgy is to show Christ to us, making him and his mystery of salvation present by his power. **True/False**

9. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the sacrifice that Christ made on the Cross is renewed and gives all of his Church new life. **True/False**

10. Christmas and All Saints Day are the only Holy Days of Obligation. **True/False**

C Make Connections On a separate sheet of paper, write a one-paragraph response to the question: What part of the liturgical year is most meaningful to you now and why? How has your experience of that season or celebration changed over time?