

Unit 7:

What is Church?

Getting Started

- Assign the students to read Unit 7, “The Church Is a Communion of Saints” (pages 256–289). Then ask them to read the following article.

The Story

Teen Saints in Times Past: Gift and Lessons by Timothy J. Cronin

Because you are baptized, you are claimed by Jesus Christ. You are a vital part of the Church on earth. You have gifts and abilities from God for the good of others. Your unique contributions continue a tradition in the Church throughout its journey.

Read the rest of the article at <http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/YU/ay0901.asp>

Discussion

- Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:
 1. Of the saints mentioned in this article, who is your favorite and why?
 2. According to the author, what is the key to becoming a teenage saint? (“*You don’t have to have it all together to serve Christ and his Church. You just have to be willing to put Jesus first.*”)
 3. What are some of the different ways that these saints put Jesus first? (*Mary said yes to giving birth to Jesus; Mark traveled widely to proclaim the Gospel, and possibly wrote the first Gospel; Lucy, Agatha, and Agnes died rather than betray their faith; Joan defied authority in order to follow God’s will; Stanislaus Kostka left behind wealth and status in order to serve God; Aloysius Gonzaga sacrificed his own life in order to minister to the sick; Kateri Tekakwitha chose Christ over her family and her people, and refused to return hate for hate; Thérèse of Lisieux performed her duties with extraordinary dedication and wrote a spiritual bestseller; and Maria Goretti forgave the man who killed her.*)
 4. What do you think a teenage saint might look like today?

Being Church

Writing a saintly obituary

- For this activity you will need writing instruments and paper for each student and, optionally, appropriate music to play while the students are writing their obituaries.
- Say to the students, “I have bad news and good news about this activity. The bad news is that you have just died. The good news is that your friends, family, and community members consider you to have been a saint.” Tell the students that they will have some quiet time to consider what kind of saint they might become, and to write a one-page obituary about themselves that describes their saintliness. Advise them that later in the session you will read their obituaries in front of the other students; however, they may choose to not share their obituaries with the other students by writing “private” at the top of their paper. Encourage the students to remember the diversity of the saints they have read about either in the student text, the Youth Update article, or elsewhere.
- Play the meditative music while the students work on composing their obituaries. When they are finished, collect their papers.
- Read the obituaries of those students who have chosen to share theirs. Consider reading the obituaries anonymously and having the students guess the author of each obituary.
- Close the session with a discussion of the obituaries, using the following questions as discussion-starters: What is attractive to you about being a saint? What is unattractive or scary? When you were writing your obituary, did you aim high or did you try to be realistic based on your limitations? Is it possible for you to become a saint on your own? What kind of help do you think you might need? Is “being good” socially acceptable?

Additional Activities

- Use the Journal questions on pages 262, 264, 266, 271, 282, 284, and 287 of the student text as discussion starters at the beginning of the session.

- Have the students rate themselves on their practice of the virtue of love as described in the activity on page 266 of the student text.
- Offer the students the opportunity to pray for the dead as described in the activity on page 263 of the student text.
- Pray the Scriptural rosary with the students as described in the activity on page 287 of the student text.
- Create the mural described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 269 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Conduct the prayer service for the dead described on page 270 of the TWE, or the Marian prayer service described on page 288.
- Have the students reflect on the liturgy for the Assumption of Mary as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 279 of the TWE.
- Have the students create a Marian collage as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 290 of the TWE.
- Have the students review the Mass for Christian Funerals as described in the Enrichment activity on page 293 of the TWE.

Additional Resources

- For Internet links related to this unit, see pages 272 and 289 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- Videos related to this unit include *What Catholics Believe About Mary and the Saints* (Ligouri Publications, 1991, 30 minutes); *Mary of Nazareth: From Icon to Woman* (Family Theater, 2000, 45 minutes); *Our Lady: Mary Immaculate* (Don Bosco Multimedia, 1988, 18 minutes); *Saint Therese of the Child Jesus* (Ignatius Press, 1997, 90 minutes); *Saint Francis: Troubadour of God’s Peace* (Saint Luke Productions, 1987, 55 minutes); *Maximillian: Saint of Auschwitz* (Saint Luke Productions, 1995, 76 minutes); *Edith Stein* (Eternal Word Television Network, 1996, 90 minutes); *Vatican II: Mary* (Hallel Institute, 1988, 29 minutes); *Passion of the Saints: Blood of the Martyrs* (Oblate Media, 1996, 50 minutes).