

Unit 4:

The Church Is Teacher

Getting Started

- Assign the students to read Unit 6, “The Church Is Teacher” (pages 124–173). Then ask them to read the following article.

The Story

At the 2002 World Youth Day in Toronto, Pope John Paul II addressed several hundred thousand young people in order to call them to a special mission.

17th World Youth Day Address by the Holy Father John Paul II

Toronto, Downsview Park, Saturday July 27, 2002

Dear Young People,

When, back in 1985, I wanted to start the World Youth Days, I was thinking of the words of the Apostle John that we have listened to this evening: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life... we proclaim also to you” (1 Jn 1:1.3). And I imagined the World Youth Days as a powerful moment in which the young people of the world could meet Christ, who is eternally young, and could learn from him how to be bearers of the Gospel to other young people.

Read the rest of the pope’s address at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020727_wyd-vigil-address_en.html

Discussion

- Lead the students in a discussion of the following questions:
 1. At the beginning of his address, the pope says he imagined the World Youth Days as an opportunity for the young people of the world to see, hear, and touch Christ. What do you think the pope meant? What are some ways that people can see, hear, and touch Christ today? (*Through the witness of other Christians, for example, and through the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word of God.*)
 2. What question does the pope say confronts young people at the start of the new millennium? (*“On what foundations, on what certainties should we build our lives and the life of the community to which we belong?”*) How do Christians answer that question? (*“Christ alone is the cornerstone on which it is possible solidly to build one’s existence.”*)
 3. What does the pope call young people to do? (*“To be bearers of the Gospel to other young people,” to work with God “in the building of the civilization of love,” “let the light of Christ shine in your lives,” and to “Communicate to everyone the beauty of the contact with God that gives meaning to your lives. In the quest for justice, in the promotion of peace, in your commitment to brotherhood and solidarity, let no one surpass you!”*)
 4. How can young people become the “light of the world”? (*“If your friendship with Christ, your knowledge of his mystery, your giving of yourselves to him, are genuine and deep, you will be. . . ‘the light of the world.’”*)
 5. What are some ways that young people can become the “light of the world” and “bearers of the Gospel to other young people”?

Being Church

Teens as the light of the world

- For this activity, each student will need a copy of the student text. Each small group will need a writing instrument and paper to record its ideas.
- Divide the students into small groups of about five people each.
- Say to the students: “In his address at the World Youth Day in Toronto, the pope asked the world’s young Catholics to be the light of the world: to bear the Gospel to other young people, to communicate to everyone God’s meaning in your lives, to quest for justice, to promote peace, to be committed to solidarity, or friendship, with all. In this activity, you will have the chance to plan how young people might respond to this call in our community.”
- Explain to the students that before they begin developing their own ideas, they should review Unit 4, “The

Church Is Teacher” (pages 124–173) for examples of evangelization that they might want to imitate, and examples of evangelization they would want to avoid. Each group should produce at least two examples of each kind, recording them on a sheet of paper. Explain that evangelization is any action that proclaims the Good News in a way that people’s hearts and lives are changed for the better; evangelization can be accomplished in many different ways beyond a direct proclamation of the Gospel. Allow the students about 10 to 15 minutes to complete this task.

- When the students are finished reviewing historical examples of evangelization, remind them of the Florida parish that established an evangelization committee to help the parish better witness to the Good News in its community (pages 152–153 of the student text). Invite them to imagine that each small group is an evangelization committee for the parish. Each group is to develop strategies for evangelizing the community. As they develop their strategies, the students should bear in mind historic examples of evangelization, as well as the various aspects of evangelization mentioned by the pope in his address: bearing the Gospel to others, questing for justice, promoting peace, and standing in solidarity with others. Explain that each group will present its strategies to the rest of the students, and will be asked to explain how its strategies relate to historic examples of evangelization and the pope’s address.
- When the students are finished brainstorming evangelization strategies, ask each group to present its strategies.
- As the students make their presentations, press them to describe in concrete terms how their strategies would be carried out by providing examples of how each strategy might play out. Discuss their suggestions using the following questions: What did they learn from the historic examples of evangelization about the best ways to proclaim the good news? Why do they think their strategies would be effective? How do they feel about being evangelists? Are there any barriers to them becoming good evangelists, such as embarrassment or uncertainty about their own faith? What is the difference between good and bad evangelization?
- If the students’ strategies are particularly good, extend this activity by asking them to try out some of the strategies and report their experiences to the group at the next session.

Additional Activities

- Use the Journal questions (pages 130, 131, 135, 140, 142, 145, 147, 153, 156, 158, 162, 164, 168, 170) as discussion questions at the beginning of the session.
- Have students work individually or in small groups on the “Praying the Psalms” activity on page 162 of the student text.
- Lead the students in the prayer service for peace on page 138 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition, or the Liturgy of the Hours on page 162 of the TWE.
- Invite a Catholic doctor or scientist to speak about scientific and religious truth as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 144 of the TWE.
- Invite a Catholic monk or nun to speak on monastic life, as described in the “Extending the Lesson” activity on page 173 of the TWE.
- Show *The Mission* (see video suggestions below) and discuss the movie using the “Extending the Lesson” questions on page 180 of the TWE.
- Have the students develop the evangelization action play as described on page 184 of the TWE.

Additional Resources

- For additional books related to this unit, see page 137 of the Teacher’s Wraparound Edition.
- For Internet links related to this unit, see pages 140 and 163 of the TWE.
- Videos related to this unit include *Because We Are Disciples* (USCCB, 1993, 12 minutes); *Church History: Early Childhood* (313-750); *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (Paramount Pictures, 1973, 120 minutes); *The Mission* (Warner Home Video, 1986, 125 minutes).