

Lesson 5: Mission as Disciples of Jesus Christ

Curriculum Goals:

- Accepting the call to live out our faith. St. Paul tells us that faith without works is dead. Using Jesus as our model, we are called to help those in need both locally and globally. Providing the theory of social justice as well as opportunities for service will help the candidate find ways to contribute to the world.
- Acknowledging that the Church offers a way of life that is consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholics understand the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes as God's revealed norms and guides for Christian living. The Church has developed a body of moral teachings, especially concerning sexuality, medical ethics, and justice, which help form the candidate's conscience in living an upright life. Specific issues, including the virtue of chastity, need to be taught. Life needs to be respected from conception until natural death. Sin needs to be taught as alienation from God. Forgiveness of sin comes mainly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Understanding the importance of social justice.

Lesson Plan Overview:

1. Intro and Prayer (3 mins)
2. Reflection Activity I: Can you Walk the Walk? (10-15 mins)
3. Confirmation Series Episode 5: The Mission of Jesus' Disciples (10 mins)
4. Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet Activity: Jesus' Disciples Crossword (10-20mins)
5. Teacher Presentation II: The Church---Jesus' Disciples Walking & Working With Others (10 mins)
6. Closing Activity: Standing Up for What We Believe and Choosing a Confirmation Saint Name (10-15 mins)
7. Closing Prayer: (2 mins)

1) Introduction and Prayer

2) Reflection Activity I: Can you Walk the Walk?

Develop an activity in which students are asked on what are the basic responsibilities of being involved in a sport or club. Examples of possible activities include:

-Imaginary Fan Club: Put the students into groups of 3-4 and ask them to come up with the basic rules of a fan club for a celebrity or music group. Each group needs to come up with at least 5 rules that demonstrate the members would be a true fan. Give each group time to share.

-Teacher Led Reflection: Ask students think about one of the most challenging or elite groups that they have joined, like a sports team or an honor's society. Next, ask them to write down all of the responsibilities and duties that members had to fulfill. Then, ask them to think about what might be the reasons that a person would not live up to those responsibilities. Ask them

which of these reasons are legitimate and which of these are not. Ex: Missing practice because of the flu=legit. Skipping practice to play video games=not legit. Give each student time to share.

The point of this activity is to help students see that the Precepts of the Church function as the “basic responsibilities” of being a Christian.

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3) Episode 5 of the Confirmation Video Series: The Mission of Jesus’ Disciples *(These are the Key Points from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that are covered in the video. They are provided here in their entirety as a reference to aid your interaction with students while reviewing the Discussion Questions after viewing the video.)*

- CCC 849 The missionary mandate. "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men"; "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 Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age."
- CCC 850 The origin and purpose of mission. the Lord's missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: "The Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit." The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love."
- CCC 851 Missionary motivation. It is from God's love for all men that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism, "for the love of Christ urges us on." Indeed, God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"; that is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the prompting of the Spirit of truth are already on the way of salvation. But the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the

truth. Because she believes in God's universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary.

- CCC 852 Missionary paths. the Holy Spirit is the protagonist, "the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission." It is he who leads the Church on her missionary paths. "This mission continues and, in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelize the poor; so the Church, urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death, a death from which he emerged victorious by his resurrection." So it is that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."
- CCC 853 On her pilgrimage, the Church has also experienced the "discrepancy existing between the message she proclaims and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted." Only by taking the "way of penance and renewal," the "narrow way of the cross," can the People of God extend Christ's reign. For "just as Christ carried out the work of redemption in poverty and oppression, so the Church is called to follow the same path if she is to communicate the fruits of salvation to men."
- CCC 854 By her very mission, "the Church . . . travels the same journey as all humanity and shares the same earthly lot with the world: she is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God." Missionary endeavor requires patience. It begins with the proclamation of the Gospel to peoples and groups who do not yet believe in Christ, continues with the establishment of Christian communities that are "a sign of God's presence in the world," and leads to the foundation of local churches. It must involve a process of inculturation if the Gospel is to take flesh in each people's culture. There will be times of defeat. "With regard to individuals, groups, and peoples it is only by degrees that [the Church] touches and penetrates them and so receives them into a fullness which is Catholic."
- CCC 2013 "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity." All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that . . . doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.
- CCC 2028 "All Christians . . . are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity" (LG 40 # 2). "Christian perfection has but one limit, that of having none" (St. Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Mos.*: PG 44, 300D).
- CCC 2029 "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).
- CCC 2041 The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. the obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the indispensable

minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

- CCC 2042 The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.") requires the faithful to participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.

The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year.") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

The third precept ("You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.") guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.

- CCC 2043 The fourth precept ("You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation.") completes the Sunday observance by participation in the principal liturgical feasts which honor the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints.

The fifth precept ("You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.") ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts; they help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.

The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities.

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4) Discussion Questions and/or Worksheet Activity: Confirmation Crossword

Lead the group in the discussion questions from the video and/or distribute the worksheets for Confirmation Series Episode 5 and have the students complete them. Feel free to help the students to remember the following key words from the video as they are the terms needed to fill in the crossword:

Adventure, Alaska, Chaplain, Climbing, Eternity, Eucharist, Fast, Mass, Mission, Peru, Poor, Precepts, Reconciliation, Walk

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5) Teacher Presentation: The Church-Jesus' People Walking & Working with Others, Key

Notes: *(Use these annotated paragraphs from the Catechism of the Catholic Church to prepare a brief presentation on the topic. Also, feel free to draw on appropriate personal experiences to give witness to your students about how being a Confirmed Catholic has led you to give witness to the teachings of Jesus and help others encounter Jesus.)*

- CCC 855 The Church's mission stimulates efforts towards Christian unity. Indeed, "divisions among Christians prevent the Church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her sons who, though joined to her by Baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects."
- CCC 856 The missionary task implies a respectful dialogue with those who do not yet accept the Gospel. Believers can profit from this dialogue by learning to appreciate better "those elements of truth and grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God." They proclaim the Good News to those who do not know it, in order to consolidate, complete, and raise up the truth and the goodness that God has distributed among men and nations, and to purify them from error and evil "for the glory of God, the confusion of the demon, and the happiness of man."
- CCC 2044 The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church's mission in the world. In order that the message of salvation can show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. "The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw men to the faith and to God."
- CCC 2045 Because they are members of the Body whose Head is Christ, Christians contribute to building up the Church by the constancy of their convictions and their moral lives. the Church increases, grows, and develops through the holiness of her faithful, until "we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

- CCC 2046 By living with the mind of Christ, Christians hasten the coming of the Reign of God, "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace." They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience, and love.
- CCC 863 The whole Church is apostolic, in that she remains, through the successors of St. Peter and the other apostles, in communion of faith and life with her origin: and in that she is "sent out" into the whole world. All members of the Church share in this mission, though in various ways. "The Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well." Indeed, we call an apostolate "every activity of the Mystical Body" that aims "to spread the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth."

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6) Closing Reflection Activity: Standing up for What we Believe Choosing a Confirmation Saint Name

Develop a reflection activity in which students are asked to recall one time when someone stood up for something that Christians believe and how it was inspiring to others. It could be someone of historical importance, a Saint or even a friend or family member. Examples of possible activities include:

*-Simple Research Project: Students should be given access to research materials to facilitate exploration Christians and Catholics who have spread the message of the Gospel in the face of dramatic cultural opposition. If the students have access to the internet, they can be guided to appropriate websites to help direct them in this regard. **NOTE: please preview any online resources before allowing the students to use them to make certain that the resources are appropriate and of adequate quality.***

-Choosing a Confirmation Saint Name: If many students have not yet chosen a Confirmation Saint, adapt the above project to help them search for such a Saint. Perhaps look up a "Patron Saint" guide from online or in print to give them a starting point. It should be emphasized to the students that confirmation saints are not just inspiring figures but people who can become our special intercessors in heaven. Students can benefit from teacher guidance in this regard. Tell them to NOT make a final decision during class time but instead to choose 3-4 possible candidates to think and pray with over the next few weeks.

The point of this activity is to prompt the students to recognize that Christians are always called to live out the teachings of Jesus publicly to spread the Gospel.

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7) Closing Prayer

Additional Lesson Suggestions:

- As a reminder, students should have completed, or perhaps just began their discipleship plans. Some parishes will implement discipleship plans at the beginning of the year. Otherwise, the discipleship plans for students should be introduced during this lesson, in the hopes of completing it as soon as possible in preparation for Confirmation and their faith walk thereafter.
- It would be appropriate in this session for the catechist, or another suitable parishioner, to give a witness to how they live a life of discipleship. Or even better, how they may have lived a life of discipleship when they were the same age as candidates for Confirmation. Any witness given should be age-appropriate and applicable to the lives of these candidates.