

Unit 1:

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
to the Feast of Christ the King
October 3, 2010—November 21, 2010
Vol. 23, Nos. 1-8

Practicing Prayer, Working for Justice

By centering each issue on the Sunday gospel, *SPIRIT* emphasizes the revelation of Jesus Christ in scripture, the core building block for high school curriculum in the U.S. Catholic Conference guidelines (2008). During this year the Church is reading semi-continuously from Luke’s gospel, Cycle C.

In every *SPIRIT* issue teens practice reflecting on the gospels, in which Jesus speaks to us still. In its first issue *SPIRIT* explores the meaning of faith as both relationship with God and as the doctrinal creeds we profess.

SPIRIT takes advantage of Luke’s emphasis on Jesus as a man of prayer to explore prayer in the life of believers, a second building block of high school curriculum. In its first four issues *SPIRIT* presents the traditional purposes of prayer—blessing, praise, thanks,

petition, intercession as well as a variety of ways to practice prayer—doing contemplative or centering prayer, walking the labyrinth, journaling, finding solitude, doing Eucharistic adoration, running or walking, mindful choring, naming moments of grace.

To be a follower of Jesus is to practice prayer, responding to God’s love for us in creation, in Jesus, in being alive. *SPIRIT* provides prayer for beginning and ending every session and invites teens to become persons of prayer.

In Luke’s gospel Jesus holds up outsiders as models. A Samaritan leper gives us an example of a thankful person. A widow seeking her rights in court is an example of persistence in prayer. One tax collector embodies an example of a right attitude in prayer; another tax

collector (Zacchaeus) models conversion from cheating to caring about the poor and the common good.

In the gospel for Christ the King, a thief gives us an example of asking forgiveness. For Luke Jesus’ signature act on the cross is forgiving the thief. Jesus reveals God’s power in his actions of healing, befriending, and forgiving.

Jesus challenges us in these gospels to reach out to others beyond our comfort zones as *SPIRIT* stories suggest—to find models of team spirit on the bench, to find a model supporter in a teacher challenged by cerebral palsy, to follow a friend beyond racial boundaries.

Sundays/Seasons

Gospel/Theme

Teens’ Lives

Catholic Faith, Practice

Sundays/Seasons	Gospel/Theme	Teens’ Lives	Catholic Faith, Practice
October 3, 2010 27th in Ordinary Time	Luke 17.5-10 What is faith?	Testimonies of faith	Prayer: Creeds
October 10, 2010 28th in Ordinary Time	Luke 17.11-19 Ten Lepers	Bringing outsiders in	Prayer: Thanks, petition, intercession
October 17, 2010 29th in Ordinary Time	Luke 18.1-8 A widow persists	Protesting violence	Prayer: Eight ways to seek God
October 24, 2010 30th in Ordinary Time	Luke 18.9-14, Who prays?	Attitudes	Prayer: Labyrinth, Contemplation
October 31, 2010 31st in Ordinary Time	Luke 19.1-10 Zacchaeus	Racism and privilege	Promoting the Common Good
November 7, 2010 32nd in Ordinary Time	Luke 20.27-38 God lives	Grieving	Bible: Two testaments
November 14, 2010 33rd in Ordinary Time	Luke 21.5-19 End Times	Where is God in an accident?	Bible: Apocalyptic writing, genres
November 21, 2010 Christ the King	Luke 23.35-43 Good Thief	Forgiveness	Sacraments: Reconciliation

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October 3, 2010, Vol. 23, No. 1
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time,
*Sunday Readings: Habakkuk 1.2-3; 2.2-4;
 2 Timothy 1.6-8, 13-14; Luke 17.5-10*

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

In Sunday's gospel Jesus' disciples ask him to increase their faith. Catholic doctrine distinguishes between two kinds of faith—the faith *by which* we believe and the faith *which* we believe. Faith is first a relationship, the way we lean into reality, set our hearts, trust or distrust all that is, trust God is and loves us. This is the faith *by which* we believe, our response to the love God reveals in creation, in Israel's history, in Jesus.

The gospels, doctrines of the Church, and the beliefs of our Creeds form the content of faith—that *which* we believe. *SPIRIT* develops both concepts in this issue and helps young people trust their personal faith and expand their understanding of doctrine to keep pace with their developing intellects.

A little faith can uproot a tree and plant it in the sea, Jesus says in the gospel, his exaggeration gently making fun of faith that wants to work wonders and show off its power. In Jesus God comes among us humbly as one of us.

The second parable in Sunday's gospel insists service is the ordinary duty of Christians. Jesus doesn't call his disciples to work wonders or gain status but to give their lives in love for others as he does.

Facilitating Groups Insist on two rules with teens:

- Share in a circle, so everyone can see each other.
- Only one person speaks at a time.

Insist on one rule for yourself: Listen rather than lecture. Let teens teach each other. Step in only when they stall, can't get going, or when you disagree. See *Faith Sharing with Teens: A How-to Guide for Teen Group Leaders*, 800-232-5533 or goodgroundpress.com.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

Objective: The young people will get to know one another.

Music Icebreaker: See *SPIRIT XTRA* for a song that fits the gospel theme and questions for group reflection.

PRAY

Pray (cover) Invite your young people to pray together the prayer at top left.

Icebreaker: M&Ms Fill a bowl with M&Ms. Invite group members to take some; then break it to them that they have to tell one thing about themselves for each M&M they have.

- Or, set the bowl in the center of the circle and tell teens they can take one for every life fact or personal preference they tell about themselves

Objective: Young people will recognize their God moments.

READ

Story: "Natural High" (cover) To introduce the topic of faith, invite your young people into question 1 on page 3: When and how have you experienced being part of something bigger than yourself? Give them a couple of minutes to close their eyes and think or doodle. Tell them they will share their responses after reading the story.

- Have volunteers read "Natural High" aloud. Ask them when they have experienced going beyond themselves and how this hints of God's presence.

- Invite your teens to respond to question 1 in pairs. *Openended.* Young people may equate faith with the truths they believe and be unable to identify an experience of God's presence. Share one of your own.

- Discuss question 2 as a group. *2. Playing or hearing music can carry us outside and beyond ourselves where we encounter the mystery of the holy both within and between others and ourselves. The Holy Spirit coexists with our spirit.*

Article: "Keeping Faith" (pages 2-3) Read aloud the quotation on page 2, bottom, which describes two kinds of faith—faith as relationship and faith as doctrine or beliefs. Have your teens take turns reading the feature, changing readers with each initial capital letter. Ask what they learn about faith in this article.

- Discuss question 3. *Openended.* A death or illness places us before *Mystery*, where we must ask and reflect on who God is.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Objective: The young people will explore the power of faith in Jesus and our duty to serve.

GOSPEL **Gospel: What is faith? (page 2)** Have five young people take parts and proclaim the gospel aloud. Discuss questions 4-5. *4. Like a seed, faith has growth potential, a sustaining power planted within us that can grow and unfold as we grow and the whole human race evolves. Like a seed, faith is living, an active relationship. It is a verb, our believing and trusting God, creation, our purpose in this whole. 5. Jesus asks us to love and serve as he does. The work of justice is basic to following Jesus. He brings good news to the poor and frees the oppressed. We have an obligation as Christians to work that the hungry may eat, the poor get educated, and the excluded have access into our society.*

LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

Objective: The young people will explore and express their faith.

Our Catholic Faith: Faith has two meanings (page 3) Read the article aloud. Ask the teens to describe the two meanings of belief. *1. To give one's heart to, to trust, to be in deep and sustaining relationship with. 2. To accept something as true, to have an opinion about.* Ask the teens what believing means for a Christian. *1. To give one's heart to God, to trust and be in relationship with God. 2. To test and seek to understand the doctrines and traditions that Christians hold.*

Our Catholic Faith: What do you believe? (page 4) Tell the young people that they will now have a chance to create a creed of their own. Read aloud the two paragraphs at the top of the page. Have them read and circle the statements they most identify with. Have them choose their top ten or twenty statements and copy them out on a separate sheet of paper.

LIVE IT! *Live It!* Give the teens time to consider what actions may flow from their statements of belief, as item 1 suggests.

Concluding Prayer Use *Live It!* item 2. Repeat the cover prayer.