

FAMILY+FAITH

JESUS CHRIST



UNIT OVERVIEW

The Big Question: How does Jesus forgive our sin and call us to conversion through his Body, the Catholic Church?

Our Catholic Tradition

- As Church members, we look to Jesus as an example of friendship and respect for others. The first Christians demonstrated friendship in how they worshipped together, followed Jesus' example, and cared for each other. (CCC, 949)
- God offers forgiveness and eternal life to those who accept his grace by following his Son, Jesus, in faith. The Holy Spirit helps us recognize our past sinfulness and helps us overcome sin in the future. (CCC, 2009–2010)
- The Church is made up of Catholics united by a common creed, the Seven Sacraments, and the Pope's leadership. She is made up of people from different cultures who express their common faith in different ways. (CCC, 866, 868)

Our Catholic Life

- Jesus met many people in different circumstances. Even though his interaction with them varied, he welcomed them all, urged them to believe, and encouraged them to change their lives. (CCC, 543–545)
- We are justified by Jesus. We are forgiven and made whole again. We don't earn our own righteousness; it is God's free gift. (CCC, 2007–2009)
- A unity exists among all baptized Christians, and we pray and work toward the full unity that Christ desires for all his followers. (CCC, 855)

HOW YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS

Close friends are very important to eighth graders. They form strong bonds within their peer groups, and learn a great deal from one another. This experience will help them relate to the bonds Jesus had with his Apostles, as well as the feelings they must have felt when Jesus was tortured and crucified.

Eighth graders have a high sensitivity to hypocrisy in others. They don't like to see people believing or professing one thing, but doing another. However, they tend to do this quite a bit themselves. Emphasize the importance of living out that which we believe and coming back to Jesus in a spirit of repentance when we recognize that we have sinned.

Eighth graders have begun to learn that adults are not always right, and they frequently challenge authority, at least internally, if not out loud. It's important for them to understand that the authority of the Catholic Church comes from Jesus through the Apostles. Still, there may be times when they begin to question some Catholic teachings, especially if they have friends who believe differently. Meet their questions with openness and understanding. Reassure them that it is okay to have questions, and encourage them to keep walking with the Church and searching for the answers.

PEOPLE OF FAITH

Saints Prisca and Aquila
first century
July 8

When Saint Paul arrived in Corinth, he met Prisca and her husband Aquila, tentmakers by trade. Like Saint Paul, they too were Jewish, and had just arrived from Rome where the Emperor Claudius had recently expelled the Jewish community. After meeting Saint Paul, Prisca and Aquila chose to accompany him to Ephesus to help spread Jesus' message. Saints Aquila and Prisca ministered with Saint Paul and held church meetings in their home. They put God first, wanted their lives to be used in the service of the Lord, and understood the providential workings of God in their lives.



CONSIDER THIS

Is there anything positive about sin?

If sin is intentionally acting against God's will, there can't be anything good that comes from it. Yet, when we know that something is a sin, it presumes that we live in a consciousness that we are indeed in relationship with God. Sin implies relationship. That is one reason it is so dangerous to name things only as mistakes or bad choices. At the heart of sin is the rupture of a relationship. "Sin harms our relationship with God and damages our communion with the Church" (*USCCA*, p. 237). It is in our relationship with Jesus, and in his Church, that we know mercy and forgiveness. The more we know Christ, the more aware we become of the many ways we fail to respond to his invitation to love as he loves.

CONNECT

Help your child to see his or her choices in the larger context of their relationship with God. Our choices to ignore or resist God result in our separation from him. Talk with your child about the different choices he or she has made in the past, and how each choice has strengthened or weakened his or her relationship with God.

Remind your child that you were once the same age and give them examples of some of the hard choices that you had to make. Show them pictures of yourself at the same age. Talk through the consequences of the big and small choices you have made and describe how these choices have affected your relationship with God.

PRAY

Help me make decisions that reflect the love I have for you.