

# Lesson 11 – The Catholic Church

## Grades 6-8

### Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 11 in the Baltimore Catechism. You will need to have Bibles for this session. Also, have the activity sheet handy.

### Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” Matthew 16:18-19

Leader: Lord, we gather in your presence to study the great gift You gave us, the Catholic Church. Help us to understand the riches of this gift, the wonderful ministers of your Church, and our role in its mission. Amen.

Together: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Opening:

Jesus Christ founded the Catholic Church nearly 2,000 years ago, and entrusted His message to the Church. It is thanks to the Catholic Church that we today have received the authentic message that Jesus gave to the world. Today we are going to start class by passing a message along.

Play a game of telephone: You will whisper a message into the ear of the first student in the class. It should be a little complex, but not ridiculously long, something like: “For her fifth birthday, Susie was given a box of chocolates from her grandmother, but she shared it with her favorite aunt.” That student, in turn, tells the sentence quietly to the next student, and the message is passed around the room, one student at a time, until the last student says the message out loud, and you all compare it to the original message.

You will notice that the message will have changed tremendously; it may not even be recognizable to the original message. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus is entrusting His entire message to 11 men, to spread it to the whole world. And they couldn't use newspapers, telephones, the Internet. They just had to tell people, and teach, and maybe write letters. But we know, from looking at historical documents from the first and second centuries, that those Catholics believed and worshiped like we do.

Ask the students, "How did they do it? If we couldn't get a simple sentence across the classroom uncorrupted, how did they spread the entire Gospel across the world so that 2,000 years later, we are receiving the same truth?" The answer: They had a secret weapon – the Holy Spirit.

### **Watch the Lesson 11 Video on Catholic Brain**

**Comprehension Questions:** *Note: These questions are asked after the video, just to check student comprehension. They are not discussion questions, but be sure students understand the answers to these questions before moving on*

1) Who is the Holy Spirit?

*The Holy Spirit is God – the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He dwells in the Church.*

2) Who founded the Church?

*Jesus Christ*

3) What is Pentecost? (Read Acts 2:1-12)

*The Holy Spirit came to the Apostles on Pentecost and has remained with the Church ever since.*

4) How long will the Holy Spirit remain with the Church?

*Forever*

5) Who was the first pope?

*St. Peter*

**Discussion Questions:** *Note: These questions are for student discussion. The students should consider these questions and comment on them.*

*There are some key points included in this lesson, after each question, that you can use to help guide their discussion toward truth. It's important that the students think about and discuss these things, but that they don't leave the discussion with false impressions about what is true.*

1) Why are priests so important?

*By virtue of gifts they received from the Holy Spirit at their ordination, priests can do things the rest of us can't, such as consecrate the Eucharist and absolve from sins. Without priests, we would have no Eucharist and no sacramental forgiveness.*

2) How can lay Catholics participate in the life of the Church?

*Answers may vary. Students should have lots of specific ideas. Lay Catholics can materially support the work of the Church, and also bring Christ to the secular world.*

### **Go Deeper:**

Look up the following Scripture passages: Mark 13:11, Luke 1:41-45, Luke 2:25-26, John 14:26, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:38, 1Corinthians 6:19-20, 2Peter 1:20-21. You may split the students into partners or small groups and assign each team one or two passages, then discuss together at the end. Students should look for what each of these passages tells us about the Holy Spirit.

### **Activity:**

Four corners – Designate each of the four corners in your room as one of the following: lay people, priests, bishops, the pope. You may tape a piece of paper to the wall with those titles. Then read the statements on the attached paper. If the statement refers to lay people, students should walk to that corner of the room; if it refers to priests, they should walk to the “priest” corner, etc. You’ll want to remind students that bishops are priests, and whatever a priest can do, a bishop can also do. They should only go to the “bishop” corner if the statement refers particularly to the office of bishop. Likewise, the pope is a bishop, as well as a priest, and students should only go to the “pope” corner if the statement is particularly about the pope.

## **Closing Prayer:**

Leader: Thank You, Father, for extending the mission of Jesus through the Catholic Church. Thank You for calling us to be part of the mystical Body of Christ, and never let us stray from our home, your Church. Amen.

Together: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.