

# Lesson 12 – The Marks and Attributes of the Church

Grades 6-8

## Lesson Preparation:

Read Lesson 12 in the Baltimore Catechism. Print the Apostolic Succession worksheet for your students. You will also want to have a Bible on hand for this session.

## Opening Prayer:

Scripture: “Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” Luke 10:16

Leader: Lord, You continue to teach us through your Church, so that when we hear the voice of your Church, we hear your Voice. Help us to be obedient to You by being obedient to your Church. 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:

Let the students know that this session will be about the Marks of the Church. These are attributes by which we can identify the true Church Christ founded. Practice by deciding on marks of the building in which this session is held (the Church, school, or home, etc. where you are having class).

If a stranger was visiting and wanted to find the building in which your class is being held, how could you describe it? Maybe the color, style of the building, distinguishing plants, statues, etc. Make a list with your students. These might be the “marks” of your current location. By knowing the marks, anyone could identify your location.

The Catholic Church also has marks, by which anyone can recognize which is the Church Jesus Himself founded. The four marks are found in the Nicene Creed, which we recite at Mass. Christ’s Church is: one, holy, catholic, and

apostolic. After the video, you will make sure students know what each of the marks means.

## Watch the Lesson 12 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) What are the four marks of the Church, and what do they mean?
  - a. *One – The Church is one Church because it is united around the world and throughout the centuries, with the same beliefs, sacrifice (the Mass), and sacraments, under the authority of the pope*
  - b. *Holy – The Church is holy, not because every individual Catholic is personally holy, but because it was founded by Jesus, and because its teachings and sacraments give us what we need to become holy*
  - c. *Catholic – Catholic means “universal,” and the Church is catholic because it is for everyone, and for all time. There are no membership requirements based on race, ethnicity, I.Q., etc. If you are human, you are welcome.*
  - d. *Apostolic – The Church is apostolic because it has the same teaching and authority that Jesus gave to the Apostles, passed on to us by lawful succession directly from them.*
- 2) What is infallibility?

*When the Church officially teaches a doctrine about faith and morals, the Holy Spirit guarantees it will not contain error.*
- 3) What is the Mystical Body of Christ?

*The Church – members are united with each other and with Christ, the head, like members of a body. You may read 1Cor 12:12-26.*
- 4) What does “catholic” mean?

*Universal*

**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) What does the phrase, "Outside the Church there is no salvation" mean?

*Jesus Christ is the savior of all men, and His saving action continues throughout time through the Catholic Church. Everyone who is saved, is saved by Christ, through His Body, the Church.*

2) How can non-Catholics be saved?

*If they are acting in good faith, out of love of God and a desire to do His will, through that desire they are united to the Church and receive sanctifying grace.*

3) Why is it important to evangelize?

*God wants all people to know Him and His Church, and asks us to be instruments in that. The Church gives people the clearest knowledge of God, the fullness of truth, and all the gifts God has given for our salvation.*

### **Go Deeper:**

Students will gain a clearer understanding of Apostolic Succession. Jesus gave the Apostles the power to do some things that only God could do, such as change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and absolve sins in Confession. These powers must come from God, and Jesus gave them to the Apostles. Using the attached diagram, show that the power Jesus gave directly to the Apostles could only be passed on from them, to others. It could then only be passed on from men who had already received it. This is Apostolic Succession.

You may use the example of, and even bring in for demonstration, extension cords. Power will only flow through the cords if one is connected to the power source. Each of the cords needs to be connected in a direct chain that ends at the power source. If the chain is broken, the power can not be passed on.

Similarly, Jesus is the power source. Each of our priests is connected in an unbroken line to the Apostles, who are plugged in (received their charism from) Him. The Holy Spirit, acting in the sacrament of Holy Orders, allows the power to continue to be passed to each new generation, as long as the chain is intact. This is Apostolic Succession.

**Activity:**

Ask students to work together to create a song about the four marks of the Church. You may suggest a familiar tune, such as 'Happy Birthday,' 'Mary Had a Little Lamb,' or 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.' Their songs should identify the four marks of the Church. Bonus if they can also tell what they mean. They may need multiple verses for that.

**Closing Prayer:**

Leader: God, we thank You for the Church. We thank You for inviting all people to be members of your family, to be members of your mystical Body. May we express our gratitude by inviting others to receive the gift that we have received. 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.