

What are some of the ways that show I am part of the Church?

### ***Objectives***

By the end of this lesson, the students should be able to

- list ways they can use their God-given talents for the building up of the Church and the glory of God.
- identify their role in their own parish family.
- recognize their vocational choices as a response to God's call.

### ***For the Catechist***

Where does the fifth grader—or the average parishioner, for that matter—fit into the scheme of the Body of Christ? Every parishioner belongs to the Body and shares in this membership. First of all the Christian is a believer, one who trusts in the Lord and proclaims His goodness in praise and witness. At every stage in life, there are opportunities which demand the "Yes" of faith.

Secondly, every Christian uses the talents God has given for the building up of the Church and the glory of God. Scripture records how much the ministry of Tabitha was respected and loved in the early Church. Tabitha's role was to sew garments for the needy (Act 9:36-42). Every talent can be brought into the service of God, no matter how insignificant. Part of your task as catechist is to help each child recognize his or her talents and appreciate the Body's need for these gifts to "form that perfect man which is Christ come to full stature" (Eph 4:13).

The role of the young person in the Church is hard to define. Chiefly it is to grow, under the guidance of others, so that the child can take his or her place as an adult member of the community in time. Also the young Christian can help with various tasks around the church now; they do not have to wait until they get older. This lesson helps the children realize they are important today and in the future.

### ***Materials Needed***

**Opening and Closing Prayers:** Student books with prayer to the Holy Spirit, prayer page

**Review:** Action Plan from Lesson 10

**Introduction:** Tree with branches or picture of one

**The Message:** Apple (or any other fruit) or pictures of fruit, a wrapped present, note cards, pens and pencils, vocabulary note cards made throughout the unit

**Application:** Pens, pencils, markers

### ***Icons and Pictures***

*Come Bless the Lord:* Holy Trinity, Pantocrator

### ***Vocational Websites***

<http://www.angelfire.com/me2/byzantinelinks/easternvocations.html>

[www.hagiaeucharistia.com](http://www.hagiaeucharistia.com)

<http://www.byzcath.org/ssb/>

[www.basiliansfoxchase.org](http://www.basiliansfoxchase.org)

[www.vocations.com](http://www.vocations.com)

# Connections

## 1. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

*Materials:* Prayer page

Invite the class to stand by the icon and remain silent for a few seconds before making the sign of the cross.

- Pray the Lord's Prayer  
or
- Have them read the prayers they wrote to the Holy Spirit as part of last week's lesson

## 2. Review (5 minutes)

Have the students turn to the "Action Plan" page of their last lesson. Ask them complete the bottom portion. Ask for volunteers to read their story.

**Alternate:** Ask:

- *How can we make the Body of Christ strong?*  
(By being an active member of the
- *What happens to the Church when sin?* (We weaken it.)
- *How can we make it strong again?*  
(Mystery of Repentance)

## 3. Introduction (2 minutes)

*Materials:* Tree with branches or picture of one.

Show the students a branch from a tree or one in a picture. Ask the students to try to break off one of the smaller branches. Discuss how easy it is for some branches to break but not for others.

Connect the importance of the branch staying on the limb to the concept of the lesson—we need to stay connected to Jesus to be able to grow in God's love.

### Notes for the lesson:

(Use this space to write helpful hints to use each year)

# The Message

## 4. A Parable (4 minutes)

- a) Have the students read the first two paragraphs.
- b) Read the Scripture aloud. Complete the writing.

## 5.) Let us remember that... (2 minutes)

- a) Have the students read this paragraph. Ask: *Does anyone remember any other parables you have read?* Let them share.

### Supplementary Activity:

Have the students make the vocabulary note card for this word.

Have the students work in groups and have them show with their bodies the scriptural passage just read. If possible, take pictures of each representation (pose).

### Supplementary Activity:

(Activity 1 on the back of the unit page) Write the question for this lesson on the board or on a poster board: What are some ways that show I am part of Christ's Body? Write the following answers when you read them in the text:

1. I share my gifts and talents.
2. I chose a vocation that builds up the Church.
3. I help in the church whatever way I can.

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## I Am Part of This Body

What are some ways that show I am part of Christ's body?



**A Parable**  
In the New Testament we read many parables told by Jesus. Through these stories Jesus teaches us how we are to live out our new life with Him.

In one story, Jesus talks about a vine and its branches. In this story He wants us to know how closely we are connected to Him and to all other Christians.

**Let us remember that . . .**  
Parables are stories in the Bible that teach a lesson.

Let's turn to the **Gospel of John 15:1-10** and read the way Jesus describes our relationship with Him. After the reading, answer the following questions:

1. What does Jesus say He is? (verse 5)  
I am the vine.
2. What does Jesus say we are? (verse 5)  
You are the branches

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### Background Reading:

(Theosis)

"Physical life is a two-sided coin: we are growing, evolving, becoming, yet we remain the same person from the moment of conception. The same thing happens in theosis, or the spiritual life. It is a process. Incorporated into Christ from our baptism, we are a new creation in Him. Yet we must grow in what we have become. We are called to cooperate more and more with the Holy Spirit through synergy and to be transfigured in the Lord. This implies a growth or evolution as in physical life. . ." (LLIII 52).

## 6. Bearing Fruit (3 minutes)

Have the students read paragraphs. Bring in some fruit or have pictures of fruit.

- *Why do you think Jesus used this image about fruit?* (It is complete, colorful, nutritious.)
- *How can our life be like this fruit?* Let them share.

## 7. Gifts from God

(5 Minutes)

*Materials:* A wrapped gift

a) Before the reading, ask: *How many of you would like to receive this gift? Why?*

b) Read the paragraphs. Remind them that they have gifts from God that some of them might have not discovered yet. Just like the gift in this class, you have not unwrapped your talent yet.

*Ask: What gifts do you think the following people have: bishops, priests, nuns, monks, missionaries?*

### Supplementary Activity:

Ask the custodian, the ushers, or those responsible for the coffee hour if there is anything your students can do to help. Arrange a task and a time for them to come in to offer their help. Some possibilities: polishing the pews, cleaning the floor under the pews, cleaning the grounds around the church, planting flowers, distributing bulletins.

## Background Reading:

(Service)

"True spiritual maturity brings us to serve as Christ served, becoming true servants. The object of our service is the whole of creation, which Christ came to save, transfigure and unite to His Father. The world is not outside our realm or concern as Christians. We are not saved from the world, but through it and in it. We have an authentic mission to the whole world: to call it to be transformed by Christ through power of Spirit; to call it to become the Sacrament it was created to be and to call all in it to transfiguring communion. If this is to happen, however, it will not be because we followed a strategy but because the love of God overflows from our hearts. In the words of the saying attributed to St. Seraphim of Sarov, 'Acquire the Holy Spirit and all around you will be saved'"(LLIII 90-91).



**Bearing Fruit**  
If we think about this comparison of our relationship with Jesus, we can also see what happens when we do something that is not following God's way. When we sin, we break away from the vine, Jesus. Just as a branch will wither if it is broken away from the vine, we also will not be as complete because we have been made to be united to God.

Jesus tells us "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Jesus wants us to know we can do many wonderful things for God and each other when we live our life being one with Jesus.

**Gifts from God**  
God has given each of us special talents and skills which we can use to serve Him. Being united to Jesus, we can put these gifts to work for God's people.

Everyone has a different kind of service to give, a different way to share God's love—all to build the Church of Christ.

Some Christians are called to be the Church's leaders as bishops or priests. Others are called to serve in the Church as nuns or monks or missionaries. Some people have the gift of teaching or the gift of giving spiritual guidance or the gift of writing songs and hymns.

Everyone in the church is called to use whatever gifts he or she has been given to build up the Body of Christ, the Church, in love.

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## 8. Our Vocation (5 minutes)

a) Read the first two paragraphs.

- *What are some jobs that the older people can no longer do?* (Work that requires a lot of movement)
- *What are some ways the older people can ask for the help they need?* (In the bulletin, by calling people)

b) Complete the reading.

- *What are some jobs with which you are familiar.* (Teacher, nurse, accountant)
- *How can we be holy in those jobs?* (By helping people and living as Jesus asks)

c) *To whom can we talk about a religious vocation?* (Our priest or the diocesan vocation director)

## Background Reading: (Holy Orders)

Since its beginning, the Church has recognized these gifts of the Spirit within it and has confirmed the Spirit's work by setting apart some people for the permanent exercise of ministries within the community. Of these the ranks of bishop, priest and deacon fall into the category of holy orders, recognized as a sacramental state within the Church" (DC 96).

## 9. Let us remember...

(2 minutes)

Give each student one note card. On one side list a vocation in the church and on the other write at least one question to ask a person who has chosen that vocation.

### Supplementary Activity:

If possible try to find the answer to at least one question by looking at one of the following websites:

[www.angelfire.com/me2/byzantinelinks/easternvocations.html](http://www.angelfire.com/me2/byzantinelinks/easternvocations.html)

[www.basiliansfoxchase.org](http://www.basiliansfoxchase.org)

[www.hagiaeucharistia.com](http://www.hagiaeucharistia.com)

[www.vocations.com](http://www.vocations.com)

[www.byzcath.org/ssb/](http://www.byzcath.org/ssb/)

## 10. My Talent (4 minutes)

Let the students complete this section on their own or in groups. Remind them that identifying our talent does not mean we are bragging about it. We are accepting God's gift to us and planning to use it.

**Our Vocation**

When we think about the Church being the Body of Christ, we realize everyone is important. Regrettably, we do not notice how important someone is until they are no longer able to serve the way they had in the past.

In some churches, many people have been active members for years, and now they can no longer do the same jobs. They still want to offer their talents to the church, but they need younger people to help them and work with them. Just as a body needs new cells to help it develop, our Church, the Body of Christ, needs young people to continue serving God and each other to keep the Church active and alive.

Sometimes we hear young people say that they do not know what they can do, so they do not even try. The Church is missing the talent and gifts that can be offered from an early age.

We can tell the talent we have by how easy the activity is to do and how much we like doing it. For example, if we are able to talk to people and enjoy talking, we have a gift that can be used to serve the Church. In our own church, we can welcome strangers and greet our parishioners. This is one way we can make everyone feel a part of God's family. Also, we can help people meet each other.

Sometimes we are asked to think about what we want to be when we get older. Before we start answering that question, we need to pray to ask for God's help to choose a job that will make us holy. We have to decide on the best way to live all of our lives growing closer to God.

If we always remember we are part of the Body of Christ, we will make decisions that will help us build up the Church. We will think about using our talents in a way that serves God and each other.

What are some of your talents?

**Let us remember that . . .**

A Vocation is a call from God to serve God's people in a particular way. Some vocations in the Church are bishop, priest, nun, sister, monk, missionary, deacon, catechist, cantor, and many more.

**My Talents**

I believe that my talent is \_\_\_\_\_

I can use this talent to honor God by \_\_\_\_\_

Some ways that I can use this talent when I get older is by \_\_\_\_\_

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# Application

## 11. Today's Witnesses to Christ (10 minutes)

This activity has questions for you and the students. You might want to spend more time on this section today.

If the interviews are at the beginning of class, have the students complete the "What do you think?" section immediately.

If the interviews are at the end, ask the students to complete this section at home. Encourage them to share their answers with their parents.

### Optional Activity 1

Ask the children to interview a different catechist, altar servers, active teens, or other students from a different grade.

### Optional Activity 2

Take a picture of the class and place it onto the copy (found at the end of this lesson) of the question and answer sheet. Have the students share the way they wrote their answers and decide on the best ones to use. Have someone with good printing skills print the answers. Place this page into a three-ring binder or a folder with clasps.

Ask the students for suggestions for the title for the booklet. At the end of the year, add this booklet to your library in the room—or even the church library.

*Today's Witnesses to Christ*

**Our Catechist,** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Classmate,** \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone is important in the Church—including all of us! Today we are going to look at our classmates and our teacher and learn how we are part of the Body of Christ. Start by interviewing your catechist and then work in groups and interview each other.

**Our Catechist**  
When did you become a member of our church?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
When did you become a catechist?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
How do you prepare to teach the lessons?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What do you consider most important to teach us this year?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Is there any story that you would like to share that shows how a catechist builds up the Body of Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**My Classmate**  
When did you become a member of our church?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What are some ways that show you are a part of the Body of Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What are some ways that you help in our church?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Identify some ways that you can serve God's people and help in our church as you get older?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you think?**  
(Answer these questions after the interviews.)  
Have you ever thought about becoming a priest, a deacon, or a member of a religious community?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Identify two ways you could serve God's people as a priest, deacon, or religious.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 12. Action Plan

(8 minutes)

Help the children recognize some of the many relationships in their lives. Use this information to help them accept their relationship with Jesus as the most important—important enough to consider a religious vocation. Remember we never know when or how the seed is planted, but we do know it is never too early to start.

## 13. Summary

(5 minutes)

Use the note cards that have been made throughout this entire unit. Set up a competition by groups and have them define the words.

## 14. Closing Prayer

(3 Minutes)

A Prayer for Vocations  
(Prayer page)

**Action Plan**

***I Am Part of the Body of Christ***

1. Throughout your life, you identify yourself in different ways. Complete the following sentences to show this is true:

1. When you are born, you are called the baby of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. If there are other children in your house, you are also a brother or sister of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. At your Baptism, you became a member of \_\_\_\_\_.

II. With each answer, you have identified the relationship you have to other people. In this next section, you are to think about yourself as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. You started that special relationship with God and all Christians on the day of your Baptism. Follow the instructions below to show your membership in God's family.

1. Draw a symbol that shows your relationship to God and each other.
2. Write a motto that could be used to describe how you live out this relationship.

*As we grow together in love,  
we grow closer to God.*

3. Think about one of your talents, and write a prayer that offers this talent to God. Ask God to help you use this talent at your age and as you get older—maybe even as a priest or a nun!

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### **Prayer for Vocation**

Troparion: O Savior, You called the fishermen and they immediately left their nets to follow You. Your voice resounds with authority, "make disciples of all nations. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded." Give us today zealous workers for Your kingdom to reap the harvest of faith; for You provide always for Your beloved Church.

Glory ... Now ...

Theotokion: O holy Virgin, Mother of God, with confidence you told those at the wedding of Cana, "Do whatever your Son tells you." Ask Him to provide an abundance of vocations for the Church.

From a Moleben for Vocations

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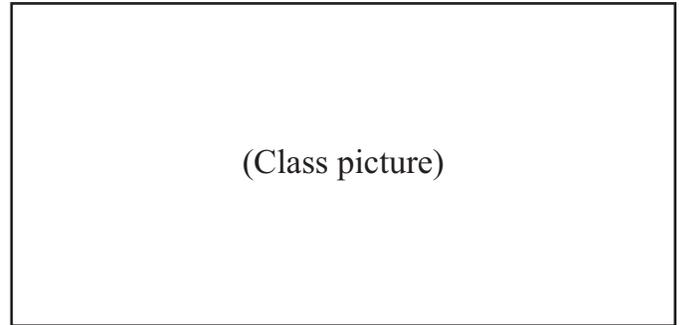
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From a Moleben for Vocations

Catechist's Name:

Name of Students:



**Our Catechist**

When did you become a member of our church?

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When did you become a catechist?

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How do you prepare to teach the lessons?

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What do you consider most important to teach us this year?

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Is there any story that you would like to share that shows how a catechist builds up the Body of Christ?

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**My Classmate**

When did you become a member of our church?

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What are some ways that show you are a part of the Body of Christ?

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What are some ways that you help in our church?

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Identify some ways that you can serve God's people and help in our church as you get older?

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## Unit 2

# The Church

## Review

Use the following review questions at the end of this unit or the beginning of the next unit. You can divide the students into two groups, and have them compete for points. Or, you can have them work in groups and have one question answered by each person. Then have them take turns to explain the answer for each question.

1. *What is our baptismal promise?*  
(Lesson 6) *At our Baptism, we "put on Christ" and promised to grow in our relationship with God.*
2. *What is a vocation?*  
(Lesson 11) *A vocation is a call from God to serve God's people in a particular way.*
3. *Identify the three parts of the church building.*  
(Lesson 7) *The narthex, nave, and Holy Place*
4. *What is the Mystery of Crowning?*  
(Lesson 9) *The Mystery of Crowning blesses the union of a man and woman, places it in union with Christ, and consecrates it to God's service.*
5. *What does it mean when we say we are no longer in communion with God and each other when we sin?*  
(Lesson 10) *It means that we are no longer one with God as we were at our Baptism. Rather than working to build up the Body of Christ, the Church, we are separating ourselves from it.*
6. *What is significant about the fact that it takes many grains of wheat to make the prosphora?*  
(Lesson 8) *Just as it takes many grains of wheat to form the bread which will become Christ's body in Holy Communion, it takes many people to come together to live as Christ's Body in the Church.*