

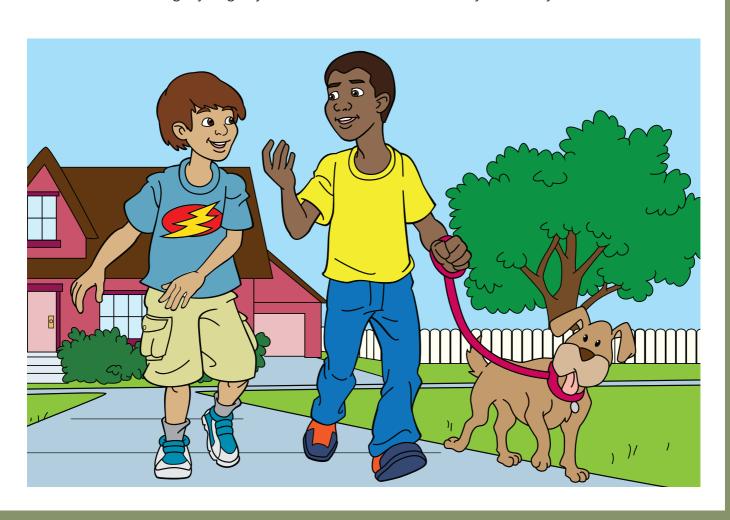
Who Is Jesus Christ?

Tomás was lost. He was supposed to be going to Terrence's house, but all the streets looked the same. Tomás knew he should probably turn around and go home, but he kept walking. Tomás knew he was way off track, but he didn't know how to get back on the right road.

"What are you doing way over here?" Terrence called when he saw Tomás.

Tomás felt relieved. "I'm lost. I didn't know where to go."

"That's OK. I'm walking my dog. If you walk back with us I can show you the way."



Who Is Jesus?

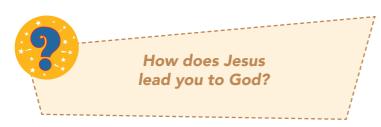
Jesus is the most important person in our journey toward God. Jesus Christ is the center of our faith. Without Jesus, we couldn't know God. Without Jesus, there would be no Church.

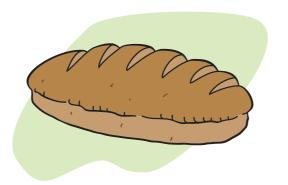
Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Let's look at those words carefully.



The Way

Jesus is the Way to God. When we know Jesus, we know God. What we learn from Jesus leads us closer to God.





The Truth

Jesus didn't say, "What I *tell* you is the truth," but "I *am* the truth." Jesus asks us to believe in him because he is God. When we believe in someone, we trust what they say is true, too. That's why we also believe what Jesus taught.



Do you believe that Jesus is really God?

The Life

Jesus taught us how to live by his example. Jesus would often go off alone and pray. This helped him understand and obey his Father. We also spend time in prayer and live by God's rules. Jesus brings us everlasting life. That good news fills our lives with joy and hope.



What in your life brings you joy or hope?

Jesus Is...

Jesus didn't only perform good deeds. He also said a lot of things about himself. Here are a few:

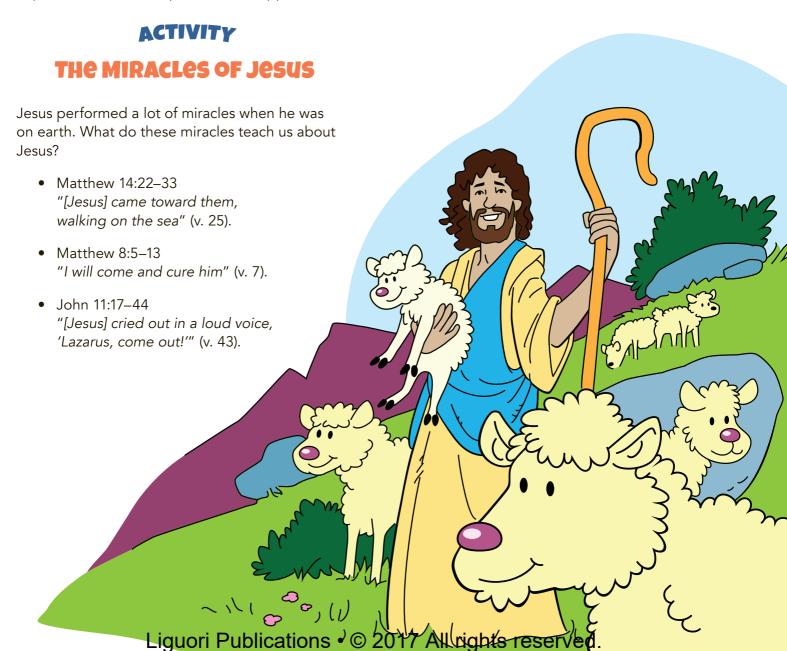
- "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).
 How does light help you see? How is Jesus like a light?
- "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14). What does a shepherd do? How is Jesus like a shepherd?
- "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower" (John 15:1). How does a vine help the plant it's attached to? How is Jesus like a vine?
- "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48). How does food give you life? How is Jesus like food?

The Life of Jesus

We read about Jesus' life in the **Gospels** of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Jesus' birth was a miracle. God sent an angel named Gabriel to ask a girl named Mary if she was willing to be Jesus' mother. She was engaged to a man named Joseph. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and Mary and Joseph helped him to grow knowing and loving God.

Jesus did many good things. He taught people about God. He forgave people when they were sorry for the wrong things they'd done. He also healed people who were sick or injured. Some of the most exciting stories about Jesus describe the miracles he performed. A **miracle** is an event that doesn't have a scientific explanation. It seems impossible, but there's proof that it happened.

Not everyone liked what Jesus was doing or saying. So the religious leaders of the time plotted to have Jesus killed on a cross. Jesus knew what they were planning, but he let them plot anyway. Jesus died on a cross, but three days later, the greatest miracle of all happened. Jesus rose from the dead! He appeared to his friends so they would know he was alive. Anyone who believes in Jesus knows that he is real and lives forever.



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In Short

- Jesus is fully human and fully divine.
- Christ is the way to the Father and salvation.
- Your friendship with Jesus grows through sharing and reflection.

Journey of Faith for Children, Inquiry, Q4 (826351)

Imprimariotes: Stephen 1. Renrader, CSRR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

Imprimatur: "In accordance with CIC 827, permission to publish has been granted on May 3, 2017, by Bishop Mark S. Rivituso, Vicar General, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication, nor is any liability assumed by this permission."

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Editors of the 2017 Journey of Faith for Children: Theresa Nienaber-Panuski and Pat Fosarelli, MD, DMin.

Design and production: Weedy Barnes, Lorge Mitro Lignory, John Krus, and Bill Tournessed Illustrations to 16 Alberta 16 Alb

Design and production: Wendy Barnes, Lorena Mitre Jimenez, John Krus, and Bill Townsend. Illustrations: Jeff Albrecht.

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Printed in the United States of America. 21 20 19 18 17 / 5 4 3 2 1. Third Edition.

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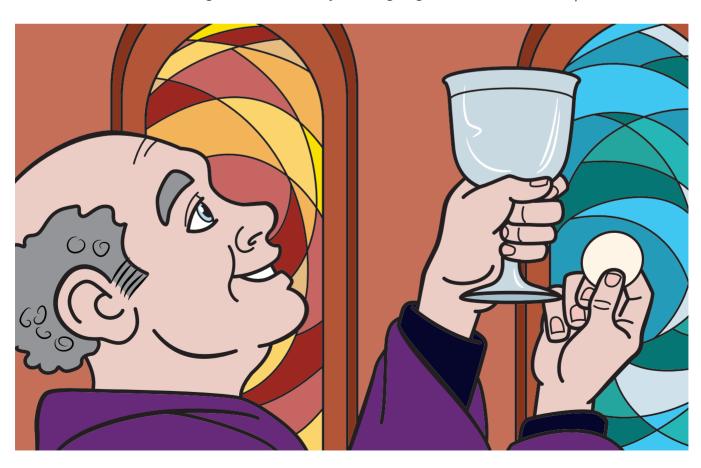
The Sacrament of the Eucharist

"The Eucharist can be a complicated mystery to understand," Mrs. Evans said. "Some people believe that the bread and wine are just symbols. Or that the bread and wine don't remain the Body and Blood after Communion. As Catholics, we believe the bread and wine really become the Body and Blood of Jesus."

"But what does it taste like?" asked Tanya.

"Why didn't Jesus just make a different way of sharing himself?" wondered Terrence.

Mrs. Evans said, "Communion still tastes like bread and wine even though it's been transformed. Jesus had a reason for sharing himself in this way. We're going to read about it in Scripture."



CCC 1322-1419



The Last Supper of Jesus (adapted from Matthew 26:26-29)

Jesus was at supper with his closest friends. He was sitting near Peter, James, and John. As everyone gathered at the table, Jesus talked about many things. Jesus told his friends about a love that never ends. "You are all my friends," he said.

Then he broke and shared the bread. "This is my body," Jesus said. "It will be given up so all of you may live." Then he filled a cup and said, "This is the blood I shed. My own life will be the best gift I can give."

This made his friends sad, but he told them to be happy. God had planned it this way. "I will come again, and then you all will know that the Son of God is in the world to stay."

We call this biblical event in history the Last Supper because it's the last meal Jesus shared before his crucifixion. Through the power of God and the working of the Holy Spirit we celebrate the Last Supper of Jesus at every Mass.

We call it the **Eucharist**, and
it's a holy meal you
get to share with Jesus and the
whole Church.

Sharing a Special Meal

Sharing a meal together is a way to get to know people better and show we care. Families talk about their days over dinner. When we have friends come in from out of town we invite them over to share a meal. We celebrate holidays by getting together with relatives for a special meal.

List three times you and your family or friends share a meal. Then in one or two sentences explain why that meal is special.

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The Real Presence of Jesus

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, you will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus—just like his disciples at the Last Supper. We know Jesus is really present in the form of bread and wine because Jesus told his disciples, "This is my body." He didn't say, "This is a symbol of my body" or, "This is both my body and blood and bread and wine." The bread and wine truly become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

When the priest calls on the Holy Spirit at Mass, God makes Jesus as present as the person sitting next to us in the pew. What we see and touch points us to a reality that remains invisible. When we eat his Body and drink his Blood, Jesus enters our hearts to help us live in his love.

The Eucharist still looks and tastes like bread and wine even though it's been transformed. That's because its **substance**, what something really is, changes even though its appearance doesn't. We can't explain how this happens, but we believe because Jesus told us it's true. It's a mystery of faith. Only God holds the answer.

The Unbelievable Promise

Jesus made a special promise about the Eucharist. One day, when he was teaching a large crowd, he said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever... and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:51, 54).

Many people didn't understand what Jesus was saying. "This is too hard to believe," they said, and walked away. But the disciples stayed because they believed the promise Jesus made about eternal life. They wanted to be with him forever.

Jesus makes this promise to you, too. If you eat this bread, Jesus' Body, you will live forever with God in heaven.

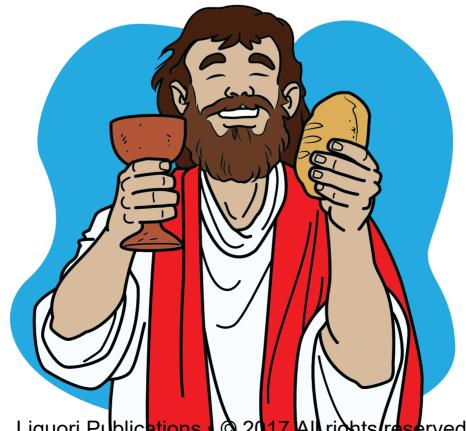
A Super Kind of Love

After the Last Supper, Jesus did exactly what he promised—he suffered and died on the cross for us. It must have been hard for his Mother and

friends to watch his suffering. But imagine their joy when Jesus came back from the dead on Easter! That day they knew the power of Jesus' love. They knew his promise of eternal life would come true.

When we receive the Eucharist at Mass, we remember that Jesus gave his life for us. We remember that his sacrifice gives us eternal life and saves us from death. We remember and thank God for Jesus. Eucharist even means thanksgiving!

Thank you, Jesus!





ist three things you learned about the Eucharist today.	
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In Short

- The Bible describes the first Eucharist in the Last Supper.
- The Real Presence of Jesus is in the Eucharist.
- We listen for the call to imitate Christ.

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Journey of Faith for Children, Catechumenate, C5 (826344)

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

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Design and production: Wendy Barnes, Lorena Mitre Jimenez, John Krus, and Bill Townsend. Illustration: Jeff Albrecht.

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Printed in the United States of America. 21 20 19 18 17 / 5 4 3 2 1. Third Edition.



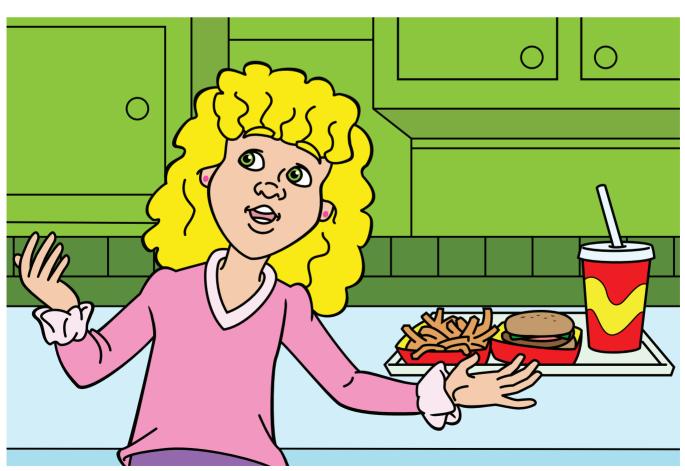


Living Lent

"Oh, no!" Tanya gasped. "I forgot it's a Friday during Lent and I got a hamburger for lunch. What should I do?" she asked Tomás.

"Um," Tomás thought. "Mrs. Evans said Lent is about giving things up and doing good deeds to be more like Jesus. Maybe you could give the hamburger to someone who can eat meat today and doesn't have lunch yet?"

"Good idea!" Tanya said with a smile.



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We Journey With Jesus

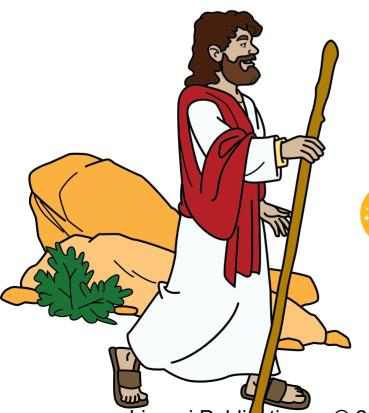
During Lent, the Church follows the path of Jesus. We think about his death on the cross. We remember his suffering and death. We reflect on his death as a great act of love and forgiveness. Our Lenten journey ends with a celebration of Jesus' glorious resurrection on Easter.

This Lent, you will become closer than ever to Jesus. On this special Easter Vigil, you will respond to God's love with your own special "yes."

Jesus in the Wilderness

LUKE 3:21-22: 4:1-15

When Jesus was beginning his ministry, he went to John the Baptist and was baptized in the Jordan River. A voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son" (3:22). When the people heard, some of them wondered if Jesus was the Savior. After his baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to prepare. Instead of eating, he prayed, and the devil tempted him, saying, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread" (4:3). Although Jesus was hungry, he wasn't fooled. He answered, "One does not live by bread alone" (4:4, see also Deuteronomy 8:2–4).



The devil then took him up a mountain, where he could look down on kingdoms of the world. The devil said, "All this will be yours, if you worship me" (4:7). Jesus replied, "Worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve" (4:8). Finally the devil placed Jesus on top of the Temple and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for...[God] will command his angels...to guard you" (4:9–10). But Jesus said, "[The Bible] also says, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test'" (4:12).

Then the devil left, and angels came to care for Jesus. When he left the wilderness, he was strong and ready to do God's will.

When have you been tempted to do something bad?

How did you say "no" to temptation and "yes" to doing good?

Four Ways to Resist Temptation

Read God's WORD

When Jesus was tempted, he quoted God's word. The Bible offers many passages that help us do good and know what God's will is, including rules, comfort, and strength to resist temptation. During Lent, spend some extra time reading the Bible.



What kind of help do you need from the Bible?

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PRAY

Jesus often prayed alone. He knew his strength came from heaven. Prayer is a great source of strength for us, too. This Lent, remember to pray every day.





How do you like to pray?
What do you want to
pray for this Lent?

FAST

Jesus fasted in the wilderness as a way to grow closer to God. **Fasting** means to eat smaller meals or only one meal during the day as a way of growing closer to God. Adults fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday during Lent. We also abstain from meat during Fridays in Lent and eat simpler meals of fish,

pasta, or veggies. You can fast during Lent by giving up a special treat or dessert, or passing up second helpings.





What could you give up this Lent to grow closer to God?

ALMSGIVING

Almsgiving means giving money or things like food and clothing to the poor. Lent is a good time to help the needy in your area. By donating your time, money, or things to others, you are caring for your neighbor like Jesus asks.



What can you give to others this Lent?

Lenten Symbols

ASHES

On Ash Wednesday, we go to a special Mass where the priest blesses **ashes** and then makes the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads with them. The ashes are made from blessed burned palms from last year's Palm Sunday. They remind us to turn away from sin and that without God, we are like dust or ashes—lifeless.

COLORS

For most of Lent, the priest wears purple when he is saying Mass. **Purple** is the color of repentance, being sorry. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, the priest wears **rose**, which signals to us that the joy of Faster is almost here.



PALMS

On **Palm Sunday**, a week before Easter, the Church begins Holy Week. We wave palm branches in remembrance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40; John 12:12–19). The palms remind us to honor Jesus as our king.





Palms

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Draw a line to connect each word on the left with its meaning on the right.

Almsgiving Going without food

Ashes Speaking and listening to God

Desire or attraction to sin

Fasting The written word of God and stories of God's people

Prayer What the crowd waved at Jesus

The Bible Giving money or food to the poor

Temptation Burned palms

In Short

- The major themes of Lent include: repentance, sacrifice, growth, and overcoming temptation.
- The practices of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are central to Lent.
- Many symbols are associated with Lent.



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Journey of Faith for Children, Enlightenment, E2 (826375)

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

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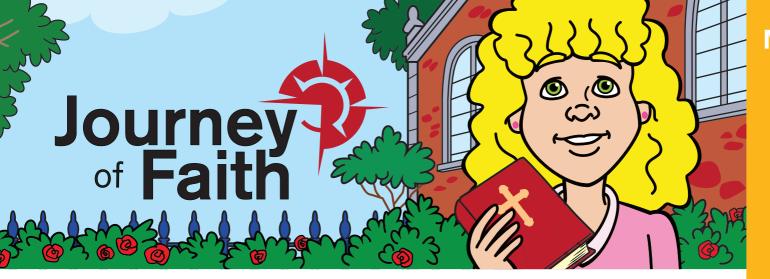
Editors of the 2017 Journey of Faith for Children: Theresa Nienaber-Panuski and Pat Fosarelli, MD, DMin.

Design and production: Wendy Barnes, Lorena Mitre Jimenez, John Krus, and Bill Townsend. Illustration: Jeff Albrecht.



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Printed in the United States of America. 21 20 19 18 17 / 5 4 3 2 1. Second Edition.



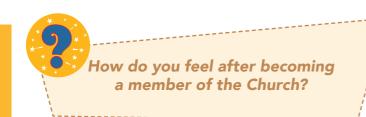
Our Faith Is a Lifelong Process

Lisa, Tomás, Terrence, and Tanya went out with Mrs. Evans and their sponsors to celebrate becoming members of the Church.

"It's really cool," Tomás said, smiling. "I feel like we're all really part of something."

"Yeah!" Lisa added. "Something really big! Something we'll be part of forever."





Journeying Together

Welcome to the family!

You've learned a lot about God and the Church. You celebrated your "birthday" in the family of God. You received the sacraments of penance and Eucharist. You shared your excitement with everyone in the Church. They shared their love and joy with you.

But your journey of faith isn't over. All your brothers and sisters in the Church are ready to help you grow closer to God. You will learn, pray, and have fun together. You will do many things for your Church, and your Church will do many things for you. Just like any other family.



A Time to Remember

Do you remember how you felt when you first started the RCIA? You had a lot to learn and to do. It must have seemed a little scary. But you did it!

Place a "Y" next to the statements you agree with. Place an "N" next to the statements you don't agree with.
I feel excited every time I attend Mass.
I'm never bored during Mass.
I feel a little lonely because I don't know many people yet.
People at church are always glad to see me.
I don't feel any different from when I started the RCIA.
I am ready to work with and for my Church family.
There are still a lot of things I don't understand.
Pick one of the statements above and write one or two sentences about why you agree or disagree with it.

Keep on Growing

If you're feeling scared or unsure about your new faith, don't worry. Even Jesus' disciples had feelings like that. At different times, the disciples felt happy and excited, a little scared, a little unsure, and sometimes even a little disappointed.

Remember Peter? He didn't always understand what Jesus wanted of him. Sometimes Jesus had to correct him. When Jesus said he would suffer and die, Peter said he would never let that happen to Jesus. You can read more about it in the Gospel of Matthew 16:21–23.



The other disciples made mistakes about Jesus, too. There's a story about James and John wanting to sit beside Jesus in heaven. Jesus corrected them and told them how they could really be great in God's eyes. You can read more about it in the Gospel of Mark 10:35–45.

Our Spiritual Helper

Jesus knew that all his followers would need help living their faith. Living like Jesus wasn't (and still isn't!) easy.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, his disciples were sad and afraid. They didn't know how they could help build Jesus' Church if he was gone. But on **Pentecost**, a miracle happened that changed them.

All of the disciples were together in one room. Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a gust of strong wind, and it filled the entire house. Then what looked like tongues of fire appeared over the disciples' heads.

The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking about God. The disciples went out into the city of Jerusalem and began to talk to people from all over the world. Each person heard the disciples speaking in his or her own language.

Peter told the people about what was done to Jesus. Then he told them how they could be saved by believing in Jesus. Thousands of people heard Peter and believed in Jesus because of Peter's words.

That's why we call Pentecost the birthday of the Church. Pentecost was the day our Church on earth began to grow. Jesus' followers continued to grow in faith after Pentecost. Just like them, we continue to grow and develop in our faith, too.



What areas of your faith do you want to explore or learn more about?

What about your faith are you excited to go out and share with others?



FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS

Using the clues, identify the word. Then find the word in the scramble of letters below.

	yohl lipstr	niwd	aetsim	rhucch	eetrp
Who came to the disc	iples at Penteco	ost? 			
What sound did the d	isciples hear in t	the upper ro	oom?		
What did the disciple	s see over each	other's head	ds?		
Pentecost is the birth	day of the				
Who told the people	about what was	done to Je	sus?		

In Short

- Conversion is a lifelong process.
- God's grace and hard work are needed for spiritual growth.
- Participation is an important part of our community faith.

Journey of Faith for Children, Mystagogy, M1 (826382)

Imprimi Potest: Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, the Redemptorists.

Imprimatur: "In accordance with CIC 827, permission to publish has been granted on May 3, 2017, by Bishop Mark S. Rivituso, Vicar General, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication, nor is any liability assumed by this permission.

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Printed in the United States of America. 21 20 19 18 17 / 5 4 3 2 1. Second Edition.

