

# One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

26

## WE GATHER

✚ **Leader:** Blessed be the name of the Lord.

**All:** Now and for ever.

**Reader:** A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

“... you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone.” (Ephesians 2:19, 20)

The word of the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Leader:** The Church is one.

**All:** Make us one, Lord.

**Leader:** The Church is holy.

**All:** Share your holiness with us, Lord.

**Leader:** The Church is catholic.

**All:** Lord, help us to share your good news with people everywhere.

**Leader:** The Church is apostolic.

**All:** Lord, thank you for the faith of the Apostles passed on to us through all generations.

Bless us always. Amen.

☀ What are some qualities or characteristics that describe you? How can these qualities and characteristics help you to grow closer to your family and community?





## WE BELIEVE

### The Church is one and holy.

In the sacraments we profess our faith. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we do this when we pray the Nicene Creed. In the Nicene Creed we state that “we believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” These four characteristics are the **marks of the Church**. The Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The first mark is that the Church is one. The Church is one because all her members believe in the one Lord, Jesus Christ. The Church is one because we all share the same Baptism, and together are the one Body of Christ.

The Church is one because we are guided and united by the one Holy Spirit. The Church is one because of the leadership of the pope and bishops, the sacraments we celebrate, and the laws of the Church that help us to live as members of the Church.

The second mark of the Church is that she is holy. God alone is good and holy. Christ shares God’s holiness with us today through the Church, where we are first made holy in Baptism. Throughout our lives God and the Church call us to holiness. Our holiness comes from the gift of grace that we receive in the sacraments. It comes from the gifts of the Holy Spirit and from the practice of the virtues. Our holiness grows as we respond to God’s love in our lives, and from living as Christ asks us to live.

We are not perfect. We do not always live according to Christ’s example or God’s law for us. Yet we always have the chance to begin again. The sacraments help us to turn to God and his love. When we follow Jesus’ example to pray, respect all people, live fairly, and work for justice and peace, we grow in holiness.



Write one thing you can do this week that will lead you to holiness.

## As Catholics...

The laws of the Church are found on page 263. They are also called the precepts of the Church. These laws remind us that we are called to grow in holiness and serve the Church. They help us to know and fulfill our responsibilities as members of the Church and to unite us as followers of Jesus Christ. They guide our behavior and teach us how we should act as members of the Church.

Read the laws of the Church together and discuss ways you can follow them.

**Key Word**

**marks of the Church**

(p. 269)



## The Church is catholic and apostolic.

The third mark of the Church is that she is catholic. The word *catholic* means “universal.” The Church is worldwide, and she is open to all people everywhere. The Church has been universal since her very beginning.

Some of the Apostles traveled to different parts of the world they knew. They preached the Gospel message. The Church continued to grow, and today there are Catholics all across the world.

The Church is truly catholic, or universal. She is made up of people from all over the

world. Often Catholics have different ways of living, dressing, and celebrating. These different customs are part of the Church’s life. They add beauty and wonder to the Church. Yet with all of our differences, we are still one. We are united by our faith in Jesus and by our membership in the Church. We are the Body of Christ and the People of God.

We experience the Church as worldwide in our parishes, too. In this family of faith we are joined with Catholics who may be very different from us. Together we grow and celebrate our faith.

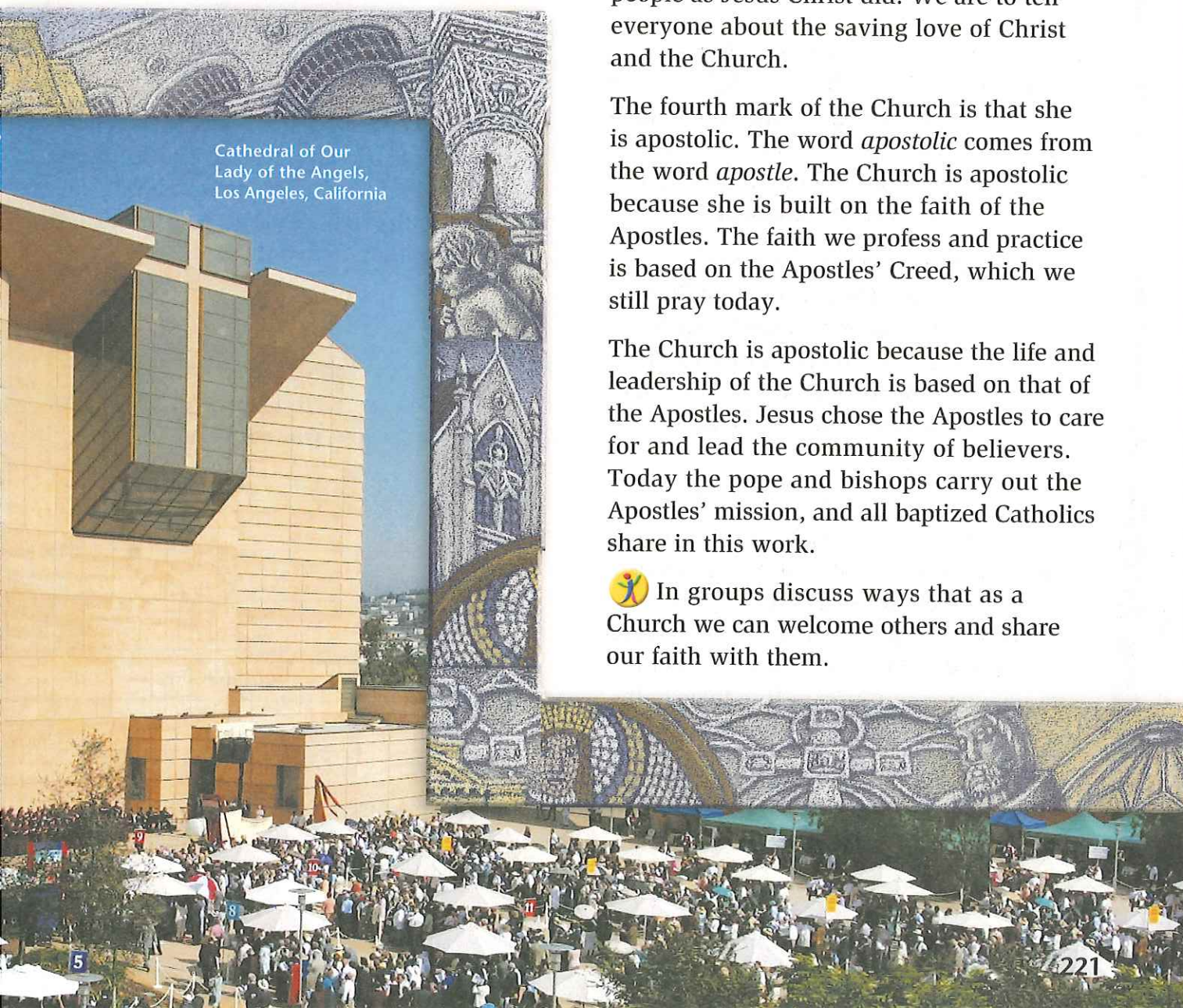
Because the Church is catholic, she is missionary, too. The Church welcomes all people as Jesus Christ did. We are to tell everyone about the saving love of Christ and the Church.

The fourth mark of the Church is that she is apostolic. The word *apostolic* comes from the word *apostle*. The Church is apostolic because she is built on the faith of the Apostles. The faith we profess and practice is based on the Apostles’ Creed, which we still pray today.

The Church is apostolic because the life and leadership of the Church is based on that of the Apostles. Jesus chose the Apostles to care for and lead the community of believers. Today the pope and bishops carry out the Apostles’ mission, and all baptized Catholics share in this work.



In groups discuss ways that as a Church we can welcome others and share our faith with them.





## The Church respects all people.

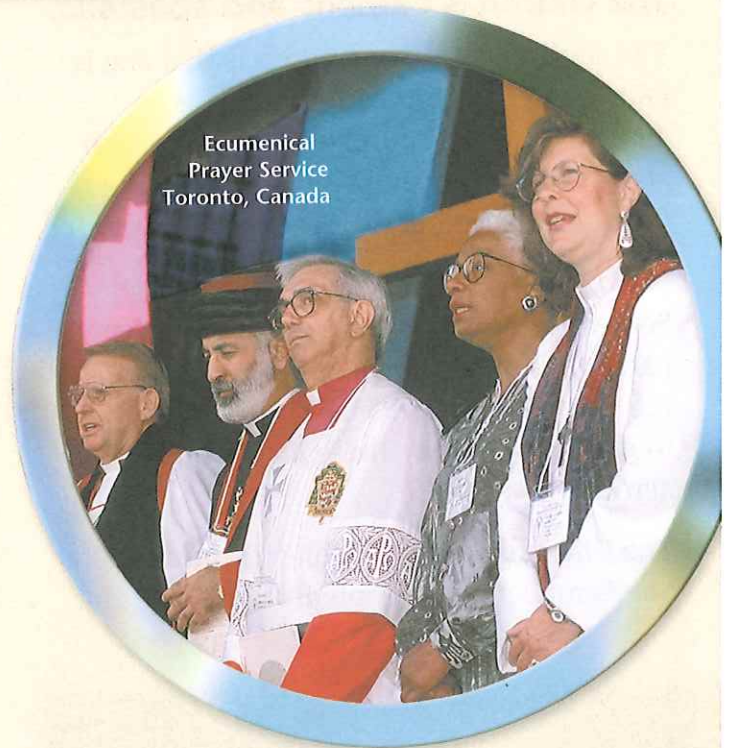
Christians believe in and follow Jesus Christ. Among Christians there are Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Episcopalians. There are Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and many others. There are some very important things that we have in common. Christians are baptized and believe that Jesus is both divine and human. They believe that Jesus died and rose to save us from sin. Christians also share the belief that the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Catholic Church is the Church founded by Christ himself. We are working with other Christian communities to bring about the unity of the Church. This work to promote the unity of all Christians is called **ecumenism**.

The differences among Christians are serious, but the Church is committed to the work of ecumenism. Each year in January the Church celebrates a week of prayer for Christian Unity. Together Christians try to grow in love and understanding.

The Christian faith has a special connection to the Jewish faith. Jesus himself grew up as a Jew. So the Jewish People are our ancestors in faith. Many Christian beliefs and practices come from the Jewish faith. Today Jewish People everywhere continue to live their faith in the one true God.

Not everyone in the world believes in Jesus as Christians do, but that does not mean that they are not people of faith.



We respect all Christians and acknowledge that elements of sanctification and truth are found in other Christian communities. We respect the right of others to practice and live their faith in different ways.



Imagine that you are asking Jesus to give a talk on "Faith in Our World." What questions would you ask him?

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In groups discuss ways that we the Church can welcome others and share our faith with them.



## The Church works for justice and peace.

Justice means respect for the rights of others. When we are just we give people the things that are rightfully theirs. Justice is based on the simple fact that all people have human dignity. All people have the value and worth that come from being created in God's image.

Jesus respected the dignity of others and protected their rights. He began his ministry by saying,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring glad tidings to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord"  
(Luke 4:18–19).


Jesus then did all these things. He worked to be sure that people had what they needed. He healed the sick and fed the hungry. He listened to people when they told him about their needs. Jesus stood up for those who were neglected or ignored by society.

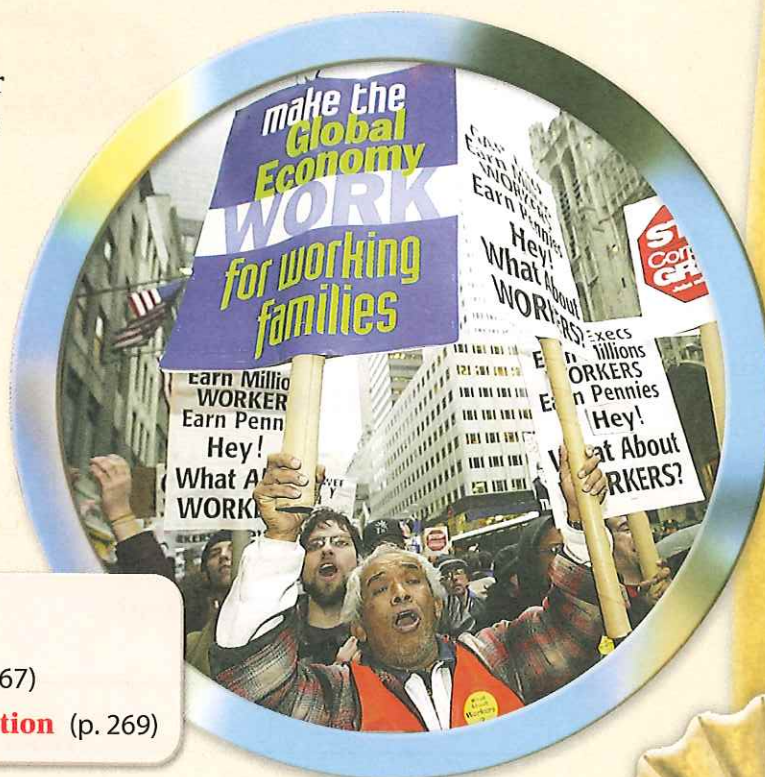
The whole Church continues Jesus' work for justice. The pope and our bishops remind us to respect the rights of all people. We can work to change the things in society that allow unjust behaviors and conditions to exist. Together we can visit those who are sick or elderly. We can volunteer in soup kitchens or homeless shelters. We can help those from other countries to find homes and jobs and to learn the language. We can write to the leaders of our state and country asking them for laws that protect children and those in need.

Justice is sharing the resources that come from God's creation with those who do not have them. God asks us to protect and take care of creation—people, animals, and the resources of the world. He asks us to be stewards of creation. **Stewards of creation** are those who take care of everything that God has given them. God intended all people to use the goods of his creation.

Justice is using the resources we have in a responsible way. We cannot use so much food, water, and energy that there is not enough for others. The world is not only God's gift to us. It is also his gift for the generations of people to come. We must work together to protect our environment and the good of all God's creation.

## WE RESPOND

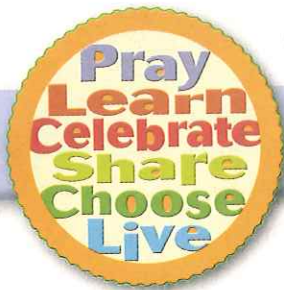
 Discuss what you and your families can do during the summer months to show your respect for the rights of others at home, in your neighborhood, and around the world.



**ecumenism** (p. 267)


**stewards of creation** (p. 269)

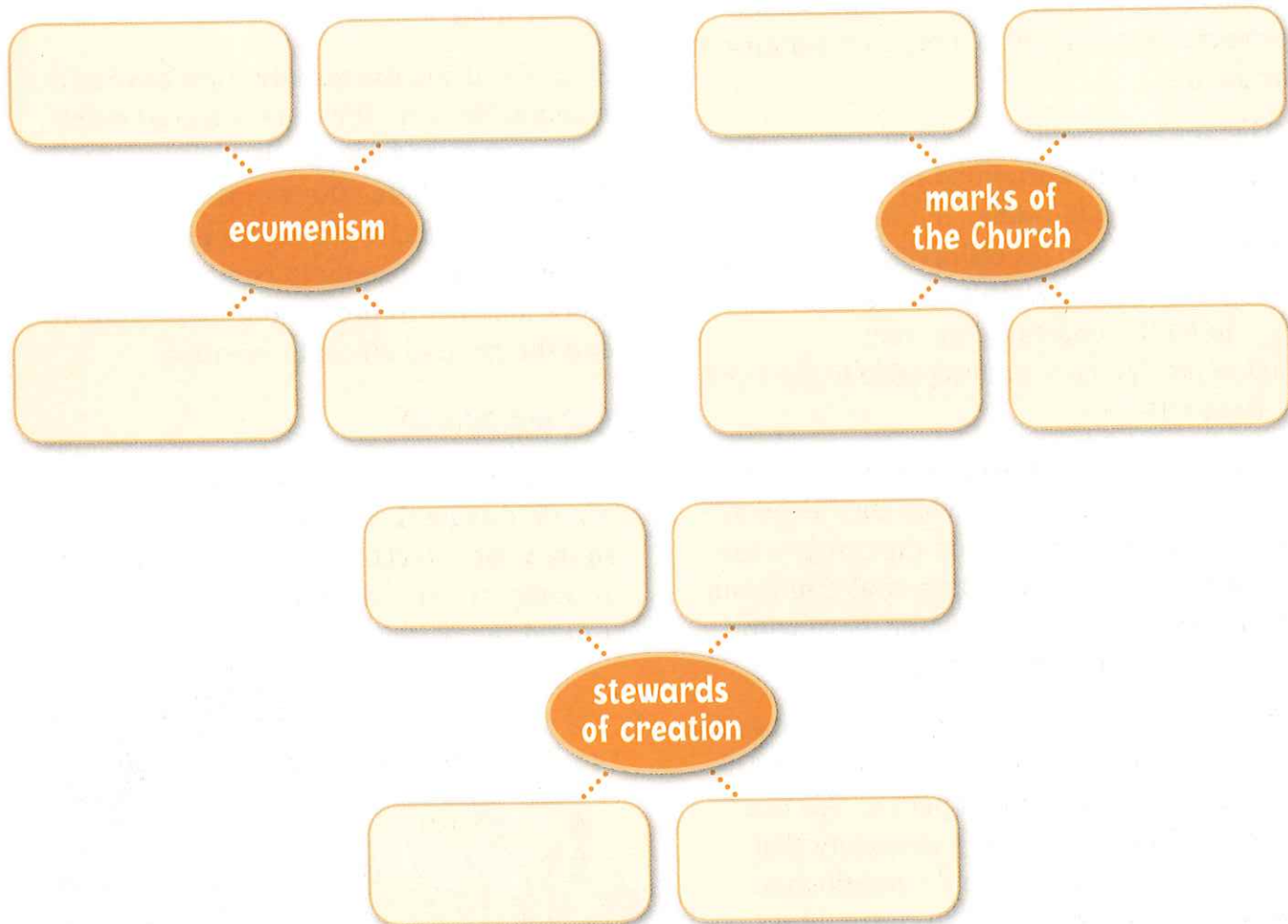




# PROJECT

## Show What *you* Know

Complete the word webs by writing words or phrases that relate to each .



## Make *it* Happen

The world is not only God's gift to us. It is also his gift for the generations of people to come. What are some ways that fifth-graders can protect our environment and the good of all God's creation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now, pass it on!



# DISCIPLE



## Fast Facts

There are over one billion Catholics in the world, which is about 17 percent of the world population. The percentage of Catholics has remained about the same for more than 35 years. The 2008 *Official Catholic Directory* lists the Catholic population in the United States as 67,117,016. Catholics represent about 22 percent of the total U.S. population.



## Reality Check

What do you think “a year acceptable to the Lord” is like?  
(Hint: see page 223.)

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## Pray Today

*Mary, Queen of Peace,  
save us all, who have so much trust in you,  
from wars, hatred, and oppression.  
Make us all learn to live in peace, and educate  
ourselves for peace,  
do what is demanded by justice and respect  
the rights of every person,  
so that peace may be firmly established.  
Amen.*

(Pope John Paul II)

## Take Home

Look over the list you wrote in *Make It Happen*. With your family, find local service projects that will help bring about one of the items on your list.

➡ **DISCIPLE CHALLENGE** Together, plan to help this local service project this week.

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# CHAPTER TEST

**Write the mark of the Church that best completes each sentence.**

1. The Church is \_\_\_\_\_ because God shares his holiness with us in the sacraments, and through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the virtues.
2. The Church is \_\_\_\_\_ because all of her members believe in the one Lord, Jesus Christ, are led by the pope and bishops, and participate in the sacraments.
3. The Church is \_\_\_\_\_ because she is built on the faith of the Apostles. The Church's life and leadership is based on that of the Apostles.
4. The Church is \_\_\_\_\_ because she is universal and missionary. All people are welcomed to believe in Jesus Christ.

## **Short Answers**

5. How are all Christians alike?

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6. What is a steward of creation?

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7. What is one way the Church works for justice?

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8. How does the Catholic Church practice ecumenism?

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**Write a sentence to answer each question.**

9. What are some things that unite Catholics?

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10. How can we grow in holiness?

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