

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the students consider how Mary and the saints serve as models of love and faithfulness and lead us to a deeper love of Christ and his Church. The students explore the Communion of Saints as all the faithful, both living and dead, that ultimately are the Body of Christ.

## Background for the Teacher

Have you ever had to defend Catholic teaching regarding Mary, or been challenged about praying to the saints? If so, you are not alone. Questions regarding Mary and the saints seem to top the list of issues that cause tension with our Protestant sisters and brothers. Many videos and documents that challenge Catholic teaching, often in harsh terms, can be found online.

Much of our teaching is derived from the Bible, though not directly stated in its pages. Popes have only twice exercised papal infallibility, guided by the Holy Spirit to speak about faith and morality without error, and both instances involved Mary. Mary's Immaculate Conception was declared as doctrine in 1854, and the declaration of Mary's Assumption came in 1950. This sharpened the divide between Protestants and Catholics. In addition, some of our teaching about the saints is based on books found in the Catholic Bible that are not included in the text used by Protestants.

It is tempting, then, to teach doctrine and its development as a justification of Catholic teaching on Mary and the saints. What the students need to understand, however, is how Mary and the saints can be part of their faith and lead them to God. For young people, the important question isn't so much, Why do we believe this? but rather, How can this help me know, love, and serve God better?

## Teacher's Prayer

God, you have given us many examples of discipleship throughout the centuries, from Mary, the Mother of your Son, to Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the patron saint of teachers. Help me follow their example of faithfulness and service so that I may live as your disciple in my classroom and in the world. I ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Teaching Tip

For the students who belong to Protestant denominations, this chapter might be challenging. For example, the Lutheran tradition strongly believes that there is no need to pray for the dead. Attempts at ecumenical prayer services often fall apart over the Prayers of the Faithful and a single intercession. Be attentive to the diversity in your classroom, and contact the students' parents if necessary.

# Chapter at a Glance

Core Text: Student Book

## Core Understandings

1. Mary's yes serves as a model of discipleship for all to respond to God's call.
2. As the Mother of God, Mary supported Jesus throughout his life. She now supports the Church as the mother of all Christians and a model of faithfulness and love.
3. All believers in Christ, both living and dead, are part of the Communion of Saints. Those who have gone before us can pray for us and bring our needs to God.
4. Saints serve as examples of holiness and inspire us in our journey of faith.

## Catechism Pillar

- The Creed

## Catechism Connection

- Paragraphs 956–962  
(Communion with the Saints)
- Paragraphs 963–972  
(Mary and the Church)
- Paragraph 1195  
(Memorials of Mary and the Saints)

## Key Scripture Passages

- 1 Samuel 1:19–28
- Luke 1:28–33
- Luke 1:39–55
- John 2:1–12
- John 19:26–27

## Key Words

- Assumption
- Communion of Saints
- Theotokos

## Chapter Project

- "The Music of Mary," page 244

## Test

- "Chapters 3–6 Test," pages 252–254

## Prayer Suggestions

- **Prayer:** God of grace, be with us as we learn about models of faithfulness and service in Mary and the saints. May we always strive to do your will and to be your servants in our homes, in our classroom, and in the world. We ask this in faith. Amen.
- **Scripture Reading:** Luke 1:38
- **Student Book:** "Connect with God," page 483
- **Music:** "Great Things," by Matt Maher, available on YouTube

## DAY 3

### Student Book

"The Communion of Saints" and "Our Friends in Heaven," pages 487–488

### Core Understanding

All believers in Christ, both living and dead, are part of the Communion of Saints. Those who have gone before us can pray for us and bring our needs to God.

### Materials Needed

- "Chapter 6 Reading Guide" handouts (*optional*)

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Begin** with this prayer, or choose from among the prayer suggestions on page 228:

- God who loves us and walks with us, we thank you for the saints. May we be inspired by their example of faithfulness, learn from their lives of holiness, and grow closer to you through their prayers. We ask this in faithfulness and love. Amen.

### Engage Activity (5 minutes)

1. **Engage** the students' experience by asking the following questions:
  - Who knows what makes a saint?
  - Can anyone name some saints?
2. **Conclude** with the following:
  - The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines a saint as "The 'holy one' who leads a life in union with God through the grace of Christ and receives the reward of eternal life" (p. 898). Let's look at what that means for our lives today.

### Core Content (10 minutes)

**Review** pages 487–488 in the student book, using one of the following options or another one of your choosing:

- **Reading Guide Option:** Ask the students to read the student book pages and to complete the sections "The Communion of Saints" and "Our Friends in Heaven" on the handout "Chapter 6 Reading Guide."

- **Presentation Option:** Give a short presentation covering the following key points:
  1. The Communion of Saints is the Church: a communion of holy people, living and dead.
  2. In the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, we become the Body of Christ. We become bound to one another and united with God.
  3. Saints are our friends in Heaven. Just as we ask our friends on Earth for help, we can ask the saints for help through their prayers.

## Core Learning Activity (20 minutes)

### Prayer Teams

**Objective:** To offer a specific example of the Communion of Saints as it applies to a student's life.

1. **Project** or display the phrases "Communion of Saints" and "Our Friends in Heaven" in front of the class. Ask a volunteer to define the *Communion of Saints* in their own words. If necessary, direct the students to find page 487 in the student book or the glossary definition on page 579. Emphasize that the fullness of the Body of Christ includes both the living and the dead. Then ask a volunteer to explain why the saints are called our friends. If prompting is necessary, ask the students to think about what our friends do for us.
2. **Direct** the students to think about a person or issue that needs prayer, whether it is a situation involving poverty or war or someone in need of help. List their responses where everyone can see them.
3. **Arrange** the students into small groups of three or four. Instruct the groups to each identify a person or issue that needs prayer, using the list compiled earlier. Then each group member is to develop their own prayer team to pray for that concern, following these steps: On a sheet of paper, the students should indicate the prayer concern and then list their prayer team by naming themselves, a living friend, and a deceased friend or family member. After each name, the students should write one or two sentences explaining their choice of that person for their team. When the students have created their individual prayer teams, instruct them to share the names of the people on their prayer team with their group members.
4. **Direct** each group to brainstorm a list of saints they are familiar with, and together agree on one holy person that they all will add to their personal prayer teams. Instruct each student to write the name of that saint on their paper and, on their own, write a sentence explaining why they chose that saint.
5. **Reconvene** the large group, and have one student from each group come forward and write down their group's prayer concern and the name of the saint they have asked to join their prayer teams. Ask a second group member to explain the choice of that saint while the first person writes this explanation on the board. Conclude by emphasizing that the Communion of Saints includes the living and the dead, the official saints, and the unofficial saints.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Collect the papers for credit or grading.

**Optional Activity:** "Litany of the Saints" (20 minutes), page 242

### **Comprehension Checkpoint** (5 minutes)

1. **Direct** the students to find a partner and discuss the following questions:
  - Why do we call the saints "our friends in Heaven"?
  - What connection do the saints have to our lives today?
2. **Invite** a few volunteers to share their answers.

### **Closing Prayer** (5 minutes)

**Close** with a prayer, choosing from among the prayer suggestions on page 228.

## DAY 3

## Materials Needed

- 8½-x-11-inch paper crosses, one for each small group of three or four
- markers, one set for each small group of three or four
- music or a bell
- internet access (*optional*)

## Litany of the Saints (20 minutes)

**Objective:** To put the prayer team into practice.

1. **Direct** the students to return to the same groups from the “Prayer Teams” activity. Distribute the paper crosses.
2. **Instruct** the groups to decorate their crosses, identifying their prayer concern on its vertical beam. Each team member should then write the names of their prayer team on the horizontal beam of the cross. Names and prayer concerns can be written using different colors, if desired. Limit the time to 5 minutes to allow time for prayer.
3. **Ask** each group to bring its cross forward, and display all the crosses at the front of the class. Invite one volunteer from each group to remain near their group’s cross.
4. **Call** the class to prayer in whatever way you wish (play music, ring a bell, etc.).
5. **Lead** a prayer in which you begin with “We ask for . . .” and then say the concern written on the first cross. Then ask the volunteer from each group to say each name on the cross. Invite the class to respond, “Pray for us,” after each name. Move to the next cross and repeat the pattern. Invite the volunteer from each group to stay up front throughout the prayer to maintain a reverent atmosphere. If time or attention spans are a concern, save some of the crosses and use them for the opening prayer on day 4.
6. **Conclude** the prayer with “All holy men and women, pray for us.” Then invite each group volunteer to place their group’s cross in a different part of the room.



**Digital Option:** Replace paper crosses by directing each group to use a word cloud app to create a word cloud that includes all the names of their combined prayer teams in the shape of a cross. Instruct the students to include their primary concern and to enter it multiple times for emphasis.



**Assessment Opportunity:** Create a rubric to assess the projects for credit or grading.