A Community of Disciples

GRADE 8

CHAPTER 1 Study Guide

Keep these ideas in mind as you study ***Chapter 1****.*

The Church is a mystery. A mystery of faith is something that can be known but never fully understood, because it relates to God. Even when God reveals himself through great works, he remains a mystery.

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Jesus is the visible image of God and the founder and head of the Church. He gathers all who believe in him into a community, the Church. This makes the Church a Communion of Saints.

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Saint Paul called the Church the Body of Christ. The image of the Body of Christ shows that the Church is a close-knit community. The Body of Christ is God's people, alive and active in the world today.

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One scriptural image of the Church is the *bride of Christ.* Christ loved the Church so much that he died for her. He cares for the Church and gives her gifts. He joins the Church to himself in a covenant of love.

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Jesus tells us that he is the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd's love is so great that he lays down his life for his sheep. Jesus also identifies himself as the gate for the sheep. Only through him can we enter heaven.

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Mary became the mother of Jesus at the Annunciation. She was united with him in the work of salvation. Mary became the mother of Jesus' Mystical Body, the Church.

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Mary was given the new title "Mother of the Church" during the Second Vatican Council. We can turn to Mary for help to be strong members of the Church.

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The Holy Spirit builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church. For this reason, the Spirit is known as the *Sanctifier. Sanctify* means "to make holy." The Spirit helps us be holy, or devoted to God. Through grace, which is the sharing of God's own life, the Spirit dwells in us and forms us to be like Jesus.

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