

Week 2: To the Heights

Week of Oct. 18

Navigating the Terrain: On the Place of Worship

“It became obvious why Catholics had built such beautiful cathedrals and churches throughout the world. Not as gathering or meeting places for Christians. But as a home for Jesus Himself in the Blessed Sacrament.” - Allen R. Hunt

GOAL: The goal of this session is to teach the youth about the different aspects of the church and how each element signifies something important within the liturgy.

MAIN IDEAS:

- The church is where we come to worship God. We construct churches not only to be a place where we can come and gather as a community for Mass and other liturgies but also to serve as a sign and a reminder of God to everyone who sees it.
- All the different elements within the church building serve a specific purpose and represent different aspects of our Catholic faith life.
- The church should be a place that everyone feels welcomed to and that they can come and join at any time.

GATHER - Church Finder:

Using the link on our [@HOME page](#), you will see 8 pictures of Catholic churches from around the world and 8 possible countries. Players must decide the country where each church is located.

- #1 - South Africa, St. Patrick's in Kokstad
- #2 - Spain, La Sagrada Familia (The Holy Family) in Barcelona
- #3 - Italy/Vatican City, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome
- #4 - United States of America, The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C.
- #5 - Argentina, Metropolitan Cathedral in Buenos Aires
- #6 - Israel, Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem
- #7 - France, Notre-dame de Paris (Our Lady of Paris) in Paris
- #8 - Philippines, Quiapo Church or Parish of St. John the Baptist in Manila

CONNECT (PICTURES ON FOLLOWING PAGES OR CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#))

- *Ask: If you wanted to go mountain climbing, where would you go? If you wanted to go swimming, where would you go? If you wanted to cook a meal, where would you go?*
- When we want to do specific things, we have to go to specific places. When we want to pray, or go to the sacraments, or celebrate a liturgy we go to the church.
- We construct churches not only to be a place where we can come and gather as a community for Mass and other liturgies but also to serve as a sign and a reminder of God to everyone who sees it.
- **Each time we enter through the church doors we walk into our Heavenly Father's house, which represents walking into new life and symbolizes our journey to the Father's eternal house in heaven.** Each aspect of our church and all the different things within this building serve a specific purpose and represent different things.
- *Ask the youth to look at the picture and find what they think the focal point of the space is (the altar).* The altar is the center of the church. It is on this altar that Christ's sacrifice of His Body and Blood is made present to us through the Eucharist.
- *Find the Tabernacle:* The tabernacle is where Jesus remains in our presence. This means that after the hosts are transformed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ at Mass, any hosts that are not consumed are kept here. That means that Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle. When the red candle is lit, this reminds us that Jesus is present. Because Jesus is present in the church and in the tabernacle, it is a place of great honor and reverence. Therefore, whenever we pass the tabernacle or before we go to sit in our pews, we genuflect towards the tabernacle to show our honor and respect to God.

- The sacred chrism (*show picture*) is held here in one of these bottles and saved for special anointings during different sacraments (including Baptism and Confirmation.)
- *Ask the youth to find where the director of the liturgy sits (priest's chair).* This is a special chair for the priest or bishop to sit in during a celebration of sacred liturgy, which shows his important role of directing prayer and the liturgy.
- *Find the Ambo:* The ambo is where the Word of God is proclaimed. By having this ambo be a special place set aside for proclaiming Sacred Scripture, it reminds us of the importance of the Word of God.
- *Find the Baptismal Font:* The Baptismal Font is our special place in the church where Baptism takes place. In Baptism the person or infant has this water poured over his or her head to signify dying and rising again with Christ to new life and he or she becomes a part of our Church.
- The Confessional (*show picture*) is where we go for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are usually screens that we can kneel behind or a chair that we can sit in with the priest on the other side, acting in the person of Christ to forgive us of our sins through this sacrament.
- Our church should always be open and welcoming. This building signifies the great family of God and is a place where we gather to worship God. A church is a special place and you should take pride in your church. This is your home here with our community; this is your home where you can come and be with Jesus whenever you need to.
- The church and the family of people at St. Matthew are here to support you as you grow in your faith.

EXPLORE

Journal

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was an incredibly faith filled man from a young age. He was always encouraging his friends in their own faith and in their relationships with Jesus Christ. He put God first in his life. In our modern day, it is hard to not be distracted by things other than God; it is hard to put God first in our lives - but we are called to worship God and God alone.

Ask your teen to fill out just the first 3 questions on page 10 in their booklet. Tell them to take time and really think about their answers. Remind them that there is no “right” or “correct” answer.

- What do you spend most of your time doing?
- Do I remember to pray? Do I notice or remember God throughout my day? Where? When?
- What is the most important thing in my life right now?

Discuss together their answers.

- Why do you spend most of your time doing ____?
- Is that a good thing to be spending your time doing? Why or why not?
- Is there anything I can do to make God the center of my life?

REFLECT

Our Parish Patron

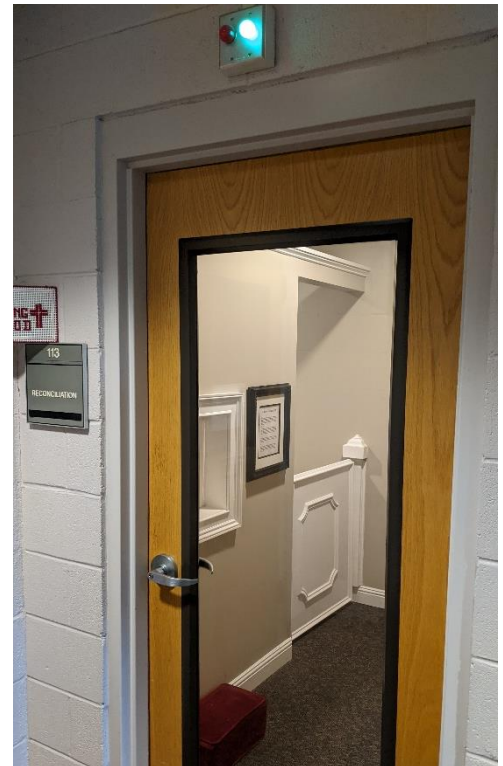
Read about our parish patron, St. Matthew, on the last page and have them complete the rest of page 10 in their booklet.

Close in Prayer

LIVE IT

Take 5 minutes that you would be doing something else (watching TV, playing video games, etc.) and pray.

Tip: Praying a decade of the rosary takes about 5 minutes!



Confessional next to the Adoration Chapel.



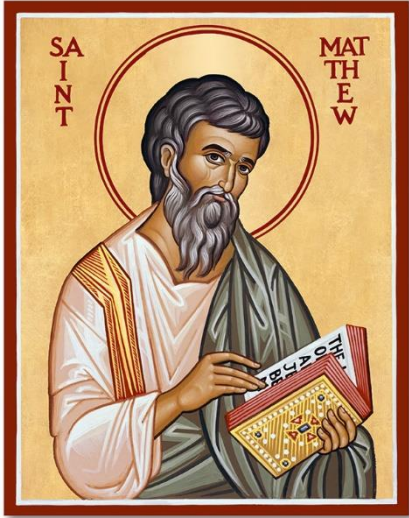
Holy Oils, from left to right:

Oil of the Infirm—used for the Anointing of the Sick

Sacred Chrism — used for Baptism, Confirmation, & Holy Orders

Oil of the Catechumen — used for Baptism

Our Parish Patron: St. Matthew



Matthew, the Evangelist who wrote the Gospel that appears first in the New Testament, was different from the other Apostles. Many people felt that he was unworthy to be chosen as a follower of Jesus. Matthew worked for the Romans as a tax collector, who forced the Jewish people to pay taxes to them. Many of the tax collectors cheated the people by charging more taxes than required and keeping the extra money for themselves. The Jews considered the tax collectors to be traitors. But Jesus knew in his heart that Matthew was neither a sinner nor a cheat.

Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish people who had become followers of Christ. He wanted his audience to know that Jesus was the Messiah that God had promised to send to save all people. Matthew's Gospel makes clear that Jesus is the fulfillment of everything said by the prophets in the Old Testament.

After Jesus' Ascension, Matthew preached the Gospel, as Jesus asked his disciples to do. It is believed that he established Christian communities in Ethiopia and other sections of the continent of Africa. Tradition tells us that he died as a martyr.

The symbol for Matthew's Gospel is a man with wings. Matthew wrote about Jesus' Incarnation and his Gospel makes clear that Jesus was true God and true man. Matthew is the patron saint of bankers, because he dealt with money as a tax collector. But anyone who reads Matthew's Gospel knows that money was not important to him. What was important was believing in and living as a follower of Christ. Matthew helps us to remember that it is our faith in Jesus that makes us truly rich!

In addition to being the patron saint of our parish, St. Matthew is the patron saint for accountants, bankers, bookkeepers and tax collectors. St. Matthew's feast day is on September 21st.

Prayer to St. Matthew:

O Glorious Saint Matthew, in your Gospel you portray Jesus as the longed-for Messiah who fulfilled the Prophets of the Old Covenant and as the new Lawgiver who founded a Church of the New Covenant. Obtain for us the grace to see Jesus living in his Church and to follow his teachings in our lives on earth so that we may live forever with him in heaven. Amen.