

Journey of Faith



The Early Church

Tanya raised her hand. "When do we get to hear about Jesus and the apostles? Didn't the Church start with them?" she asked.

"Yeah!" called out Terrence. "I thought the Israelites were Jewish. What does being Jewish have to do with being Christian?"





What do you think the Israelites and the early Church had in common?

Jesus the Jew

Mary and Joseph were descendants of King David. This means they were Jewish. Jesus was raised Jewish, too. He practiced the Jewish law and celebrated religious feasts with his community. But Jesus knew God had more planned for his people.

Jesus Makes a Promise

Jesus came to fulfill God's kingdom. He looked for people who would follow him and believe in him. Jesus chose twelve disciples (the apostles) and taught them. For years, Jesus stayed with his apostles, walked and ate with them, and showed them many things. When it was time for Jesus to leave this world, he sent the apostles to preach and teach. Jesus promised them a Helper:

"When he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine."

John 16:13–15



Jesus shared his Spirit with the apostles and assured them they could lead the world to the truth. All baptized Christians are asked to take part in this mission.



How would you feel if you were one of the apostles and had to spread the good news?

How can you share what you are learning about in RCIA with your friends and family?

After Jesus died, his apostles were sad and scared. Instead of preaching and teaching, they hid behind locked doors. They didn't want to be hurt or killed like Jesus.

But Jesus came back! He appeared to his disciples many times. He spoke with them and ate with them again. They were very happy! They finally understood that Jesus could never die. Once again, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help them. Then he ascended to heaven.



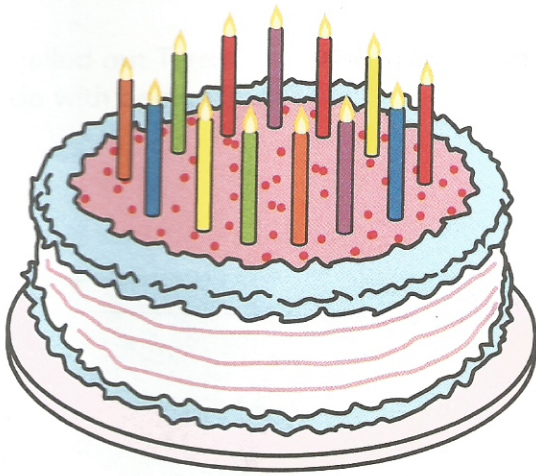
How would you feel if Jesus came to talk and eat with you?

The Birthday of the Church Acts 2

The disciples were praying in an upstairs room. They didn't know how they were going to build Jesus' Church. They needed help.

Suddenly a roaring sound, like a strong wind, filled the house. The Holy Spirit came, looking like a flame, and rested over their heads. The Holy Spirit gave the apostles the courage to speak for Jesus. They went outside and started preaching. Hundreds of thousands believed in Jesus' Word and joined the Church.

We celebrate this day, called **Pentecost**, as the birthday of the Church.



A Man Named Saul

Being a Christian in the early Church was dangerous. Anywhere the apostles tried to preach or the early Church tried to grow, the **Roman Empire** would **persecute** Christians. That meant they would arrest, hurt, or kill Christians just because they were Christians.

There was a Jewish man named Saul who was really mean to Christians. He would go to their houses and drag them off to prison. All the Christians were afraid of Saul.

One day, Saul was heading out to arrest more Christians:

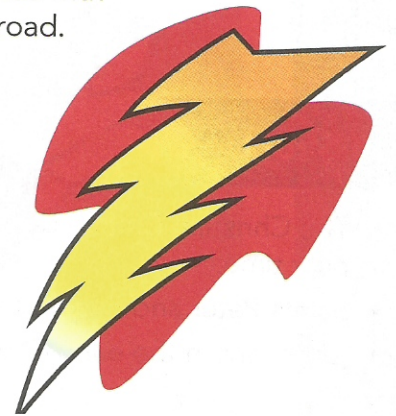
"A light from the sky suddenly flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' He said, 'Who are you, sir?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.'"

Acts 9:3–6

The men traveling with Saul also heard the voice. But they didn't see anyone. When Saul got up, he couldn't see. The men he was with had to lead him down the road.

Next, God sent a man named Ananias to Saul. Ananias knew everything Saul had done. He didn't want to go. But God told him, "Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name..." (Acts 9:15).

Through God's power, Ananias healed Saul. God changed Saul's name to Paul. Paul became one of the greatest preachers the Church ever had. His writings, along with the Gospels, make up most of the New Testament.





FILL IN THE BLANK

Complete the following sentences by selecting a word beginning with A and with P from the lists below.

A List

Advocate

Ananias

Apostles

Ascension

P List

Paul

Pentecost

Preaching

Promised

Jesus called twelve _____ and prepared them for the

ministry of _____.

On _____, Jesus sent the _____ to

the upper room.

_____ was blind, but then was healed

by _____.

Before the _____, Jesus _____ to

send the Spirit.

In Short

- The Christian Church developed over time.
- Saints Peter and Paul led the early Church.
- Christians in the early Church faced persecution.



Journey of Faith for Children, Catechumenate, C11 (826344)

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. Rivotuso, 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. Third Edition.