

Journey of Faith



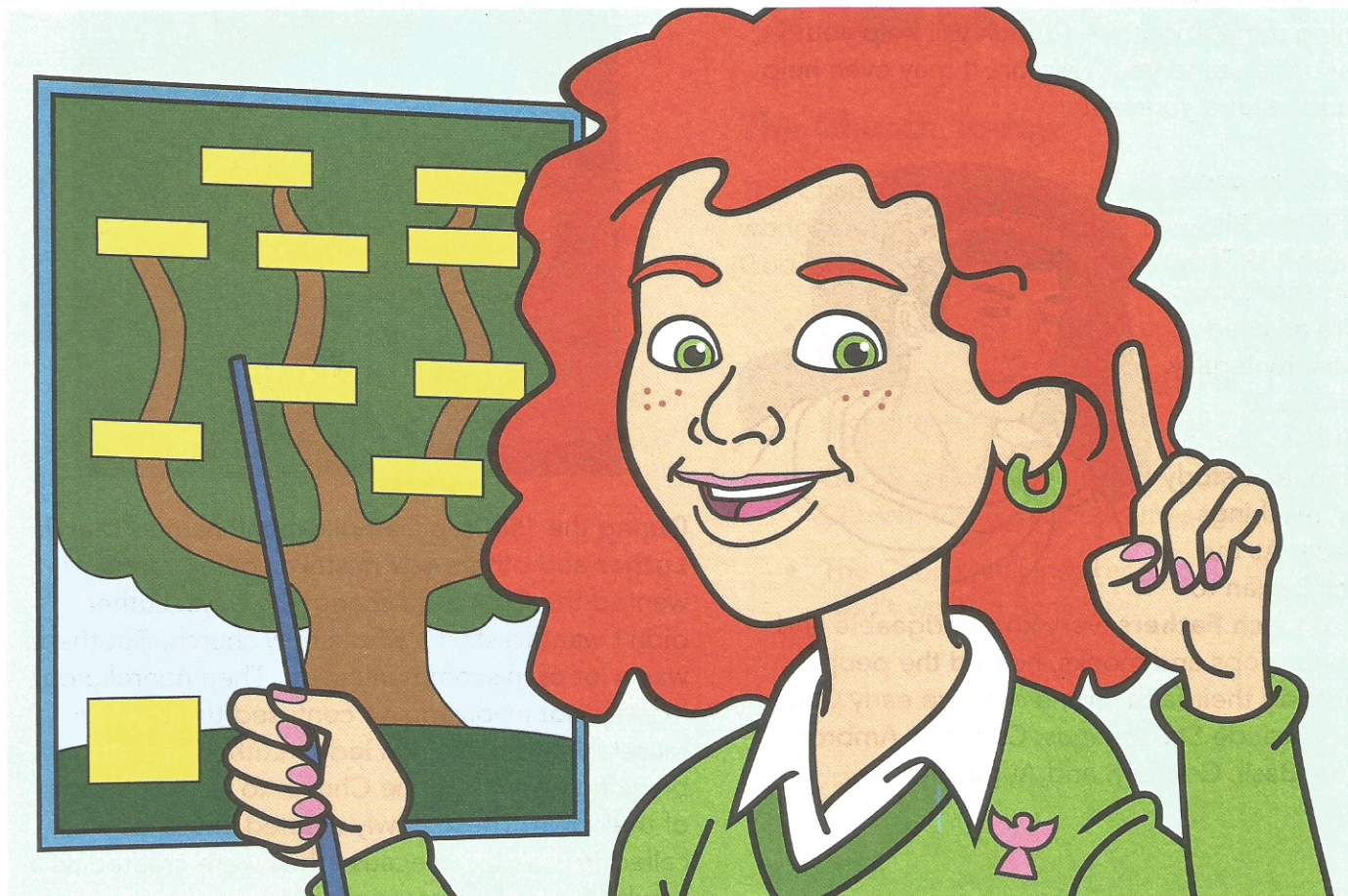
Church History

"Who can tell me one thing that was passed down from your grandparents, to your parents, to you?" Mrs. Evans asked.

"My gramps always made a big Sunday dinner for the family. Now my dad does it. When I'm grown up, I'll be the one who has the family over," Terrence said with a smile.

"My mom wore my grandma's wedding dress," Lisa added. "My mom says she's saving it for me if I ever want it."

"Great!" Mrs. Evans said, encouragingly. "Our family in faith has traditions like that, too. These traditions have been passed on for generations, and Catholics all over the world share them."





What traditions have been passed down in your family?

History: A Family Story

Every family has a story and a history. Knowing what happened in your family before you were born can help you understand your family, and yourself, better. If your great-great grandfather was a pioneer, it might explain why you like to explore new places. If your grandmother made clothes for people, you might understand your love of clothing.



List the hobbies or interests you share with at least one other person in your family.

The history of the Church has many stages. Learning more about the Church will help you better understand your religion. It may even help you understand yourself!

In the 300s, under the Roman ruler **Constantine the Great**, the Roman Empire allowed Christianity legally. This made it possible to gather, worship, and study Jesus' teachings in peace. As the Church began to grow, **Church Fathers**, very knowledgeable and faithful bishops and monks, helped the people understand their faith. Some of these early Church Fathers include Sts. Ignatius, Clement, Ambrose, Jerome, Basil, Gregory, and Augustine.



Why was it important for new Catholics to learn about the faith from people like the Church Fathers?

Family Separations

Even with the Holy Spirit to guide us, we can still make mistakes. When parts of the Church disagree and separate, we call it a **schism**, which means a split or division. Sometimes people get mixed-up and think their truth is God's truth. Over time, mixed-up thinking led to arguments within the Church. Some people even left the Church completely because of these disagreements. God still wants everyone in his family to be together. So even today the Church is working to become one again.

In 1054, the **Eastern**, or **Orthodox**, Church in **Constantinople** (now Istanbul, Turkey) didn't agree with the pope's role or how the Church talked about the Holy Spirit. So it separated from the **Western**, or **Latin**, Church in Rome.



During the 1500s, a Catholic monk named **Martin Luther** and others saw mistakes being made. He wanted the Church to change its ways. Luther didn't want to start a whole new church. But there was a lot of miscommunication. Then nonreligious leaders got involved and confused things even more! All this confusion led to Luther and others breaking away from the Church to form churches of their own. These newly created churches were called **Protestant** because they were created as a result of people protesting what was going on in the Church at the time.

Family Expansions

Some Catholic groups created religious orders.

Religious orders are groups of men and women who live together and focus on a specific spirituality or way of serving God. Some religious orders today are the Jesuits, Franciscans, Redemptorists, and Dominicans. They teach in schools, help in hospitals, preach to people, and live lives of prayer.



Others choose to be missionaries.

Missionaries go into distant parts of the world to spread the Good News and serve the poor. Many missionary communities are still active today.

- People were encouraged to study the Bible and spend more time learning about their faith.
- The Church family would continue to help the needy, promote education, and fight greed.
- Even though there have been disagreements in the past, the Church would work with other religions and nonreligious people to end bad things like abortion, war, and poverty in the world.

The Twentieth-Century Church

In 1959, Pope St. John XXIII called together Catholic bishops, laypeople, and leaders from other Christian communities for a meeting known as the Second Vatican Council, or **Vatican II**. This meeting resulted in important messages like:

- Laypeople should become more involved in the Church's work and assist priests during Mass by proclaiming the first and second readings, leading songs, and planning Church celebrations.
- Mass could be celebrated in the languages of the people (like English) and not just Latin.



The Church Today

The Church works hard to preserve the truth. The world has changed a lot since Jesus lived, but our God and our faith remains the same:

- God the Father is Creator.
- God the Son saved us and gave us the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.
- God the Holy Spirit always guides the Church, through good times and bad.
- The Church still inspires people through God's word in Scripture.



WHO'S WHO AND WHAT'S WHAT?

Determine whether each word below is a person, religious order, Christian church, or an event in Church history. Write it in the correct column.

Ambrose

Constantine

Council

Franciscans

Jesuits

Lutherans

Orthodox

Schism

People	Orders / Groups	Churches	Events

In Short



- The Church has a varied and rich history.
- Saints and religious orders helped shape the Church.
- The Holy Spirit guides the Church.

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