Level 7, Lesson Plan 8, Chapter 11: "Jesus Founds His Church"

- **Dinner** (6:00-6:30)
- **Aim: Jesus built a Church.**
- **Materials:** Bibles, Nicene Creed handout, rosaries, Music Issue, Prayer handout, evaluations, pencils
- **Key Words (Vocabulary):**

  twelve apostles: The twelve men whom Jesus chose at the beginning of his public ministry.

  Pope: The visible leader of the Church and supreme teacher of the Catholic faith. The Pope receives his authority from Christ as a successor of Saint Peter. All Catholics are obliged to respect and obey the Pope as the representative of Christ for the whole Church.

  bishops: Successors of the apostles who have received the fullness of the priesthood. They are the spiritual leaders of Christians in their dioceses (geographical areas). They alone can ordain men to the priesthood and to the office of bishop. United with the Pope, they are the official teachers of the faith in the world.

  hierarchy: The order of authority in the Church. The bishops united under the Pope as the true successors of Saint Peter and the apostles form the *hierarchy* in the Church. It is their duty to teach the faith, govern Christians in their dioceses, and administer the sacraments.

  pilgrim Church: Another title for the Church. It reminds us that: (1) we are pilgrims---people who are on a spiritual journey to the Kingdom of God, (2) life on earth is only a temporary thing, and (3) heaven is our true home.

  People of God: A title for the Church that reminds us that the Church is a visible community of people who are chosen by God to be his own. All baptized Christians belong to the People of God.

  Mystical body of Christ: A name for the Church that reminds us that we are all united to Jesus and to one another just as the various parts fo the human body are united to form one person (everyone must do their part in bringing Jesus and the gospel to the world).

  Communion of Saints: The relationship that exists between all of the members of the Church, whether they are in heaven, in purgatory, or on earth. The word *saint* here means anyone who is in the state of sanctifying grace.

  four marks of the Church: The four special signs that point out the true Church of Jesus Christ. They are found in the Nicene Creed as *one*, *holy*, *catholic*, and *apostolic*. Only in the Catholic Church can all four of these marks be found.

- **Explanation**

1. **Opening Prayer, Scripture Reading, and Key Words** (Matt) (6:30-6:35 PM)

   Opening Prayer: "Nicene Creed" from the "Revised Order of Mass" (all recite together). (A copy may be found under Lesson Plan 5, Chapters 7 & 31).

   Scripture Reading: John 1:35-51

2. **Activity** (Lance) (6:40-7:00 PM)

   The following activity is intended to help students relate to and visualize Christ building his Church.

   The youth are given the task of starting a new dance club that will appeal to the young crowd (approximately their age). The club should be trendy and hip and appeal to as many youths, different groups, cliques, and styles as possible.

   Break the youth into groups of 6-8. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to accomplish the task. Do not give specific instructions beyond the description of the task stated above. It is hoped that on their own they will come up with some of the following: leadership structure, charter members (board of directors who will help the leader), the aim of the club, division of responsibilities, recruitment of new members, kinds of patrons, appeal, music, finances designers; everything needed to make a successful enterprise.

   Have the groups report back. Possible questions to lead to discussion:
   How difficult or easy did you find this activity?
   What potential problems/difficulties do you imagine could occur in taking on an enterprise such as this?
   What would it take to get that many people involved, excited/inspired/enthusiastic to make such an enterprise be a success?
   What qualities would it take in a leader of this enterprise to make it work smoothly and well? Do you think people of your age could carry something like this off? (How old were the disciples when they were given their task?)
   Do you believe Jesus and the apostles experienced similar difficulties?
   What does it take (would it take) to get you take something like this on?

3. **"The Twelve Apostles"** (Matt) (7:00-7:05 PM)

   Message: What is the significance of the number twelve in the Bible? There were twelve tribes of Israel, God's chosen people. The tribes descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. Jesus chose twelve apostles. The choice of twelve apostles should remind us that Christ's Church is a continuation of God's chosen people---the foundation of the new People of God, the Church.

   Jesus started the Catholic Church. His aim was to save people and lead them to heaven. Christ himself was the leader, but because he would be returning to heaven at the end of his earthly life, he chose Peter to be the visible head of the Church on earth. He also chose the

twelve apostles, who would seek out new members, the Christian converts of the early Church.

Peter means "Rock." What are the qualities of a rock that would be an asset to leadership? (Strength, firmness, consistency, etc.). Jesus gave Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. What does this mean? (A key is a sign of power (Isaiah 22:23-23)). A key can open and close. If Peter has the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, what does this mean?

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the bishops (including the Pope, who is the bishop of Rome) can trace their lineage back to the apostles. This succession is unbroken and is necessary for valid ordination (so that the grace of the sacrament is conferred). All priests and deacons are ordained by a bishop (the successor of an apostle). They share in his powers and are united to their bishop through a vow of obedience.

4. **"The Church"** (Matt) (7:05-7:10 PM)

Message: The Church is a human and divine institution: she is human in that her members are human (and can make mistakes). The Church is divine in that she was founded by Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and accomplishes God's work through her sacraments. With the help of the Holy Spirit, she is protected from error in matters of faith and morals, and leads her members to life with God forever in heaven. The Church is an institution because there is a structure and organization to this community of believers. She is guided by laws (Canon Law), has a set of beliefs and doctrines (catechesis), a holy book (the Bible), and a history (Tradition). Just as the Church is an institution and a people, she is also a mystery (a people united in Christ).

5. **"The Four Marks of the Church" "** (Matt) (7:10-7:15 PM)

Message: Earlier tonight we recited in the Nicene Creed the four marks of the Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

One: Catholics share one Faith, one Baptism, one head on earth, one Sacrifice of the Mass---the same Sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. We are all united in one Mystical Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Holy: The Church is holy in that she was founded by Jesus himself, who is all holy. By Christ's Sacrifice and through the Church, we can become holy through holy doctrines and holy sacraments. The Church is sanctified by the Holy Spirit and shares in the sanctity of her members, including the saints and holy souls.

Catholic: The Church is catholic (meaning universal). She is for all people, of every age until the end of time. She proclaims the whole Gospel. It is through this mark that the Church of Christ receives her name.

Apostolic: The Church is apostolic in that her beginnings date to the days fo the apostles

who learned from and were formed by our Lord. The apostles were the first members and teachers. Their successors share their work of teaching, governing, and sanctifying. A special sign of the apostolic succession is the Pope, Christ's vicar on earth.

6. **Evaluation** (Matt) (7:15-7:25 PM) (Questions from the Diocesan Confirmation Questions list are indicated by (CF#)).

1. (CF #45) Before Jesus left the earth, He established His Church through which He would continue to teach and sanctify His people.

2. (CF #46) The name of the church that Jesus started is called The Catholic Church.

3. (CF #48) The one true Church established by Jesus is recognized by four marks: one, holy, catholic, apostolic.

4. (CF #49) Jesus gave the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to St. Peter, telling him that whatever he declared loosed or bound on earth would be held loosed or bound in heaven.

5. (CF#50) The voice of Christ and His Church here on earth is the Pope.

6. (CF #50) We can know what Christ teaches through His Church by listening to the Pope.

7. (CF #50) The present Pope is Pope Benedict XVI.

Write one or more petitions to pray during our Intercessory Prayers. For . . .

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_____. . . We pray to the Lord.

7. **Prayer** (Matt) (7:25-7:30 pm)

Intercessory Prayers

Decade of the Rosary

- **Dessert**