

THE CHURCH

Keys to the Kingdom



While they may not say it aloud, their reluctance to attend Mass and obvious boredom when anything “religious” is brought up make it clear that teens often don’t put church at the top of their favorite activities list. But many teens do want to know what religion has to do with Jesus, and why we need the Church.

The CONNECT section of the parent sheet connects you with the information that was presented to your teen in our last small discipleship group. The DISCUSS section contains questions that you can use to start meaningful discussion on the topic covered and how it relates to your teen's life. The COMMIT section explains to you the challenge that your teen committed to as a way to grow in his or her faith.

CONNECT

This week the discipleship group discussed how Jesus very intentionally established the Church, and built it on the rock of Peter. In Matthew 16, He bestows Peter with a new name and gives him the keys to the Kingdom. When He does so, He uses the language of “binding and loosing,” which would have triggered the memory of the Jews to the story of Eliakim in Isaiah 22. By the end of this study on the Church, teens will hopefully have a better understanding of why Jesus established the Church, and why they need to belong to the Church if they are to enter into the great, dynamic, and beautiful love story that Jesus has planned for them.



“[Jesus] said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’”

—Matthew 16:15-19

TIP FOR THE WEEK

If you would like to learn more about this topic, you can purchase a series of talks on the Church called *Set All Afire: Why the Church Still Matters* from Lighthouse Catholic Media. You can buy it as a CD or download it here:

<http://www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org/store/title/set-all-afire-why-the-church-still-matters>

DISCUSS

Jesus gave us the Church, and He gave this Church authority so that His teachings and His message would not become confused or distorted over the centuries. When we reject this authority, we reject the family of God and miss a huge part of the gift that He has given us.

Here are some conversation starters to help you discuss this topic with your teen. Be sure to share your perspectives as well.

- » Describe a time you struggled with authority—the Church, your parents, teachers, etc. How did you come to respect, or even to appreciate, the authority God has placed in your life?
- » How have you experienced the Church as the family of God?
- » Why do we need the Church? How can we share with others that Jesus established the Church, and wants us all to be part of His family?
- » Why do you think the Mass is so important to people that they are willing to risk persecution, imprisonment, and death for their faith?

COMMIT

Teens were challenged this week to offer their Holy Communion at Sunday Mass for a special intention. When they receive Jesus, they will pray that He unleashes all of the graces of this sacrament in their heart, and will ask Him to reveal the Church to them in all of her glory (in whatever way He wills), and help them to understand and follow the Church's guidance and wisdom.



“And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.’”

—Mark 4:21-23