

Chapter
17

Liturgy of the Word



Let Us Pray

Leader: Gracious God, help us trust you in all things.

“For the LORD’s word is true;
all his works are trustworthy.”

Psalm 33:4

All: Gracious God, help us trust you in all things. Amen.

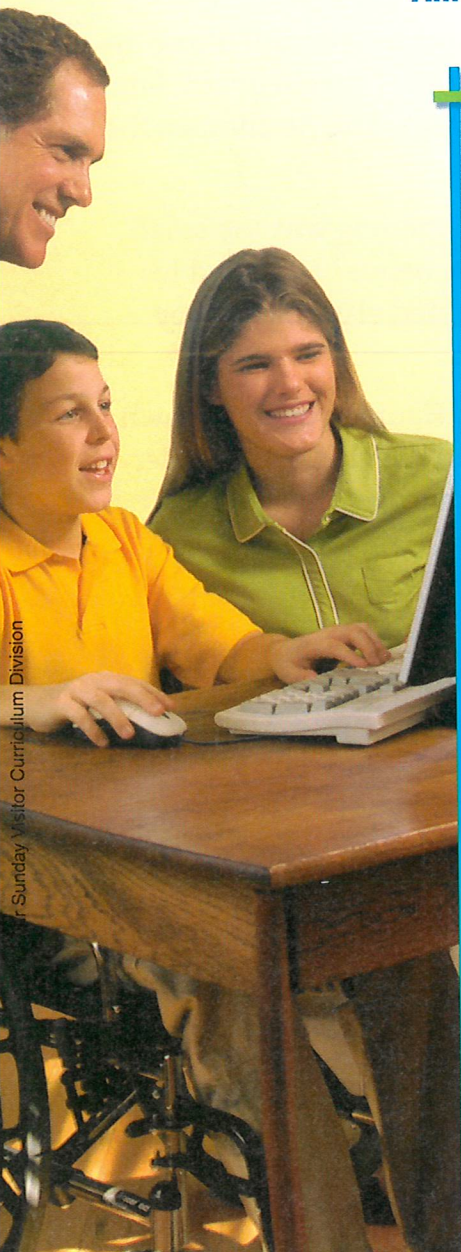
Activity

Let's Begin

● **Family Story** The family huddled around the computer screen. “Look! There’s the ship!” exclaimed one of the kids. “And there’s Great-Grandma Julia’s name on the passenger list!” They were visiting the Ellis Island Web site to find records of their family’s immigration to the United States. The blurry photograph and the old-fashioned handwriting revealed a moment in history that had influenced many of the circumstances of their lives.

What are some important and happy events in your family’s life? How did these events affect your family?

● **Tell Family Stories** Share with a partner a family story.



The Dead Sea Scrolls


Focus

Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls important?

Faith Fact

Bedouin comes from the Arabic word *bedu*, which means "inhabitant of the desert."

Family records, photographs, and books help you learn from the past about your family. Similarly, ancient documents help modern scholars understand biblical times. In 1947 some ancient documents called the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves near the Dead Sea. Here is the story of their discovery.

BIOGRAPHY

VOICES FROM THE PAST

One day in 1947, three shepherds of the Ta'amireh tribe of bedouin people were herding their goats on a rocky cliff along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in Palestine. One shepherd, Jum'a Muhammed, saw the goats climbing too high, and he climbed the cliff to bring them back.

The shepherd noticed a cave—but the opening was too small for him to enter. Could there be a treasure inside? He called his cousins, Khalil Musa and Muhammed Ahmed el-Hamed. They climbed up to see, but it was getting dark.

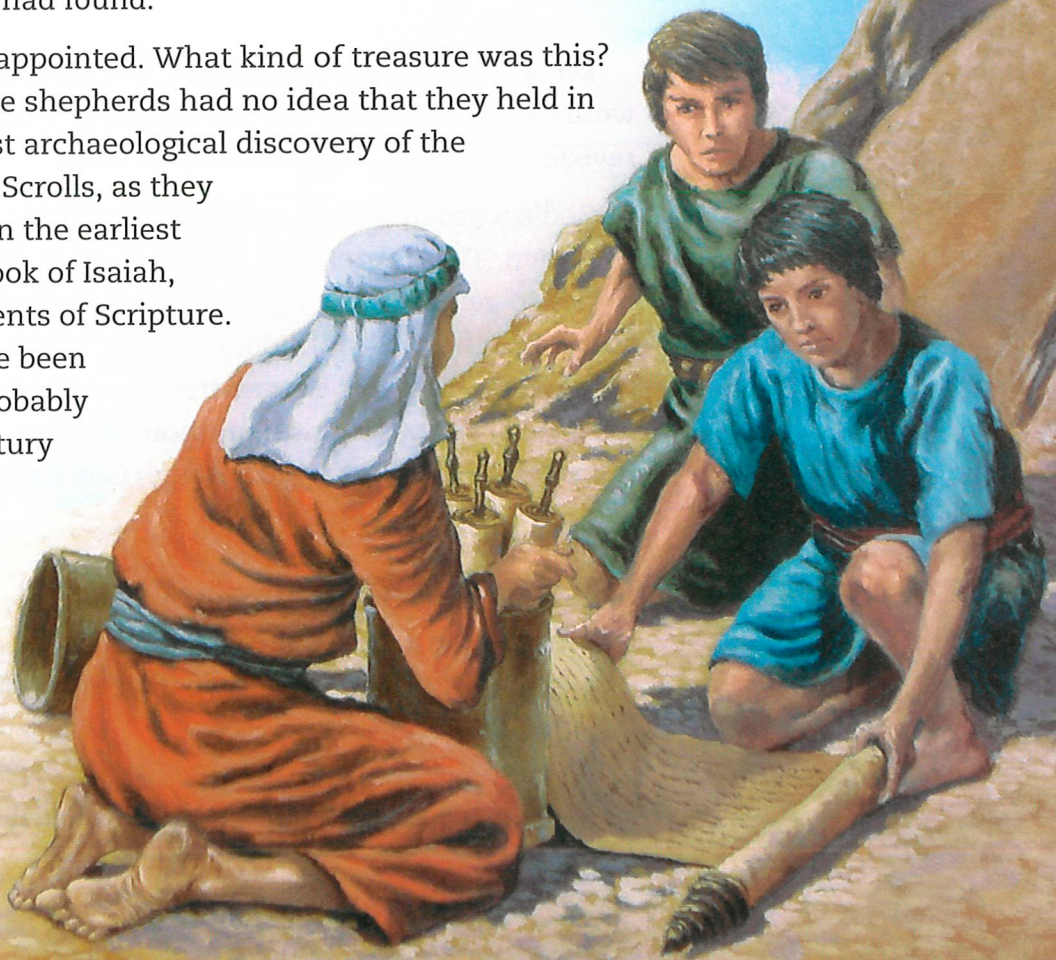
Two days later, Muhammed Ahmed el-Hamed got up at dawn. He left his two cousins asleep and climbed the cliff. The slender youth squeezed through the narrow opening and lowered himself into the cave. Tall, narrow jars lined the walls.

Muhammed Finds a Treasure

Muhammed reached into one jar after another. Eight of them were empty. The ninth was filled with dirt. Exploring further, he finally felt three bundles, two wrapped in cloth and one in leather. Muhammed pulled them out and rushed back to his cousins, eager to show them what he had found.

The others were disappointed. What kind of treasure was this? A pile of old scrolls! The shepherds had no idea that they held in their hands the greatest archaeological discovery of the century. The Dead Sea Scrolls, as they became known, contain the earliest complete text of the Book of Isaiah, as well as other fragments of Scripture. The scrolls, which have been carefully preserved, probably date from the first century before Christ.

? What would you have done if you had found such objects in a cave in Palestine? Why?



Activity

Share Your Faith

Reflect: Read *Isaiah 66:1–2*. Reflect silently on its meaning.

Share: With a partner, take turns telling what the passage means to each of you.

Act: Write three sentences that summarize your understanding of the passage.



God Speaks to Us


Focus

Why is the Liturgy of the Word important?

Every time you open the Bible, you discover a treasure—the word of God. Even though the Bible was written long ago, it still reveals a message from God to you today.

God's word in **Scripture** is not something you can interpret on your own. The Church's understanding of the message of Jesus comes to you from the Apostles and from the life of the Church and its teachers. That understanding, handed on to and further understood by each new generation of Christians, is called **Tradition**. Scripture and Tradition have one common source: the Word of God conveyed through God's revelation.



SCRIPTURE

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Colossians 3:16



How do you express your gratitude to God during the Liturgy of the Word?

Honoring God's Word

Ritual actions let the assembly know the importance of the word of God. The readings are proclaimed from the ambo, the podium-like structure situated to the side of the altar. A lighted candle is usually placed near the ambo. After the first and second readings, the reader pauses and then says, "The word of the Lord," and you reply, "Thanks be to God."

Sometimes, incense is used to reverence the Book of the Gospels. After the priest or deacon reads the Gospel, he raises the book and then kisses it to show honor and love of God's word.

Proclaimed and Preached

The Liturgy of the Word is the first of the two main parts of the Mass. In readings from the Old and New Testaments, God speaks to the heart of each person. Jesus is truly present in the word as it is proclaimed and preached in the liturgy, just as he is truly present in the consecrated Bread and Wine.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading	The first reading is from the Old Testament or from the Acts of the Apostles.
Responsorial Psalm	The assembly usually sings a response taken from the psalm, and the choir sings the verses.
Second Reading	The second reading is from one of the New Testament Letters or from the Book of Revelation.
Gospel Acclamation	An alleluia is sung, except during Lent, to express the assembly's anticipation of the Gospel.
Gospel Dialogue/ Gospel Reading	Each person traces a cross on forehead, lips, and heart before the Gospel is proclaimed.
Homily	The priest or deacon explains God's word.
Creed	Usually, the Nicene Creed is professed.
Prayer of the Faithful	The assembly prays for the needs of Church leaders, the faithful, and the world.

Words of Faith

Scripture is the holy writings of the Old and New Testaments, the written word of God.

Tradition is the living process of handing on the message of Jesus through the Church, especially through its teachers.

Activity

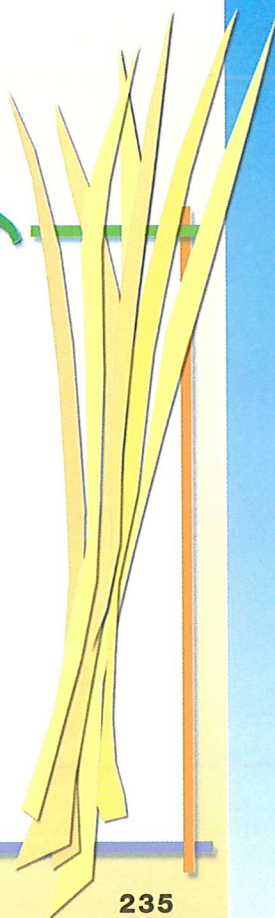
Connect Your Faith

Respond to God Write a psalm prayer in response to the gift of God's word in Scripture. Use this form:

- Write words of praise and thanks.

- Describe what God has given or taught you through his word.

- Tell what you will do in response.



Breaking Open the Word



Focus How do you live God's word?

The word of God nourishes the Christian community in the liturgy. By reflecting on the Sunday readings either before or after Mass, you allow God's word to become a real part of your life. When that happens, you live God's word.

Reflect on the Word

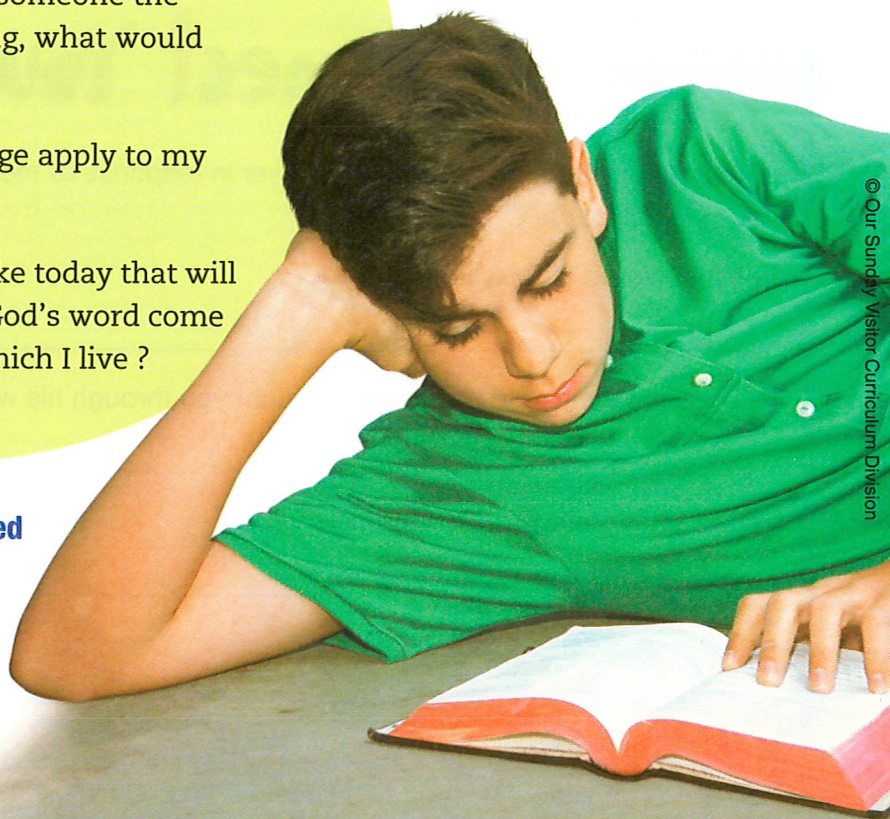
Use these steps to reflect on the Sunday readings:

- Begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open your heart to hear God's word.
- Read the Gospel or one of the other readings aloud.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **What** words in the reading are important to me?
- **If** I were going to tell someone the message of this reading, what would I say?
- **How** does this message apply to my life today?
- **What** action can I take today that will make the message of God's word come alive in the world in which I live?

? What kind of help do you need in order to hear God's word better?



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Read with Understanding With a small group, use a selection from next Sunday's liturgy and read it according to the instructions on the previous page.

Compose a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Read the passage aloud as a proclamation of God's word.

What words in the reading are important to you?

What is the message of the reading?

How does it apply to you right now?

What can you do to bring this message to the world in which we live?

Celebration of the Word



Let Us Pray

Gather and begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: God our Father, open our hearts to see the wisdom of your word.

All: Amen.

Reader 1: A reading from the Book of Isaiah.

Read Isaiah 40:28–31.

Reader 1: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



Sing together.

My shepherd is the Lord,
nothing indeed shall I want.

"Psalm 23" © 1963, The Grail,
GIA Publications, Inc., Agent

Reader 2: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

Read Ephesians 1:3–6.

Reader 2: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Reader 3: Sing Alleluia!

All: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia

Reader 4: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Read John 10:1–11.

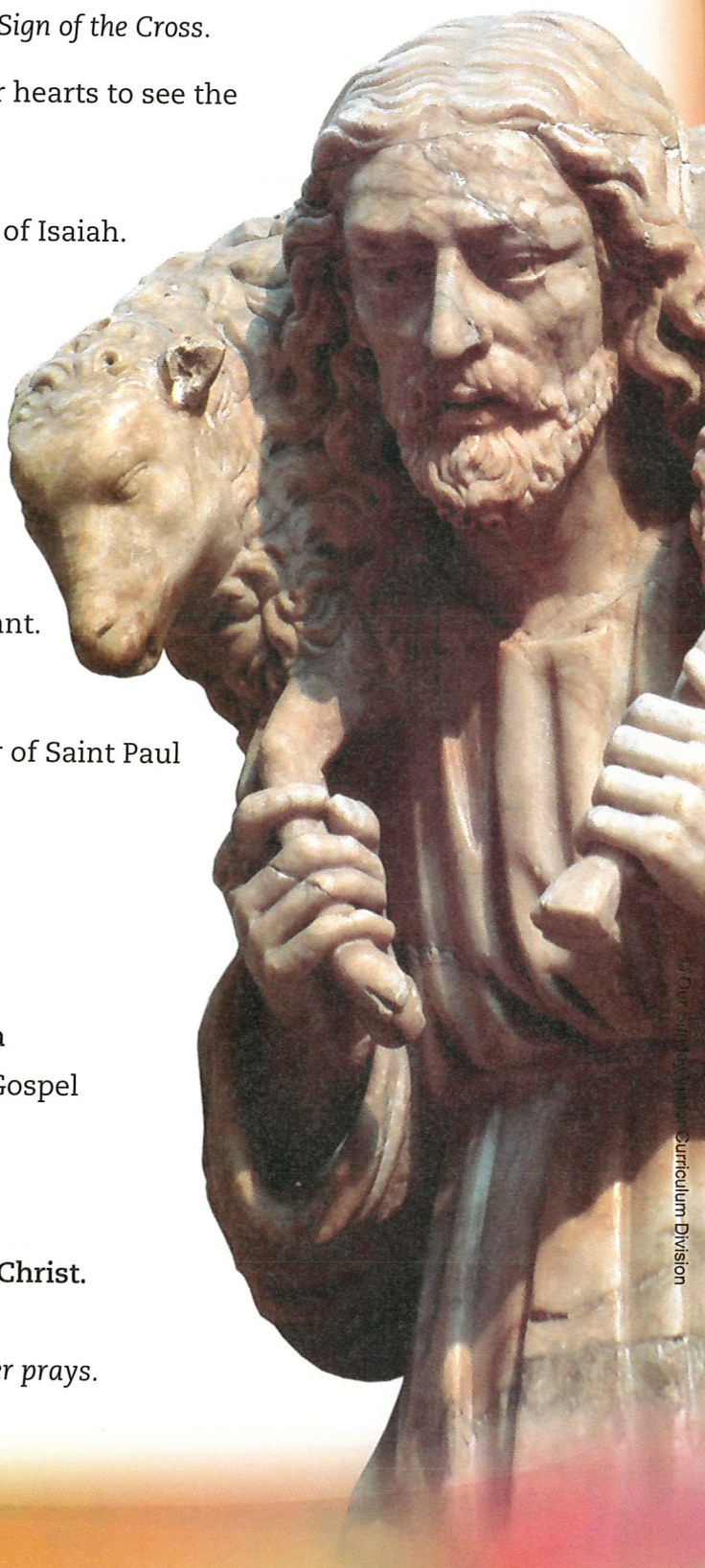
Reader 4: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: Let us pray.

Bow your heads as the leader prays.

All: Amen.



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Review

A Work with Words Complete each sentence with the correct term from the Word Bank.

1. The Bible is also called _____.
2. The living process of understanding the message of Jesus that is handed on to each new generation of Christians comes from _____.
3. The _____ explains the reading in the Liturgy of the Word.
4. Readings are proclaimed from the _____ near the altar.
5. The homily is usually followed by the _____.

WORD BANK

Acclamation
Scripture
Tradition
Nicene
Creed
candle
ambo
homily

B Check Understanding Circle the letter of the choice that best completes the sentence or answers the question.

6. The Responsorial Psalm is said or sung after the _____.
 a. first reading b. Gospel c. Creed
 d. second reading e. homily
7. Jesus is present in the _____.
 a. Eucharist alone b. Word alone c. Tradition alone
 d. Scripture alone e. Word and Eucharist
8. Participation in the Liturgy of the Word includes all of these except _____.
 a. listening b. fasting c. reflecting
 d. reading e. responding
9. Scripture and Tradition have one _____ source.
 a. historical b. biblical c. common
 d. written e. human
10. The complete text of the Book of _____ was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
 a. Job b. Ruth c. Jeremiah
 d. Isaiah e. Psalms



Family Faith

Activity

Live Your Faith

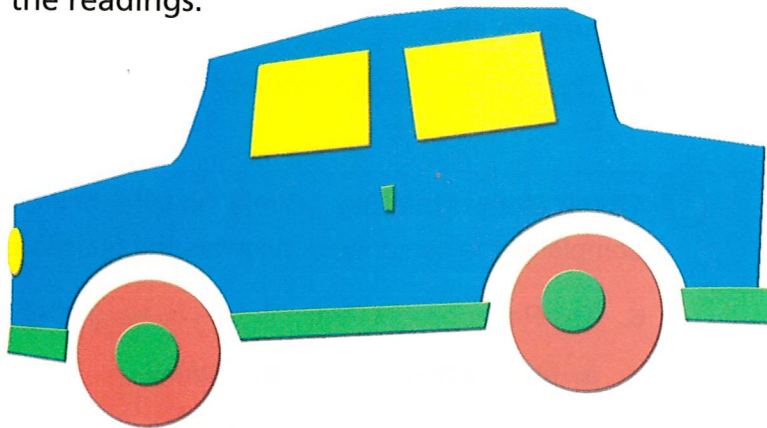
Catholics Believe

- The Word of God is conveyed through Scripture and Tradition.
- Jesus is truly present in the word as it is proclaimed and preached in the liturgy.

SCRIPTURE

Read *Matthew 26:1–30* to learn more about the events surrounding the Last Supper.

Drive Home You can prepare to meet Christ in the word by reading the Scripture readings before going to Sunday Mass. Find the readings for the next Sunday in the parish bulletin or worship aid. Choose one reading to read aloud at home. Name something you noticed in the reading. On your way home after Mass, practice “driving the word home.” Discuss the main message you heard in the readings.



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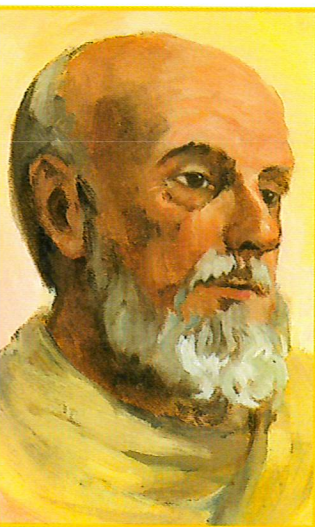
People of Faith

Jerome was a Christian, but he loved the Latin literature written before the Romans accepted the Christian faith. One night in a dream, God accused Jerome of preferring this literature to the Bible. Jerome awoke from his dream a changed person. He spent the rest of his life studying the Bible. Jerome’s knowledge of Hebrew and Greek enabled him to produce a Latin translation of the Bible, called the *Vulgate*, which the Church used for the next 1,500 years. Saint Jerome’s feast day is September 30. He is the patron saint of biblical scholars.

Family Prayer

Saint Jerome, pray for us that we may love the word of God as you did. We praise God for your brilliance and thank him for all the benefits that have flowed from your work and continue to enlighten our minds and hearts. Amen.

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▲ Saint Jerome
c. 341–420

In Unit 6 your child is learning about SACRAMENTS.