

The Church

Teaching:

- For Grades 1-3, watch [What is the Church? An Explanation for Kids](#)
- For Grades 4-8 and Adults, watch [What's Catholic?](#)



Cardinal Avery Dulles used six models to describe the facets of the Church. The following activities explore each facet and the Church's role in our world today.

The Church as the Body of Christ

The Church as the Body of Christ comes from St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians (watch [Mr. Potato Head Video](#)).

No one can be Christ in the world alone; we need one another to support one another, to grow together, to love one another, to be in community. Just like a body needs all its parts, we need each other to live out the message of Jesus in the world. We are called to be members of God's family, living the Gospel message in the world today.



[Complete this whole body activity as a family.](#)

The Church as Institution

This model of the Church is the most visible; even non-Catholics know who the Pope is. The institution of the Church ensures that the work of the Church will continue for years to come. After Jesus appointed Peter as the leader of the Church and commissioned the Apostles, and returned to Heaven, it was necessary to answer some important questions: How do you join? How are disagreements solved? When the leader of the Church dies, how is a new leader chosen? (Christ is always the head of the Church.)



Watch this video: [Popes 101](#) to learn more.

The Church as Sacrament

People need visible, tangible signs of God in the world. This is one reason Jesus instituted the sacraments. Like the pouring of water in Baptism, the sharing of bread in Eucharist, and the anointing with oil in Confirmation, the Church also conveys God's presence in the world. It is as Sacrament that we are united in love with God and the heavenly community; and it is in the actions we do together in unity (like the Mass), that we are affirmed in our identity as members of God's family.

[Invisible Ink Science Experiment](#) [Invisible Ink Craft](#)

The Church as Herald of God's Word

The Church is the official messenger of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Being witnesses to the Good News of Jesus, isn't about just talking about Jesus, it means acting like Christ in every part of our lives.



Matt Maher, a famous Catholic artist, is using his gifts and talents to herald the news of Jesus throughout the world. Here is a live music video of one of his songs, [White Flag](#).

Discuss: What gifts and talents do you have that can be used to herald the Good News of Jesus to the world?

The Church as Servant



Jesus washed the disciples' feet and tells us to do the same. The Church for centuries has been the leading organization to care for people: hospitals, soup kitchens, orphanages, schools, etc. In 2016, Catholic Relief Services touched the lives of 120 million poor and vulnerable people in 110 countries; and this is just one of our organizations! Yet it's not just the official Church who is responsible for serving others, all members of the Church are called to follow Christ's example of servant leadership. [Click here for daily ways to serve others.](#)

The Church as Community of Disciples

We are called to be disciples of Jesus. A disciple must live in the radical way Jesus did. Jesus was not afraid to confront the people in power and we as disciples, are called to do the same in our time. This means speaking out against what is corrupt in the world and speaking up for what is right. There are countless members of the Church who have throughout the centuries been examples of true disciples. Many who have paid a high cost: losing family/friends, being jailed, tortured, and even killed for speaking out. [Watch this video to learn about one such disciple, Archbishop Oscar Romero.](#)



Pray this prayer for the Church at the end of your lesson:

Dear God, as a Church, we are in need of your power and your strength. Fill us with your Spirit of love and unity among believers. We ask for help to set aside our differences and look to Christ. Help us to truly live out a life of love, move across our land in miraculous ways, turning your people back to you, drawing others to come to know you. We, the Church, need your unity and your love to stir our hearts and give direction to our days. Thank you for always being present in our Church, giving us purpose and hope. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

