

2017-2018

# SPiRiT Guide

*Using SPiRiT is a transforming process that encourages teens to wrestle with what the Sunday gospels and Church tradition ask of them in their lives.*

## PASTORAL VISION

**SPiRiT sows the Word of God in the good ground of teens' lives,** where it can multiply a hundredfold in our world.

**SPiRiT is a teaching tool for catechists and youth ministers.**

Every issue invites young people into dialogue with the Sunday gospel and Catholic tradition—to question and imagine, to find words and speak for themselves, to share and pray.

**SPiRiT makes faith sharing easy and worthwhile.** Who will help teens do soul work if parish and school groups don't? Many families will—and who else?

**If your teens are talking about everything but religion, SPiRiT**



stories and articles can change that. They prime the pump for authentic God talk. They help teens value their own God moments and life questions, work through conflicts and doubts. *SPiRiT* stories spark the deep sharing that allows teens to know and trust one another and over time share their concerns.

*SPiRiT* issues call teens to put their faith into action—to live it!

**SPiRiT initiates a habit of reflecting on the gospel** that cycles the mystery of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection into teens' lives and over a lifetime transforms the Christian into Christ.

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## HOW SPiRiT WORKS

Each *SPiRiT* issue provides four pages written just for teens that include stories about life, the Sunday Gospel in reader parts, and presentations of Christian tradition.

- **Stories and interviews** anchor each session in teens' experience.
- **Questions** invite teens to interpret what the gospel asks of them.
- **Our Catholic Faith** helps teens explore Catholic tradition in their language.
- **Faith in Action!** activities challenge teens to put the gospel into action globally and locally in their schools, parishes, and neighborhoods.

**Lesson plans inside ▶▶▶**

## SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND

Sunday's first reading from Isaiah 5.1-7 describes God as a farmer who cultivates a vineyard on a fertile hillside. The farmer digs up the dirt, digs out the stones, terraces the hillside, and plants vines where they will flourish—a picture of God planting Israel in the promised land.

In the parable Jesus invites the chief priests and elders to see themselves as the tenants of the vineyard, those charged with helping the people of Israel flourish as a holy people. Instead the chief priests and elders identify with the owner of the vineyard and judge themselves by wanting to punish and kill the rebellious tenants.

The killing of the heir of the vineyard links the parable to Jesus. For Christian Jews, Jesus is the heir of Israel, the messiah. He is God's son (in Hebrew, *ben*) who was crucified, the stone (in Hebrew, *eben*) rejected by the builders which God has made the cornerstone of a new community.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**Objective: The young people will get to know one another.**

**Icebreaker: Names** Create an accepting and hospitable atmosphere at this first *SPIRIT* session. If your group members don't know each other, have them pair off, interview each other, then introduce each other to the whole group. See also the *Introductions* section of *Icebreakers for Teen Groups*.

**Music:** See *SPIRIT XTRA* for a song that fits the gospel theme.

**Pray (cover)** Ask group members if any of them have special concerns in their hearts they wish to name or for which they wish to make a prayer petition. Make a petition or name a person or concern yourself to model how to join in this opening prayer. To conclude, invite your teens to find and pray the prayer with you.

**Objective: The young people will identify and evaluate ways they stereotype others and make choices.**

**Icebreaker: What immigrants do you know? (cover)** Invite your class to look together at the cover photos and questions. Have the group sit in two circles with young people facing each other. Explain that they will talk about the cover questions in pairs and you will ask them to rotate to a new person for the questions in the blue, red, green, and three purple backgrounds. Start with talk about the questions in the blue oval. Allow two minutes or less per question.

**Stories: Two Views (pages 2-3)** Divide your class or group in half. Have half read the story on page 2, and half read the story on page 3. Then ask two teens who read the first story to be Juan and Pedro and tell the whole group what happened in town as if they were telling their friends back at the migrant camp. Then have two teens who read the story on page 3 be Luke and Murph and tell their version of what happened. This should make teens aware of how differently each of the four boys experiences the pool game and choices they make as a result of the game.

● Raise questions 1-4. 1. *At first, teens may assume that Murph really didn't have a choice and stayed in the truck with Luke. It is important to point out that Murph is capable of choosing not to go along with Luke. The way students perceive the ending will be revealing about how they respond to peer pressure.* 2. *Teens may identify with Murph, choosing between friends and making difficult decisions; with Pedro and Juan, feeling like outsiders; or with Luke, incapable of understanding difference in others. Have teens explain why they identify with a certain character.* 3. *Luke feels humiliated that he lost and has to get even.* 4. *It would take risking the loss of a friend and maybe retaliation.*

## REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

**Objective: The young people will recognize the kind of harvest Jesus expects.**

**Who yields a good harvest? (cover)** Have six young people proclaim the gospel. Invite your group to ask questions about the gospel, so they gain skill in using their thinking ability to reflect on the gospel. Hold the questions; this passage is a complex and highly symbolic parable.

● Discuss questions 5-6. 5. *Talk about why your young people identify with the people in the parable. Note the chief priests identify with the owner. People who rent may have sympathy for the tenants or the servants who seem caught in the middle. Stress that as Christians we identify with Jesus, who was put to death, but rises from the dead and becomes the cornerstone of a new community—us.* 6. *All of us are tenants who should care for Earth but we tend to use Earth for our own ends without considering sustainability.*

## LIVING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

**Objective: The young people will recognize their capacity to choose.**

**Our Catholic Faith: Choices (page 4)** Allow time for the group to check the choices they have made today. Invite them to reflect on the questions as they finish. Have the group divide into twos or threes to talk about the patterns they see in their checks. Have the pairs form groups of four and give each person time to describe the pressures they feel.

**Human beings are free to choose (page 4)** Use the photo at top right to recall the choices involved in the story "Two Views." Have volunteers take turns reading a paragraph of the feature to the group.

**Faith in Action (page 4)** Direct the small groups to do item 1, and create a visual (item 2) that shows what the world might look like. Have them use the visual to tell the whole group. Item 3 suggests identifying steps in making a choice. Invite the group to act out what other alternatives Murph might do.

**Concluding prayer** Gather in a circle. Have a volunteer read aloud Jesus' final words in the gospel. Invite your group to say how they think Jesus is the cornerstone of our Church and our lives. Invite them to make petitions for their group and their concerns. Pray together again the prayer on the cover, upper left.