

Profile of an Eighth-Grade Child

(AGES 13–14)

Young people on the threshold between childhood and young adulthood are often critical and self-absorbed. This is a time of rapid growth, especially for girls, who develop more quickly than boys. Eighth-grade young people seek approval from peers and challenge authority but, at the same time, rely on key adults to continue to play crucial roles in their lives, especially when facing difficult situations. Eighth-grade young people can deal increasingly with abstractions and need to explore, reflect, and find meaning in new experiences. At the same time, they find comfort in familiar rituals and traditions.

Children at this age

- ◆ become preoccupied with self and are strongly influenced by peers.
- ◆ struggle for freedom and identity and need to channel idealism and energy constructively.
- ◆ experience conflicts of conscience as a result of increasing independence.
- ◆ are critical of adult inconsistency but are inconsistent themselves.
- ◆ tend toward absolutism in value judgments; are legalistic regarding religion, principles, and experience.
- ◆ withdraw somewhat from family, yet need support and direction from significant adults.
- ◆ need to challenge adult authority and begin to reevaluate religious notions of God, faith, and the Church.
- ◆ respond well to heroes and role models from past and present.
- ◆ need an atmosphere of encouragement, humor, respect, and trust with understanding of their negativity, moodiness, and regressive behavior.





The Eighth-Grade Program

The eighth-grade program of *Christ Our Life: New Evangelization Edition—The Church Then and Now*—is devoted to the study of God’s faithful love as it is revealed in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Your child will grow in knowledge and love of the Church.

New Gather and Go Forth pages at the end of every chapter reveal to children a fundamental truth—to be Catholic is to evangelize. Children grow in their knowledge and love of God and recognize the missionary heart of the Church. Inspired by the Good News, they share their most precious gift, a lived faith, with others.

Unit 1 deepens your child’s understanding and appreciation of the Church. Your child will explore the Church as a mystery and come to see Mary as the best image of the Church. Your child will reflect on the importance of prayer and learn that every Christian is called to share in the mission of Christ and his Church.

Unit 2 helps your child grow in understanding the four Marks of the Church—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Your child will learn that all Catholics are united as one in the Church. The Church is holy because it was founded by Jesus, is guided by the Holy Spirit, is led to be holy, and is called to help carry out Christ’s saving mission. Your child will learn that as a follower of Christ, he or she is called to help serve the mission of the Church.

Unit 3 is designed to help your child identify key people and events in the Church’s history. Your child will learn how the Holy Spirit guided the Christians of the first century, how Roman persecutions threatened to eliminate the Church, and how heresy divided it. He or she will find inspiration in the actions of the martyrs and defenders of the faith and will learn about the Church Fathers and the monks. Your child will see how the Church in the Middle Ages was a light for a dark world of fighting and feudal power.

Unit 4 continues to identify key people and events in the Church’s history, beginning with the problems of the Great Western Schism, the Black Death, the Renaissance, and the Protestant Reformation. Your child will learn about the Catholic Reformation, the Council of Trent, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution. He or she will focus on the Church’s response to rationalism at the First Vatican Council and on the effects of the Industrial Revolution. Your child will study some of the changes the Second Vatican Council made and become familiar with the beginnings of the Church in North America.

Unit 5 helps your child realize what it means to live a Christian life. Your child will learn about his or her obligations under the new covenant of Jesus, how to recognize the seven Capital Sins, and how to practice virtues that free us from them. He or she will reflect on what it means to love God above all things. Your child will consider his or her Christian responsibility to work for peace, truth, and justice.