

Chapter 8 **The Vine and the Branches**

This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. *John 15:12*

To the Parents:

In chapter 8, your child learned the following:

- The Body of Christ includes the Communion of Saints.
- Christians are united with Jesus and with one another.
- Christians are called to reach out in love to all people.
- The Body of Christ needs the gifts of each of its members.

The friends of Jesus knew him well. They looked into his eyes, heard his voice, ate with him, laughed with him, and felt sorrow with him. They were truly connected to their friend. Two thousand years later, those who believe in Jesus are also truly connected to him when they live out his life, death, and resurrection in holiness and loving service to others.

Friendship with Jesus develops over a lifetime as people discover his good qualities as described in the Gospels and in the traditions of the Church. Jesus is a friend who listens, heals, comforts, challenges, loves, accepts, and shares in suffering and death. Faith, like friendship, is grounded in forming and maintaining a relationship with Jesus. Building faith, fellowship, and friendship with God the Father, son, and Holy Spirit is an ongoing process.

With Your Child:

1. Read the Biblical passage containing the vine and the branches metaphor (*John 15:4-5, 9*) and discuss its meaning.
2. Talk about prejudices and exclusions that you or others face, and pray to God for the strength to overcome resentment and the will to forgive.
3. Think of times when you were the cause of people being excluded or ridiculed and make a conscious effort to reach out as a friend. Talk about those times as a family.
4. Together read the story about the Syrophenician woman on the Review and Explore page.