

**NEW
COVENANT
DISCIPLES**

—Luke 1:28

and he came to her
and said, "Greetings,
favored one!
The Lord is with you."

A

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

SESSION 1

Mary & Gabriel: Encounter with Mystery



The Annunciation, Gustav Doré



words to remember

The first one ever, oh, ever to know
of the birth of Jesus,
was the Maid Mary, was Mary the Maid
of Galilee,
and blessed is she, is she who believes.
Oh, blessed is she who believes in the Lord,
oh, blessed is she who believes.
She was Mary the Maid of Galilee,
and blessed is she, is she who believes.

—The Hymnal 1982, 673 (Verse 1)

prayer

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

My Message from God

I sit beneath a flowering dogwood,
Sunshine dancing all around.
the world about me is full of life,
To each, its beauty has been found.

I enjoy everything I see,
The bird, the trees—life.
I see no faults in any of these,
I see only innocence and light.

I did not always see the world this way,
God opened up my eyes.
He let me see the beauty,
One that never dies.

I sat beneath this dogwood once before,
Before I had opened my life.
I had not seen the purity,
My eyes only saw the strife.

While I was thinking weary thoughts,
An angel came from above.
The angel spoke pure words from God;
God has taught me how to love.

—Nancy, Grade 7

Youth prayer

O God,

You gave me strength when I was weak, and you helped me when times were hard. I ask you to forgive me because I did not choose your paths from the beginning. I gave in to temptation, the kind that does not come from love. You sent an angel to help me, when my life was full of confusion. My life is no longer meaningless; I am filled with joy. I thank you for helping me to see the beauty of life, and ask your forgiveness because I could not see it sooner. Amen.

—Nancy, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Matthew 1:20-21

Tuesday—Hebrews 1:14

Wednesday—Matthew 28:18

Thursday—Daniel 3:28

Friday—Daniel 6:22

Saturday—Hebrews 11:3

voices



She struck the angel as hardly old enough to have a child at all, let alone this child, but he'd been entrusted with a message to give her and he gave it.

He told her what the child was to be named, and who he was to be, and something about the mystery that was to come upon her. "You mustn't be afraid, Mary," he said.

As he said it, he only hoped she wouldn't notice that beneath the great golden wings, he himself was trembling with fear to think that the whole future of creation hung now on the answer of a girl.

—Frederick Buechner



—Luke 1:39

In those days Mary set out
and went with haste to a
Judean town in the hill
country, where she entered
the house of Zechariah and
greeted Elizabeth.



SESSION 2

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

Elizabeth & Mary: Someone to Talk to



words to remember

prayer Lord, make us instru-
ments of your peace.
Where there is hatred let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where
there is discord, union; where there is
doubt, faith; where there is despair,
hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy. Grant that
we may not so much seek to be con-
soled as to console; to be understood
as to understand; to be loved as to
love. For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are par-
doned; and it is in dying that we are
born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and
its righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you;
Alleluia!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you, seek, and
ye shall find,
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you;
Alleluia!

The Hymnal 1982, 711

COMMENTARY

God Has Not Forgotten

A single rose, sitting there.

Beautiful, yet fragile.

This is what most friendships are like.

Fragile.

But there is a special person out there.

Just waiting to find you.

You can share your triumphs, joys, and hardships.

You can seek advice from this person,

And they can look for help from you, too.

You can be yourself, and not worry

About your friendship coming to a sudden end.

Put your faith in God,

For God has not forgotten any of his children.

There is a special friendship that you can find

If you will listen

To God.

—Nancy, Grade 7

Youth prayer

O God,

I had closed my mind to your calls. I have tried to open my heart and listen to you. I fear that I am not in tune to your knowing call. I am worried about so many things that I have forgotten to listen to you, God. Forgive me because I have put aside what is most important, my faith in you. And lead me to the special person to whom I will tell only the truth, confess my sins, and share happy times with. Lead me, O Lord, so that I may better understand your righteous ways, and so I may come in peace to your everlasting and loving kingdom.

Amen

—Nancy, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Luke 1:57-58

Tuesday—Luke 1:59-64

Wednesday—Luke 1:65-66

Thursday—Luke 1:67-71

Friday—Luke 1:72-75

Saturday—Luke 1:76-79

voices



Pious legend holds that Mary, keeping her Secret to herself, took to the hills to assist her old cousin, then six months along.

In the days between the old and new, each became her sister's keeper, Tears and fear were safe between Elizabeth and Mary as awesome joy. Each surely needed to let herself go. The two grew as friends, working and praying and resting in God.

—Mary Lou Sleeve

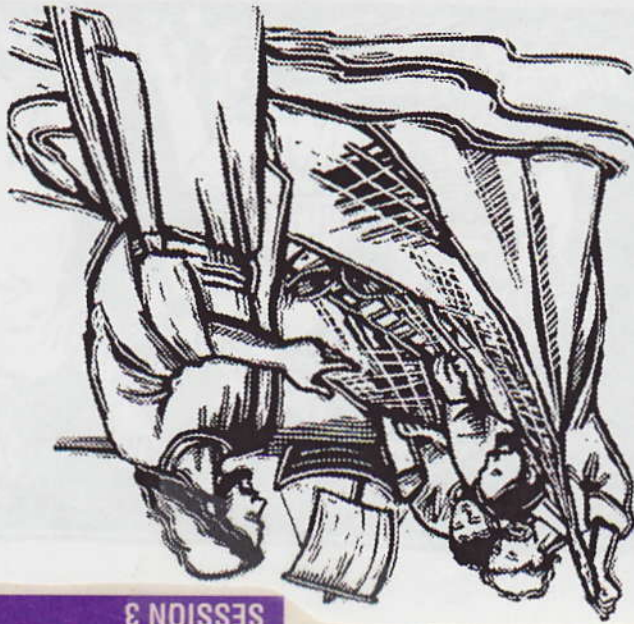
The ideal condition would be, I admit, that all should be right by instinct; but since we are all likely to go asking the reasonable thing is to learn from those who can teach.

—Sophocles (adapted)

Teachers affects eternity; they can never tell where their influence stops.

—Henry Brooks Adams (adapted)





Communication Resources
Used with Permission

They came to him. And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out and to proclaim the message. . . .
—Mark 3:13b-14



SESSION 3
NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

Follow Me: Join Us

words to remember

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended to heaven, and is seated on the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.

prayer Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

We are all called to share in Jesus' ministry; to be a part of the Body of Christ. Jesus invites us all and helps us to develop our strengths and beliefs. Being a part of God's Kingdom can mean learning the scriptures and going to church. Joining Jesus' ministry is like joining the Church. Once we are baptized we begin our journey with God. Our many trials show how devoted we are to God.

We are all so different in our personalities but as a Church family we are equal and united. We all share the Word of God and the peace of God every week with each other. Being called and joining are very different. Being called, being invited and joining is when you want to be a part of a particular group. We are very lucky because we don't have to go through the embarrassment of asking to join the Church. Jesus has already invited us at baptism.

—Ashley, grade 7

Youth prayer

Thank you God for making me a part of your heavenly Kingdom.

Thank you for guiding me on the right path and showing me how to make the right choices.

Show me how to use my talents for you so others can see your love through me.

Your love is greatly appreciated by the people of the world that need it.

Through Jesus our Lord, Amen.

—Ashley, grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Matthew 4:18-22
Tuesday—Galatians 5: 22-26
Wednesday—
I Corinthians 12:4-12

Thursday—Matthew 22:34-40
Friday—Matthew 28:16-20
Saturday—Philippians 3:12-14

voices



A call may not be so much a call to "do" as to "be."

—Listening Hearts, p. 9

... I call you by your name, I surname you, though you do not know me.

—Isaiah 45: 4

God calls each of us. There is a variety of calls, and no one call is inherently better or higher than any other.

—Listening Hearts, p.8

The call goes forth, and is at once followed by the response of obedience. The response of the disciples is an act of obedience, not a confession of faith in Jesus.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Dorothy Linthicum

—Mark 10:21

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."



SESSION 4

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

Rich Young Ruler: Missed Opportunities



words to remember

"For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Matthew 7:14

prayer Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

Saying yes to God leads us to new happenings and opportunities. Our lives are strung together with events. Saying yes and responding to God in a good way really changes our lives.

When we say no to God we miss out on opportunities. Like the rich young man, we are sad when we can't respond to God the way he wants us to. Even if we can't say yes at one point in our lives, God still gives us chances to say yes. God is always going to give us his love no matter what happens in our lives.

—Ashley, Grade 7

Youth prayer

Dear God, thank you for always being beside us when the going gets tough. We never will be alone as long as you are here to walk with us on our journey of life. Help us to have the courage to say yes to you even when there is peer pressure and we feel alone. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

—Ashley, Grade 7

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

- Monday—Mark 10:26-31
- Tuesday—Deuteronomy 6:5-9
- Wednesday—Joel 2:12-17
- Thursday—Galatians 3:3-5
- Friday—Luke 2:51-52
- Saturday—Matthew 6:19-21

voices



Though my flesh and my heart should waste away,
God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

—Psalm 73:26

It's easier to change a perception than a behavior.

—Leo Rippey

To be or not to be. That is the question.

—Shakespeare



—Acts 15:39

he disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.



SESSION 5
NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES



Elizabeth Wolf

Paul & Barnabas: Resolving Conflict



words to remember

For those who do not yet believe,
and for those who have lost their faith,
that they may receive the light of
the Gospel,
we pray to you, O Lord.

Litany for Ordinations
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 549

prayer

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

We all share the task of doing God's work,
morning, noon and night.

We continuously work hard to get the task
just right.

Sometimes, together things may go okay,
and our tasks are finished with ease.

We have enough time left over to thank God
on our knees.

But it's not every day that we together finish the
tasks or pray each day.

We have our disagreement; go our separate ways.

But as long as God stays in our minds,
and our task is carried out,

We will please God in our own ways,
on our own special route.

—Brittany, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Thank you, God, for all your creations. We will work to keep them. Together we share your will, but as one, we understand your will. We will work together with you to teach others to understand. We will work alone with you to understand ourselves. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen.

—Brittany, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Acts 13:1-3

Tuesday—Acts 13:46-47

Wednesday—Acts 14:1-3

Thursday—Acts 14:9-12

Friday—Acts 14:13-15

Saturday—Acts 15:12-18

voices



Let there be spaces in your togetherness.

Work is love made visible. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

—Kahlil Gibran

As long as we are on earth, the love that unites us will bring us suffering by our very contact with one another because this love is the resetting of a body of broken bones—even saints cannot live with saints on this earth without some anguish. Without some pain at the differences that can come between them. There are two things people can do about the pain of the disunion with other people—they can love or they can hate.

—Thomas Merton

The word conflict means, literally, "to strike together." Conflict is the collision of differences.

Conflict is a necessary element of the created order by which all life is sustained.

—Sam Portaro

Let no one despise
your youth, but set the
believers an example in
speech and conduct, in
love, in faith, in purity.
—1 Timothy 4:12



SESSION 6

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

Paul & Timothy: Learning From Each Other



words to remember

Young men and maidens,
old and young together.
Let them praise the Name of the Lord,
for his Name only is exalted,
his splendor is over earth
and heaven.

Psalm 148:12-13
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 806

prayer Lord, make us instru-
ments of your peace.

Where there is hatred let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there
is discord, union; where there is doubt,
faith; where there is despair, hope; where
there is darkness, light; where there is
sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so
much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be
loved as to love. For it is in giving that we
receive; it is in pardoning that we are par-
doned; and it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

Having friends of different ages helps us both grow and understand more about our Christian faith. Working with younger children, lets us see "the simpler things" that God gives us, like teddy bears and toy trucks. Also younger children show us just how much we need to love others and how much we need to be loved ourselves, especially by God.

By befriending someone older, there is always someone there to answer a question, or give advice, whether it's about Christianity, school, friends, or anything at all. (Also, they can take you to the movies your parents don't want you to see.)

—Lorna, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear God,

Please watch over and keep safe all my friends. Ease their worries, calm their fears, heal their wounds, and most of all, show them your love. Thank you. Amen. I love you.

—Lorna, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6

Tuesday—Isaiah 51:7-8

Wednesday—Acts 2:17-21

Thursday—II Timothy 2:22-26

Friday—Luke 2:41-52

Saturday—Jeremiah 1:7-8

voices



Then afterward I will pour out my

spirit on all flesh; our sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Joel 2:28

So I say to you, my friends, that even though we must face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed—we hold these truths to be self evident that all are created equal.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King

Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.

Bob Dylan

I never dared be radical when young For fear it would make me conservative when old.

Robert Frost



The Hymnal 1982, 528 (Verses 1, 2)

Lord, you give the great commission:
"Heal the sick and preach the word."
Lest the Church neglect its mission and the
Gospel go unheard,
help us witness to your purpose with renewed integrity;
with the Spirit's gifts empower us for the
work of ministry.
Lord, you call us to you service: "In my name baptize
and teach."
That the world may trust your promise, life abundant
meant for each,
give us all new fervor, draw us closer in community;
with the Spirit's gifts empower us for the
work of ministry.

Words to remember

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred let us sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there
is discord, union; where there is doubt,
faith; where there is despair, hope; where
there is darkness, light; where there is
sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so
much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be
loved as to love. For it is in giving that we
receive; it is in pardoning that we are par-
doned; and it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

prayer



Priscilla & Aquila: Doing God's Work

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

SESSION 7



" . . . and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers."

—Acts 18:3

Elizabeth Wolf

COMMENTARY

Together we worked to make everybody see the way God works his ways. It takes time to convert the belief and the routine of our days.

People come together and believe in the Lord most high. They can answer their questions about the Lord, their reasons for their whys. The lesson here was that they believed in what Paul had said. They now tell others and read to them what he said.

—Brittany, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear God, we pray for you to teach us to forgive those who have doubted us so that we may continue to work together to do your work here on earth. That we may learn to do like Priscilla and Aquila did and help those who need our help to believe in you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, forever and ever. Amen.

—Brittany, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—I Corinthians 1:4-9
Tuesday—I Corinthians 1:10
Wednesday—I Corinthians 1:18-19

Thursday—I Corinthians 2:1-5
Friday—I Corinthians 2:9-10
Saturday—I Corinthians 1:26-31

voices

How very good and how pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

—Psalm 133:1

Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

—Matthew 18:20

Life is enhanced when there is a clear and organized response to the redemptive activity of God in the world at large.

Life is enhanced when caring for persons is viewed and acted upon as the work of the congregation.

—James Fenhagen

—1 Corinthians 12:24b-25

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.

B



Photo of original art.

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES
SESSION 8

Many Parts: One Body



words to remember

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

—Ephesians 4:4-6

prayer

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

I think that the main points in this passage hang on the idea that if we are good people, standing together, God will give us strength and happiness. We won't get anywhere by being selfish, but if we stand firm and do good, we will be rewarding ourselves. What the world thinks is "cool," God doesn't care about. If we believe in God we will never go astray.

—Nick, Grade 6

Youth prayer

Dear God, I need not be worried about what's cool, because I know that if I have faith and do good, I will be happy and have internal power, even if I may not look prestigious in today's world. Help me hold onto this belief even when it may seem silly. Amen.

—Nick, Grade 6

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Mark 1:1-8

Tuesday—John 3:25-30

Wednesday—Mark 9:33-37

Thursday—I Corinthians 1:10-15

Friday—John 14:15-17

Saturday—Ephesians 4:1-6

voices



A kingdom divided against itself...cannot stand.

—Jesus

The only answer in this life, to the loneliness we are all bound to feel, is community.

—Dorothy Day

When you put a diverse group together, the only thing they have in common is God.

—Adrienne Carr

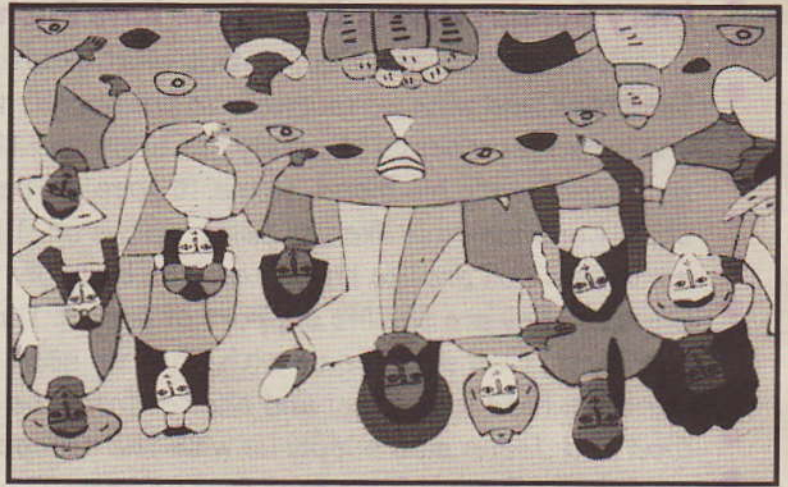
If we are accepted with our limitations as well as our abilities, community gradually becomes a place of liberation. Discovering that we are accepted and loved by others, we are better able to accept and love ourselves.

—Jean Vanier



—John 20:31

These are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”



“

SESSION 9

NEW COVENANT DISCIPLES

Circles in Christ: Being Disciples



words to remember

“Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?”

“I will, with God’s help.”

From the Baptismal Covenant
The Book of Common Prayer

prayer

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

COMMENTARY

Every Sunday during Church, we have Eucharist to celebrate the Last Supper. But what exactly is the bread and wine we receive? We are taught that the bread represents the body of Christ and the wine represents his blood. To me, it goes deeper than that. Communion is like the earth we live on. The earth and soil are like the bread (the body of Christ.) They are the life support of people. Through the earth, God supplies us with what we need to live our lives: food for energy and shelter from the rain. God and Jesus also supply us with the necessities we need to live our lives: food for the energy to help others and shelter from the raining blows of others. The water of the earth is like the wine (blood of Christ). We could not live without water to drink. When Jesus died on the cross, he shed his blood for us so that we might live. Like water, we would not be alive if it weren't for Jesus' shedding his blood.

—Helen, Grade 8

Youth prayer

Dear Lord, Help me to eat the food of the earth so that I might have the energy to help others, the Strength to be as forgiving as you, the Wisdom to be as understanding as you, the Heart to be as loving as you. Help me to drink the water of the earth so that I might have the courage to be as brave as you, the Spirit to be as happy as you, the Hope to be as giving as you, the Knowledge to be as thoughtful as you. Help me to remember you not only at the time of the celebration of the Last Supper, but as I look around me at everything I know and see. Help me to know that you are the true giver of life to me. Amen.

—Helen, Grade 8

DAILY DEVOTIONS

reflections

Monday—Luke 11:17-23

Tuesday—I Peter 5:6-7

Wednesday—Matthew 11:25-30

Thursday—Matthew 7:15-20

Friday—John 15:5-17

Saturday—Matthew 28:17-20

voices



Before going to Bosnia I thought the kids would be different from American kids. But the scary thing is, they weren't. It shows that war can happen anywhere and touch anybody. Everyone always says the point of remembering the Holocaust is to make sure it won't happen again, but after talking to the kids in the former Yugoslavia, I learned how easily it can happen again.

—15 year-old Manhattan teen, Newsweek, January 8, 1996.

God's might to direct me, God's power to protect me, God's wisdom for learning, God's eye for discerning, God's ear for my hearing, God's word for my clearing.

—Saint Patrick

To eat this particular meal together is to meet at the level of our most basic humanness, which involves our need not just for food but for each other. I need you to help fill my emptiness just as you need me to help fill yours....The next time you walk down the street, take a good look at every face you pass and in your mind say Christ died for thee. That girl. That slob. That phony. That crook. That saint. That damned fool. Christ died for thee. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee.

—Frederick Buechner in *Wishful Thinking*

