

# Enrichment: Character

## The Precepts of the Church

The precepts of the Church are certain obligations that the Church has given us to help us stay on the right track in our walk with God. The precepts are minimum obligations, but the Church encourages us to go beyond them to further our spiritual growth. These are the precepts of the Church according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC 2042–43):

1. “You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.”
2. “You shall confess your sins at least once a year.”
3. “You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.”
4. “You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.”
5. “You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.”

We fulfill the first precept by going to Mass and avoiding unnecessary work every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation. [You can find a list of Holy Days of Obligation on page 321 and on the parent and student portals.](#)

The second and third precepts are given for our spiritual well-being. Going to confession and receiving the Eucharist regularly give us the grace we need to live as people of virtuous character.

The fourth precept is about fasting and abstinence. By fasting from certain foods, we become more detached from worldly things and more open to loving God and others. People ages eighteen through fifty-nine are required to fast (have no more than one full meal and two small meals) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Those older than fourteen are obligated to abstain from eating meat on those days and every Friday in Lent.

The fifth precept requires the faithful to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability. We can do this through tithing. Tithing is an act of giving a portion of an individual’s or family’s income for the service of God. This is normally done by monthly donations to your parish or diocese.

### Journal Reflection

**How can you help provide for the needs of your parish church?** Write your answer on the journal page. [Journal pages are available on the parent and student portals.](#)

