

# The Visible Hierarchical Church

**Lesson Focus** | The Church’s governing structure is different from other governing structures in that it is supernatural. It was established by Christ, acts with his authority, and is guided by the Holy Spirit. The Pope is the visible head of the worldwide Church, bishops are the heads of the Church in their dioceses, and priests serve under them by helping govern individual parishes. Deacons assist priests in their work. The outlines of this structure were established by Christ and developed over time to meet the people’s needs.

## 1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Tell your child a story about or a memory of your favorite priest.
- Read Acts 1:15–26 aloud.

## 2 | summarize

**Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:**

Example: *Priests are part of the visible, hierarchical structure of the Church. Although the structure of the Church has grown and expanded as the Church has grown and expanded, it remains supernatural in its origins and follows the outlines of the structure Christ established.*

## 3 | review

**Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**

1. Define *diocese*. (*The part of the Church over which a bishop has authority.*)
2. Define *bishop*. (*A successor of the apostles who has received the fullness of the priesthood and is the spiritual leader of Catholics in his diocese.*)
3. Define *priest*. (*Someone who is chosen by God to pray and offer sacrifice on others’ behalf.*)
4. Who is the vicar of Christ in the world? (*The Pope.*)
5. What are two honorary titles the Pope can give? (*Monsignor and Cardinal.*)
6. What is the name of the body of officials who assist bishops and Popes in governing a diocese or the universal Church? (*Curia.*)

### References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 6, pp. 39–42
- Sacred Scripture: Acts 1:15–26
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 77–79, 758–69, 833, 858–96, 1536–1600



## 4 | apply

Help your child apply this week's lesson by asking the following questions:

1. How is the governing structure of the Church different from the governing structure of a country or a city?
2. What problems could arise if the Church's governing structure were like a city's governing structure?
3. How is the Church's governing structure more like the governing structure of a family? Why is that appropriate?

## 5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

## 6 | follow up

During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:

1. Memorize Ephesians 4:11.
2. If possible, attend Mass at your diocesan cathedral sometime in the next month.
3. Learn online about the election of Pope Saint Fabian and the Holy Spirit's role in the vote.

*And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers.*  
—Ephesians 4:11

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