

## Teaching All Young People

During adolescence, many young people are capable of comprehending complex ideas and concepts. As catechists, we show our respect for God's creation by accepting all young people as they are and by mentoring them as they grow in their personal relationships with God. In addition to recognizing each individual's unique qualities, we are mindful that young people are also experiencing many physical, social, intellectual, and emotional changes. We acknowledge that developmental age may not always coincide with chronological age. We stay alert for opportunities to assist young people with special needs. *Confirmed in the Spirit* effectively links faith formation to the lives and real-world experiences of young people by using lessons and activities designed to appeal to a variety of learning styles and developmental levels.

### Getting to Know a Ninth-Grade Young Person (Ages 14–15)

Young people in ninth grade are transitioning from childhood through adolescence and eventually into adulthood. Navigating the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional changes they are experiencing can be challenging for them and for the adults who care for them. Establishing trust and open communication with young people is extremely important for teachers, catechists, parents, and other adult caregivers. Most young people this age are beginning high school and adjusting to a new school, new teachers, and new friends. Peers exert a strong influence in their lives. Ninth-grade girls often place great importance on close friendships, whereas boys tend to socialize in groups. Young people may not wish to engage as much with their parents and other family members.

Most young people are capable of comprehending complex ideas and concepts during their adolescent years. Receiving moral guidance and encouragement to follow their faith tradition can provide structure and stability in the midst of many changes. Additionally, because of our fast-paced technological age, young people face new pressures and situations. As they strive to become independent and self-reliant, young people still need generous doses of loving guidance from responsible adults.

# CONFIRMED IN THE SPIRIT

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

### Young people in ninth grade often

- have increased intellectual ability and creativity.
- are good at problem solving.
- like to engage in discussions.
- need to feel valued.
- are trying to define who they are and where they fit in.
- search for independence but still require support, guidance, and encouragement.

## MORAL DEVELOPMENT

### Young people in ninth grade often

- have improved decision-making skills but don't use them consistently.
- understand consequences of their actions.
- try to make decisions on their own.
- are concerned with fairness.
- have conflicts of conscience as a result of increasing independence.
- involve themselves with social media and communication technology, such as talking on the phone, texting, and social networking.
- remain vulnerable to influences of social media and need to understand the ethical and moral implications of these forms of communication.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Young people in ninth grade often

- spend less time with parents and more time with friends.
- are annoyed by younger siblings.
- do things in large groups.
- perform well on cooperative learning assignments.
- are influenced by peer pressure but are beginning to think more independently.
- do more activities independently.

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

### Young people in ninth grade often

- question or reject childhood beliefs.
- are questioning their own relationship with God.
- need parents and other adults to understand and respect their need to question faith and values.
- wish to become more involved in their faith community.
- are becoming interested in social issues.
- have a deeper appreciation of traditions and rituals within their family and the Church.
- encourage others to join them in a faith community activity.