

Chapter 3

Featured Story

Love Is the Greatest
Commandment
(Mark 12:28–34)



Background Focus

Today's chapter focuses entirely on the Greatest Commandment as Jesus taught it: to love God and to love others as we love ourselves. In teaching this commandment, Jesus summarized and simplified the Law of God in terms that anyone, even a child, can understand. This demonstrates his insight and brilliance as a teacher. Of course Jesus makes clear that this love includes the Ten Commandments and other teachings of God's Law. (See Matthew 23:23–24.)

This chapter also introduces the term *Sacred Scripture* as an alternative for *the Word of God* and *the Bible*. We look to Scripture for our knowledge and understanding of God and his plan for us. If we want to follow Jesus, we will listen to his Word in Scripture and then love as he loved.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 3 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet. Invite your child to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Engage Activity

- Invite your child to think of all the people they love. Record their answers on a piece of paper. (*Possible responses might be: Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc.*)
- Encourage your child to expand their answers by asking: "Who else does Jesus tell us to love?" (*Possible responses might be: those who are poor, hungry, homeless, alone, friendless, etc.*)

Lesson Goals

- to identify that we follow Jesus by loving God and others
- to recognize that we can learn about love in Sacred Scripture
- to explain that we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully

Lesson at a Glance

 **Go** (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

Engage Activity

 **Seek** (30 minutes)

Featured Story

Core Learning Activity

 **Find** (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of

Forgiveness

Lesson Wrap-Up

Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 3 activity booklet
- two large, red precut paper hearts for each child
- white construction paper, one piece for each child; red pencils; gold or yellow crayons or markers

Music Suggestions

- "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself," by Wonder Kids (Wonder Workshop)
- "Love One Another (Lullaby Mix)," by Little Praise Party and Yancy (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)

- Ask your child to read over the list and add any other people they can think of. (*Suggestions: people who are disabled in some way, people who are gravely ill, people in prison.*)
- Congratulate your child on thinking of so many people to love. Explain that in this chapter we will learn more about the greatest commandment that Jesus gave us: the commandment of love.

† Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Mark 12:28–34 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1554–1555).
- Direct your child to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1556 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous pages.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1556–1557. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the Bible story. After reading, ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who came to Jesus with a question? (*A teacher of the Law. "The Law" is God's Law that he gave to Moses on Mount Sinai.*)
 - What question did this teacher ask? (*"Which commandment is the most important of all?"*)
 - Jesus replied with two important commandments. What was the first one? (*To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.*)
 - What is the second important commandment? (*Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.*)
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bible open. *Answers: 1. 6, 2. 5, 3. 9, 4. 3, including infant, 5. hanging clothes on a line, 6. a baby, 7. orange, 8. a bundle of sticks*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1557 to your child.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - At the end of our lives, Jesus will not care how much money we made or how smart we are. He will ask us, "How much did you love?"
 - The greatest thing we can do in life is to love God with all our heart, and to love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves.
 - When we love, we are like God. Loving God and others is so important that God made it a law.
- Follow the suggestion in the last paragraph of Understand It! Lead a spontaneous prayer in these or similar words:
 - "God, fill our hearts with your love more and more. Help us to grow in love for you. Help us to grow in love for our families, our friends, our neighbors, and all people everywhere. Amen."

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 1557, or read it aloud yourself.
- Give two red paper hearts to your child, and ask them to follow the directions in Live It!
- Allow your child to display the paper hearts in a special place.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1557.
- Act out the Tell It! frames with your child by speaking the short dialogue pictured.
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Greatest Commandment Booklet

- Explain that because we follow Jesus we want to follow the Law of Love he gave us, the **Greatest Commandment**. We can make a reminder of this law to take home. We can make it look like a page from the Bible.
- Give your child a piece of white construction paper and a red pencil. Help your child place the paper horizontally in front of them and fold it in half, from side to side. Then have them reopen the paper so the crease is in the middle of the paper, running from top to bottom. On the left half of the paper, have them write "LOVE GOD" in capital letters at the top. Have them continue with the words "with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." On the right half, have them write "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" at the top and continue with "as you love yourself."
- Ask your child to close the page to create a cover. On the cover, have them print in gold or yellow crayon or marker, "THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT." They may draw an outline in red around these words.
- Ask your child to share why loving God and our neighbor is so important. (*Responses might include: Because Jesus gave us this commandment; because when we love we are like God; because when we love we follow God's Law.*)
- Invite your child to consider how this Bible-page reminder might help your family. (*Responses might include: We will know what Jesus teaches about love; when we see it we will remember not to start fights with our brothers and sisters; we will remember to share.*)
- Conclude by reminding your child that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. Remind your child that love is a decision and an action. It is not something we do for one day, but something we do for the rest of our lives. Jesus will help us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can love God, ourselves, and others more fully.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Remind your child that we learn about God in the Bible. Explain that another name for the Bible is **Sacred Scripture**. Tell them that when we read Sacred Scripture, we are reading God's Word. Give them the example of today's reading from the Bible, in which we learned that Jesus gave us the greatest commandment of all, the commandment to love.
- Explain that your child will likely hear God's Word in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well. Tell them that after the priest greets us, we make the Sign of the Cross with the priest and he says a few words to encourage us to trust in God's mercy. Next we may hear God's Word from the Bible. Explain that the priest may read a short passage from Sacred Scripture, or he may ask us to read.
- Tell your child that reading from the Bible—both in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and in our daily lives—allows us to hear about God's love and forgiveness and helps us to love God and one another more fully.
- Recall that Sacred Scripture can help us see when we may not have loved as fully as we are called to do, or we may have sinned. Remind them that the Good News is that we can trust in God's loving-kindness, and we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Remind them that in this sacrament, we receive God's grace, God's new life, to help us love God, ourselves, and others.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Bible, Sacred Scripture, 2. God, 3. neighbor, 4. God's Word, 5. Reconciliation*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Ask your child to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite them to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input, and write answers on a piece of paper.

- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, and circle them:
 - We follow Jesus by loving God and others.
 - We learn about love in Sacred Scripture.
 - We can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 3 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite your child to turn to page 1995 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and read together "A Prayer to Jesus."
- You may want to play a piece of music, if you have time, on the theme of loving one another.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.