

Reconciliation Home Guide



**Discover God's
Treasures**



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Welcome

Welcome to *Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures!*

We at Saint Mary's Press are excited to partner with you in the important ministry of preparing your child for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Through this new and unique program, your child will be led on an adventure of discovery as they explore the rich and beautiful significance of this sacrament in their life. *Go Seek Find* will engage and inspire your child, creating a spirit of excitement and joy around their journey toward encountering Jesus through the treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This program was developed with the real needs of your child at its center. The core text of this program is the Saint Mary's Press® *Catholic Children's Bible*. By using a Bible designed specifically for children and engaging with the Featured Stories within it, your child will explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation through the biblical lens of Jesus' life and works and learn more about their faith in language they can understand. Your child will also experience interactive core activities that bring the chapter lessons to life in a fun and memorable way. And your child will learn important information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and reinforce this new knowledge through a variety of activities and family learning opportunities offered in the activity booklets that accompany each lesson.

Together, you and your child will *Go Seek Find* the incredible treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. May an ever-expanding awareness of Christ's presence in our lives be the source of faith, hope, and love for all of us!

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

**"Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened to you."**

(Matthew 7:7)

Program Overview

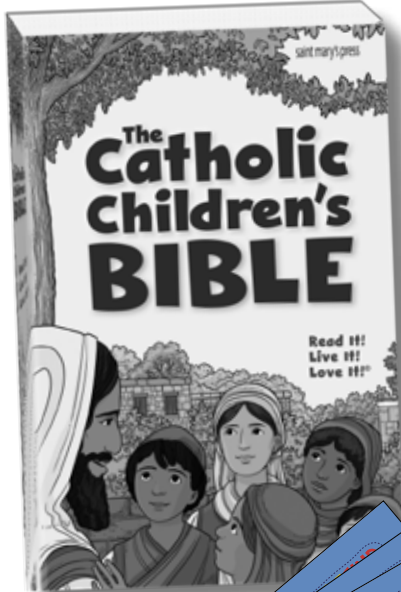
Program Outline

| Chapter Number | Chapter Title | Lesson Goals | Featured Story | Key Words |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1 | Jesus Is Always with Us | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation | The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18) | sacraments, grace, sin, Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confession, conversion |
| 2 | We Trust in God's Mercy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that God is a loving Father to identify that God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins to explain that God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation | The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32) | mercy |
| 3 | We Follow Jesus' Message of Love | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 | Love Is the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28–34) | Greatest Commandment, Sacred Scripture |
| 4 | We Follow the Ten Commandments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us to explain the difference between a sin and an accident | God Gives His People the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:16–20:17) | Ten Commandments, accident |

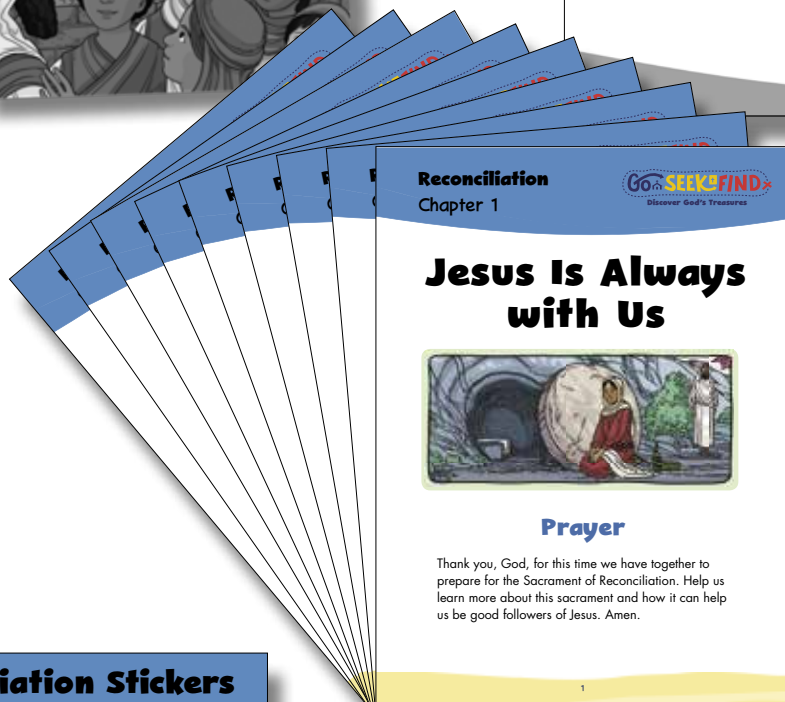
| Chapter Number | Chapter Title | Lesson Goals | Featured Story | Key Words |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 5 | We Ask for Forgiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin | Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50) | mortal sin, venial sin |
| 6 | Jesus Loves and Cares for Us | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep to recall that Jesus seeks us out when we stray, and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that in the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned | Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–18) | penance, Act of Contrition, contrition |
| 7 | Jesus Helps Us Always | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution | Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27) | disciple, absolution, conscience |
| 8 | The Holy Spirit Teaches Us | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide to identify that the Holy Spirit helps us in an examination of conscience as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to review the key words and important concepts of these chapters in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation | Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us (John 14:15–31) | examination of conscience |

Program Components

The Catholic Children's Bible



Home Guide



Activity Booklets

Stickers



Treasure Map



Understanding the Components

Home Guide

Background Focus provides quick, easy-to-read insights about the theme of the chapter.

Lesson Goals shows the key desired outcomes of the chapter.

A list of **Materials Needed** helps you adequately prepare for the lesson.

Two **Music Suggestions** are offered for possible incorporation into the lesson.

16


Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Featured Story

The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)


Jesus Is Always with Us





Lesson Goals

- to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now
- to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments
- to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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 1 activity booklet

Music Suggestions


- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are "doorways to the sacred." There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (*Roman Missal*). Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Penance*).

 **Go (10 minutes)**

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 1 activity booklet and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember 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.

The **Go** part of the lesson begins with an opening prayer that is found in the activity booklets.

After the opening prayer, an **Engage Activity** will spark interest and create excitement for the lesson ahead.

Engage Activity

- Invite your child to recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (Answers might include: born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.)
- Emphasize the point that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Remind your child that this is what Christians celebrate each year on a very special and holy day. Ask them if they can name that holy day, the greatest day of the year. (Easter)
- Tell your child that they will read about Jesus rising from the dead and will explore why that is important for us today.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1702–1703. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite them to read the title on the page, and ask your child to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean. (Jesus was crucified on the cross, but he rose again and is now risen from the dead.)
- Ask your child to share what they know about Mary Magdalene. (She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his grave.)
- Read the Featured Story. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension such as these:
 - > Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (She did not know where Jesus was.)

The **Seek** part of the lesson invites direct interaction with the Bible and the learning of key sacrament-related themes through important Bible stories.

- > What did the angels ask her? ("Woman, why are you crying?")
- > What did Mary Magdalene answer? ("They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!")
- > What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (She saw Jesus.)
- Remind your child that this Bible story is the story of the very first **Easter Sunday**, when Jesus rose from the dead.

Chapter 1

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite your child to use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- 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 Bible Says

- Invite your child to stand with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to Simon Says.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - > We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - > When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" you will crunch down, put your hands over your head, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then you will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - > When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" you will lift your arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means, "Praise God!" Then you will put your hands at your sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - > If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - > If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be given one strike. If you get three strikes, we will declare "Game over."

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind your child to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note.

- Remind your child of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The **Find** part of the lesson relays key information about the sacrament.

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Tell your child that Jesus, rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.
- Explain that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell your child that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- List the Seven Sacraments on a piece of paper, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask your child if they know that they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell your child that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on your paper.
- Remind your child that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:
 - > Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to "the Sacrament of Penance" or "the Sacrament of Reconciliation."
 - > Often we call this sacrament "**confession**," because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, "We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon."
 - > Sometimes it is called "the sacrament of **conversion**," because this sacrament helps us to convert, or change, for the better.

Each lesson is anchored by a **Core Learning Activity**. This activity presents an aspect of the chapter theme in a fun, engaging, and memorable way.

- Help your child understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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 from your child, and write their answers on a piece of paper.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, and circle them:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Make the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead as you say: "____, God calls you by name. You are God's child. You belong to God." Encourage the child to respond, "Amen."
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about belonging to God, being children of God, being called by name, or following Jesus.
- End with the Glory Be prayer (see page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then 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.


The **Lesson Wrap-Up** encourages recall and invites your child to mark their progress on the interactive treasure map.

Activity Booklets

Reconciliation
Chapter 1

Go SEEK & FIND
Discover God's Treasures

Jesus Is Always with Us



Prayer

Thank you, God, for this time we have together to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us learn more about this sacrament and how it can help us be good followers of Jesus. Amen.

1

Each activity booklet begins with a **Prayer** that is used as the opening prayer for that chapter's lesson.

Use the Bible passage on page 1702 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (John 20:11-14,16) to find the answers. Write the number of the correct word or phrase on the line.

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Mary Magdalene | 3. Jesus |
| 2. tomb | 4. two angels |

_____ She stood crying outside the tomb.

_____ The place where the body of Jesus had been

_____ They stood where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

_____ They asked her why she was crying.

_____ She answered, "They have taken away my Lord."

_____ She turned around and saw Jesus.

_____ He said, "Mary!"

Complete each sentence with one of these five words. Write one letter on each line and in the circle to spell the correct word.

| | | |
|------------|------------|---------|
| better | Baptism | forgive |
| conversion | confession | |

- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask God to _____ us.
- The word _____ means "change."
- In the Sacrament of _____, we became children of God.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also called _____.
- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we change for the _____.

Now write down the letters in the circles, in order. What do they spell?

What is it? God's life in us!

2

3

Page 2 (on left) features an activity that relates to content discovered in the Bible.

Page 3 (on right) features an activity that relates to the sacrament content in the chapter.

The **Family Page** provides helpful information about the chapter and additional key ideas to bring the lesson to life at home.

Family Page



Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions, and material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are “doorways to the sacred.” There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays: “By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity” (*Roman Missal*).

Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ’s living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice offering absolution and forgiveness of sins, in God’s name.



Family Strategies

Our first community is the family, and learning to live in harmony at home is a first lesson in living in harmony with others. Harmony often involves following rules and procedures for the good of all. Present and enforce these rules and procedures as a source of family pride and identity. For example: In our family, we do not use electronics during meals; in our family, we do not call names; in our family, we serve guests first. You may soon hear a child explaining proudly to friends, “*In our family . . .*”

[The quotation on page 4 of this activity booklet is from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation [ICEL] [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011], page 529. Copyright © 2011, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission of the ICEL. [Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops].



Family Activities

- Congratulate your child on beginning to prepare for Reconciliation. Talk about the sacrament together, and present the sacrament as an opportunity to experience God’s love and forgiveness and a chance to start over.
- Read the Scripture passage from this lesson together, either the shorter version (John 20:11–14,16) or the longer one (John 20:11–29). Remind your child that the Risen Jesus will be present at the Sacrament of Reconciliation but will not be seen.
- Watch the YouTube video “In Good Hands (Baby Dedication Song),” by Ben Chilcote (5:04), which expresses a parental perspective on caring for “God’s child.” Emphasize to your child that we are precious to God and are in God’s good hands our entire lives.

Pray It!

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

Risen Jesus, be with us each moment, especially as [name of child] prepares to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us all to become good followers of Jesus. Amen.



Treasure Map and Stickers

A **Treasure Map** helps track progress through the chapters in a fun and engaging way that also reinforces what was learned.



Stickers are provided that contain key images from the different chapters. These stickers will be used to track progress on the treasure map.

Stickers are also provided to encourage engagement with the Bible and a way to mark verses and other meaningful content.

Key Elements of the Program

Home Guide

The home guide divides each chapter into three main parts: “Go,” “Seek,” and “Find.” The “Go” section begins with an opening prayer and continues with a short activity to engage your child in the topic of the day. The “Seek” section involves exploring Scripture related to the sacrament of focus and a core learning activity centered on the chapter theme. The “Find” section provides a deeper look into the meaning of the sacrament and concludes the lesson with a summary and a closing prayer.

Activity Booklets

A fun and colorful activity booklet is provided for each chapter. These booklets include the opening prayer used for each lesson, two activity pages that support the learning of the chapter, and a family page that offers background on the chapter topic, strategies to integrate the values of Christian life into family life, and suggested activities related to the lesson to be done at home.

Additional Booklet

The Sacrament of Reconciliation resources include an additional booklet that contains all of the key words used in the program, an outline of the Rite, and an examination of conscience.

Treasure Map

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has its own treasure map. This unique and colorful resource is designed to build excitement as your child journeys through the various chapters on the way to their first celebration of the sacrament. Using stickers with key images from the Bible stories to be read in each chapter, your child will track their progress on a fun, engaging treasure map as they recall the key themes and lessons offered throughout the program.

Stickers

A sticker sheet is included in the resources for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to the stickers that allow the tracking of progress on the treasure map, there are stickers that allow your child to mark Featured Stories or key verses in the Bible that have special significance to them. This immerses your child in the Bible and helps them retain key lessons and messages throughout.

Music Suggestions

Music can add another wonderful dimension to this program. Each chapter includes two song suggestions that correspond to the chapter theme. These songs can be purchased and downloaded online. For a complete list of all of the songs for the program, please visit the online resources for this program at www.smp.org/resourcenter/books. Of course, you may also wish to add your own favorite hymns or songs such as those that are popular in your parish community.

How to Use All These Elements at Home

The Home Guide contains everything you need to bring all the elements of *Go Seek Find* together for successful use at home. Although you may have to make some adjustments for this program to fit your time frame or the individual gifts and interests of your child, you will find a complete easy-to-use structure from which to start. The current lesson is designed to take 60 minutes from start to finish; however, this can vary depending on the unique pace at which you and your child move through the lesson.

Quickly reviewing the content and flow of a chapter before working with it will be especially helpful in making decisions about how best to tailor it for your child. Once you cover the first chapter, you will begin to find your own unique rhythm and will be able to make quick adjustments to further refine the program for a perfect fit.

If you need additional ideas to supplement the content of the lesson, you can easily add some of the activities and ideas from the Family Page in each lesson's activity booklet. If you find the lessons are running longer than the time you have, you might consider skipping the Engage Activity and saving the activities in the booklets to be done at a different time.

You can involve the entire family in these lessons by gathering and preparing materials so that everyone can participate in the Core Learning Activity. This can make learning more fun, and it encourages learning across different ages. You will likely find that you enjoy these activities as well!

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Featured Story

The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)



Lesson Goals

- to identify that Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now
- to recognize that we meet Jesus in the sacraments
- to express that we confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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 1 activity booklet

Music Suggestions

- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

Jesus Is Always with Us

Background Focus

Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Given to the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.

The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are "doorways to the sacred." There is a particular place in the Mass in which the water and wine are mingled in the chalice, and the priest prays, "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity" (*Roman Missal*). Our humanity is the water. The divinity of Christ is the wine.

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Order of Penance*).

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 1 activity booklet and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember 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 recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (*Answers might include: born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.*)
- Emphasize the point that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead. Remind your child that this is what Christians celebrate each year on a very special and holy day. Ask them if they can name that holy day, the greatest day of the year. (*Easter*)
- Tell your child that they will read about Jesus rising from the dead and will explore why that is important for us today.

t Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1702–1703. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.
- Invite them to read the title on the page, and ask your child to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean. (*Jesus was crucified on the cross, but he rose again and is now risen from the dead.*)
- Ask your child to share what they know about Mary Magdalene. (*She was a friend to Jesus. She loved Jesus very much. That is why she was visiting his grave.*)
- Read the Featured Story. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (*She did not know where Jesus was.*)
 - What did the angels ask her? (*"Woman, why are you crying?"*)
 - What did Mary Magdalene answer? (*"They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"*)
 - What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (*She saw Jesus.*)

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1703.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - Mary Magdalene was very sad when Jesus died. She did not expect to see him again.
 - When she went to the tomb, she did not find his body. She thought someone had taken it. She was very upset.
 - Then she turned around and saw Jesus! At first she didn't know it was Jesus. But then he said her name, and she knew who it was.
 - Jesus was alive after all! Mary was so happy! She ran to tell the other disciples. (See John 20:18.)

Live It!

- Read Live It! on page 1703.
- Ask your child to share what they would write in their diary for that first Easter Sunday if they were Mary Magdalene, using these questions:
 - What would they say they were thinking or feeling as they went to the tomb?
 - How did they feel after they saw Jesus and he spoke their names?
- Explain that we are happy that Jesus rose from the dead because it means that he is always with us. Explain that he is still with us today in a very special way.
- Pray this short prayer with your child: "Thank you, Jesus, for rising on that first Easter Sunday."

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite your child to use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- 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 Bible Says**

- Invite your child to stand with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to Simon Says.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" you will crunch down, put your hands over your head, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then you will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" you will lift your arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means, "Praise God!" Then you will put your hands at your sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be given one strike. If you get three strikes, we will declare "Game over."

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind your child to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note.

- Remind your child of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.

- Tell your child that Jesus, rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.

✕ Find (20 minutes)**God's Treasure of Forgiveness**

- Explain that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell your child that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- List the Seven Sacraments on a piece of paper, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask your child if they know that they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell your child that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on your paper.
- Remind your child that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:
 - Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to "the Sacrament of Penance" or "the Sacrament of Reconciliation."
 - Often we call this sacrament "**confession**," because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, "We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon."
 - Sometimes it is called "the sacrament of **conversion**," because this sacrament helps us to *convert*, or change, for the better.

- Help your child understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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 from your child, and write their answers on a piece of paper.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, and circle them:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Make the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead as you say: "____, God calls you by name. You are God's child. You belong to God." Encourage the child to respond, "Amen."
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about belonging to God, being children of God, being called by name, or following Jesus.
- End with the Glory Be prayer (see page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then 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.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Featured Story

The Forgiving Father
(Luke 15:11–32)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that God is a loving Father
- to identify that God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins
- to explain that God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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 2 activity booklet

Music Suggestions

- "God Is Love," by The Praise Baby Collection (Flicker Records/Big House Kids)
- "Amazing Grace—My Chains Are Gone," by St. John UMC Children (VBS Babylon; available on YouTube, 3:27)

We Trust in God's Mercy



Background Focus

The parable commonly known by the title Prodigal Son or Lost Son is called The Forgiving Father in the Featured Story of *The Catholic Children's Bible* on page 1620. This change of emphasis from the son to the father is deliberate and reflects the main point of the story. Although it is important that the son recognized his self-destructive ways and decided to repent and return home, it is even more important that he was received with mercy and compassion by his father.

Jesus' story here is not only about our human weaknesses but about God's loving kindness, or mercy, for all of his children. This is the message of this chapter. Future chapters will explore our human tendency to take the wrong path, and our need to be honest with ourselves, to be sorry, and to ask for forgiveness. But in this chapter, the emphasis is on God's mercy. God's mercy always welcomes us home.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 2 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 with your child, taking turns reading the sentences. Say "Amen" together, and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Engage Activity

- Remind your child that running away from home is never a good idea, and could be very dangerous. Tell them that they will be hearing a story today that Jesus told about a young man who ran away from home.

- Ask your child: "How do you think I would feel if you ran away from home? How would I feel when you came back?" Invite your child to respond.
- Explain that in today's story, we will find out how this young man's father reacted when his son left, and when his son finally came back.

† Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Luke 15:11–32 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1619, 1622).
- Direct your child to turn next to the Featured Story on page 1620 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 1619 and 1622.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1620–1621. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Invite your child to read the title on page 1620, and ask what *forgiving* means. (*not holding a grudge against someone; not bringing up someone's past mistakes or hurts*)
- Read aloud the full story as noted (Luke 15:11–32), beginning on page 1619. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What did the younger son ask his father for when he wanted to leave? (*his share of the property*)
 - Where did the son go? What did he do with all the money? (*The son went to a far country and spent all the money in foolish ways.*)
 - Why did the son decide to go back home? (*He was hungry.*)
 - What did the son say to his father? (*"I have sinned against God and against you."*)
 - What was the father's reaction when he saw his son coming? (*The father was filled with love and pity, and called for a celebration.*)
- Did the father scold the son? Did he tell him what a bad son he had been? (*No. The father welcomed the son back and forgave him.*) Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bible open. *Answers: sinned, son, ring, shoes, dead, found*

Understand It!

- Take turns reading the paragraphs of Understand It! on page 1621, beginning with the first paragraph and dividing the second paragraph into two or three parts.
- Ask your child to summarize what they just heard in the reading, and review these key points:
 - The son asked his father for a lot of money and then left home.
 - He spent the money foolishly and had nothing to show for it.
 - When he was hungry, he decided to go home. Even before he could say he was sorry, his father hugged him and welcomed him back.
 - Our Father in Heaven is like this father. God will always love us, welcome us back, and forgive us when we are sorry.
 - Jesus told this story so that we would always trust in God's forgiveness and **mercy**. God's mercy is God's loving-kindness toward all people.

Live It!

- Read the content in Live It! on page 1621 aloud.
- Ask your child to respond to the questions.
- Ask your child to describe what the paragraph says God is like. (*a loving parent who always welcomes us back, even when we have disobeyed his commandments*)
- Pray this short prayer together: "Thank you, God, for loving us like the father loved his son in the story. Thank you for your mercy and forgiveness. Amen."

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1621.
- Invite your child to describe what is happening in each of the images.
- Encourage your child to summarize the Bible reading, using the images in Tell It!
- 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

What Happens Next?

- Explain that when we do wrong, we hurt others. Ask your child to share how the son in the story hurt the father. (*The son not only wasted money but hurt the father's feelings by leaving home.*)
- Emphasize that even though the father was hurt he still forgave the son because he loved him. Remind them that this is what God does: he forgives us because he loves us.
- Ask your child to listen as you read the following scenarios. Discuss the "What happens next?" after each scenario.
 - Sylvie is mad because her family has plans to visit her grandmother on the same weekend as a friend's birthday party. Sylvie won't be able to go to the party. She goes to her room and shuts the door in anger. Later, she feels badly and tells her mother that she is sorry. What happens next?
 - Trevor sees a basketball at the curb. He knows it belongs across the street. But he has always wanted a basketball. He takes it home. Later, he feels badly. He goes across the street and knocks on his neighbor's door. What happens next?
 - Lisa and Elvira are friends. Kaylee wants to be friends with Elvira, so she tells a lie about Lisa. Later, Kaylee feels badly. She talks to both Lisa and Elvira and says she is sorry for lying. What happens next?
 - Darren waits at the bus stop with Josh, who is in kindergarten. Darren upsets Josh every morning by telling him that he dresses funny and no one likes him. Darren feels badly about it. He tells Josh he is sorry and won't tease him again. What happens next?
- Ask your child to choose a scenario to act out with you. Together, plan to add words and actions to the outline of the story. Have the actor playing the part of the mom, the neighbor, the friend, and the kindergartner do what God would do (that is, forgive the hurt). As time permits, choose more than one scenario to act out. If possible, present the scenario to other family members.
- Invite your child to share the character or scene they remember best from this activity. Elicit reasons for their responses.

- Tell your child that God is our Father who forgives us when we are sorry. People can act like God and forgive us when we are sorry. When we forgive others, we are being like God.
- Remind your child that sometimes people will not forgive a hurt and do not always act like God. Tell them that sometimes people hold grudges and will not forgive, but God will always forgive us if we are truly sorry.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Ask your child to recall what sacrament they are preparing for. (*the Sacrament of Reconciliation*) Remind them that this is the sacrament in which we ask for forgiveness and our sins are forgiven. Tell your child that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.
- Explain that at the very beginning of the sacrament, the priest will greet us and welcome us. Tell your child that we then pray together the Sign of the Cross. Explain that making the Sign of the Cross reminds us that we are baptized and that we belong to God. Tell your child that the priest will usually say something like, "May God, who has enlightened every heart, help you to know your sins and to trust in his mercy" (*Rite of Penance*).
- Remind your child that they learned about God's mercy in the Bible story about the Forgiving Father. Recall that Jesus taught us that God was like the forgiving father in the story. Explain that God is full of mercy and will always love us and forgive us.
- Ask your child to share what mercy is. (*Mercy is the loving kindness of God toward all of his children.*) Tell them that when we go to confession, we trust in God's mercy, and we trust that if we are truly sorry for our sins, God will forgive us.
- Ask some questions to check for comprehension:
 - What happens at the beginning of the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*The priest greets us; we make the Sign of the Cross.*)
 - What does the priest remind us to do? (*to trust in God's mercy*)
 - What do we confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*our sins*)

➤ What is mercy? (*the loving kindness of God toward all his children*)

- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity.
Answers: 1. Reconciliation, 2. mercy, 3. Father, 4. forgives, 5. grace

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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 their answers on a piece of paper.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, and circle them:
 - God is a loving Father.
 - God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins.
 - God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 2 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.
- Ask your child to turn to page 1990 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us, the Our Father. If your child knows it by heart, encourage praying it without looking at the page.
- Pray aloud: "God our Father, help us to be good and loving sons and daughters. Help us to be like you in our words and actions. Amen."
- 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.

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 1993 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

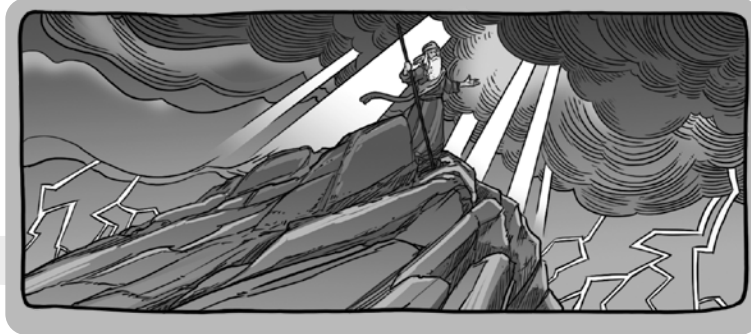
For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.

Chapter 4

Featured Story

God Gives His People the Ten Commandments
(Exodus 19:16–20:17)

We Follow the Ten Commandments



Lesson Goals

- to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy
- to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us
- to explain the difference between a sin and an accident

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 4 activity booklet
- black markers
- white construction paper, precut to look like two Commandments tablets (Fold paper lengthwise. At the top, cut an arc. When opened, this will look like two tablets.)
- Saint Mary's Press® Big Book *Moses and the Ten Commandments* (optional)

Music Suggestions

- "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," by CedarMont Kids (CedarMont Music, LLC)
- "The Ten Commandments Song," by The River's Voice (The River's Voice)

Background Focus

In the last session, we learned that Jesus expects that his disciples will keep his commandment of love. This commandment of love also includes following the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, given to us by God out of love, articulate what is called "natural law": an innate and universal understanding within human beings of what is right or wrong. God's gift of the Ten Commandments codifies these innate human understandings. Saint Thomas Aquinas summarized the first principle of the natural law as: "Good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided" (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 94).

The Ten Commandments formed the basis of the governance of God's people as they wandered in the desert and in the more than three thousand years since. The Ten Commandments are the backbone of society as we know it. This session will help your child understand that God's rules are given out of love, to help us live safe and happy lives as his children and as loving brothers and sisters to one another.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 4 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 together. Say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child close the activity booklet for now.

Engage Activity

- Ask your child to write down three good rules for your family. Explain that these may be rules that are already followed (like "wash hands before eating") or they might be new rules.

- Conclude with the following or similar words:
 - We have rules for school and rules for home. God has rules too! God has rules for us because he wants to keep us safe and happy. Today we will learn more about some of the rules from God.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Exodus 20:1–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 131 and 134).
- Direct your child to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 132 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 pages 131 and 134.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 132 and 133. Point out the man standing on the mountain. Explain that this is Moses. When God's people were slaves in Egypt, God chose Moses to lead them out of slavery.
- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story. Explain that long before God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us and help us, God was teaching his people the best way to live. Tell your child that God gave us the rules we call the **Ten Commandments**.
- Before reading the Bible story on page 132, read aloud Exodus 19:16–24 on page 131. Ask your child to follow in the Bible. These verses set the scene for the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then read the Bible story aloud and ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who was Moses? (*Moses was the leader of God's people.*)
 - What did God give to Moses? (*the Ten Commandments*)
 - What are some of the commandments that God gave us? (*Worship no god but me. Do not use my name for evil purposes. Observe the Sabbath. Respect your father and your mother.*)

➤ Why did God give us the Ten Commandments? (*He wants us to love him and to love ourselves and others. He wants us to be happy and peaceful together.*)

- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bible open. Answers: 1. *Worship*, 2. *generations*, 3. *evil*, 4. *Sabbath/holy*, 5. *Respect*, 6. *steal*, 7. *accuse*, 8. *house/donkeys*

Note: You may want to supplement this Featured Story with the Saint Mary's Press® Big Book *Moses and the Ten Commandments*.

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 133, or invite your child to read.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - Rules keep us safe and happy.
 - God gave Moses, and us, the Ten Commandments so that we could be safe and happy.
 - The first three commandments teach us how to love God.
 - The next seven commandments teach us how to love other people.
- Ask your child to turn to the Ten Commandments on page 1988 in the back of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Take turns reading each of the commandments. Point out the first three commandments about loving God and the next seven commandments about loving other people.

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 133, or read it aloud yourself.
- Invite your child to pray with you: "Dear God, help us to follow your commandments today and every day. Help us to love and respect you, to love and respect ourselves, and to love and respect others. Amen."

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at and describe the images in Tell It! on page 133. (*The first frame is Moses on the mountain; the second is the people worshipping God alone; the third is a child respecting and helping his parent.*)

- Direct your child's attention to the third frame and ask, "If you could put a picture of yourself in the third frame, respecting and helping your parent, what would it show?" (*Accept reasonable responses.*)
- 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 Ten Commandments Tablets

- Recall Jesus' teaching on the Greatest Commandment, to love God and to love others. Tell your child that the Ten Commandments are God's Laws that help us to love God and others. Explain that because we follow Jesus, we want to follow the Ten Commandments.
- Tell your child that they are going to make a reminder of the Ten Commandments. Explain that this reminder will look like the tablets that Moses brought down from the mountain.
- Give your child the construction paper "tablets." On the left-hand tablet, have your child write "LOVE GOD" in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 1, 2, and 3 in a row down the tablet. On the right-hand tablet, have them write "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" in capital letters at the top. Under this, have them write the numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in a row down the tablet. Ask your child to turn to page 1988 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* to review each of the Ten Commandments. Read a number aloud and ask your child to read the commandment; then read a commandment aloud and ask your child to say what number it is.
- Review the significance of the Ten Commandments by asking your child to share why God gave them to us. (*Responses might include: out of love; because God wants us to be safe and happy.*)
- Conclude by reminding your child that if we want to follow Jesus, we will love God, ourselves, and others as he taught us. The Ten Commandments were not just for Moses and God's people long ago. They are still God's rules today. They are the best way for us to love God, ourselves, and others.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Remind your child that Jesus wants us to love God, ourselves, and others, and that the Ten Commandments show us how to do this in ten different ways. Explain that when we fail to love as God calls us to and we sin, we can confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Recall the steps covered so far in the Sacrament of Reconciliation: the priest greets us, we make the Sign of the Cross, the priest reminds us of God's mercy, and we hear the Word of God. Explain to your child that the next step is to confess, or tell, our sins to the priest.
- Help your child understand that we confess our sins to the priest because Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. Tell them that the Pope and bishops are the successors to the Apostles, and they receive this same power to forgive sins. A priest receives the authority to forgive sins from his bishop.
- Explain that we confess sins, not accidents, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - To commit a sin, you must *know* it is a sin (something against God's Law and against love), you must *want to do it*, and you must *do it freely*.
 - An **accident** is something that you do by mistake, that you *did not intend* to happen.
- Give an example of the difference between sins and accidents.
 - If we break something in the house, like a lamp, while we are dusting the living room, that is an accident. But if we break the lamp because we are throwing a ball in the house, which a parent has told us we may not do, then we freely and deliberately disobeyed by throwing the ball.
 - We may not have wanted to break the lamp, but we did want to throw the ball. The broken lamp was a direct result of our decision to throw the ball. We may need to help replace the lamp. We always need to make up in some way for any damage we cause because of our sins, whether it is hurt feelings or damaged property.

- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
1. *Yes, Sam disobeyed. No, this was an accident, but it was a consequence of throwing the ball. Sam should confess the entire incident and will need to make up for the broken lamp in some way.* 2. *Yes, Crissie disobeyed.* 3. *No, this was an accident.*
- If time permits, you may want to discuss the following two situations:
 1. After supper it was homework time. Lydia told her mom, "I don't have any homework." Even though Lydia had a spelling pretest tomorrow, she wanted to play video games instead of studying. Did Lydia commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, she lied to her mother.
 2. Jill walks home from school every day with her sixth-grade neighbor, Jason. Jason saw some flowers in a yard. Jason said, "Hey, Jill, go over there and pick those flowers so I can give them to my mom." Jill said, "I don't want to! That's stealing!" Jason said, "If you don't, I won't walk you home anymore and you will have to cross the highway by yourself." So Jill picked the flowers that Jason wanted. Did Jason commit a sin?
Answer: Yes, he bullied Jill and told her to do something wrong.

Did Jill commit a sin?
Answer: No, she was coerced by Jason. She told him it was wrong, but he threatened her. She did not make a free decision to pick the flowers.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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:
 - God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy.
 - The Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us.
 - There are differences between a sin and an accident.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 4 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 1993 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*, then pray the Act of Contrition together.
- You may want to play a piece of music, if you have time, on the theme of listening to God or the Ten Commandments.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

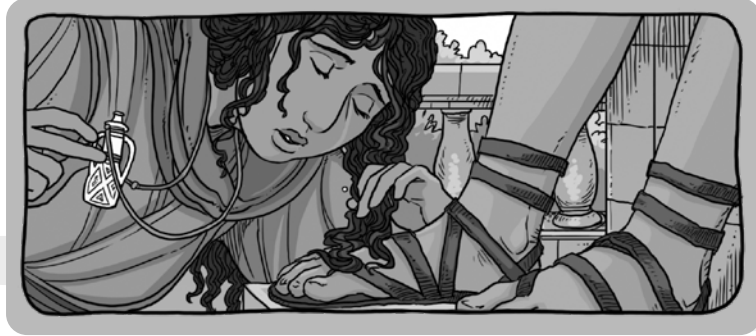
For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.

Chapter 5

Featured Story

Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50)




We Ask for Forgiveness



Lesson Goals

- to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry
- to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin

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 5 activity booklet
- an empty square tissue box, seven construction-paper "jewels", an envelope, and one-half of an index card, tape, markers or crayons

Music Suggestions

- "Jesus Heal Us," by Sr. Kathy Bettencourt (Sr. Kathy Bettencourt)
- "We Are Marching," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)

Background Focus

Identifying ourselves as sinners is not easy, but it is the honest truth. With this truth comes the humble realization that no one—not even the person I call *me, myself, and I*—is perfect. This truth can be humbly liberating, especially when we realize that God still loves us and wants to forgive us. As sinners, our imperfect love is met by perfect love. We are forgiven!

The expansion of the definition of sin presented in this lesson is very important and includes the distinction between serious sin (mortal sin), which completely breaks our relationship with God, and less-serious sin (venial sin), which nonetheless harms our relationship with God and others.

In this lesson, the truth of sinfulness and forgiveness is gradually opened up to your child through the account of the sinful woman who poured her perfume and her tears over Jesus' feet.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 5 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

- Ask your child to think about everything they own—their clothes, their toys, their books, their electronic devices. Have them share what their most treasured possession is and where they keep it. Record their answers on a piece of paper.
- Explain that some people keep their most treasured possessions at the bank, in a special box. Continue with the following points:
 - People sometimes keep their jewelry at the bank so the jewelry will be safe at all times.
 - People sometimes keep important papers at the bank, so that they will not be lost or burned up in a fire.
 - Other people keep special boxes at home for their most treasured possessions.
- Tell your child that today they will learn about a woman who was so sorry for her sins that she gave her most precious possession to Jesus.
- Ask your child if they would be willing to give their most precious possession to Jesus. Remind them that Jesus does not really want or need what we have. Explain that he wants us to love God, ourselves, and others. Tell the children that Jesus wants us to be truly sorry, to not sin again, to do our penance, and to follow his command of love.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Luke 7:36–50 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1595).
- Direct your child to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1596 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 page.
- Ask your child what they think the woman in the artwork on pages 1596–1597 is doing.
- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story. Explain that we do not know who the woman is, or what her name is, but she could

have been Mary Magdalene, the woman who saw the Risen Jesus in the garden. Recall that you read the account of Mary Magdalene and the Risen Jesus in the first chapter.

- Read the Bible story aloud (either the short version on page 1596 or the longer version, Luke 7:36–50, on the previous page). Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Where was Jesus in this story? (*eating at the house of a Pharisee*)
 - Who came in with a special alabaster jar? (*a woman*)
 - What was in the jar? (*perfume*)
 - What was the woman doing at first? (*crying and wetting Jesus' feet with her tears*)
 - What did the woman do next? (*She dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them.*)
 - What did she show by doing this? (*her great love*)
 - What did Jesus say to her? (*"Your sins are forgiven."*)
- Explain that like the woman in the story, we have room in our hearts for two things: love and sin. Remind your child that sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love. The more love we have, the less room we have for sin. The more sin we have—the more meanness and selfishness—the less room we have for love. When we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we have more room for love.
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bible open. *Answers: "In that **town** was a woman who lived a **sinful** life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's **house**, so she brought an alabaster **jar** full of **perfume** and stood behind Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his **feet** with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the **perfume** on them. [Jesus said] 'The great **love** she has shown proves that her many sins have been forgiven. . . .' Then Jesus said to the woman, 'Your **sins** are forgiven.'"*

Understand It!

- Read aloud Understand It! on page 1597, or invite your child to read it.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - Jesus is a friend to sinners and forgives them.
 - This woman was sorry for her sins. She had true contrition, true sorrow for her sins.
 - She showed her sorrow and love with her tears, kisses, and gift of perfume.
 - Jesus forgave this woman's sins.

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 1597 or read it aloud yourself.
- Explain that the Jesus Prayer can be said anytime or in any place, and that some people carry a circle of ten beads with them, called "Jesus beads," so that they can move their fingers from bead to bead as they pray.
- You may want to ask your child to say the Jesus Prayer with you now, ten times, using their fingers as "beads."
- Assure your child that Jesus will always forgive them if they are sorry.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1597.
- Invite your child to use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- 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

A Treasure Box of Love

- Remind your child that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure to Jesus to show her sorrow and love. Explain that Jesus forgave her sins, not because she gave her treasure, but because she had great love. Help your child understand that her love was a greater treasure than her perfume. Tell your child that we too can have the great treasure of love and offer this love to Jesus by doing good things for others.
- Give your child a tissue box, one-half of an index card, a small envelope, and seven paper "jewels". Cut out the "jewels" ahead of time. Each should be about 2 inches long or about 2 inches in diameter. Of the seven jewels, two should be "diamonds" (a diamond shape cut from white paper), two should be "rubies" (a round shape cut from red paper), two should be "turquoise stones" (an oval shape cut from turquoise paper), and one should be a "gold bar" (a rectangle cut from gold or yellow paper). Ask your child to write their name on the envelope, and to keep the paper jewels in the envelope.
- Ask your child to write "My Treasure Box" on the one-half index card. This should be taped to the front of the tissue box.
- Explain that each paper jewel represents a real jewel. Tell your child that there are seven of them, one for each day of the week. Name each jewel with a day of the week. Ask your child, starting today, to write something good that they did for someone else on a jewel each day. (*Suggestions: "I helped clear the table without being asked"; "I read a storybook to my baby cousin."*) Explain that they may make more jewels if they want to put more "treasure" into their boxes.
- Invite your child to give examples of good actions they might write on their jewels. Encourage your child to be alert to small things they can do to help others. Explain that love is often expressed in small and helpful ways.
- Remind your child that the more we love, the less room we have for sin in our hearts. Tell them that Jesus will always forgive our sins if we ask him.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain that the sinful woman gave her greatest treasure—her love—to Jesus, so he forgave her all of her sins. Recall that sin is doing something that is against love. Remind your child that sin is a thought, word, or action that goes against God's Law, especially the commandment of love.
- Tell your child that there are two kinds of sin: **mortal sin** and **venial sin**. Write both of these terms on a piece of paper, leaving space for examples to come.
- Introduce the definition of *mortal sin*, giving examples:
 - Mortal sin is a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God. Mortal sin is a serious sin against the Ten Commandments and against God's Law of Love. Mortal sin is a sin like murder. (*Write this on the paper.*) We sin by taking another's life. Or, we can sin against God by refusing to worship him as he deserves. We can refuse to go to Mass on Sunday or on Holy Days of Obligation. (*Write this on the paper. The Holy Days of Obligation can be found on page 1989 in The Catholic Children's Bible.*)
 - Mortal sin cannot be committed by accident. It is very serious. To commit a mortal sin, you must first *know* it is a mortal and serious sin, you must *want to do it*, and you must *freely* do it.
 - If we commit a mortal sin and are sorry for it afterward, we must go to confession as soon as possible. We have broken our loving relationship with God, and we must ask forgiveness.
- Introduce the definition of *venial sin* by explaining that a venial sin is a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God.

- Expand on this definition with the following explanation and examples:
 - Venial sin cannot be committed by accident. We must know something is a sin, must want to do it, and then do it freely. Venial sins are the kinds of sin that we might commit in our everyday lives. Some examples are: talking back to our parents and being sassy and rude, fighting with our brothers and sisters, cheating on a test, taking something that does not belong to us. (*Write these on the paper and others that may apply to your child.*)
 - Even though venial sin is "less serious," we want to avoid it, because we do not want to harm our loving relationship with God or others the least little bit.
- Explain that venial sin is something that we can confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and we can ask God to forgive us. The sacrament helps us to be better and to follow Jesus more closely.
- Tell your child that there are other ways that venial sin is forgiven. We can also ask God to forgive us at the beginning of every Mass, in the Penitential Act. We can ask God to forgive us in our private prayer. Emphasize that the best way to receive God's forgiveness is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because the grace we receive from this sacrament helps us to grow in God's love.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
 1. *freely*, 2. *as soon as possible*, 3. *weakens*, 4. *Reconciliation*, 5. *grace*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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 their answers on the paper.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, and circle them:
 - God will forgive our sins if we are truly sorry.
 - We have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - There is a difference between mortal (serious) sin and venial (less serious) sin.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 5 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin 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 open the Bible to Romans 12:21 (page 1786). Invite your child to read this verse. Remind your child to conquer evil with good by working on their treasure box this week.
- End with the "Morning Prayer." Write it on the paper so that you both can pray together. Pray the prayer together, then close with the Sign of the Cross.

Morning Prayer

O my God, I offer you this day

All I do and think and say,

In union with what was done

On earth by Jesus Christ, your Son.

Amen.

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.

Jesus Loves and Cares for Us



Background Focus

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are not simply confessing our sins to the priest. We are confessing them to God. The priest is God's representative, who has the power, in God's name, to forgive our sins. In every sacrament, the priest acts in the name of Jesus. Getting to know Jesus as the Good Shepherd helps the children to understand that the priest, who acts in the name of Christ, will welcome them with love and care.

You may want to remind your child that we have many shepherds in our lives. Parents and teachers are shepherds; police and firefighters are shepherds who risk their lives each day to care for the community; and children themselves are shepherds when they look out for younger children or animals. All people who love and care for others are signs of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who loves and cares for all.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 6 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 aloud. 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.

Chapter 6




Featured Story

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd
(John 10:1–18)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep
- to recall that Jesus seeks us out when we stray, and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain that in the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned

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 6 activity booklet
- a stuffed toy lamb
- one white balloon, already blown up and decorated with a sheep's ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, drawn with a black marker; a ruler or stick
- Saint Mary's Press® Big Book *The Good Shepherd* (optional)

Music Suggestions

- "I Am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)," by Paul McIntyre (Paul McIntyre)
- "The Baa Baa Song," by Sibling Harmony (Sibling Harmony)

Engage Activity

- Begin the lesson by using the stuffed lamb as a puppet. Walk the lamb along the table or desk as you say, in the voice of the lamb: "Baaa! Baaa!"
- Tell your child that the lamb is lost, and then continue with these or similar words:
 - This lamb should be with his flock, but here he is, wandering around this room.
 - This lamb needs someone to find him! This lamb needs a shepherd!
- Ask your child to be the shepherd, and hand the lamb to your child.
- Continue with the following words:
 - What should the shepherd say to this poor little lost lamb? (*Share suggestions. Tell the shepherd to repeat some of the better suggestions and say them to the lamb, "Poor lamb. Come with me. I will take you home," etc.*)
 - Yes, that is exactly what a good shepherd would say to a lost lamb! This is what Jesus, our Good Shepherd, says to us. He says, "I am here to find you again. I will bring you home." When we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we are coming home again to the flock of the Good Shepherd, Jesus.
- Allow the shepherd to hold the lamb for a few minutes and keep it near during the lesson.

† Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find John 10:1–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1675 and 1678).
- Direct your child to turn the page to the Featured Story on page 1676 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 verses on the previous page and on page 1678.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1676–1677. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork and to predict what the Bible story might be about.

- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story, and then to look at the vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Read each word aloud, and ask your child to read the definition.
- Introduce the Bible story by explaining that where Jesus lived, there were a lot of sheep and a lot of shepherds. Continue with the following points:
 - People saw shepherds all the time. They knew it was hard work being a shepherd and taking care of sheep all day and all night too.
 - Today we might compare being a shepherd to a rancher taking care of cattle or even to those of us who take care of a pet.
 - Many animals are totally dependent on us for their food, their water, and their well-being. We can't let them down. In this story, Jesus tells us that he will never let us down.
- Read aloud the Bible story on page 1676. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who is the Good Shepherd? (*Jesus*)
 - What does the Good Shepherd do? (*He takes care of the sheep and is willing to die for them.*)
 - There is a wolf in this story. What could the wolf do to the sheep? (*He might snatch the sheep and scatter them.*)
 - If we are the sheep of Jesus, what do you think the wolf is? (*The wolf is anyone who wants to harm us or to lead us on the wrong path.*)

Note: You may want to read the Saint Mary's Press® Big Book *The Good Shepherd* to your child.

- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the maze by drawing a line from the shepherd to the lost sheep.

Understand It!

- Read aloud Understand It! on page 1677, or invite your child to read.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.

- Review these key points:
 - Sheep need to be cared for.
 - A good shepherd loves his sheep and knows each one.
 - A good shepherd risks his life to save his sheep.
 - Jesus called himself “the good shepherd.”
 - Jesus knows us, loves us, and died for us. He is a shepherd worth following forever!

Live It!

- Invite your child to read the left-hand column of Live It! on page 1677, or read it aloud yourself.
- Pray the verses of Psalm 23 together.
- If time permits, you might want to play one of the Good Shepherd hymns noted in “Music Suggestions” at the beginning of this lesson.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1677.
- Encourage your child to summarize the Bible reading, using the images in Tell It!
- 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

Leading the Sheep

- Set up chairs in a circle to designate the sheep pen.
- Explain that today we will play a game to remind us that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads us and guides us. (If you make two balloon sheep, you may also play this game with your child.)
- Ask your child to stand at one end of the room, and to listen to the following instructions:
 - You will be given a sheep. You will be the shepherd. Hang on to your sheep by the little knot at one end. *(Give a balloon to your child.)*

➤ I will also give you a ruler or stick. *(Do so now.)* When I say, “Go!” drop your balloon sheep and use the ruler or stick to gently guide your sheep into the sheep pen on the other side of the room. You may not use your hands!

➤ Get ready! Get set! Go!

- Ask your child to join you at the table or desk when the sheep have been led to the sheep pen.
- Invite your child to share what they learned about their balloon sheep. *(They are not easy to lead and guide with gentleness. Sometimes they go anywhere but where they should go!)* Remind the children that Jesus leads and guides us with gentleness, even when we want to go every which way.
- Invite your child to share their experiences of being a shepherd in the activity. Explain that being a shepherd is not an easy job. But Jesus never gives up. He wants us to stay with him and follow him because he is the Good Shepherd.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Invite your child to recall the different steps of the Sacrament of Reconciliation that have been covered up to this point. You may want to point them to *The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words* booklet to read through the steps of the individual celebration on page 2, stopping them when they get to the confession of sins.
- Continue with these or similar words:
 - After we confess our sins, the priest may give us some words of advice or encouragement. He will then give us a **penance**. A penance is a prayer or good action that shows that we will do better. Doing a penance shows, in a small way, that we want to make up for what we have done. Sometimes a penance is a prayer to pray. Sometimes it is an action to do. Sometimes it is a kind act to help someone that we have hurt in some way. It is important to do our penance as soon as possible.

- The priest will then invite us to pray an **Act of Contrition**. The Act of Contrition is a prayer that tells God that we are sorry and will not sin again.
- The word **contrition** means “true sorrow for sin and a desire to avoid sin in the future.” Our Act of Contrition in the Sacrament of Reconciliation tells God that we are sorry for our sins. In the sacrament, we can say the Act of Contrition by heart or we can read it from a card. We should practice ahead of time, so that we know what we are saying to God and can say it with our whole heart.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
 1. *Contrition*, 2. *sin*, 3. *encouragement*,
 4. *penance*, 5. *possible*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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:
 - Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep.
 - Jesus seeks us out when we stray and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - In the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 6 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin 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.
- Play a Good Shepherd song or hymn from the list of “Music Suggestions” at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying an Act of Contrition (see page 1993 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*). Then 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.

Jesus Helps Us Always



Background Focus

The brains of second graders are still developing, and so their interpretation of events is often very literal. This lesson bridges the gap between a literal and a metaphorical understanding of an event. Understanding the storm at sea metaphorically, we can help your child understand that Jesus is with them during their own stormy times.

We may not realize how often we speak in metaphors. Accepting a drink, we say, “Thanks. That hits the spot.” (What spot? Where?) Speaking of an obstacle we have encountered, perhaps a difficulty with another person that was resolved, we say, “She gave me a run for my money.” (This metaphor comes from horse racing.)

In today’s lesson, with its scriptural account of Jesus calming the sea, we see Jesus actually quieting the Sea of Galilee—but this is also a metaphor for his presence and help with us always, especially in times of trouble, and especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 7 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 together, then invite your child to say, “Amen.” Close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Chapter 7




Featured Story

Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble
- to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution

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 7 activity booklet
- a plastic tub of water; one or more boats; a towel
- a sheet of newspaper, tape

Music Suggestions

- “Help Me, Jesus (Hebrews 13:6b),” by Jay Stocker (Group Publishing, Inc.)
- “Just Give Me Jesus/’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus,” by New Life Worship Kids (Integrity Music)

Engage Activity

- Place the pan or tub of water on a desk, preferably on top of a plastic tablecloth.
- Invite your child to place a boat in the water. Ask your child to share what they think would happen if a storm came up and the wind blew hard. (*The boat would be in danger. It might sink.*)
- Ask your child to make waves in the tub with their hands and sink the boat(s).
- Explain that something similar happened to Jesus and his followers. Tell your child that a storm came up on the sea, but Jesus saved them!

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Matthew 8:23–27 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1466).
- Direct your child to turn to the Featured Story on page 1468 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 verses on page 1466.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1468–1469. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Read the title of the Featured Story and then point to the vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Ask your child to read each word, and then read aloud the definition.
- Introduce the Bible story by explaining that many of the disciples were fishermen. Include the following information:
 - The disciples fished on the Sea of Galilee, which is a large body of water in Israel.
 - Sometimes Jesus and the disciples used a boat to travel from one side of the sea to the other. And sometimes there were storms on the sea.
- Read the Bible story aloud. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What happened while Jesus and the disciples were crossing the sea in the boat? (*A storm came up.*)

- What was Jesus doing? (*He was asleep.*)
- What did the disciples do? (*They woke up Jesus.*)
- What did they ask Jesus? (*to save them*)
- What did Jesus do? (*He ordered the winds and the waves to stop.*)
- How did the disciples feel? (*They were amazed. They wondered who Jesus was.*)
- Conclude by reminding your child that we know who Jesus is: Jesus is the Son of God!
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. b, 4. b, 5. c, 6. c, 7. c*

Understand It!

- Read aloud Understand It! on page 1469, and then invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - Jesus is with us, not only in the good things of life but also in the storms.
 - When the disciples are in a storm, they wake Jesus and ask for help.
 - Jesus wants us to have faith and trust in him.
- Expand upon these points as follows:
 - Sometimes we are in storms. These storms can be outside of us or inside of us.
 - A storm is anytime we need help. A "storm" is not only a thunderstorm or a hurricane. A hard time in our lives is called a "stormy time."
 - Jesus is more powerful than any storm, because Jesus is God.
 - Jesus is our friend, who is with us in any trouble. He is especially with us when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 1469, or read it aloud yourself.
- Ask your child how they might feel if they were out in their boats and a storm came up. Assure them that it is normal to be frightened sometimes. Remind them that Jesus is with them.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1469.
- Direct your child's attention to the third frame. Ask your child to read what Jesus says to the storm. (*"Be still."*) Ask why Jesus could stop the storm. (*Because Jesus is God.*)
- Invite your child to use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- 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 chapter.

Core Learning Activity

Sailing with Jesus

- Explain that Jesus is the Son of God, and each one of us is a **disciple**. Remind your child that a disciple is a close follower of Jesus. Today we are going to take an imaginary boat ride with Jesus, and we will make sailor hats to wear on the boat.
- Give a half-sheet of newspaper to your child, and direct them to fold the sheet in half. Then fold one corner down to the center, leaving about an inch at the bottom. Then fold the other corner down to meet the previous corner in the center. This will make a triangle. Fold the bottom flaps up on one side and then the other. Use tape as needed. (There are YouTube videos to guide you if necessary.)
- Ask your child to wear the sailor hat and to sit quietly, fold their arms, and close their eyes.
- Take your child through a guided meditation using the following prompts:
 - Imagine that you are in a boat with Jesus and the disciples. The boat is rocking gently back and forth. Keep your eyes closed but rock gently back and forth. Jesus is tired, so he falls asleep in the back of the boat. You and the other disciples are talking together quietly.
 - Suddenly the wind begins to blow! The disciples quickly pull down the sail. "Hang on!" Peter says. "It looks like we're in for a storm!" The thunder rolls and the lightning flashes. Suddenly the boat starts to tip violently back and forth. You are nearly thrown out of your seat! You are thrown to the right! You are thrown to the left! (*Encourage your child to act this out while seated.*) Hang on tight! You hear the disciples say: "Jesus! Jesus! Wake up! We are about to sink!"
 - Jesus wakes up. He hears the thunder and sees the lightning. He sees the frightened faces of his friends. He sees the big waves and feels the boat tip one way and then the other. He puts out his hand. "Peace! Be still!" he says. (*Pause.*)
 - Everything is still. The disciples are so thankful! They go up, one by one, and say, "Thank you, Jesus." Now it is your turn to go up to Jesus. What will you say to Jesus? Say it quietly now in your heart. (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - Does Jesus say anything back to you in the quiet of your heart? (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - The boat is heading to shore now. All is calm and peaceful. The disciples look forward to another day with Jesus. And you do too! You may open your eyes now and come back to land!
- Ask your child to share what they said to Jesus and what Jesus said to them. Remind them that Jesus is always ready to help us when we are in trouble.
- Ask your child to share what they felt as the storm raged.
 - What was it like to be in the boat with Jesus and the disciples during the storm?
 - How did you feel when Jesus said: "Peace. Be still"?

- Explain that Jesus knows us and loves us, using the following points:
 - Jesus cares about us. He knows when we are going through a hard time. He even knows all of our sins, even before we confess them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation!
 - Even when we have made wrong choices, Jesus knows and, if we are sorry, he will bring us peace.
- Invite your child to draw a picture of a scene from this event, and then invite them to display the drawing in a special place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain the meaning of today's story as follows:
 - Today we learned that Jesus is the Son of God. He is with us, in good times and in scary times. He is with us during storms, whether they are storms outside or even our storms inside, when we feel bad about what we have done.
 - We are the disciples of Jesus. We are his close followers. He wants to take care of us and to save us, just as he saved the disciples in the storm.
- Link the story to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in these or similar words:
 - Jesus saves us by forgiving our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After we confess our sins and are given a penance, we are given **absolution**, or forgiveness of our sins, through the words and actions of the priest. He extends either both hands or his right hand as he says the prayer of absolution. We give thanks to God and then the priest sends us forth, saying this or another similar prayer: "The Lord has forgiven your sins. Go in peace" (*Order of Penance*).
- We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends us forth in peace. Pardon and peace are two great gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just as Jesus calmed the storm, Jesus calms the storms in our lives and gives us peace. We are given peace with ourselves, with God, and with others. Following are other gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
 - Grace, God's own life in us.
 - We grow closer to God and to all God's people, the Church.
 - We are given a peaceful **conscience**. (Our conscience is the knowledge we have within us of right and wrong.)
 - We are given grace and strength to avoid sin and live as a Christian.
 - We are able to repair some of the harm done to our relationships that our sin caused.
 - We are helped to stay in friendship with God in this life so that we can be happy with him forever in Heaven.
 - We are saved, if we have confessed a mortal sin, from being separated from God forever after we die.
 - We are more ready than ever to follow Jesus as his disciples!
- Conclude by explaining that there are three things necessary for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be complete: (1) we must have true sorrow for our sins (contrition), (2) we must promise not to sin again, and (3) we must do our assigned penance. Ask your child to hold up their fingers with you as you repeat these three necessary actions.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: Across: 2. grace, 4. disciples, 6. sin; Down: 1. peace, 3. absolution, 5. life*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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:
 - Jesus is the Son of God who is with us to save us in times of trouble.
 - We are disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 7 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin 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.
- Play a song from the list of "Music Suggestions" at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying an Act of Contrition (see page 1993 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then 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.

Chapter 8

Featured Story

Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us (John 14:15–31)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide
- to identify that the Holy Spirit helps us in an examination of conscience as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to review the key words and important concepts of these chapters in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

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 8 activity booklet
- an index card

Music Suggestions

- "Holy Spirit Come," by Spring Harvest (Elevation Kids)
- "Nigeria: Come, O Holy Spirit / Wa wa wa Emimimo," by John Bell and Alison Adam (GIA Publications, Inc.)

The Holy Spirit Teaches Us



Background Focus

You may have seen the cartoon featuring Lassie, the dog who so often comes to the aid of her human family members. In one frame, a man is pictured in the midst of high waves, clearly about to drown and calling, "Lassie, get help!" In the next frame, Lassie is seen stretched out on her back on a psychiatrist's couch, recounting her thoughts and feelings, while the psychiatrist diligently takes notes.

We all need help. Jesus knew this, and promised to send the Holy Spirit as our Advocate, our Helper. The Holy Spirit is especially important—and helpful—while preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Holy Spirit helps us to discern our sin, ask forgiveness, and move forward with confidence in the love of God in order to share that love with others. This is the whole purpose of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In this chapter, your child is introduced to the examination of conscience to help them call on the Holy Spirit for guidance as they prepare to receive this sacrament for the first time.

🏠 Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 8 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 away the activity booklet for now.

Engage Activity

- Ask your child to name some of the helpers in their life (*community helpers like police officers and firefighters, helpers at school, helpers at home*). Write these on a piece of paper.
- Consider aloud some of these helpers. Choose some and ask:
 - How does this helper help you?
 - How does this helper make your life safer or better?
- Tell your child that today they will learn about another helper that Jesus sent to us, the Holy Spirit. They will learn more about all the ways the Holy Spirit helps us in our lives, and how the Holy Spirit helps us prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find John 14:15–31 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1689 and 1692).
- Direct your child to turn to the Featured Story on page 1690 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 verses on pages 1689 and 1692.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1690–1691, and invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Introduce the Bible story by explaining that after Jesus died and rose from the dead, he went back to Heaven to be with his Father. Tell them that before he left, Jesus promised to send a helper for us, the Holy Spirit.
- Read the Bible story aloud. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Who is the Helper that Jesus promised? (*the Holy Spirit*)
 - How will the Holy Spirit help you? (*The Holy Spirit will teach us and help us remember all that Jesus said.*)
 - What does the Holy Spirit bring us as a gift from Jesus? (*peace*)

- Conclude by reminding your child that because the Holy Spirit brings us peace, we can share that peace with others. Ask your child: How can we share peace? (*by being kind, by forgiving others, by helping others*)
- Invite your child to turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Answers: *Helper, forever, Spirit, truth, remains, in, Holy Spirit, teach, remember, told, peace, worried, afraid*

Understand It!

- Read aloud Understand It! on page 1687, or invite your child to read it.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - The great gift of Jesus to us is the Holy Spirit.
 - The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one God. They are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.
 - We receive the Holy Spirit's power at Baptism.
 - The Holy Spirit is our Helper. We cannot see him, but he works within us.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us to understand what Jesus taught and to act on it through the good ideas we have.
 - The Holy Spirit is at work in us each day. We can ask him for help and guidance.

Live It!

- Invite your child to read Live It! on page 1687 or read it aloud yourself.
- Give an index card to your child if time permits. Instruct your child to copy the Holy Spirit prayer onto the index card and place it in the Bible as a bookmark.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1687.
- Direct your child's attention to the second frame. Explain that the Holy Spirit is often shown as a dove, because a dove is a sign of peace.
- Encourage your child to summarize the Bible reading, using the images in Tell It!
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Tell them that they can keep any remaining stickers to be used at a later time as they explore the Bible by themselves.

Core Learning Activity

An Examination of Conscience

- Explain that one of the special things the Holy Spirit helps us with is our preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us remember things we have done for which we are sorry and want to ask forgiveness. The Holy Spirit helps us to be honest and truthful with ourselves.
 - Today, we will ask the Holy Spirit for help to think of sins we want to confess in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This thinking-over of what we have done and any sins we have committed, how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments and been better followers of Jesus, is called an **examination of conscience**.
- Remind your child that each of us has a conscience, that is, an inner knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. Tell them that when we examine our conscience, we look at things we have done and remember things we have done that were right and good. Explain that we also remember things we have done that were not right, that caused a problem for ourselves or for someone else.
 - Explain that we will now examine our consciences together. Begin in these or similar words:
 - Let us quiet ourselves. Hands, be still. Feet, be still. Fold your arms or hands on top of the desk. You may put your head down if it helps you to listen. I will ask a question for you to think about. Answer it in your heart, just for yourself. When it is time for you to prepare for your confession, ask the Holy Spirit to help you remember this examination of conscience.
 - Continue with the following questions. Pause between each one.
 - Have I used God's name and the name of Jesus with respect? *(pause)*
 - Have I honored God by saying my prayers? *(pause)*
 - Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and to pray and sing with my parish? *(pause)*
 - Have I shown love to my parents and others who care for me by listening to them and always doing as they ask? *(pause)*
 - Have I lied to my parents or my teachers? *(pause)*
 - Have I been helpful to my brothers and sisters? Have I been mean to them? *(pause)*
 - Have I treated others in a kind and friendly way? Or have I been mean to others? *(pause)*
 - Have I played fairly? *(pause)*
 - Did I call names or tell lies about someone? *(pause)*
 - Did I share my things with others? *(pause)*
 - Have I treated the belongings of others carefully? Have I taken what does not belong to me? *(pause)*
 - End by praying: "Jesus said, 'Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.' (John 14:27) Thank you, Holy Spirit! Be with us always. Amen."
 - Invite your child to share what they felt during this activity. Explain that sometimes we can feel sad when we remember some things we have done wrong, but this sadness is true sorrow, and it will turn to joy after we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- Explain that the Holy Spirit is our Helper and will help us to live the way Jesus taught. Tell your child that the Holy Spirit reminds us of all the things we have done and helps us to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation with honesty and courage.
- Explain that as followers of Jesus, we try to live by the Golden Rule that Jesus taught us:
“Do for others what you want them to do for you” (Matthew 7:12).

Ask your child to turn to page 1988 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* to find this Golden Rule printed above the Ten Commandments.

- Remind your child that the examination of conscience is printed on page 3 in *The Rite of Reconciliation and Key Words* booklet. Suggest that they bring this examination of conscience to church and review it before receiving the sacrament.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of Forgiveness

- Recall the previous lessons with your child by playing a simple game. Set up a blank piece of paper with numbers in a list from 1 to 10.
- Ask the first question (using the questions below). If your child gets the correct answer, invite them to put a check mark next to the question number. (Hints can be given if they are needed.)

Review Questions for This Activity

1. What do we call God’s life in us? (*grace*)
2. When we disobey God’s Law, we call it what? (*sin*)
3. What is the Great Commandment that Jesus taught us? (*to love God and to love others as ourselves*)

4. When we fail to love fully, where can we ask for forgiveness? (*in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
 5. Why did God give us rules? (*to keep us safe and happy*)
 6. How is an accident different from a sin? (*An accident is something unexpected that you did not choose to happen; a sin is a deliberate choice.*)
 7. What is the difference between a mortal sin and a venial sin? (*A mortal sin separates us from God; a venial sin harms our relationship with God and others. We must confess a mortal sin and ask forgiveness as soon as possible.*)
 8. What prayer do we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins? (*an Act of Contrition*)
 9. When can we call on Jesus for help? (*anytime, but especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*)
 10. What happens when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (*Our sins are forgiven and we are given the gift of peace.*)
- Expand the questions, if you like, by formulating extra questions based on the activity worksheets.
 - End the game by assuring your child that they are ready to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation!
 - Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers:*
1. *sin*, 2. *contrition*, 3. *venial sin*, 4. *mercy*, 5. *absolution*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite 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:
 - The Holy Spirit is our helper and guide.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us examine our conscience.
 - The Holy Spirit helps us remember important facts about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 8 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin 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.
- Play a song from the list of "Music Suggestions" at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying the "Come, Holy Spirit" prayer (found in Live It! on page 1691 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then 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.



The Rite of Reconciliation

The Communal Celebration

1. We gather with our parish community. We join in singing a hymn. The priest greets us and leads us in praying together.
2. We listen to the Bible. We may hear more than one reading, with a psalm response in between. We stand for the Gospel reading. Then we listen to the priest or deacon talk about the readings. He helps us understand what we heard in Scripture.
3. We make an examination of conscience. We think of things we have done that we are sorry for. We pray together to tell God we are sorry. Then we pray the Lord's Prayer together.
4. We wait to take our turn confessing our sins. While we wait, we can sing or pray. When it is my turn, I confess my sins. The priest gives me my penance and absolves me from my sins. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
5. When everyone has confessed individually, we pray and sing in thanksgiving to God. The priest or deacon blesses us. We go in peace.
6. I do my penance as soon as possible.

The Individual Celebration

1. I take time to examine my conscience. I ask the Holy Spirit to help me remember what I have done or not done to follow God's Law. I think about the words of Jesus ("Love one another"), the Ten Commandments, and the Golden Rule.
2. The priest welcomes me. We make the Sign of the Cross together.
3. We read the Bible, the Word of God. The priest may ask me to read.
4. I confess my sins to the priest. He may give me some words of advice or encouragement. Then he gives me my penance.
5. The priest invites me to pray an Act of Contrition. In my prayer, I tell God that I am sorry for what I have done wrong and that I will try not to do these things again.
6. The priest extends his hand or hands over me and gives me absolution in the name of Jesus. My sins are forgiven! I make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.
7. We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends me forth in peace. I do my penance as soon as possible. I quietly thank Jesus for giving me his new life of grace and a new start.

Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often. It will help you to follow Jesus. The Church wants us to receive this sacrament at least once a year. Those who have committed a mortal sin must confess their sins and receive absolution before receiving Holy Communion.



An Examination of Conscience

Think about the words of Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you." Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind what you have done, or what you have not done, to follow God's Law.

A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Ask Yourself

- Have I used God's name and the name of Jesus with respect?
- Have I honored God by saying my prayers?
- Have I done my best to pay attention at Mass and to pray and sing with my parish?
- Have I shown love to my parents and others who care for me by listening to them and always doing as they ask?
- Have I lied to my parents or my teachers?
- Have I been helpful to my brothers and sisters? Have I been mean to them?
- Have I treated others in a kind and friendly way, or have I been mean to others?
- Have I played fairly?
- Did I call names or tell lies about someone?
- Did I share my things with others?
- Have I treated the belongings of others carefully? Have I taken what does not belong to me?



Reconciliation Key Words

A

absolution God's forgiveness of our sins through the words and actions of the priest

accident something done by mistake, or an action with unintended results; an unplanned event

Act of Contrition the prayer we say in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to express our sorrow for our sins and our promise not to sin in the future

C

confession another name for the Sacrament of Reconciliation; telling our sins to the priest during the Sacrament of Reconciliation

conscience the knowledge of right and wrong that we have within us

contrition true sorrow for our sins and a desire to avoid sin in the future

conversion changing for the better; turning our lives back to God

D

disciple someone who follows the instructions of a teacher; a close follower of Jesus

E

examination of conscience thinking about our actions, any sins we may have committed, and how we could have better kept the Ten Commandments and been better followers of Jesus' way of love

F

forgive to give up resentment or anger toward someone who has caused harm, restoring friendship and love

G

grace the free gift of God's own life in us, which makes us his children

Greatest Commandment the most important commandment, the commandment to love God and others, given to us by Jesus (see Mark 12:28–31)

M

mercy the loving kindness of God to all his children; the love and forgiveness we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

mortal sin a serious sin, committed on purpose, that completely breaks our loving relationship with God

P

peace an inner feeling of calm or quiet; peace is a gift of the Holy Spirit that we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

penance a prayer or good action to show that we will do better

S

Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation the sacrament in which God forgives our sins and brings us back together with him and with the Church

sacraments seven holy signs that Jesus gave the Church, which give us a share in God's life. The Seven Sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.

Sacred Scripture the Word of God; another name for the Bible

sin something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law. When we sin we offend God and hurt our relationship with him.

T

Ten Commandments the ten important rules God gave to Moses and to us, to keep us safe and happy

V

venial sin a less serious sin that weakens, but does not completely break, our loving relationship with God

Acknowledgments

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