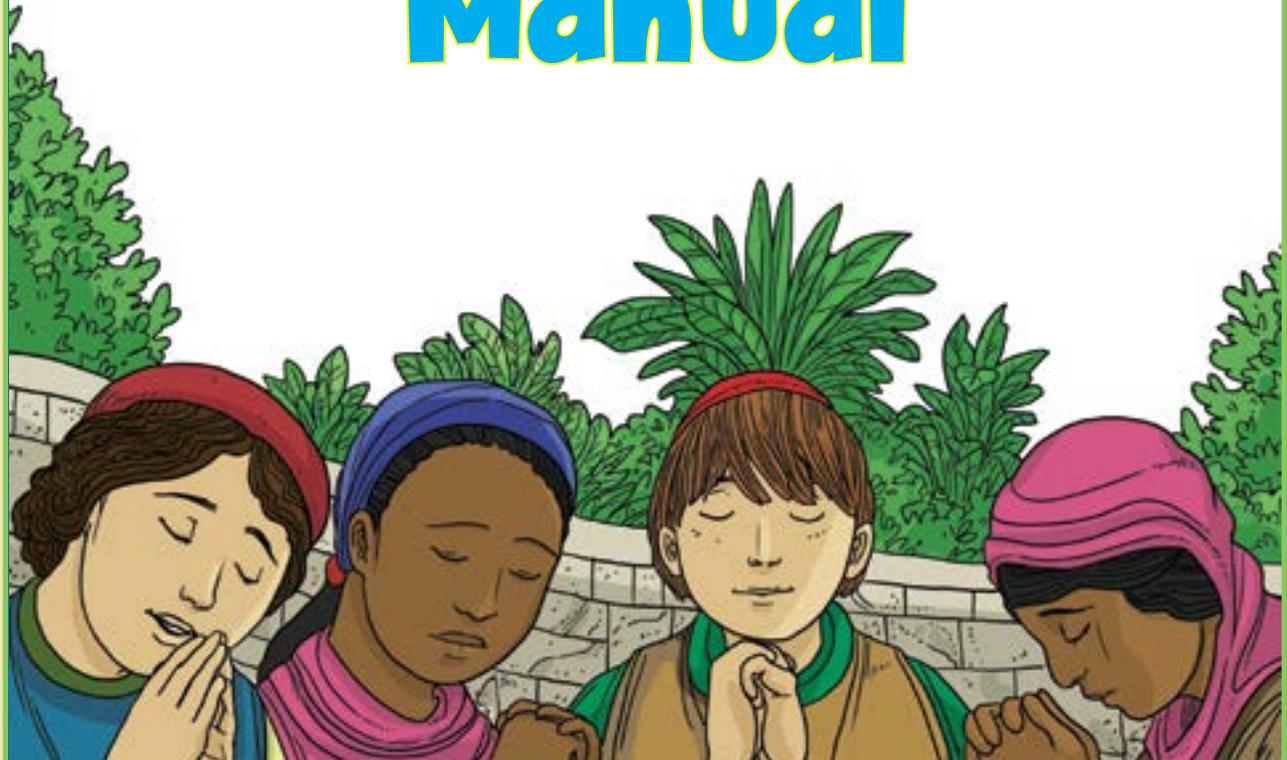


saint mary's press



Online Director's Manual



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Welcome

Welcome to *Discover! Finding Faith in Life*. This exciting program is designed to help children fully engage in the process of discovering and growing in the richness of their Catholic faith, making deep faith a central part of their everyday lives.

The lessons within the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program are designed to foster a clear understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. This method brings lessons to life in a fun and memorable way through experiential and interactive processes. Core principles of faith are introduced in a manner that allows children to discover meaning and develop understanding while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and in the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

The Catholic Children's Bible is the core text of this program, rooting the key concepts of each chapter to important Scripture passages. This serves to promote biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity with and knowledge of key Scripture stories throughout the Old and New Testaments, including their meaning for us today.

Discover! Finding Faith in Life is a program like no other. This *Online Director's Manual* offers many useful articles that will help you discover, explain, and clarify the riches of this program for teachers and parents. We are confident that by using this program, you will experience faith coming to life for children in a truly exciting way. May we all continue to discover more deeply the riches of our Catholic faith and so help others find the message of the Good News at the center of their lives.

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,
The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

Program Highlights

The Bible Is the Primary Text

Discover! Finding Faith in Life immerses the children in Scripture by anchoring each chapter in a particular Scripture story. The children use *The Catholic Children's Bible* for each chapter in each grade, and the Bible is the core text of this program. This unique feature promotes biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity with and knowledge of key Scripture stories throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Based on Principles of Engaged, Active Learning

The lessons are designed to foster a deep understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. Experiential and interactive processes create energy and excitement for both the teacher and the children, and activities and activity options throughout the program help teachers build a meaningful lesson in a creative and engaging way.

Child-Centered Design

Information and activities are presented using the language and experiences of the child to create an ideal environment for real, engaged learning. The program relays core information through activities and discussions that will make sense to the learners in their everyday lives, thus conveying deep meaning and touching their hearts and minds in a significant way.

Rooted in a "Discover" Approach

The name of this program speaks to an energy and excitement that are infused in the learning process. The content helps the children make connections with previous experiences and knowledge and invites them to deepen both as they discover new concepts and practices in the Catholic Tradition. Core concepts are structured in such a way that the children can discover meaning for themselves while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and exposed to the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

Clear and Practical Structure

Each grade level is structured in the same manner: four units with five chapters in each unit. In addition to the twenty core chapters, there are eight liturgical season chapters, which can be incorporated into the flow of the school year according to each particular school's schedule and needs.

Program Highlights

Each grade level has a generalized area of focus (Grade 1: God; Grade 2: Jesus; Grade 3: Church; Grade 4: Covenant; Grade 5: Sacraments), while at the same time spiraling core concepts and foundational understandings throughout each grade level to introduce and deepen meaning for the children at age-appropriate levels.

Of the five chapters in each unit, four of them focus on the four pillars of the *Catechism*. A fifth chapter introduces children to a foundational concept related to one of the seven Catholic social teaching principles.

The unit structure for all grades is as follows:

First chapter	Believe (First <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Second chapter	Celebrate (Second <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Third chapter	Live (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Fourth chapter	Live: Catholic Social Teaching (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar / Catholic social teaching)
Fifth chapter	Pray (Fourth <i>Catechism</i> pillar)

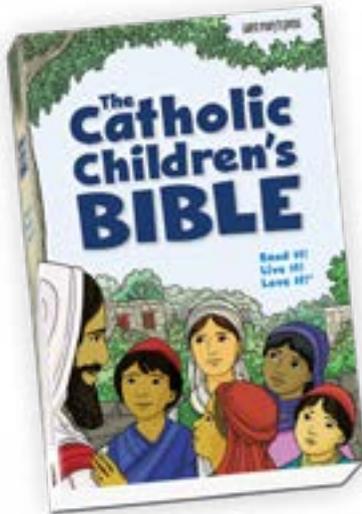
Family Support

This program is designed to extend beyond the classroom and into the home. Each activity booklet across the program includes a family page that helps families follow along with the Scripture story and the core concepts presented in the current chapter.* This family page includes background information for adults in the home, suggestions for family activities that relate to the focus of the chapter, a reflection on a person of faith, and a prayer that families can pray together.

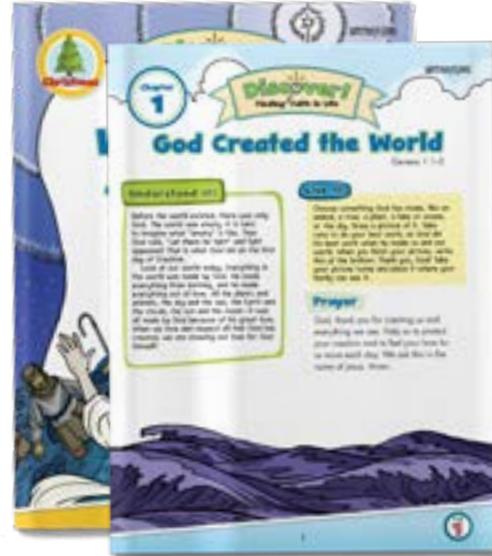
*Spanish versions of all family pages are available as part of this *Online Director's Manual* and in the online resources for each teaching guide.

Program Components

Grade 1



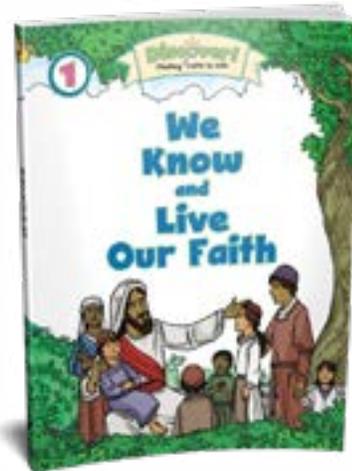
The Catholic Children's Bible



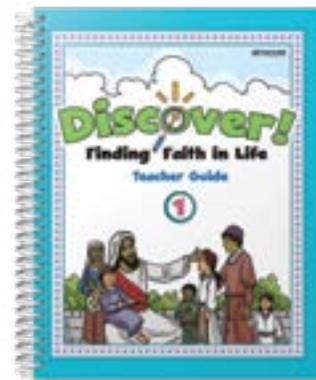
Activity Booklets



Special Feature

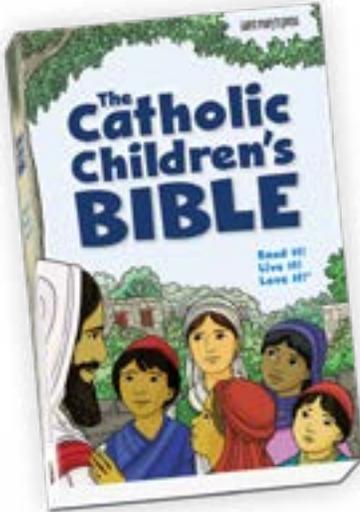


We Know and Live Our Faith Resource

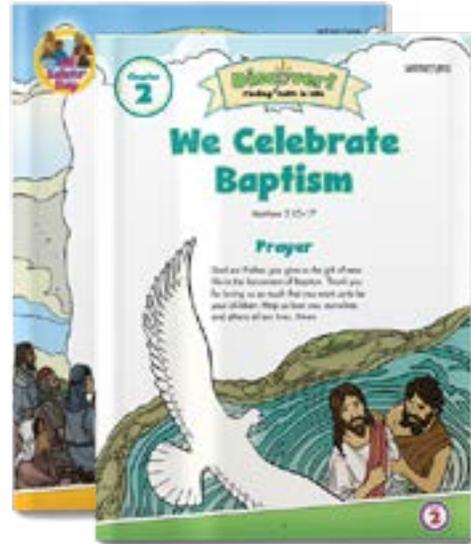


Teacher Guide

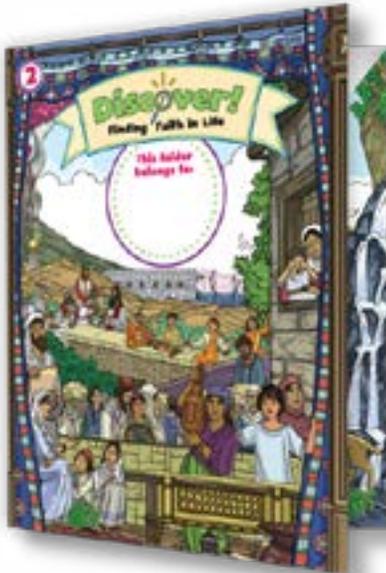
Grade 2



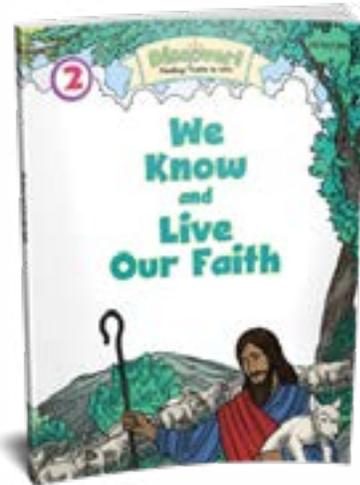
The Catholic Children's Bible



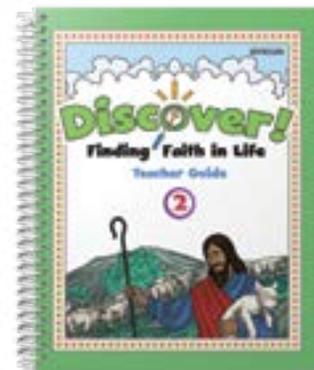
Activity Booklets



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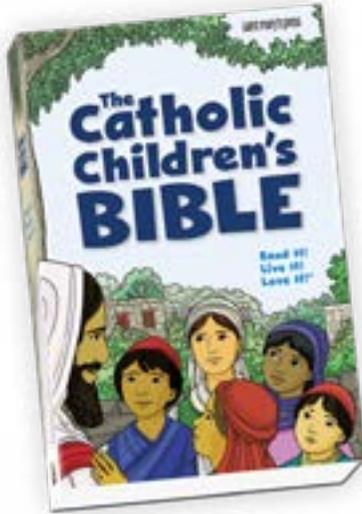


We Know and Live Our Faith Resource

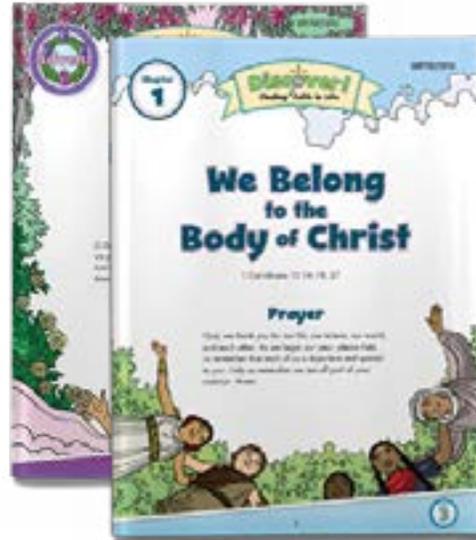


Teacher Guide

Grade 3



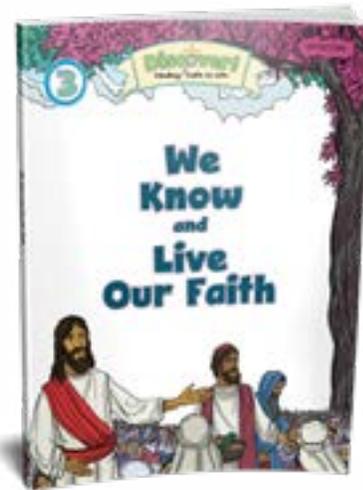
The Catholic Children's Bible



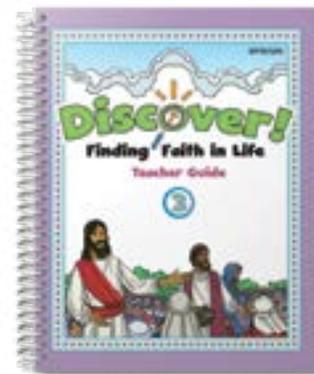
Activity Booklets



Special Feature

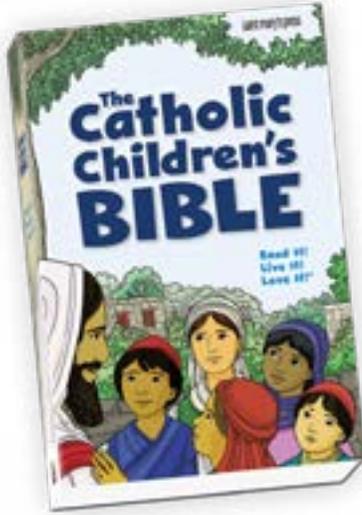


We Know and Live Our Faith Resource

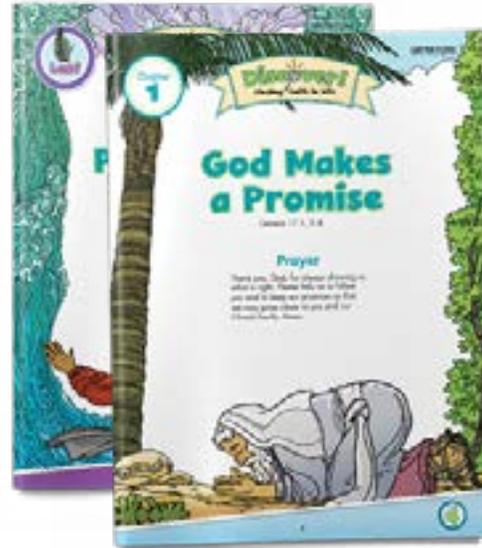


Teacher Guide

Grade 4



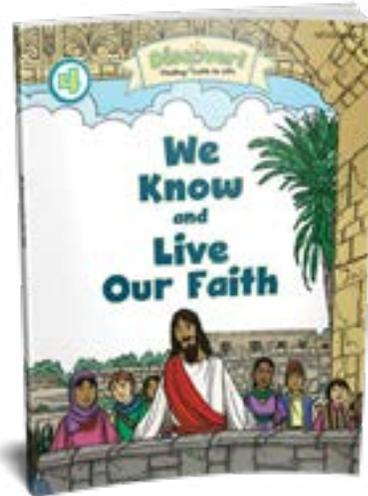
The Catholic Children's Bible



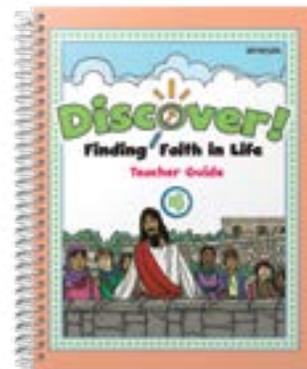
Activity Booklets



Special Feature

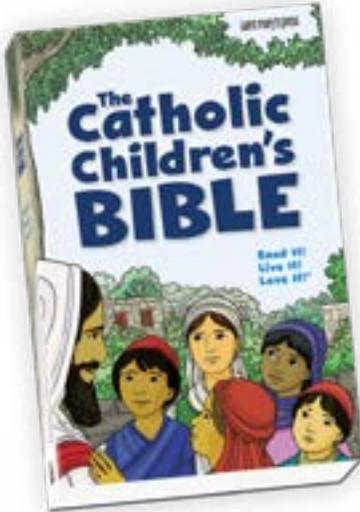


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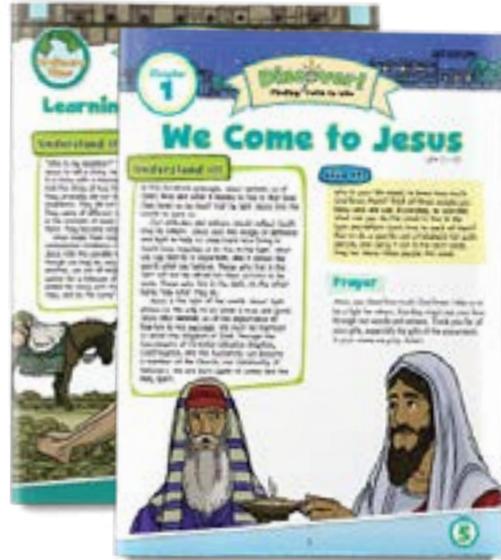


Teacher Guide

Grade 5



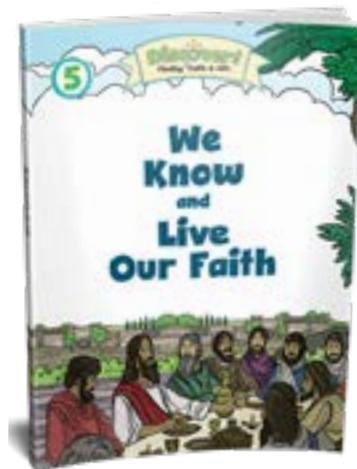
The Catholic Children's Bible



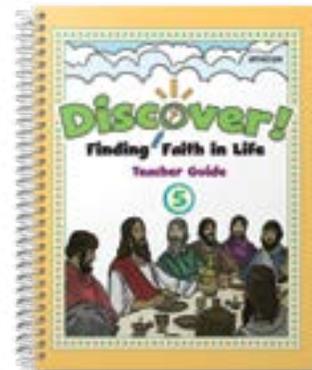
Activity Booklets



Special Feature



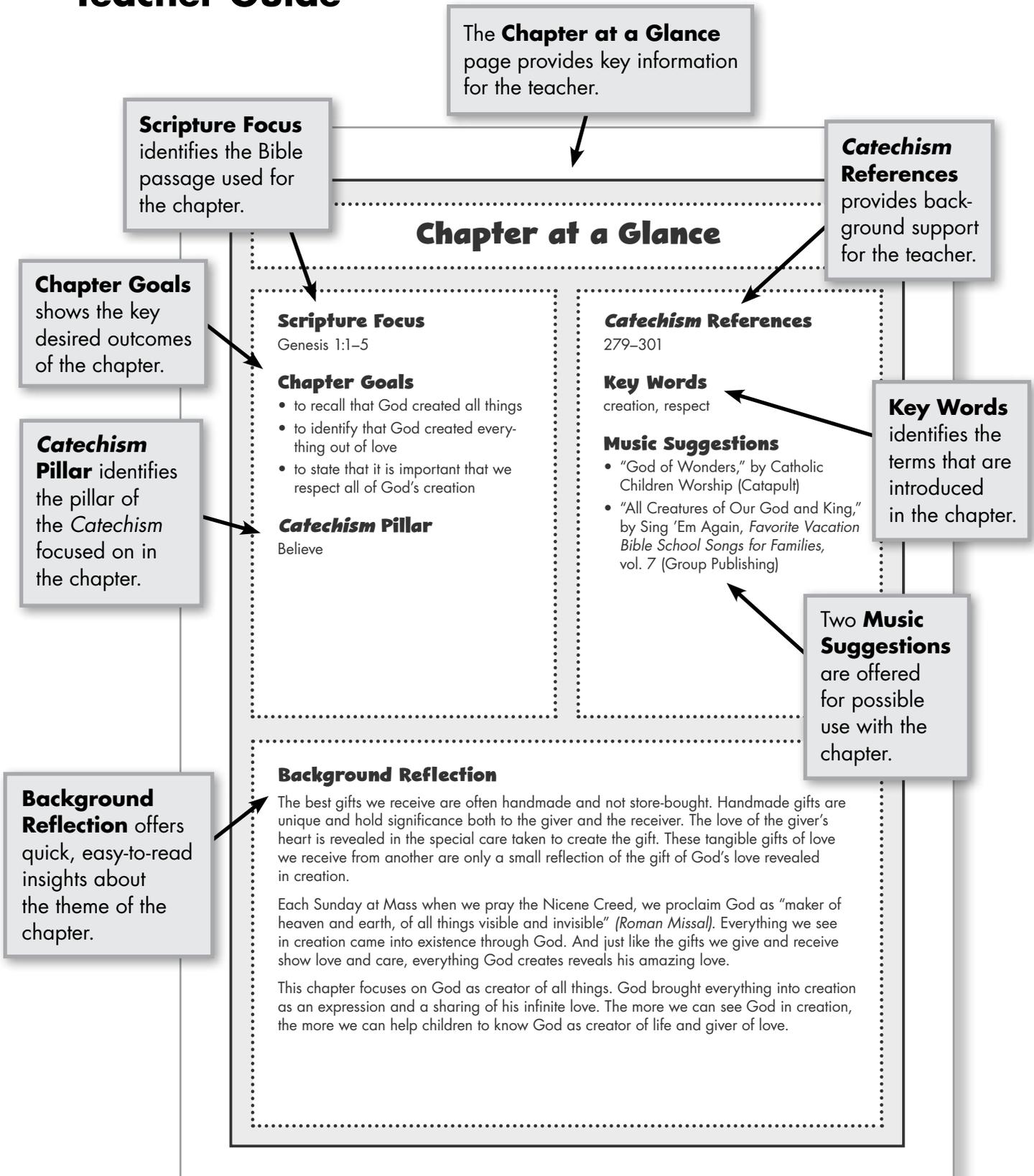
We Know and Live Our Faith Resource



Teacher Guide

Understanding the Components

Teacher Guide



The **Day 1—Get Ready!** lesson introduces the children to the focus of the chapter with an activity that will spark interest and create excitement. Children will also locate the Bible book, chapter, and verses used for the chapter.

† Day 1—Get Ready!

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 1 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- a bookmark for the children to use throughout the year

Opening

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 1 activity booklet.
- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.
- Encourage the children to look at the image on the front of the activity booklet. Invite them to share what they see and to predict what the chapter might be about. Read the chapter title to the group.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share some of their favorite things in nature. You may need to give them examples, such as flowers, animals, water, and trees.
- Encourage the children to share their favorite things, and write them (or draw a quick picture of them) on the board or poster.
- Ask the children if they know who created the world (God).
- Explain that this chapter is about God's creation. When we talk about the world, we are talking about creation.

Bible Background

- Tell the children that the Scripture passage for this chapter is found in the Book of Genesis. Invite the children to turn to the Book of Genesis in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and find "Genesis" on the back cover. Explain that the book is found in the Old or the New Testament. Encourage them to note the color of the book and the number of books called the Pentateuch. Encourage them to look at the bottom pages of the Bible to get a general idea of how the Bible is found.
- Help the children to use the table of contents (page 20). If there is time, read aloud the table of contents.
- Invite the children to find Genesis 1:1–5 in the Bible. Distribute a bookmark to each child. Invite them to read the pages, and explain that you will read the story to them.

Materials Needed lists all items that will be used in the lesson.

The **Day 2—Dive In!** lesson invites the children to interact directly with *The Catholic Children's Bible* and learn important concepts through key Bible stories.

Closing Prayer

- Close the day by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and a brief, spontaneous prayer or by playing one of the music suggestions for the chapter.

¶ Day 2—Dive In!

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 1 activity booklet
- blank paper
- markers or crayons

Opening

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to turn to Genesis 1:1–5 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 21). Point out the title at the top of the page, and read it to the children. Explain that the first few pages of the Bible tell a story about God creating the world. Tell the children that you will just read part of this story for now.
- Read the Scripture passage aloud. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did God create on this first day? (*light*)
 - What did God call the light? (*day*)
 - What did God call the darkness? (*night*)
- Summarize the other days of Creation briefly for the children by mentioning what was created (Genesis 1:6–2:4): day 2—sky and water, day 3—land and plants, day 4—sun and moon, day 5—birds and sea creatures, day 6—people and animals, day 7—God rested. Remind the children that after God created these things, he looked at them and was pleased with what he saw.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on page 22 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Invite them to name things God created they see in the pictures (*plants, animals, water, rocks, trees, etc.*).
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read aloud the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.

The **Day 3—Discover!** lesson presents key content through an engaging learning activity and a core teaching section.

- Review some of the key points with them:
 - > Before God created anything, there was only God.
 - > God made everything from nothing. God's power alone made things come into being.
 - > The story of God's Creation is a story of how God shares his love with us.
 - > We are called to love and respect all of God's creation.

Live It!

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1 of the activity booklet.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons, and invite the children to draw a picture of something God has made. If they don't finish their drawing in the allotted time, encourage them to finish it at home.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to share what they recall about the story of Creation.
- Invite them to use the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet to help them remember some basic points.

Closing Prayer

- Close the day by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and an appropriate prayer from pages 1990–1995 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Day 3—Discover!

Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 activity booklet
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Opening

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Core Learning Activity

Imagine If . . .

- Create a space where the children can sit together on the floor for this activity.
- Invite the children to close their eyes. Ask them to imagine if God had not created light. Explain that there would be no sun to see during the day and no moon to see at night, and everything would be dark. Tell them to open their eyes now.

te pretend binoc- like if God had k them to imagine clouds, stars, and

hem to imagine play our favorite

a bowl. Ask them play around, to fruit, vegetables,

are going to pet ds, fish, animals,

Core Teaching

- Explain how God created everything suggested points:
 - Love is about providing for and caring for another person. The more we love, the more God's creation gives us many wonderful things, and we know that this is one way God shows his love and care for us.
 - When we create something, like a drawing or a card, we create out of love. We want to share something special from us with another person. Creation is God's gift of love to us.
 - The more we can see all that God has created around us as gifts, the more we can grow in our ability to know God's love.
- Tell the children that when we love all that God has created, we are showing our love to God since he created it all.
- Explain that because every part of God's creation shows us God's love, we must **respect** all of creation. Tell them that **respect** means "caring for," so we must care for animals, plants, and one another.
- Tell the children that it is important that we care for and don't hurt or damage what God has made. Remind them that we wouldn't like it if someone damaged the art or gift we made, so we want to show how important God's creation is to us by using great care with all that he created.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - > Who created the water, land, animals, and people? (*God*)
 - > When we care for God's creation, we are showing our love and respect for whom? (*God*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. If there is not enough time, have the children complete the activity at home and bring it back the next day to check. When they have finished, tell them that all the pictures show ways we can care for God's creation.

Closing Prayer

- Close the day by reading aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Day 4—Go!

Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- copies of the handout "Chapter 1 Review," one for each child

- Invite the children to look at one another without moving around. Ask them to imagine if God had not created people like us or our friends and family to love and care for each other.
- Encourage the children to run in place until you count to six. Ask them to imagine if God had not rested to enjoy his creation. Tell them that he created our bodies to move but also to rest and to set aside time to remember how special God's creation is and how much he loves us.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children that God created all things out of love for us. When we see all created things, we can be thankful that God has created them.
- Invite the children to repeat the following statements after you, to show thankfulness for creation:
 - > Thank you, God, for creating light.
 - > Thank you, God, for the sky and the sea.
 - > Thank you, God, for land.
 - > Thank you, God, for all the plants.
 - > Thank you, God, for creating birds, fish, and all the animals.
 - > Thank you, God, for creating people, especially me.
 - > Thank you, God, for reminding us to rest.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 51 in its place.

Additional Activity Options

is a reminder that each chapter offers three alternative possibilities for the core learning activity.

Day 4—Go!

Materials Needed

- the chapter 2 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- copies of the handout “Chapter 2 Review,” one for each child

Opening

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.

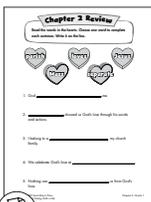
Review

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this chapter, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Nothing can separate us from God’s love.
 - Jesus shows us God’s love.
 - We celebrate God’s love as a parish community.
- Give each child a copy of the handout “Chapter 2 Review” if you would like to incorporate an assessment on day 4. Help the children by reading the instructions. You may also find it helpful to complete the review together as a class. *Answers: 1. loves, 2. Jesus, 3. parish, 4. Mass, 5. separate*

Chapter Wrap-Up

- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Paul the Apostle, and lead the children in saying, “Saint Paul the Apostle, pray for us.” Assure them that they can ask for Saint Paul the Apostle’s help at any time.
- Encourage the children to page on the back of the d
- Ask the children to find the folders. Direct them to pla the Seek and Find sheet.

Note: The hand-out “Chapter 2 Review” can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1/school.



The **Day 4—Go!** lesson includes an invitation to recall key learnings, an optional chapter review, and a special activity to mark the completion of the chapter.

Day 5—Discover More!

The following suggestions can be used alone or in some combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit in with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

Journal or Artistic Reflection

Invite the children to use a journal to write about the key learnings from the chapter. Encourage them to recall the things they found most interesting or helpful and what they might do differently because of what they learned. Alternatively, you might encourage the children to share their significant learnings through art, skits, or other forms of creative expression.

We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource corresponds to concepts introduced in this chapter:

- “God Made You and Loves You” + activity, pages 6–7

Read the selection aloud. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children. Invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.

Additional Activity Options

Use any of the additional activities on page 51 not used during any of the lessons to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

Review and Chapter Wrap-Up

If you have a full class period for day 5, you could consider using day 4 to incorporate one of the additional activities on pages 51 or in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource to reinforce the core concepts of the chapter. Then day 5 can include the verbal recall of the key learnings of the chapter, the “Chapter 1 Review,” and the chapter wrap-up.

Liturgical Readings

Read through the Gospel (or all of the readings) for the upcoming Sunday liturgy—a list of readings can be found by using the calendar on the USCCB website (www.usccb.org)—and invite the children to share what they hear as the message. You do not need to provide lengthy background or explanation of the reading(s) or look for specific answers. Rather, encourage the children to open their ears and hearts to what the reading(s) might be saying to them and to use this as a time of preparation for Sunday liturgy.



The **Day 5—Discover More!** lesson is offered for schools that have five rather than four days for religion class. Options for extending the chapter to a fifth day are included here. These ideas can also be used as extension activities on other days during the week.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- pipe cleaners, three or four for each child

What Can We Make? (15 minutes)

- Distribute three or four pipe cleaners to each child. Tell the children they have 3 minutes to create something.
- Allow a few minutes for volunteers to share what they have created. Then collect the children's creations, and tell them you will give them back at the end of the class. Clear the space of all extra pipe cleaners.
- Tell the children that they are now going to make something else, but give them no supplies. Wait for a few minutes to see their reactions.
- Remind them that God made things from nothing, but that is because he is God. Explain to them that people cannot make art, cook, or build anything with nothing. Only God can create the world from nothing.
- Explain that we should be thankful that God loves us so much that he created us and the whole world around us.

Materials Needed

- multiple pieces of paper, each with a simple picture of an item from nature

Creation Charades (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time multiple pieces of paper with simple pictures of items from nature, such as a dog, a bird, a tree, a plant, water, the sun.
- Explain to the children how to play the game of charades. Tell them that they have to act out something without using words, only using their bodies. Give the children an example by acting out a simple picture to guess what you are acting out.
- Invite volunteers to come up with a picture on their piece of paper and act out what the volunteer is acting out.
- Play several times, and remind the children that everything was created by God. Explain that we can be thankful for all that God has created, including ourselves.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- markers or crayons

Creation! (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Creation" (found in the back of the book) that this cartoon retells the story of Creation.
- Invite the children to share their thoughts on the video.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons to see what was created on the things that were created.
- Invite volunteers to share and explain their drawings.
- Say a quick prayer of thanksgiving for all that God has created.

The **Additional Activities**

are alternative options for the core learning activity. They may also be used to extend or supplement the lessons as needed.

Chapter 1 Review

Follow the instructions for each question.

1. Circle what God created.



the world



birds and all animals

2. Why did God create the world?
Circle your answer.

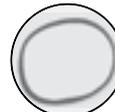


out of love



to show his power

3. What did God make everything from?
Circle your answer.



from nothing



from Earth

4. What did God create on the first day?
Circle your answer.



light



people

5. Circle the way we respect God's creation.

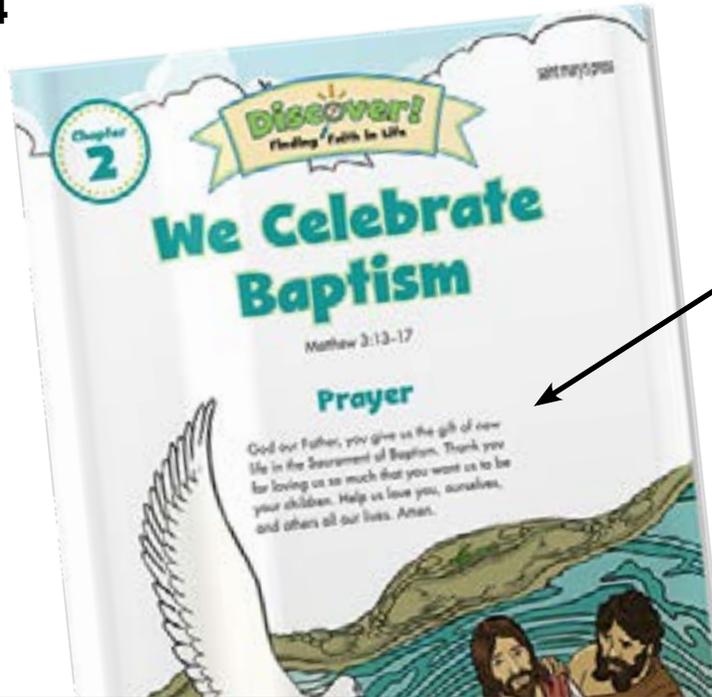


The **Chapter Review** is offered for those who would like to include a review as part of the chapter. Core concepts covered in the lessons are highlighted here. You may wish to have the children complete this review individually, or you may choose to complete it as a class.



Activity Booklets

Grades 1–4



Each activity booklet begins with a **Prayer** that is used in class.

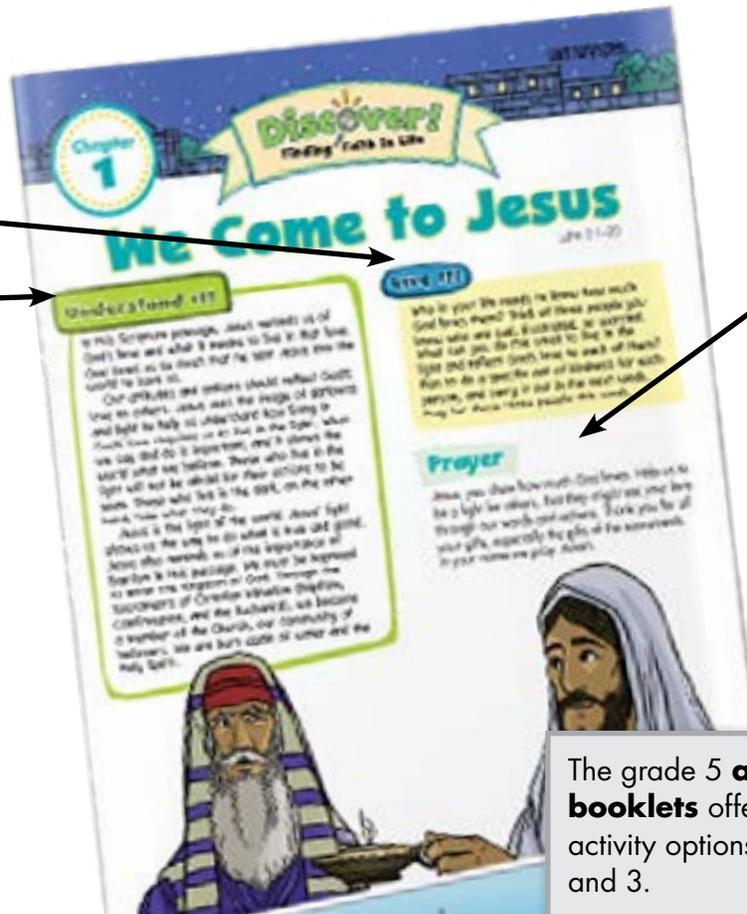


Page 2 (on left) features an activity that relates to content introduced in the Bible.

Page 3 (on right) features an activity that relates to the core teaching content for the chapter. This page is a prayer in the liturgical season chapters.

Activity Booklets

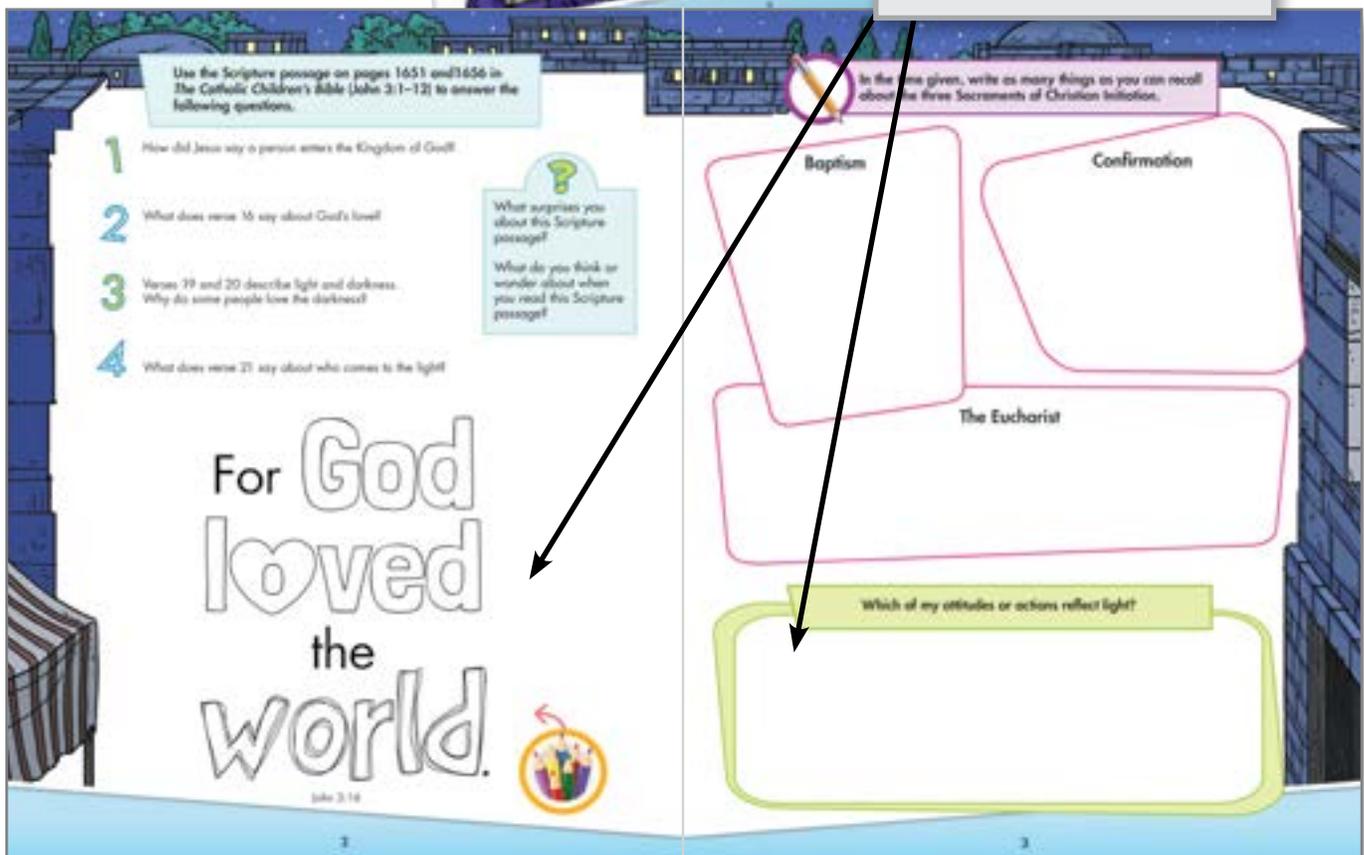
Grade 5



Understand It! and Live It! content appears on the opening page to deepen the understanding of the Scripture passage.

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

The grade 5 **activity booklets** offer additional activity options on pages 2 and 3.



Activity Booklets

Family Pages Grades 1 – 5

The **Family Page** provides families with helpful information about the chapter and ideas to bring the chapter focus to life at home.

Family Page

Background Reflection

God's love is perfect, never changing or swayed by anything we do. God created us from his love and desires us to remain in his love for all time. In the New Testament, we learn that God loved us so much that he sent his only Son to be with us and to teach us how to live. We celebrate God's love as the Church, a gathered community of faith.

This chapter offers a deeper understanding of what love is through seeing the everlasting love of our God. The true, eternal love of God is not something we can earn but is a gift freely given.

Take some time to reflect on how you celebrate God's love through the way you worship, pray, and serve. Share your own experience of the depth of God's love as you help your child understand God's love for him or her as God's beloved child.

Family Activities

- Discuss some of your favorite family religious celebrations. This discussion might include the reception of sacraments by family members, the parish community's liturgical seasons, or preparing for Sunday Mass. Share what makes these celebrations special to your family and explain that by taking the time to celebrate we grow in our love for God.
- Watch the video "VeggieTales – My Day" (YouTube, 2:42) together. Invite your child to share some things that he or she is thankful for that happened throughout the day. Discuss how God's love might be visible in some of these things.
- Read together the Featured Story on page 1780 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Romans 8:35, 37–39). Invite your child to tell you what he or she remembers about the meaning of this Scripture passage.

People of Faith

Saint Paul the Apostle (first century)

Paul was changed after meeting the Risen Jesus on a journey. He went from being against Christians to getting baptized and teaching and writing letters about Jesus to others. The feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul is January 25.

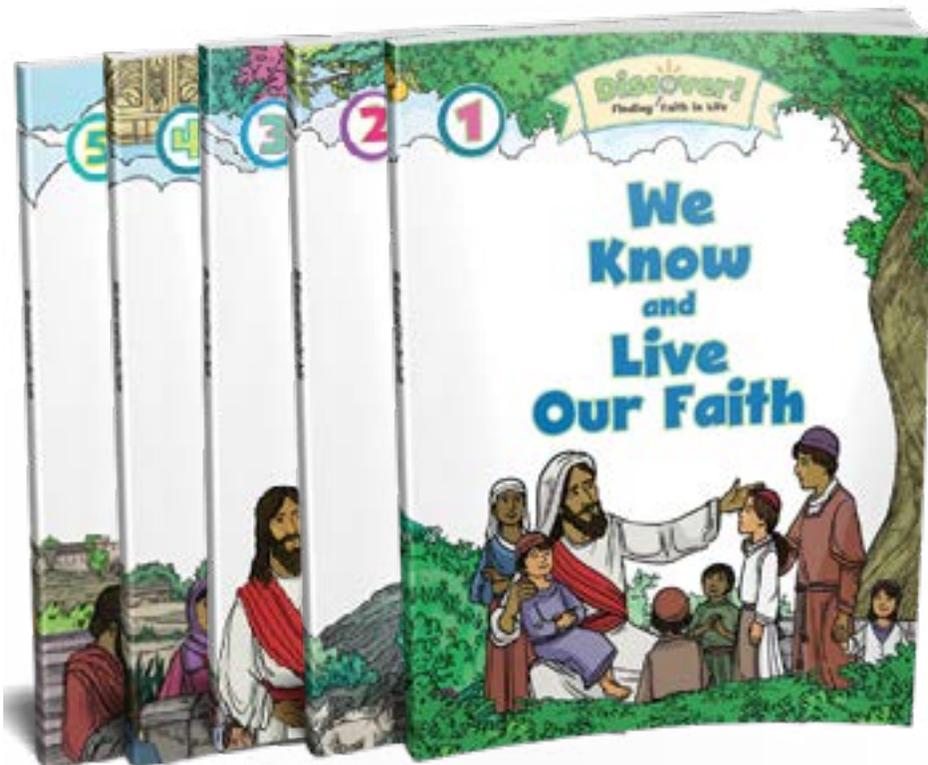
Prayer

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

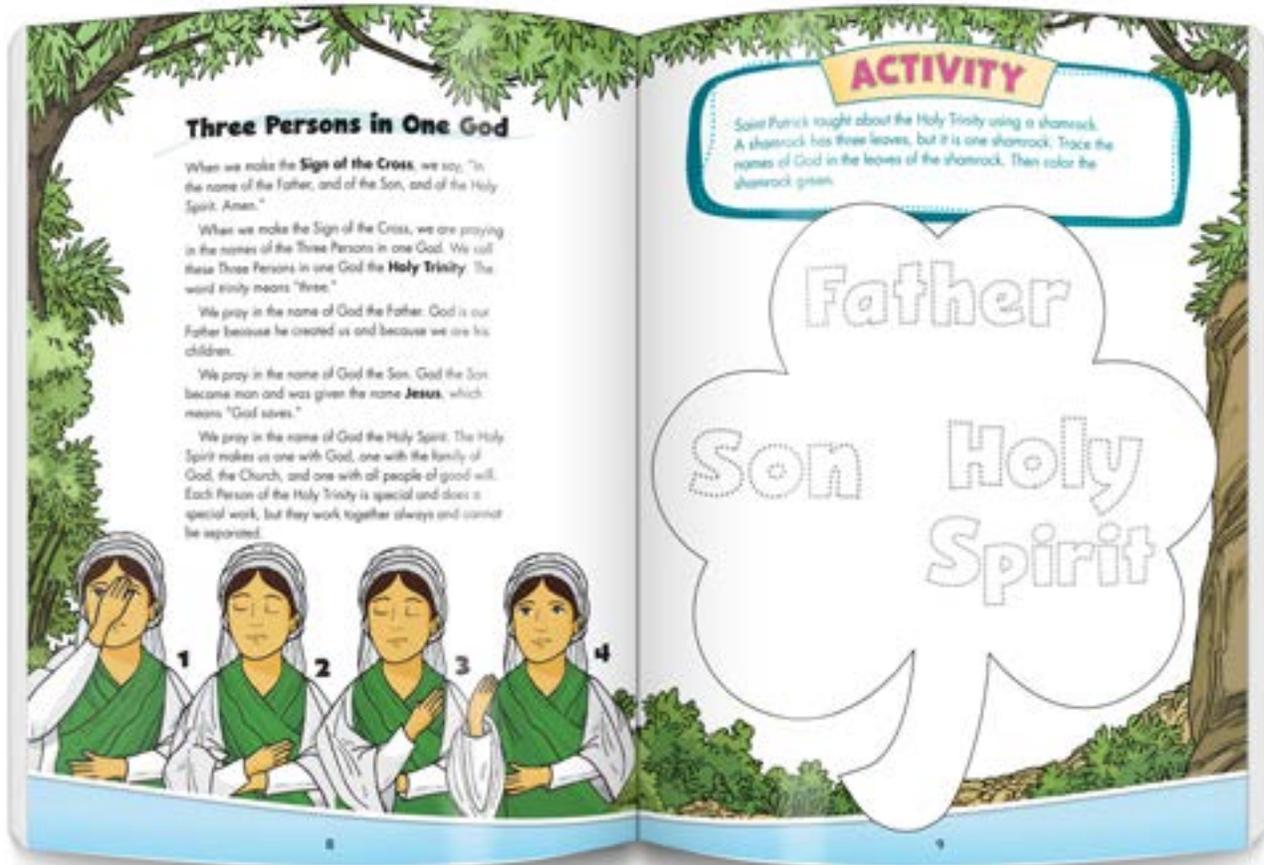
God, you love us so much that you want to share all of creation with us. Thank you for making the world and everything we see! Amen.

People of Faith introduces the children to saints and other holy people who are models of faith.

We Know and Live Our Faith



This resource provides an additional opportunity for the children to learn about their faith. It can be used as part of class or at home with the family.



Special Features



Seek and Find Sheet

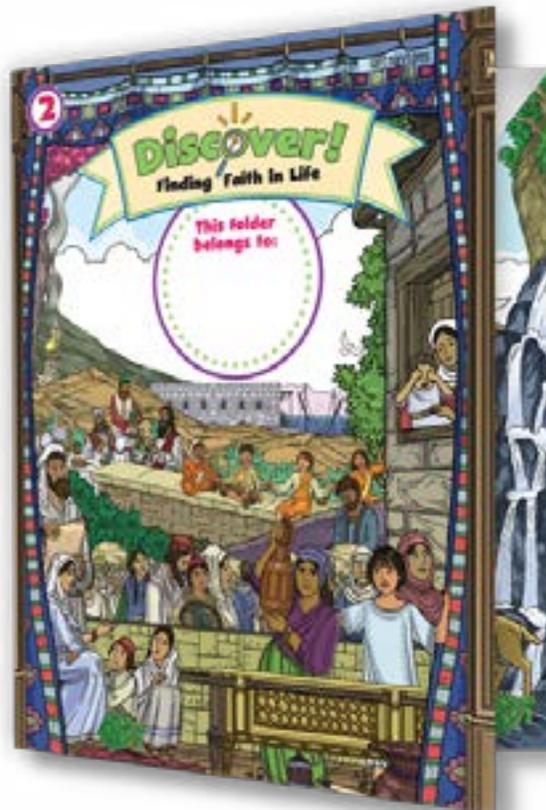
Seek and Find Stickers

Grade 1

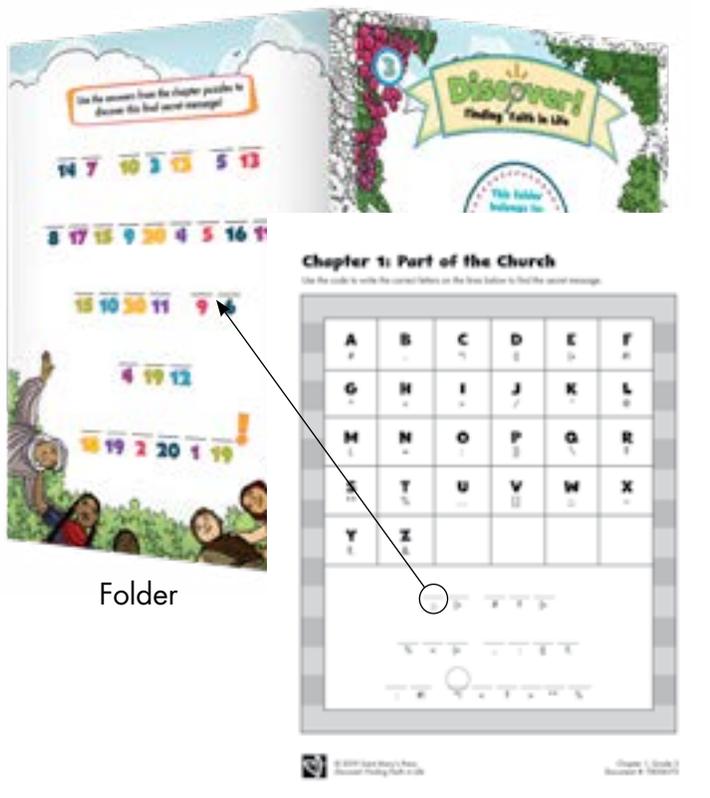
At the end of each of the twenty core chapters, the children will be encouraged to take a sticker and find where it belongs on the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Each week they will complete a different scene from Scripture.

Grade 2

At the end of each of the twenty core chapters, the children will be given a specific image to look for on their folders. It will be hidden among many other images, so they will have to look carefully!



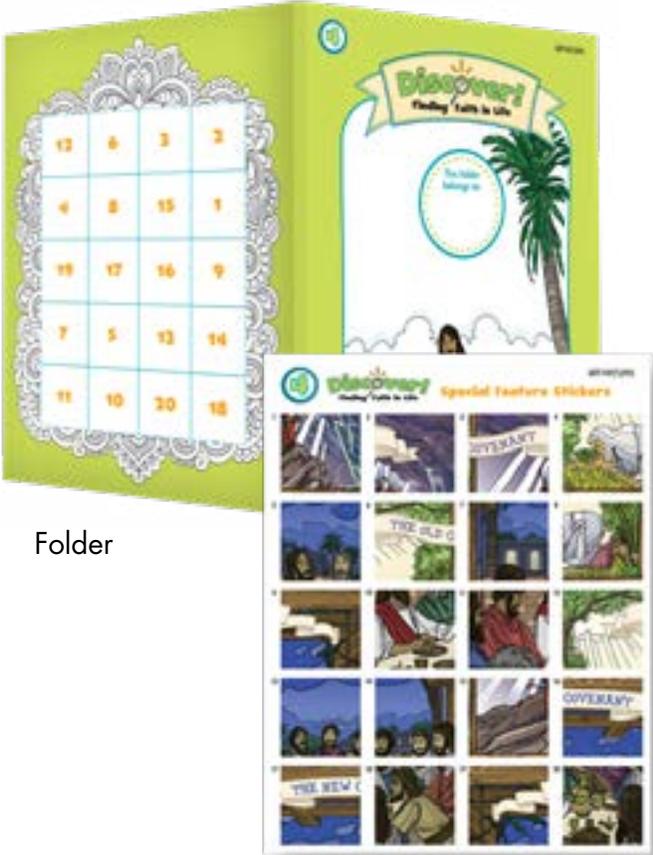
Folder



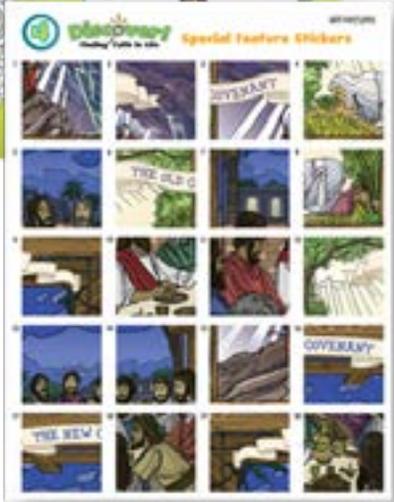
Folder

Grade 3

Each of twenty core chapters ends with a **puzzle handout** for the children to complete. They will use a part of their answers on these handouts to reveal the master puzzle on the back of their folders.



Folder



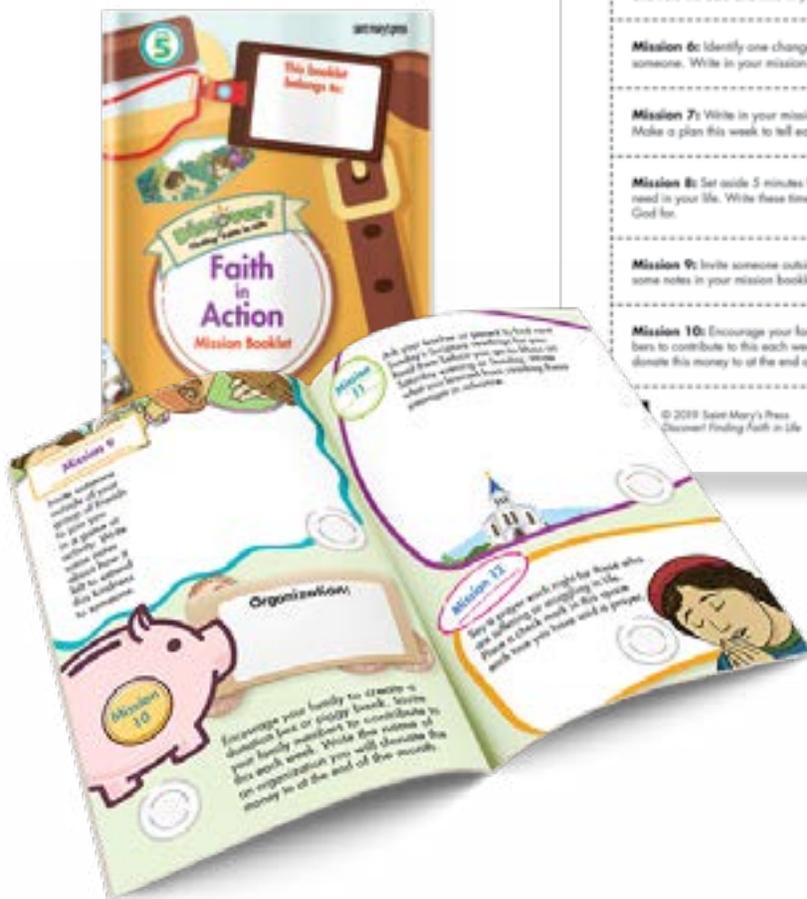
Sticker Sheet

Grade 4

At the end of each of the twenty core chapters, the children will be encouraged to take a **sticker** and find where it belongs on the back of their folders. At the end of the twenty core lessons, their grid of stickers will complete one main image.

Grade 5

Each of the twenty core chapters will end with a randomly selected mission that will challenge the young people to actively live out their faith during the chapter. Then the young people will be encouraged to write a reflection in their mission booklets about the mission they were challenged to live.



Mission Booklet

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Living the Mission: Faith in Action

Mission 1: Each day this week, write in your mission booklet one thing you are grateful for. Say a silent prayer to God in thanksgiving.

Mission 2: Reflect on someone you might need to say you're sorry to. Write that person's name in your mission booklet, and make a plan to express your sorrow to this person in some way.

Mission 3: Think of one thing you can do to care for creation in a new way this week. Take that action and write a few notes in your mission booklet about what it was like.

Mission 4: Share some of your thoughts and feelings about what it means to you to be a follower of Jesus with one person this week. Write in your mission booklet how that conversation went.

Mission 5: Find a traditional prayer that you like (you can find some of these on pages 1990-1997 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Make a point to say this prayer each morning this week and note the date and time in your mission booklet.

Mission 6: Identify one change you can make in your behavior to minimize or end a conflict with someone. Write in your mission booklet about that change, and take that action.

Mission 7: Write in your mission booklet the names of five people who are important to you. Make a plan this week to tell each of these people how important they are to you.

Mission 8: Set aside 5 minutes for silent prayer time each day this week. Ask God for those things you need in your life. Write these times in your mission booklet, and make some notes about what you asked God for.

Mission 9: Invite someone outside of your group of friends to join you in a game or activity. Write some notes in your mission booklet about how it felt to extend this kindness to someone.

Mission 10: Encourage your family to create a donation box or piggy bank. Invite your family members to contribute to this each week. Write in your mission booklet the name of an organization you will donate this money to at the end of the month.

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 Discover! Finding Faith in Life

Chapter 1, Grade 5

Key Elements of the Program

Teacher Guide

The Chapter at a Glance feature offers the teacher an overview of the chapter goals and the core information needed to plan each day's lesson. It identifies key vocabulary introduced and music suggestions that correspond to the chapters. A background reflection for teachers is offered, as well as *Catechism* references that are related to the concepts covered in the chapter. These references can be used by the teacher for deeper research and understanding.

Each chapter in this guide follows the same overall structure, which is shown below. The chapters are designed to work in schools with either a four- or five-day weekly schedule for religion. Giving each lesson within a chapter a quick review will help you make any adjustments necessary to ensure success in your particular setting and with your particular class.

 **Day 1—Get Ready!**

- Opening
- Engage Activity
- Bible Background
- Closing Prayer

 **Day 4—Go!**

- Opening
- Review
- Chapter Wrap-Up
- Closing Prayer

 **Day 2—Dive In!**

- Opening
- Scripture Focus
- Closing Prayer

 **Day 5—Discover More!**
(optional)

- Journal or Artistic Reflection
- We Know and Live Our Faith*
- Additional Activity Options
- Review and Chapter Wrap-Up
- Liturgical Readings

 **Day 3—Discover!**

- Opening
- Core Learning Activity
- Core Teaching
- Closing Prayer

Day 1—Get Ready!

This day's lesson includes an engage activity that lays the foundation by assessing the children's prior knowledge and experience. This engages the children by prompting discussion and activity around concepts they are familiar with and then connecting those concepts with content they will be learning in the chapter. The children are also invited to locate the Scripture passage and/or Featured Story that is the focus for the chapter and to place a bookmark in the Bible to save the location. On the first day of class, teachers provide blank bookmarks that the children can decorate for use throughout the year.

If teachers have more time available after the engage activity and navigating to the Scripture passage for the chapter, they can read the Scripture passage in advance of day 2. Teachers can also introduce one of the music suggestions and continue to play this selection each day so the children can learn it.

Day 2—Dive In!

This day's lesson immerses the children in the Bible through the key Scripture passage for the chapter. The focus in this lesson is helping the children understand the Scripture story through reading and reflecting on the content presented in the Understand It!, Live It!, and Tell It! features of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Day 3—Discover!

This day's lesson involves a core learning activity (a craft in the liturgical season chapters) that brings to life one of the themes of the chapter in an interactive way. Frequently, this involves an out-of-the-seat activity that creates energy and excitement while helping the children further explore a concept related to the chapter. The core teaching part of the lesson takes place after the learning activity, presenting essential content to share with the children and questions to ask to assess comprehension.

Day 4—Go!

This day's lesson wraps up the chapter with a final check and recall of the core chapter goals. If teachers would like to include an assessment as part of the chapter content, a chapter review is available to be completed at this time. The chapter review can be completed individually or together as a class. This lesson ends with a special activity (in the twenty core chapters) that rewards the children for completing the chapter and builds excitement for the chapters to come.

Day 5—Discover More!

If your school offers religion class five days a week, ideas are presented in this section for a fifth lesson. If your school has religion class four days a week, the ideas offered on day 5 can be used as supplementary activities on any of the other days.

Activity Booklets

A fun and colorful activity booklet accompanies each chapter. The activities in these booklets may be used in class or may be completed at home with the family, depending on time parameters. Each activity booklet includes a prayer used in the chapter, two activity pages that reinforce the content of the chapter, and a family page that offers families background information on the chapter focus, suggested activities that can be done together, some information about a person of faith, and a family prayer. *Note:* In the liturgical season chapters, the activity on page 3 is replaced with a prayer service that can be used at the end of the chapter.

We Know and Live Our Faith

This resource, a supplemental piece that follows the pillars of the *Catechism*, is filled with articles that present additional doctrinal content that can expand the core concepts covered in the program. Directions in the teacher guide pinpoint which articles and activities from this resource relate to which chapters in the program. Some articles are referenced multiple times, as they relate to several chapters. Other content in this resource is not referred to directly in the chapter, as it may introduce concepts that are not focused on in the core program. The *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource can be used either directly in class as time allows or as a family-centered piece that deepens family understanding through reading and discussing faith content together.

Special Features

Each grade ends the lesson with an engaging activity to reinforce the chapter focus, to celebrate the completion of another chapter, and to track the progress the group has made through the year. From stickers to decoding puzzles, each age-specific special feature will create excitement at the end of the lesson, and the children will look forward to discovering something new each week.

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 individually online. For a complete list of songs for the program, please see the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* resources for each teacher guide. Of course, teachers may also wish to add their own favorite hymns or songs, such as those popular in your school or parish community.

Videos

Options for activities that incorporate fun and engaging videos are provided throughout the program. Settings that have access to the necessary technology can utilize this additional media to further enliven learning. The video suggestions are also included on the family page in the children's activity booklets, so even if they are not used with the formal learning environment, they can be enjoyed at home with the family. Links to the video resources that are referenced throughout this program are available as part of the online resources for each teacher guide.

Teacher Orientation Session

Overview

This 105-minute session is for teachers who will use the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program in a school setting.

Session at a Glance

	Get Ready!
	A. Welcome and Gathering Prayer (5 minutes) B. Reflecting on Goals (15 minutes)
	Dive In!
	C. Bible Story (20 minutes) D. Balloon Activity (20 minutes) E. Break (10 minutes)
	Discover!
	F. Program Overview (30 minutes)
	Go!
	G. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Materials and Preparation

Materials Needed

The Catholic Children's Bible, a candle and matches or a battery-powered candle, and other items to create a prayer space

name tags, one for each teacher

markers for filling out name tags

Discover! resources (*The Catholic Children's Bible*, the folder and contents, and the teacher guide), according to grade level

index cards for reflection on goals, one for each teacher

pens for group use

manila envelopes for handouts

copies of handouts for each teacher: "Characteristics of Elementary Children," "Overview of Catholic Social Teaching," "Faith and Fun in the Family"

12-inch balloons, one for each teacher

rulers, one for each teacher

refreshments for break time

Preparation Tasks

Print each handout on different colored paper for easy identification during the session. *Note:* The handouts can be found in this manual.

Place a copy of the handouts in a manila envelope for each teacher, and write each teacher's name on an individual envelope. Arrange the envelopes on a table near the entrance, in alphabetical order, for the teachers to pick up as they enter.

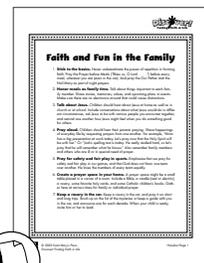
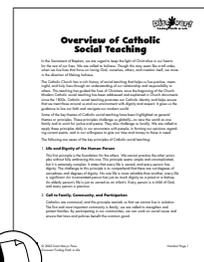
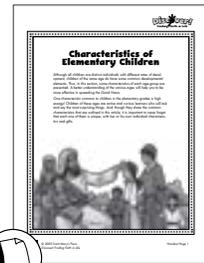
Set up a table with the *Discover!* resources (see above).

Have blank name tags and markers available for teachers as they arrive.

Bookmark 2 Corinthians 4:5–12 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Prior to the session, ask a teacher volunteer to prepare to read this passage at the closing prayer. On an index card or slip of paper, write, "A reading from Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians" and "The Word of the Lord," and place it in the Bible. Suggest that the reader begin the passage with the first phrase and end with the latter one.

Provide a light snack and beverages for the participants.

Handouts



Session Steps



Get Ready!

A. Welcome and Gathering Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Welcome** the teachers and thank them for coming.
2. **Invite** the group to recall that they are in the holy presence of God, and allow for a few moments of silence.
3. **Lead** or choose another appropriate person to lead the following prayer:
 - Lord Jesus Christ, you have said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). As we begin another year of religious education together, help us to lead our children to you. Always aware of our own weakness as earthenware vessels, help us always to come to you for strength and guidance. Help us to discover your love, and a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven, in the ministry we undertake. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. (All say "Amen.")
4. **Close** with the Sign of the Cross.

B. Reflecting on Goals (15 minutes)

1. **Distribute** an index card and a pen to each teacher.
2. **Ask** the teachers to take a moment to consider the coming year. Invite them to consider what three goals they would most like to have accomplished with the children or young people in their class by the end of the year. Explain that these might be educational or spiritual goals.
3. **Direct** the teachers to write down their goals, and then to share their goals with the larger group.
4. **Remind** the group that if these goals are to be met, the teachers must address them each week in some way. Ask the teachers to turn their cards to the other side and make a statement indicating how they will work toward these goals in small steps each week. For example: "I will pray a Hail Mary each week with the children so that they will know this prayer by heart by the end of the year." Or, "I will remind the children, at some point in the chapter, that Jesus wants us to love one another." Give the teachers a few moments to write down their plans to meet their goals.
5. **Encourage** the teachers to use one another as resources in meeting these goals, and, during the year, as resources and sources of help and encouragement. Remind them that they are here for the children, but they are also here for one another as a community of teachers. Remind the teachers that you, as the religion coordinator or principal, are here for them. Encourage them to approach you with any challenges or concerns.



Dive In!

C. Bible Story (20 minutes)

1. **Distribute** the Discover! resources to the teachers according to grade level.
2. **Direct** the teachers to turn to the Featured Story “Solomon Asks God for Wisdom,” on page 458 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*. Tell them that the text between the leaves on page 458 is a shortened version of the Scripture verses on pages 457 and 460. Alert them to the citations under the picture on page 458. Explain that the first citation notes the abbreviated story on page 458, and that the “full story” citation notes the Scripture verses on pages 457 and 460. Point out that the full story is also marked on these pages with a green leaf at the beginning and at the end.
3. **Explain** that you will go through the story with them, modeling how they might use it in the classroom.
4. **Encourage** the teachers to take a moment to look at the artwork on the pages. Remind them that the art often helps convey the meaning of the story. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Featured Story, “Solomon Asks God for Wisdom,” on page 458.
5. **Ask** the teachers several questions to illustrate the kind of questions that might be asked of the children:
 - What was the man in the story doing? (*praying to God*)
 - What is the name of the man who is praying to God in the story? (*Solomon*)
 - Solomon was a king. What was King Solomon asking God for? (*wisdom*)
 - Why did Solomon need wisdom? (*He needed to know the difference between right and wrong so that he could rule with justice.*)
 - Let’s look at the words at the bottom of the page. What is wisdom? (*seeing things as God sees them, knowing how to act*) What is justice? (*fairness, right treatment of people*)
6. **Summarize** the meaning of the story for the group. Explain that teachers too need wisdom from God, sometimes in very subtle ways, to reach each child in the group. Remind the teachers that they need wisdom to see each child as God sees that child, and to know how to act accordingly. Remind them also that they need to show fairness, and to explain to children that fairness does not mean treating everyone the same—fairness means giving each person what they need to grow.

Understand It!

Summarize the first paragraph of the Understand It! Note these points:

- Solomon asked for wisdom so that he could be a good leader.
- Wisdom would help him to know the right thing to do.
- This prayer showed that he already had some wisdom, as this was a wise prayer.
- As religion teachers, we too need to ask for wisdom and help from God, and sometimes from the religion coordinator or principal.

Live It!

Invite the teachers to read the Live It! on page 459, and have them discuss the situations briefly in small groups. Then call everyone back to the larger group and summarize by explaining that although the answers may seem obvious to us, they may not be obvious to children. Remind the teachers that giving the children an opportunity to think through imaginary situations stretches their minds and hearts and prepares them for new situations that may arise in their own lives.

Tell It!

Point out the images in the Tell It! on page 459, and explain that these images recall the Featured Story and will help the children remember the story.

D. Balloon Activity (20 minutes)

1. **Distribute** a balloon and a ruler to each teacher, and invite the teachers to blow up their balloons and tie them. Then divide the group in half, and select one group to be the wisdom team and one group to be the justice team.
2. **Invite** the wisdom team to take their balloons and rulers and stand by the wall on one side of the room. Invite the justice team to take their balloons and rulers and stand by the wall on the opposite side of the room.
3. **Explain** that when you say "Go!" each team will use their rulers to gently move their balloons until they touch the wall on the opposite side of the room. Encourage the teachers to take great care of their balloons, as the two teams will be crossing each other to get to their goal walls. Tell them that when each person's balloon touches the opposite wall, that person should grab it and hug it, signaling that he or she has finished. The first team to collectively get their balloons to touch the opposite wall is the winner.
4. **Process** the activity by congratulating the winners and explaining that as long as we care about wisdom and justice, and as long as we ask God for these important strengths in our lives and in our teaching, we are all winners!
5. **Explain** to the teachers that they have just been led through several of the key components in the *Discover!* program, with the focus on a Bible story and a core learning activity. Add that after learning about a Bible story related to the topic of a particular chapter, the children will learn more about that topic in greater detail.

E. Break (10 minutes)



Discover!

F. Program Overview (30 minutes)

1. **Explain** that you will now take a few minutes to help the teachers understand the *Discover!* program.
2. **Direct** the teachers to open their teacher guides and to find the scope and sequence for their grade. Explain that they might like to look over this information in detail as they begin to plan each lesson. Tell them that this is a road map of the goals, concepts, Scripture stories, key words, and other items that will be covered in the program.
3. **Ask** them to next turn to the table of contents. Explain that the program's core chapters are presented in four units of five chapters each. Note that each chapter follows a pillar of the *Catechism* in that unit: The first chapter is Believe (doctrine), the second is Celebrate (liturgy and sacraments), the third is Live (morality), the fourth is Live: Catholic Social Teaching (social teaching principles), and the fifth is Pray (prayer).
4. **Note** that an additional eight liturgical season chapters are offered following the core chapters. Explain that these are listed in order of presentation for the year and can be used as time or your particular program allows. Ask the teachers to note the chapter on Mary for their own grade. Explain that in grades 1 and 2, the Mary lesson can be used for any feast of Our Lady or during the month of May. Note that in grades 3, 4, and 5, the Mary chapter is focused on a specific feast.
5. **Ask** the catechists to turn to chapter 3 in their teacher guides, no matter what grade. Encourage the catechists to page through the chapter for a few moments to get familiar with the presentation and the layout of the pages.
6. **Direct** them to find the first page of the chapter, the chapter at a glance page. Point out the Scripture focus connected to this lesson in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Ask the teachers to open their Bibles to this Scripture passage and its Featured Story. Explain that even though they may be looking at different lessons, you will be walking through the chapter's main features together.
7. **Note** that grade 5 is special because it uses no Featured Stories. Explain the following:
 - In grade 5, all of the Bible stories are given from the two-column Bible text, and are not condensed into a Featured Story. In fifth grade, the young people are asked to use their biblical literacy skills to find the Scripture passages in the two-column section of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.
 - The features that would ordinarily be given in the Bible that support the Scripture story (Understand It! and Live It!) are given on the first page of the grade 5 activity booklets. The Tell It! directions are given in the teacher guide.
 - Occasionally, this is also the case for some of the chapters in grades 1 through 4. If there is no Featured Story, the first page of the activity booklet presents the Understand It! and Live It! paragraphs.

8. **Continue** explaining the chapter at a glance page. Comment on the following:
- The chapter goals are given in three clear statements, and are repeated at the end of the chapter as a summary for the children.
 - The *Catechism* pillar reminds you which pillar the chapter is focused on.
 - The *Catechism* references are paragraph numbers in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that go deeper into some of the concepts introduced to the children. These references are for your background and aren't meant to be used directly with the children.
 - The key words are printed in two kinds of type. The words in italic are words that are introduced in the Featured Story in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. The words in regular type are words introduced in the teacher guide chapter.
 - The music suggestions are songs that can be incorporated into the chapter and relate to the concepts being presented.
 - The background reflection is offered as a personal reflection to help you make connections with the chapter content and your own faith. It also provides some additional background for you as you prepare to teach each chapter.
9. **Ask** the teachers to turn to the next page where they will see "Day 1—Get Ready!" Explain that this is the lesson for the first day of the week. Note that there are three more days: Day 2—Dive In!, Day 3—Discover!, and Day 4—Go! Point out that there are options for extending the chapter to a fifth day (Day 5—Discover More!). Direct the teachers according to what schedule works best for your school.
10. **Explain** that you will go through each day in turn. Make the following brief comments:
- The first day (Get Ready!) includes an opening prayer, an engage activity, a Bible background, and a closing prayer. The engage activity helps to create interest in the chapter topic, and the Bible background helps the children to learn about the Scripture passage they will be reading and locate it in their Bibles.
 - The second day (Dive In!) includes an opening prayer, a Scripture focus that will involve reading and understanding the Scripture passage for the chapter, and a closing prayer.
 - The third day (Discover!) includes an opening prayer, a core learning activity, a core teaching, and a closing prayer. The core learning activity is central to the lesson, as the children will be encouraged to use their bodies and minds to grasp the meaning of the central concept in the lessons. The core teaching introduces additional content to the children.
 - Note the "Additional Activity Options" box. If necessary, one of these activities can be substituted for the core learning activity. Encourage the teachers to look over all the activities to find the best one for their group.
 - The fourth day (Go!) includes an opening prayer, a review, a chapter wrap-up, and a closing prayer. The review encourages the children to recall all that they have learned and includes an optional assessment tool. The chapter wrap-up includes a reading about a person of faith and a special closing activity.

- The fifth day (Discover More!) includes additional suggestions that can be incorporated into the week or can extend the chapter to a full fifth day. How this is used will depend on your weekly school structure for religion. You might want to point out the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource at this time, which can be used on the fifth day, incorporated into the four-day week, or sent home for family use.
11. **Ask** the teachers to look through their folders to find the activity booklet for chapter 3. Comment on the activity booklet contents as follows:
 - A prayer is always found on the first page of the activity booklet. For chapters that use Scripture apart from a Featured Story, the Understand It! and Live It! can also be found here.
 - The second page relates to the Scripture used in the lesson. It is often planned as an open-Bible activity in which the children can further familiarize themselves with the Bible story and feel a sense of competence and accomplishment through the activity.
 - The third page is a review of some of the concepts presented in the core teaching. This page helps the children to recall and reinforce the main concepts of the teaching.
 - The last page of the activity booklet is called the family page. It includes the background reflection for the parents, family activities that can be done at home, the “People of Faith” paragraph, and a prayer for the family.
 - The “People of Faith” paragraph is also presented in the lesson for the children, and you are encouraged to read this with the children and to invite them to ask a chapter’s particular saint or person of faith to pray for them throughout the week.
 - It is important that these family pages go home with the children, as this is the main communication of the chapter content to families.
 12. **Summarize** your remarks by asking the teachers to find the article “Understanding the Components” at the front of the teacher guide. Explain that these pages provide brief explanations of all the different parts of the teacher guide, the activity booklets, the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource, and the special feature for each grade.
 13. **Refer** briefly to the manila envelopes the teachers picked up as they came in. Explain that these envelopes contain some informative handouts that can be used by themselves or can be distributed to parents. Remind the teachers that there are other important and helpful articles in the front of each teacher guide. Explain that these articles will not be discussed today, but ask that the teachers review them for their own information.
 14. **Invite** the teachers to take some time to look over their teacher guide and to raise any questions they might have.

(After a few minutes, ask the group if anyone has any questions. If someone has a question requiring a lengthy response, give a short response and then ask that teacher to see you after the session for a more detailed explanation.)



Go!

G. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

1. **Ask** the teachers to take a few moments to quiet themselves and to recall that they are in the holy presence of God.
2. **Begin** by asking the designated reader to read the prepared passage from Saint Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 4:5–12).
3. **Continue** by offering the following prayer:
 - Thank you, Lord Jesus, for making us the earthenware vessels, or common clay pots, that hold the power of your life within us. Help us to share your love, wisdom, and justice with the children we will meet this year. Help us to pour out that love, wisdom, and justice through our planning, our activities, our teaching, and our joyful participation in the faith life of the children you call to yourself. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.
 - Let us now pray together in the words that Jesus taught us: Our Father . . .
 - Let us go in peace to share the Good News with the children, our school, and our world. (Encourage all to respond, "Amen!")

Characteristics of Elementary Children

Although all children are distinct individuals with different rates of development, children of the same age do have some common developmental elements. Thus, in this section, some characteristics of each age-group are presented. A better understanding of the various ages will help you to be more effective in spreading the Good News.

One characteristic common to children in the elementary grades is high energy! Children of these ages are active and curious learners who will ask and say the most surprising things. And, though they share the common characteristics that are outlined in this article, it is important to never forget that each one of them is unique, with individual characteristics and gifts.



First Graders

First graders are enthusiastic, social, and eager to learn. Nowadays, many first graders are already reading and writing at a basic level, having developed these skills in kindergarten. Yet, six-year-olds and seven-year-olds still need a lot of movement and activity. Though they are quite inquisitive, their attention spans are rather short. Making sessions varied and dynamic will ensure that your first graders are engaged and content.

Physical Characteristics

Much is happening in first grade in terms of physical characteristics. Many children are losing teeth and growing new ones. Their fine motor skills are fairly well developed, which means that they can use scissors as well as draw and write. However, cutting around curves and writing with precision can still take quite a bit of effort. And, for some children, these are still challenging tasks. First graders' desire to move and play points to the importance of varying learning activities for this age-group. To address this, it is best to keep them moving, by doing such things as starting the class in a prayer circle in one corner of the room, singing a song with several simple motions, moving to a table activity, sitting on the floor to listen to a dramatic Bible story, playing a game in the middle of the room, or better yet, going outside or to the gym to play. This variety will satisfy their need to move while keeping them engaged and focused.

Intellectual Characteristics

Thinking and learning are literal and concrete at this age. First graders will most likely think of God as a human person with human characteristics rather than use abstract or symbolic images. Nonetheless, first graders are thinkers. They ask a lot of questions, and they have creative imaginations. They will think about questions you ask, as long as the questions are not too complicated. Their attention spans are long enough that they like to listen to a good Bible story.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

Most first graders like playing with others, but they often prefer small groups. They are willing to cooperate, but they often want to "win" or have things go their way. Young children need continual affirmation, thriving on praise. Many first graders want to be the center of attention, so they like telling stories about themselves.



Second Graders

Second graders are lively, yet more grown-up and serious compared to the less confident first graders they were just a year ago. Now that second graders have a few years of elementary school experience, they are more settled and comfortable in their learning environment. The seven- to eight-year-old typically appreciates the order and structure of a classroom. Thus, being organized and well prepared will help second graders to feel relaxed, content, and ready to learn.

Physical Characteristics

Most second graders have good hand-eye coordination and therefore are fairly adept at writing, painting, drawing, cutting, and pasting. Because they are still growing rapidly, they may be somewhat awkward at some of these tasks. However, in general they have good large- and small-muscle motor skills.

Intellectual Characteristics

Second graders are concrete thinkers, but they do have some analytical skills and can organize their thoughts. For example, they can make comparisons and think reflectively. Yet, most of their thinking is concrete and focuses on the physical things that they can see or imagine. They might have trouble imagining something with which they are unfamiliar (see "Grade-by-Grade Learning," at pbs.org). For example, they may have trouble imagining a desert if they have never seen one. So, if knowing what a desert is like is an important part of a lesson, they may need to see a picture or a video clip of a desert.

Furthermore, second graders do have the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, although they will not always understand the consequences of their actions. They do, however, like to please adults.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

The second-grade child is developing a sense of self. Interaction with classmates helps the child, but there are times when a second grader may want to be alone. And friendships can change quickly in second grade. At the same time, the seven- to eight-year-old child likes to play and work with friends. For this reason, second graders do best working with a partner or in a small group. Also, this is the period when the division of sexes begins, meaning that children prefer to play or work with others of the same sex. Given that there is a heightened interest in friendships at this age, it is a good time to talk about Jesus as friend.



Third Graders

Third graders are spirited, lively, and eager to take on more challenging, complicated tasks. However, they do not necessarily have all the follow-through skills needed to complete their tasks. Although they will take some initiative and work enthusiastically, you will have to help them stay organized.

Physical Characteristics

Coordination and balance are much improved for third-grade children. Their muscle groups and their fine motor skills have developed to the point that they can do more intricate tasks beyond writing and drawing. They have the ability to use small instruments and thus can do things like simple sewing or threading small beads onto a string.

Intellectual Characteristics

Verbal skills are in high gear by third grade. Most third graders have mastered a grade-level ability for reading, writing, and listening. They also like to talk and discuss their ideas. They are inquisitive, and now they want to know not just the facts but also the reasons behind the facts. For example, third graders may want to know why Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, or why he asked James and John to leave their father to be his disciples. And they are ready and willing to discuss the importance of these facts.

This deeper level of thinking helps them to evaluate and make judgments. They are beginning to see the connections between concepts and to think abstractly. They not only know the difference between right and wrong but can also usually understand the consequences of choices they make.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

In third grade, the peer group is very important, and peer pressure can become an issue. Also, it is fairly common for third graders to have a “best friend,” though sometimes to the exclusion of other children. You can build on the notion of Jesus as friend and use examples of Jesus and how he treated his friends. Point out that Jesus welcomed many friends, like Peter and the Apostles, Martha, Mary, Zacchaeus, and others.

Playing in same-sex groups is also still the norm. Most third graders enjoy the social dimension of working in groups and having group discussions. They can also work effectively in small groups to complete a simple task.



Fourth Graders

Fourth graders are now some of the older children in their elementary school. Thus, they often feel pretty mature, important, and more autonomous. They are willing to work independently and have less need for adult direction. They are ready to take on more responsibility and make decisions. Indeed, this is a good age to discuss the responsibilities of discipleship. Fourth graders may also develop particular interests in a hobby, sport, or activity, and they may take it very seriously.

Physical Characteristics

Girls are more physically mature than boys at this point. Some girls have begun pre-puberty and even puberty. Girls and boys alike may be more temperamental and brooding. But, at the same time, they are still high energy and like to play outside and with friends. They may also enjoy team sports.

Intellectual Characteristics

Fourth graders are able to do some abstract thinking and reasoning, but they still do best with concrete, hands-on learning. They like using books and references, and they have an interest in facts and figures. They also have a developing conscience and definitely have a sense of what is fair, right, and just. These interests make it a good time to have them delve more deeply into the Scripture stories that have moral lessons, as most of them do. For instance, a fourth grader will be intrigued by the fact that Jesus tells Peter he should forgive not seven times but seventy times seven times. Why would Jesus ask us to keep forgiving someone who keeps sinning?

Also, nine- to ten-year-olds have the capacity to complete a more complicated and prolonged project. So, for example, with guidance from you, a small group can take a Scripture story and act it out as a skit.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

This is an age for high emotions and dramatic intensity, especially among girls. Fourth graders are often critical of themselves and others, sometimes expressing this inappropriately by talking about friends and classmates. Many fourth graders are interested in the opposite sex. Even when this is the case, however, most still want to stay within their same-sex groups for socializing. In addition, they like working in small groups and can even come to a group decision. Again, emphasizing that Jesus wants us not only to welcome one another as friends but also to love and help one another can lead fourth graders to develop empathy and respect for those they may not naturally like.



Fifth Graders

Fifth graders may be considered “tweens,” because they are between early childhood and adolescence. Many of them, girls especially, will begin puberty, which often starts between the ages of ten and twelve for girls and a bit later for boys. These biological changes are often accompanied by changes in emotions and intellect as young people in these middle school years become more socially, intellectually, and physically mature. At the same time, they are still children who like to be silly and have fun.

Physical Characteristics

Many fifth-grade girls will show the physical signs of puberty as they begin to enter the developmental stage known as adolescence. Breast development and menstruation often occur for girls. Many boys, however, do not begin puberty until the ages of twelve to fourteen. Both boys and girls are often growing taller, feeling more stress, and sometimes experiencing changes in their sleep habits.

Intellectual Characteristics

Children in fifth grade are capable of critical thinking and problem solving. They are able to think somewhat abstractly. For example, ritual symbols are meaningful. They can understand that the cleansing effects of baptismal waters mean more than physical cleaning.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

Most middle-school-age children enjoy group work. They are mature enough to compromise, cooperate, and collaborate when it comes to completing an assignment or solving a problem. Some fifth graders will have feelings for someone special and flirt with, text, or message those they are interested in. Social media can be a major source of influence and social anxiety at this age. Cell phones and mobile devices may become an issue in the classroom but can also be used as teaching tools.



Overview of Catholic Social Teaching

In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are urged to keep the light of Christ alive in our hearts for the rest of our lives. We are called to holiness. Though this may seem like a tall order, when we live lives that focus on loving God, ourselves, others, and creation itself, we move in the direction of lifelong holiness.

The Catholic Church has a rich history of social teaching that helps us live positive, meaningful, and holy lives through an understanding of our relationship and responsibility to others. This teaching has guided the lives of Christians since the beginning of the Church. Modern Catholic social teaching has been addressed and explained in Church documents since the 1800s. Catholic social teaching promotes our Catholic identity and helps ensure that we treat those around us and our environment with dignity and respect. It gives us the guidance to live our faith and navigate our modern world.

Some of the key themes of Catholic social teaching have been highlighted as general themes or principles. These principles challenge us globally—to view the world as one family and to work for justice and peace. They also challenge us locally. We are called to apply these principles daily in our encounters with people, in forming our opinions regarding current events, and in our willingness to give our time and money to those in need.

The following are seven of the key principles of Catholic social teaching:

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

This first principle is the foundation for the others. We cannot practice the other principles without fully embracing this one. This principle seems simple and uncomplicated, but it is extremely complex. It states that every life is sacred, and every person has dignity. The challenge to this principle is to comprehend that there are not degrees of sacredness and degrees of dignity. No one life is more valuable than another; every life is significant. An incarcerated person has just as much dignity as a priest or a bishop. An elderly person's life is just as sacred as an infant's. Every person is a child of God, and every person is precious.

2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

Catholics are communal, and this principle reminds us that we cannot live in isolation. The first and most important community is family; we are called to strengthen and protect families. By participating in our communities, we can work on social issues and ensure that laws and policies benefit the common good.



3. **Rights and Responsibilities**

We must work to have all human rights protected. Every person has rights, such as the right to life, food, shelter, and work. Everyone has economic, political, and cultural rights. Along with these rights comes the responsibility to help others in our society and to protect and safeguard the rights of others.

4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

Jesus focused on those in most need—the disabled, the diseased, and the outcast. His concern for their welfare was a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of God among us. This principle encourages us to look for those who might need our help. The Catholic Church teaches that by celebrating the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity, we commit ourselves to concern for those who are poor and in need.

5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

All occupations are valuable and should be respected. Workers have a right to fair wages and to safe working conditions. Workers have a right to join unions. This principle especially speaks to our responsibility as consumers. Who makes the products we purchase? Where are they produced? What are the working conditions of those who produce them? Expanding our knowledge as responsible consumers means that we can use our consumer power to better the lives of workers around the globe.

6. **Solidarity**

As one family, we have a commitment to one another. Regardless of culture, race, or social status, we are called to be nonjudgmental in our support for one another. This principle reminds us that we are not to participate in groups that set one side against another. We should work to eliminate the “we-they” mentality in our speech and other social communication. Under this principle, we commit ourselves to seek common solutions to common problems in an atmosphere of respectful dialogue. Working for peace in a world that is often filled with violence and conflict is at the core of this principle.

7. **Care of God’s Creation**

The Catholic Church calls care for the Earth and all of God’s creation essential to our faith. The responsibility of taking care of the Earth’s resources must be taken seriously and thoughtfully. Each day we are faced with choices, large and small, that help sustain our environment or contribute to the abuse of the tremendous gift of God’s creation.



One person can dramatically affect the lives of others. Catholic social teaching reminds us that we are called to embrace everyone: the poor, the immigrant, the incarcerated, the unborn, the nosy neighbor, the coworker that irritates us, and those whose opinions differ from our own. We are called to treat everyone lovingly, as God loves us. We are also called to use the resources in our environment with careful consideration.

The goal of Catholic social teaching has been articulated in the Church since the beginning: “Love one another” (John 15:17). The principles of Catholic social teaching articulate this love in a precise and measurable way. Together they serve as an “examination of conscience” for the Church today, and they can serve as a beacon of hope for all of human society. In our world today, the principles of Catholic social teaching outline our path toward building a just society and a life of holiness.

Discover! Finding Faith in Life brings the core concepts of Catholic social teaching to life for children. One chapter in every unit of the program focuses on a Catholic social teaching principle and the basic concepts around this principle. This introduces children to a crucial component of Catholic teaching and can enrich their faith and understanding of their role in working for a better world.



Faith and Fun in the Family

1. **Stick to the basics.** Never underestimate the power of repetition in forming faith. Pray the Prayer before Meals ("Bless us, O Lord . . .") before every meal, wherever you are (even in the car). And pray the Our Father and the Hail Mary as part of night prayers.
2. **Honor meals as family time.** Talk about things important to each family member. Share stories, memories, values, and upcoming plans or events. Make sure there are no electronics around that could cause distractions.
3. **Talk about Jesus.** Children should hear about Jesus at home as well as in church or at school. Include conversations about what Jesus would do in different circumstances, ask Jesus to be with various people you encounter together, and remind one another how Jesus might feel when you do something good for others.
4. **Pray aloud.** Children should hear their parents praying. Share happenings of everyday life by requesting prayers from one another. For example, "Mom has a big presentation at work today. Let's pray now that the Holy Spirit will be with her." Or "Josh's spelling test is today. He really studied hard, so let's pray that he will remember what he knows." Also remember family members and others who are ill or in special need of prayer.
5. **Pray for safety and fair play in sports.** Emphasize that we pray for safety and fair play in our games, and that God does not favor one team over another. He loves the members of every team equally.
6. **Create a prayer space in your home.** A prayer space might be a small table placed in a corner of a room. Include a Bible, a candle (real or electric), a rosary, some favorite holy cards, and some Catholic children's books. Gather here at various times for family or individual prayer.
7. **Keep a rosary in the car.** Keep a rosary in the car, and pray it on short and long trips. Brush up on the list of the mysteries or keep a guide with you in the car, and announce one for each decade. When your child is ready, invite him or her to lead.



8. **Plan vacations with Mass in mind.** Each parish in the world is unique. Research nearby parish churches and plan to participate in the Eucharist on the Sundays you are vacationing. After Mass, introduce yourselves to the celebrating priest. Ask him for tips on local restaurants or other places to see in the area.
9. **Get out in the real world.** Enjoy God's gift of creation with your family. Visit a local park or nature preserve, and wonder aloud at the beauty of God's handiwork. At every site, pray a litany: "Thank you, God, for . . ." with each family member naming one thing she or he sees in nature. Go around as many times as you like!
10. **Bless your child.** A parent's blessing is a powerful sign of God's love. With your hand on your child's head, make the sign of the cross with your thumb on your child's forehead, while saying, "God bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Any other appropriate words can be added. Blessings can be done before any occasion, special or routine, such as leaving for school, preparing for a test or sports competition, or going to bed.
11. **Talk about your values.** Use TV, social media, video games, or other influences as "teachable moments" to express your Christian values. Be sure to accentuate the positive if you see it illustrated in a particular character or situation.
12. **Prepare for Mass together.** Mass should be anticipated with preparation. Saturday night might be a good time to read the Sunday Gospel at the evening meal. Discuss as a family what Jesus might be telling or showing your family in the Gospel. After Mass, incorporate the homily into your conversation on the way home.
13. **Celebrate feast days.** Keep track of annual feasts by using your parish calendar and bulletin reminders. Though the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter are key, various feasts during the year merit attention and offer an opportunity to celebrate faith and make the day special. You may want to add family name days to your feast-day calendar, as well as baptismal anniversaries. There are many sources, in books and online, for celebrating feast days on the Catholic calendar. Feast days give us a respite from every-day routine and root us more firmly in the life of Christ as mirrored in each individual feast or saint.



Biblical Literacy and the Teaching of Scripture

As a religious educator, you may already know the power that Scripture has to touch children's hearts and inspire their moral and spiritual lives. To remind us to draw on this power when teaching religion, the Church's teaching documents always call us to make the Bible an integral part of our ministry:

Catechesis [faith education] should take Sacred Scripture as its inspiration, its fundamental curriculum, and its end because it strengthens faith, nourishes the soul, and nurtures the spiritual life. (*National Directory for Catechesis*, p. 70)

Likewise, the holy synod forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful, especially those who live the religious life, to learn "the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine scriptures. (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation [Dei Verbum]*, 1965, 25)

Through their ministry with children, teachers equip children with the essential knowledge and skills required for their lifelong journey of faith. When it comes to the Bible, teachers want to begin teaching the knowledge and skills that will help children to ultimately become biblically literate adults. So let's start by describing biblically literate adults.

Biblically literate adults are comfortable reading and using the Bible. They know how the books of the Bible are arranged and how to quickly and easily locate a specific book or passage. They have a solid understanding of the biblical story of salvation history, and they are familiar with key people and events and how God's saving power worked through those people and events. Biblically literate adults understand that any book or passage from Scripture must be understood in its proper context. When reading the Bible, they consider things like the literary genre, the culture of the time, the original author's intended message, how the message fits into the bigger picture of salvation history, and how the passage is understood in the Church's Tradition.

We can help children to become biblically literate adults by working on three specific goals:

- A. Help them to become knowledgeable and comfortable using the Bible.
- B. Help them to know and understand the biblical story of salvation history.
- C. Help them to understand how to interpret Bible books and passages in their proper contexts.

Goal A is the **Access** goal. Goal B is the **Big-Picture** goal. Goal C is the **Context** goal. Taken together, these can be called the ABCs of biblical literacy.

The three goals of biblical literacy follow a certain progression. The **Access** goal is the most basic; its competencies create a foundation for working on the **Big-Picture** and **Context** goals. The **Big-Picture** competencies build on the **Access** competencies and create greater knowledge that the **Context** competencies can then build on. All three goals are closely related; working on any one goal usually reinforces the others.

As a general guideline, with elementary-age children, the primary focus should be developing the **Access** competencies and introducing some **Big-Picture** knowledge. The **Context** competencies will probably not be focused on, because they require more abstract reasoning than most young children are capable of. However, specific **Context** skills and knowledge competencies will be used as children learn about the meaning of specific Bible stories.

Let's take a closer look at these three goals and how teachers can help children to develop the competencies needed to become proficient in them. (For a more detailed look at these three goals, read *Biblical Literacy Made Easy: A Practical Guide for Catechists, Teachers, and Youth Ministers*, Saint Mary's Press, 2008.)

Access Goal: Helping Children Become Knowledgeable and Comfortable Using the Bible

Many children do not know how to use the Bible. They may have heard Bible stories, and maybe they were even given a Bible for their First Communion. But they do not know how the Bible is structured or how to find specific passages or stories within it. By focusing on the competencies of the **Access** goal, we can help the children we teach to become more familiar and comfortable with the Bible.

The most critical practice for achieving the **Access** goal—a practice so basic that many people overlook it—is simply having the children *use* the Bible. Too often children read Scripture passages as quotations in textbooks. There may be only one Bible in the classroom, so the teacher looks up the passage and then hands the opened Bible to a young person to read. These practices do not encourage children to learn basic biblical literacy skills. If young Catholics are to become comfortable in accessing the Bible, they must use it regularly. Every classroom or meeting space must have enough Bibles for each student to use. What we model as important has a much greater impact than what we say is important!

To help children become comfortable in using the Bible, we can teach them two important competencies: (1) knowing the Bible's structure and (2) locating a passage in the Bible.

Knowing the Bible's Structure

The Bible is not one book; rather, it is a collection, or even a small library, of books and letters. These books are organized in a specific and intentional structure, sort of like books might be grouped in sections on a bookshelf. At the beginning of *The Catholic Children's Bible*, these sections are briefly explained and visually presented in the section called "The Bible Is Like a Bookshelf." Here is a slightly more detailed explanation of those sections:

- **The Old Testament** is the first major section of the Bible. Its books are primarily about God's relationship with his Chosen People, the Israelites (or the Jews).
 - The first part of the Old Testament is called the **Pentateuch**. The stories in these books are the heart of the Old Testament.
 - The second part of the Old Testament is called the **Historical Books**. These books recount how the Chosen People settled in the Promised Land and how they eventually became a kingdom ruled by great and not-so-great kings.
 - The third part of the Old Testament is called the **Wisdom Books**. These books teach some of the collected wisdom of the Israelites.
 - The fourth part of the Old Testament is called the **Books of the Prophets**. These contain the warnings and consolations of some of Israel's prophets.
- **The New Testament** is the second major section of the Bible. Its books tell how God fulfilled the Old Testament promises by sending us the Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - The first part of the New Testament is the four **Gospels** and the **Acts of the Apostles**. The Gospels have the stories about Christ's life and teaching, and the Book of Acts tells us about how the Church spread after Christ's Ascension.
 - The second part of the New Testament is the **Letters**. Early Church leaders sent these letters, some to certain individuals and others to specific Christian communities.
 - The last book of the New Testament is the **Book of Revelation**. It is a unique collection of prophecies and symbolic visions.

These sections can be referred to when the children look up passages in the Bible with comment, such as, "This Bible story is from the Book of Exodus, which is in the Old Testament of the Bible," or "This Bible story is from the Gospel of Mark. The Gospels have stories about the life of Jesus and the things he taught."

Locating a Passage in the Bible

The system for finding a particular passage in the Bible is simple and explained in the beginning of *The Catholic Children's Bible* in the section called "How to Find a Bible Passage." After explaining this system to the children, teachers can assist them in developing the skill of locating Bible passages through practice, practice, practice! This skill will take time for children to master, but it is crucial for lifelong Bible reading. Help in teaching navigation skills to children can be found in the article in each teacher guide—and this Online Director's Manual—titled "Helping Children Navigate *The Catholic Children's Bible*."

Big-Picture Goal: Helping Children Know and Understand the Biblical Story of Salvation History

Because of our Lectionary-based liturgies, Catholics are often familiar with most of the important people and stories of history. But if liturgies are a person's only contact with Scripture, she or he may not see how those individual stories fit into the overarching biblical story of God's covenant relationship with the human race, which we also call salvation history. Much of Catholic theology is based on the presumption that we know and understand the overarching story of salvation history.

Salvation history is often organized into different periods to help us understand God's saving work. In all relevant Saint Mary's Press® resources, eight historical periods are named to describe the arc of salvation history:

1. Primeval History (the figurative stories in the Book of Genesis)
2. The Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob)
3. Egypt and the Exodus (Moses and the desert experience of Israel)
4. Settling the Promised Land (Joshua and the Twelve Tribes of Israel)
5. The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel (the time of the Prophets)
6. The Exile and Return (the Babylonian captivity and restoration of the Temple)
7. The Life of Jesus Christ
8. The Early Christian Church

Understanding how each biblical book's story fits into this bigger history is the mark of a truly biblically literate person. This kind of knowledge grows with repetition and review. Teachers can best help children develop this knowledge by exposing them to key people and events in Scripture. *The Catholic Children's Bible* helps to do this by focusing on 125 key people and events in the Featured Stories on two-page spreads. Using these Featured Stories consistently with children will provide them an excellent foundation for knowing and understanding salvation history.

Context Goal: Helping Children Understand How to Interpret Bible Books and Passages in Their Proper Contexts

The **Context** goal is more subtle and complex than the **Access** and **Big-Picture** goals. Teachers typically do not work on the skills required to master this goal with young children. It requires a level of abstract thinking that this age-group is not yet capable of. However, teachers need to understand this goal in order to teach children the correct interpretation of the biblical stories they read.

This excerpt from the Second Vatican Council document *Divine Revelation* describes how to correctly interpret the Bible:

Seeing that, in sacred scripture, God speaks through human beings in human fashion, it follows that the interpreters of sacred scripture, if they are to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, the meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words. (12)

This excerpt states that we must do two things when interpreting a Bible story or teaching. First, we must seek to understand what the original human author intended to communicate. The Church Fathers called this the “literal sense” of Scripture. Second, we must seek to understand what God is revealing through the story or passage. The Church Fathers called this the fuller sense or the “spiritual sense” of Scripture. Often the literal sense and the spiritual sense of a passage are closely related. But in some Scripture passages, God reveals, through the spiritual sense, a deeper and more universal truth than the human author originally understood or intended.

Paragraphs 109–119 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further explain how to apply these principles. These paragraphs describe the contexts we must consider when interpreting any particular passage of the Bible, which is why we describe this as the **Context** goal.

- **Historical context** To understand the full importance or meaning of a certain event, we need to know the larger historical situation the event occurred within.
- **Cultural context** Sometimes the true meaning of certain actions or words makes sense only when we understand the cultural practices or beliefs of the time.
- **Literary genre** The Bible is composed of many different types of literature. We must know which type we are reading and realize that each genre has its own rules for interpretation.
- **Unity of the whole Bible** When taken as a whole, God’s revealed truth is presented in the Bible without error. This is the case in many Old Testament passages, whose Christian meaning can be completely and accurately understood only in light of the New Testament revelation.
- **Living Tradition of the Church** To fully understand some Bible passages, we must take into account how the Magisterium—the official teaching authority of the Church—has interpreted the meaning of those passages.
- **Coherence of the truths of faith** When it comes to religious or moral truth, the Bible cannot contradict itself or any other revealed truth of our Tradition.

If we do not interpret the Bible using these contexts, we could easily misinterpret God’s Revelation. This is the danger of biblical fundamentalism, an approach to biblical interpretation that Catholics are cautioned to avoid. In its extreme forms, biblical fundamentalism leads people to false beliefs, such as the belief that God created the universe in six twenty-four-hour days.

Even though teachers will not necessarily mention these different contexts when working with young children, the Featured Stories in *The Catholic Children's Bible* provide trustworthy tools to help children correctly understand the contexts of 125 Bible stories. The engaging art in *The Catholic Children's Bible* provides strong visual cues about the human authors' intention. The Tell It! panels provide children the opportunity to retell the story using the visual prompts so that they begin to process its meaning. And the short Understand It! panels explain what God is revealing through the story, drawing upon the contexts of the unity of the Bible, Tradition, and the coherence of the truths of faith.

Helping Children Navigate *The Catholic Children's Bible*

Helping children become familiar with the structure of the Bible so that they can easily locate specific books and passages is a foundational part of building biblical literacy. *The Catholic Children's Bible* offers multiple tools to help children more readily navigate the Bible.

Color Coding

When you look at the bottom of *The Catholic Children's Bible* or open it to any page, you will notice bands of color along the bottoms of the pages. These colors delineate the major divisions of the Bible.

Bible Section	Bible Books	Band Color
The Pentateuch (or Torah)	Genesis through Deuteronomy	aqua
The Historical Books	Joshua through Second Maccabees	brown
The Wisdom Books	Job through Sirach	purple
The Books of the Prophets	Isaiah through Malachi	orange
The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles	Matthew through John and the Acts of the Apostles	blue
The Letters and Revelation	Romans through Revelation	green
Prayer and Bible Helps	back of the book	yellow

The same colors are shown in the table of contents (pages 3–6) as bands of color behind the name of each section of the Bible. They are also repeated in “The Bible Is Like a Bookshelf” image on page 15 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*. This image can be helpful in introducing children to the structure of the Bible and can be another resource to help them identify where a particular book of the Bible is located.

Page Tabs

You will also notice that the table of contents (pages 3–6) indicates a specific color for each book of the Bible. These colors are matched with tabs that are provided along the sides of each page within the Bible. A chapter number is also included in the tab to indicate the core chapter that is featured on each page.

Finding Specific Passages in the Bible

The article “How to Find a Bible Passage” on page 13 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* presents the traditional method of finding specific Bible passages by the name of the book, the chapter, and the verse. This is basic information for anyone who wishes to understand Scripture citations and use them to locate a particular Bible passage.

Navigating the Featured Stories

One of the most attractive elements of *The Catholic Children's Bible* is its Featured Stories. These stories encapsulate a Scripture story or passage, illustrate it, and surround it with the helpful Understand It!, Live It!, and Tell It! teaching aids. In addition, new or unfamiliar words are printed in bold type and presented with definitions. A full list of the 125 Featured Stories that are offered within the Bible is presented on pages 7–11 of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

When the children encounter a Featured Story, such as the one presented on page 122, for example, they will see a green leaf at the beginning and end of the Scripture text. This indicates that this is a portion of text repeated from the main body of the Bible. To identify where this text comes from, the children can simply look at the Scripture citation or citations above the Scripture text. In many cases, this text shown for the Featured Story is a shortened version of a longer Scripture citation. The children can find the “full story” citation in their Bibles and will see two green leaves that indicate where the full story starts and stops (see pages 120–121).

The Dark Passages of Scripture

In helping children read and understand the Bible, teachers must be aware that some Bible stories are not child-friendly. The accounts of incest, rape, genocide, and holy war in the sacred pages of Scripture can come as a surprise for many beginning Bible readers. In his apostolic exhortation "The Word of the Lord" ("*Verbum Domini*," November 2010), Pope Benedict XVI called these stories the "dark" passages of the Bible. Here is what the Holy Father said regarding these passages:

In discussing the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments, the Synod also considered those passages in the Bible which, due to the violence and immorality they occasionally contain, prove obscure and difficult. Here it must be remembered first and foremost that *biblical revelation is deeply rooted in history*. God's plan is manifested progressively and it is accomplished slowly, in *successive stages* and despite human resistance. God chose a people and patiently worked to guide and educate them. Revelation is suited to the cultural and moral level of distant times and thus describes facts and customs, such as cheating and trickery, and acts of violence and massacre, without explicitly denouncing the immorality of such things. This can be explained by the historical context, yet it can cause the modern reader to be taken aback, especially if he or she fails to take account of the many "dark" deeds carried out down the centuries, and also in our own day. In the Old Testament, the preaching of the prophets vigorously challenged every kind of injustice and violence, whether collective or individual, and thus became God's way of training his people in preparation for the Gospel. So it would be a mistake to neglect those passages of Scripture that strike us as problematic. Rather, we should be aware that the correct interpretation of these passages requires a degree of expertise, acquired through a training that interprets the texts in their historical-literary context and within the Christian perspective which has as its ultimate hermeneutical key "the Gospel and the new commandment of Jesus Christ brought about in the paschal mystery."¹ I encourage scholars and pastors to help all the faithful to approach these passages through an interpretation which enables their meaning to emerge in the light of the mystery of Christ. (42)

In this teaching, Pope Benedict emphasized the following points:

- The Bible does not shy away from telling about the worst things that humans do to one another—these are the very things that Jesus Christ came to save us from. Unfortunately, these evil acts continue even into our time.
- The biblical author does not always explicitly say that a particular action is immoral; at the time he was writing, these actions might not have yet been seen as immoral (such as the killing of whole groups of people) or the biblical author may have presumed the reader knew that these were immoral actions (such as Lot's daughters having sexual relations with their drunken father). Because God's Revelation is "manifested progressively" and "is accomplished slowly, in successive stages," the preaching of the prophets and, ultimately, the teaching of Jesus Christ help us see the true moral meaning of these actions.
- Properly understanding these passages requires the help of people trained in biblical interpretation, such as pastors and biblical scholars.

So what does this mean for teachers of children when it comes to these dark passages of Scripture? The best advice is to avoid these passages completely, because these stories can be too disturbing and confusing for young and innocent minds. *The Catholic Children's Bible* does not use any of these stories as Featured Stories, so there is no need to worry about coming across any dark stories when the special two-page spreads are used.

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A		
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Alphonsus Liguori, Saint	Grade 2	Chapter 13
Andrew the Apostle, Saint	Grade 3	Easter
Anna Dengel	Grade 3	Chapter 17
Anne, Saint	Grade 2	Chapter 14
Arnold Janssen, Saint	Grade 2	Chapter 17
Augustine of Hippo, Saint	Grade 2 Grade 4	Chapter 10 Lent
B		
Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus	Grade 5	Chapter 6
Benedict Joseph Labré, Saint	Grade 2	Chapter 19
Benedict of Nursia, Saint	Grade 3	Chapter 7
Bernadette Soubirous, Saint	Grade 5	Chapter 12
Brigid of Ireland, Saint	Grade 2	Lent
C		
Catherine of Siena, Saint	Grade 3	Chapter 11
Cecilia, Saint	Grade 1 Grade 3	Chapter 16 Palm Sunday
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Acknowledgments

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The first excerpt on page 46 is from *National Directory for Catechesis*, by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), page 70. Copyright © 2005 USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.

The second excerpt on page 46 is from *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965)*, number 25, in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, Austin Flannery, general editor (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996). Copyright © 1996 by Reverend Austin Flannery.

The excerpt on page 54 is from "The Word of the Lord" ("*Verbum Domini*"), number 42, at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html. Copyright © 2010 LEV.

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Endnote cited in excerpt from "The Word of the Lord"

1. *Propositio 29*.