

FROM HERE TO HOME:

SHARING SCRIPTURE WITH THE FAMILY

BY RITA BURNS SENSEMAN

(adapted from an article
in *The Catholic Children's
Bible Leader Guide*)

The Word of God is central in the life of the Church. And, the Second Vatican Council says that family is the domestic Church¹. Indeed, the family is the first place from which the Word is received and the first place it is nurtured². Thus, it is important for us, as teachers and catechists, to support families and encourage their understanding of Scripture. The following are some ways to connect what you do in the classroom with what the children experience in the home.

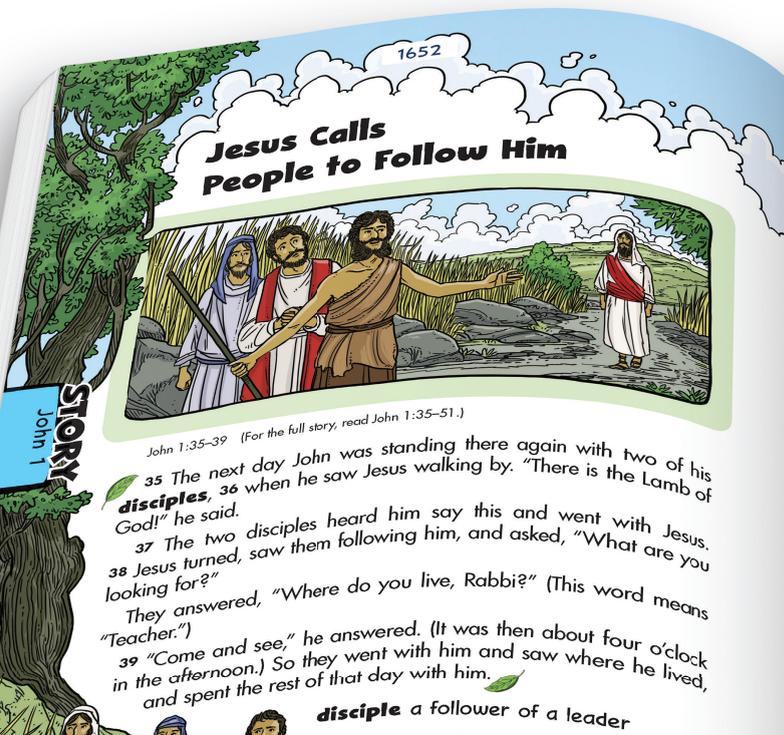
CARRY IT HOME

Give the children a word, an image, or a question from Scripture that they can "carry" home, either tangibly or in their imaginations. A carry-home can be anything that helps the child to remember the Scripture story or the message from the Scripture story.

For example, in the story "Jesus Calls People to Follow Him" (John 1:35-51), Jesus says, "Come and see" (verse 39). After discussing the story and what it is that Jesus wants us to "see," provide each child with a 3-x-5-index card and ask them to write the words of Jesus on the card.

Then ask that they take the card home and make a note (on the opposite side of the card) whenever they "see" Jesus working in their lives over the next few days. Encourage the children to share their cards with their family and ask family members where they "see" Jesus.

You can design a carry-home in any way that you choose. It might simply be an image of Jesus that the students "carry home" in their imagination such as an image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Other carry-home examples might include a craft, a song, a prayer from *The Catholic Children's Bible*, a question to discuss with family, and so on.

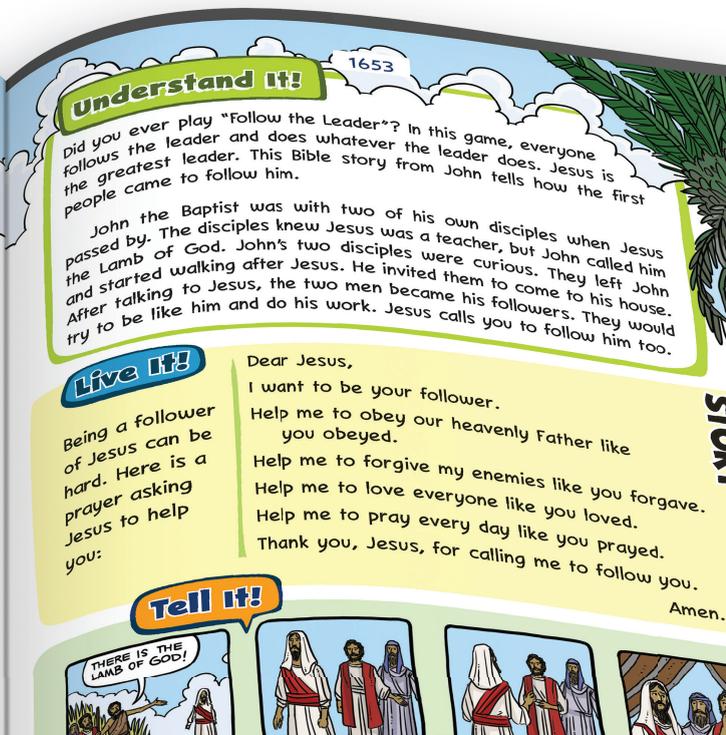


Jesus Calls People to Follow Him

John 1:35-39 (For the full story, read John 1:35-51.)

35 The next day John was standing there again with two of his disciples, 36 when he saw Jesus walking by. "There is the Lamb of God!" he said.
37 The two disciples heard him say this and went with Jesus. 38 Jesus turned, saw them following him, and asked, "What are you looking for?"
They answered, "Where do you live, Rabbi?" (This word means "Teacher.")
39 "Come and see," he answered. (It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon.) So they went with him and saw where he lived, and spent the rest of that day with him.

disciple a follower of a leader



Understand It!

Did you ever play "Follow the Leader"? In this game, everyone follows the leader and does whatever the leader does. Jesus is the greatest leader. This Bible story from John tells how the first people came to follow him.

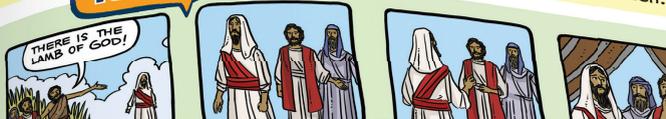
John the Baptist was with two of his own disciples when Jesus passed by. The disciples knew Jesus was a teacher, but John called him the Lamb of God. John's two disciples were curious. They left John and started walking after Jesus. He invited them to come to his house. After talking to Jesus, the two men became his followers. They would try to be like him and do his work. Jesus calls you to follow him too.

Live It!

Being a follower of Jesus can be hard. Here is a prayer asking Jesus to help you:

Dear Jesus,
I want to be your follower.
Help me to obey our heavenly Father like you obeyed.
Help me to forgive my enemies like you forgave.
Help me to love everyone like you loved.
Help me to pray every day like you prayed.
Thank you, Jesus, for calling me to follow you.
Amen.

Tell It!





POST IT!

A sticky note is a type of carry-home that you can post in the home. Many homes use the refrigerator as a place to post important items. What better place to post the Word of God than right there alongside all the other family information? Posting easy-to-remember phrases can help children to learn the Word of God and can prompt family discussion about Scripture.

Make a simple take-home handout with a word or phrase from a Bible story. Or, you can ask children to make their own flyer, handout, or poster to be displayed on the refrigerator, on the bathroom mirror, or in the child's room.

The Catholic Children's Bible is full of Scripture that would be good for posting. Here are a few examples of possible post-its from *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

- "Israel, remember this! The LORD—and the LORD alone—is our God. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
- "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:9)
- "The LORD is my shepherd; / I have everything I need." (Psalm 23:1)
- "Courage!...It is I. Don't be afraid!" (Matthew 14:27)
- "I know my sheep and they know me." (John 10:14-15)

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BREAK OPEN SCRIPTURE AT HOME

In essence, whenever we talk about God’s Word and what it means in our lives, we are doing a type of “breaking open the Word.” Parents and children can grow in faith by reflecting together on the Word of God. Encourage parents to break open Scripture by asking children these two questions:

What did you hear?

What did it mean?

WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

Another way to ask this question might be, “What was the Scripture story today?” The purpose of this question is to allow the child to talk about the story. Often a child cannot remember what she or he heard, but after a little prompting, the child may respond in words like: “Jesus was walking on water. The Apostles thought he was a ghost.” Then the parent would naturally follow up with something like: “What do you mean, ‘Jesus was walking on water’? Tell me more.” Such an exchange is an example of how a parent encourages the child to talk about what she or he heard. Then the parent moves the conversation to the second question.

WHAT DID IT MEAN?

Another way to ask this question is, “What is God’s message?” The purpose of this question is to help the child grasp a message for life. In the example of the story of Jesus walking on the water, the parent tries to lead the child to trust Jesus and turn to Jesus in times of trouble.

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BUILD A BIBLE CORNER AT HOME

Create a Bible corner in your classroom, where you gather to pray and reflect upon the Word of God. Talk to the children about the importance of the Bible corner and suggest that they make a simple Bible corner at home. Be sure to tell them to talk to a parent about it first. A Bible corner can be simple and temporary. In other words, it does not have to be a permanent fixture in the home.

LOVE IT! LIVE IT!

All in all, the most important thing you can do in sharing Scripture with families is to love and live the Gospel. You are already showing your commitment to the Gospel by being a catechist or a Catholic school teacher. Your students and their families look to you as a model of discipleship.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! ■

1. See *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, 1965)*, 11). 2. See *National Directory for Catechesis*, 29.D.

