

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Catechist Guide



Don't Miss This!

Handouts and other teaching resources
are available online at
www.smp.org/discover_grade1.



saint mary's press

Nihil Obstat: Dr. John Martens

Censor Librorum
September 6, 2018

Imprimatur: † Most Rev. Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
September 10, 2018

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Printed in the United States of America

4519

ISBN 978-1-59982-965-4

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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 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, anchoring 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. 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 saving 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 to 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 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 fun way.

Child-Centered Design

Information and activities are presented using the language and experiences of the child to create an 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 designed for this guide. 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. Each grade has twenty core chapters plus eight liturgical season lessons, which can be incorporated into the flow of the catechetical year according to each particular program's schedule and needs.

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 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)

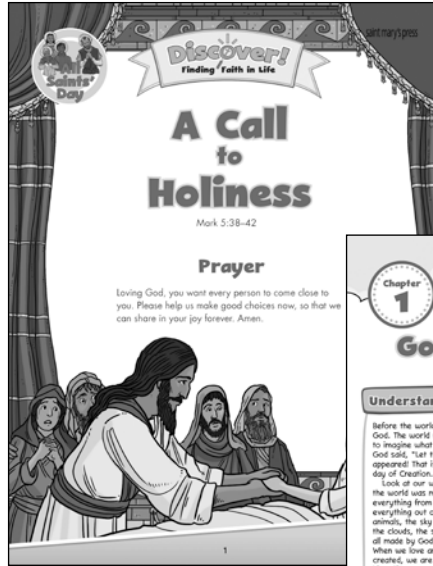
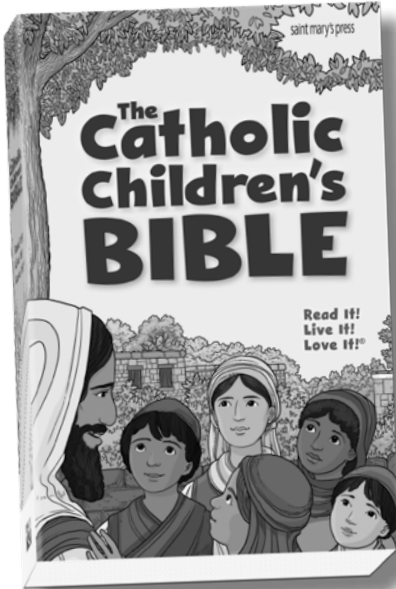
Family Support

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 lesson.* In addition, this program offers home guides for catechetical programs in which parents or guardians are responsible for a portion of the direct teaching of content. These easy-to-use guides are structured to ensure success in relaying key concepts of faith.

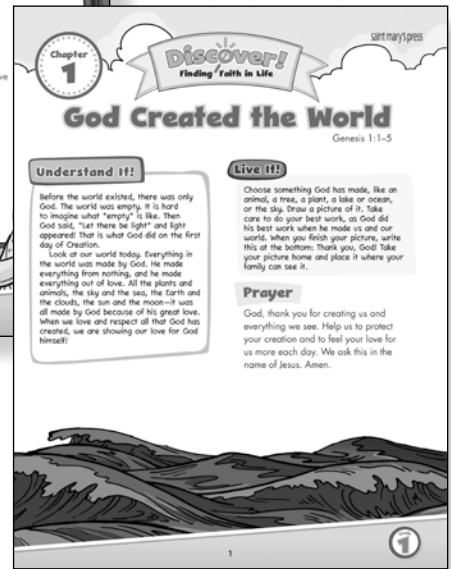
*Spanish versions of all family pages are available online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Program Components

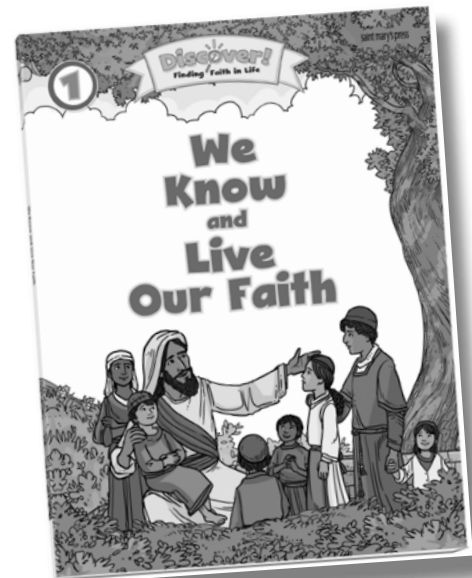
The Catholic Children's Bible



Activity Booklets



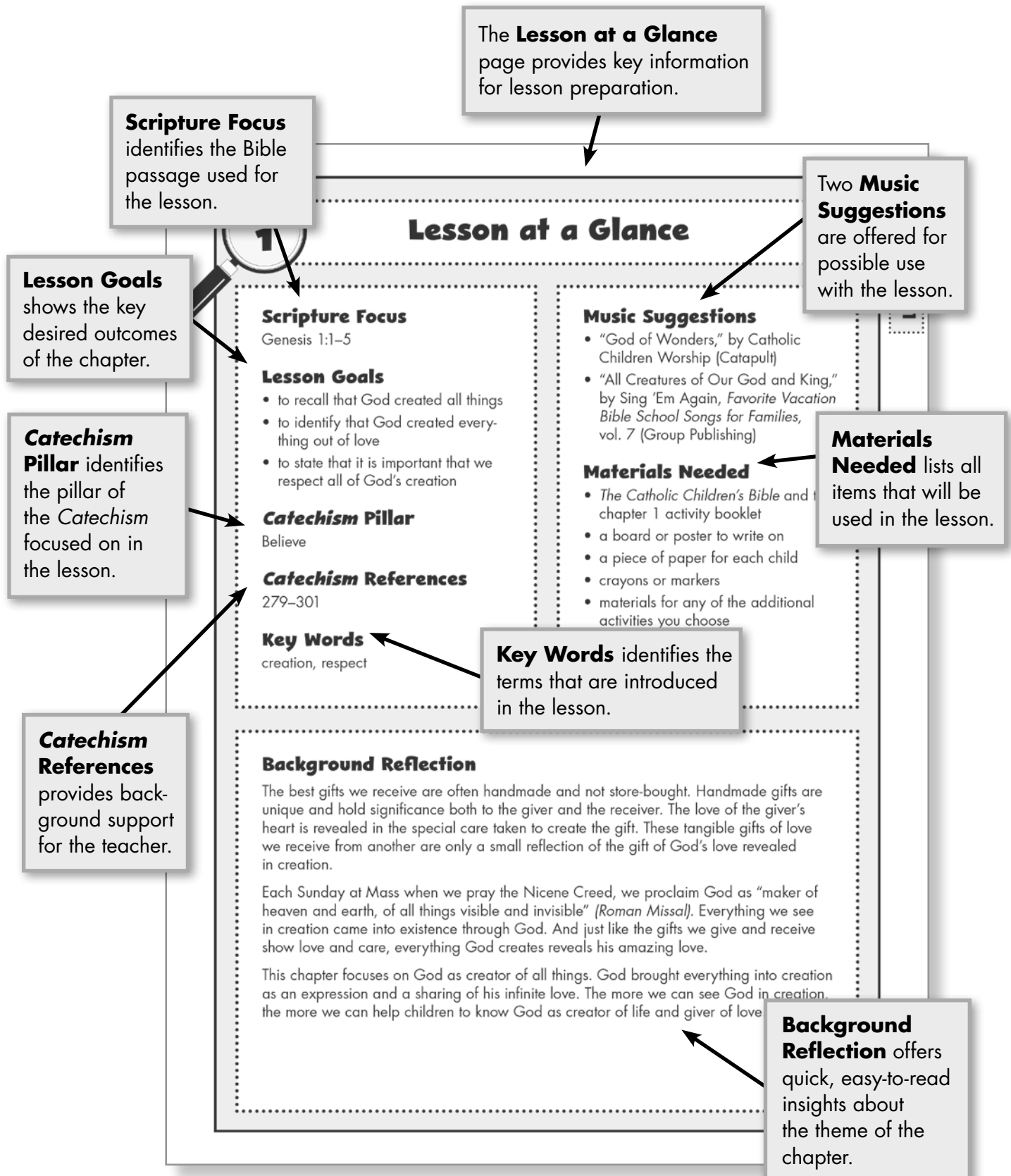
Special Feature



We Know and Live Our Faith Resource

Understanding the Components

Catechist Guide



✝ Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

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

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 in another place where the children can see.
- Ask the children if they know who created all of these wonderful things. (God)
- Explain that today's lesson is about God's creation. Tell them that when we speak of creation, we are talking about all of the things that God has made.

📖 Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find 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 to the children. 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.

The **Get Ready!** part of the lesson begins with an opening prayer and an activity that will spark interest and create excitement in the children.

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

the artwork on page 22 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* and see the things God created they see in the pictures (*plants, animals, etc.*).

page 2 of the activity booklet and complete the

on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a

summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions to check for comprehension.

points with them:

anything, there was only God.

from nothing. God's power alone made things

ation is a story of how God shares his love with us, and respect all of God's creation.

of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer

read it.

- Provide the children with paper, and invite them 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.

🏠 Discover! (25 minutes)

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.
- Have the children cup their hands around their eyes to create pretend binoculars to look through. Ask them to imagine what it might be like if God had not created the water for us to drink or bathe or play in. Ask them to imagine what it might be like if God had not created the sky to see clouds, stars, and the sun. Invite them to share how that might look.

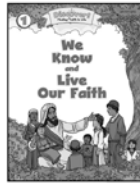
The **Discover!** part of the lesson presents key content through an engaging learning activity and a core teaching section.

The **Core Teaching** part of the lesson relays key information that supports the lesson goals.

Core Teaching

- Explain how God created everything out of love, using the following as suggested points:
 - Love is about providing for and caring for another person. We know that 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 to the children 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 their activity booklet and complete it. When they have finished, tell them that *all* of the pictures show ways we can care for God's creation.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group, and add any other information you know about Blessed Julian of Norwich. Encourage the children to say, "Blessed Julian, pray for us," during the next week.

The **We Know and Live Our Faith** resource provides additional content that can be used to support the lesson.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

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

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.

Additional Activity Options is a reminder that each lesson offers three alternative possibilities for the core learning activity.

- 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 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 49 in its place.

The **Go!** part of the lesson invites the children to recall everything they have learned and ends with a closing prayer.

48 Unit 1: God Loves Us

Chapter 1



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made:
 - God created all things.
 - God created everything out of love.
 - It is important that we respect all of God's creation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct location on their Bible covers.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite each child to name one thing she or he is thankful for.
- Play one of the suggested songs, if you have time, to further support the lesson.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet, pausing at various points so the children can repeat after you. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

The **Additional Activities** are alternative options for the core learning activity. They may also be used to extend or supplement the lesson as needed.

God Created the World (Believe) 49

Chapter 1

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- pipe cleaners, three or four for each child

What Can We Make? (15 minutes)

- Give each child three or four pipe cleaners, and tell them they have 3 minutes to create something.
- Allow a few minutes so that volunteers can share some of the things they 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 one of the pictures and inviting them to guess what you are acting out.
- Invite volunteers to come up to the front of the room, and give them a piece of paper with a picture on it. Have the rest of the class try to guess what the volunteer is acting out.
- Play several times, and remind the children that all these things were created by God. Explain that we can thank God for all of the wonderful things he created, including ourselves.

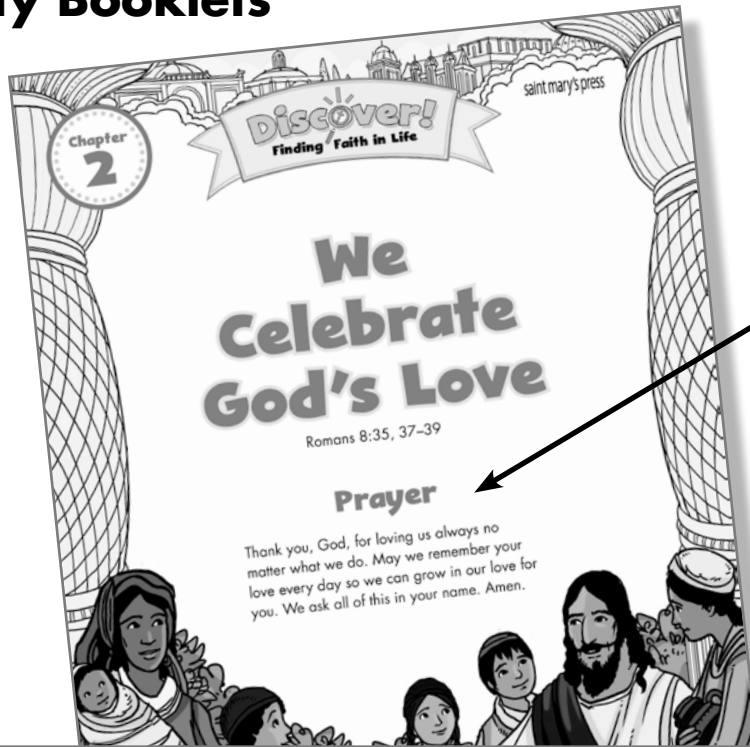
Materials Needed

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

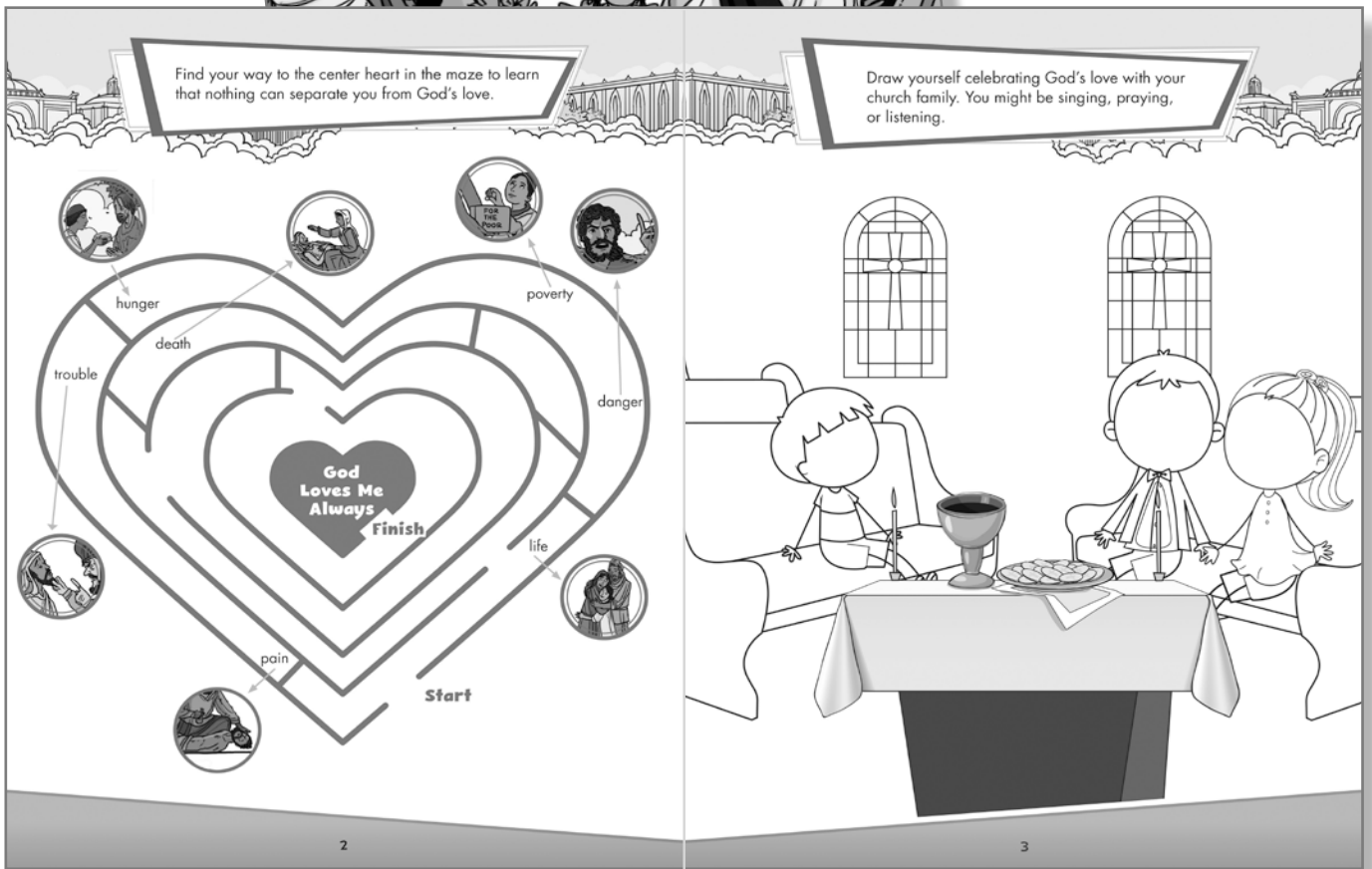
Creation! (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Creation (Genesis 1-2)" (YouTube, 3:49). Tell the children that this cartoon retells the story of Creation that is in the Bible.
- Invite the children to share their reaction to the video and their favorite part.
- Have the children choose one of the days of Creation (they can look at page 2 of the activity booklet to see what was created on what day) and draw a picture of God creating the things that were created on that day.
- Invite volunteers to share and explain their drawings with the large group.
- Say a quick prayer of thanksgiving to God for all of creation.

Activity Booklets



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



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.

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

Family Page

Background Reflection

God's love is perfect, never changing or swayed by anything we do. He 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 introduces the children to saints and other holy people who are models of faith.

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.

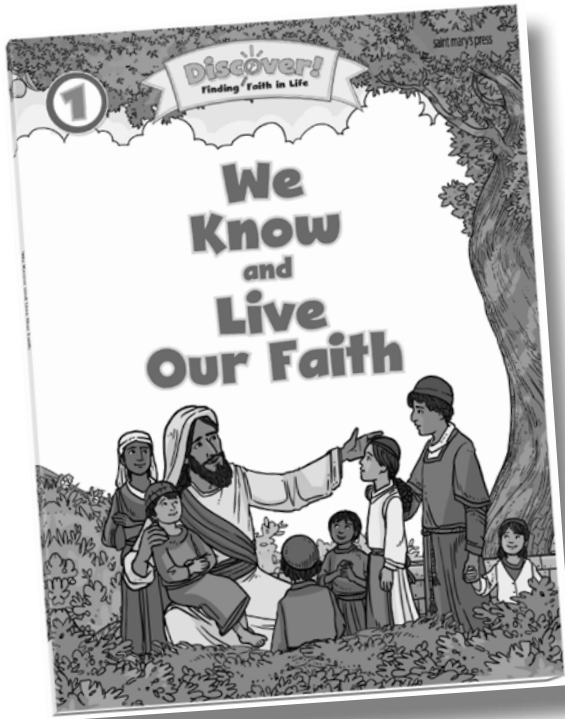
Prayer

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.



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 the session or at home with the family.

ACTIVITY

Three Persons in One God

When we make the **Sign of the Cross**, we say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

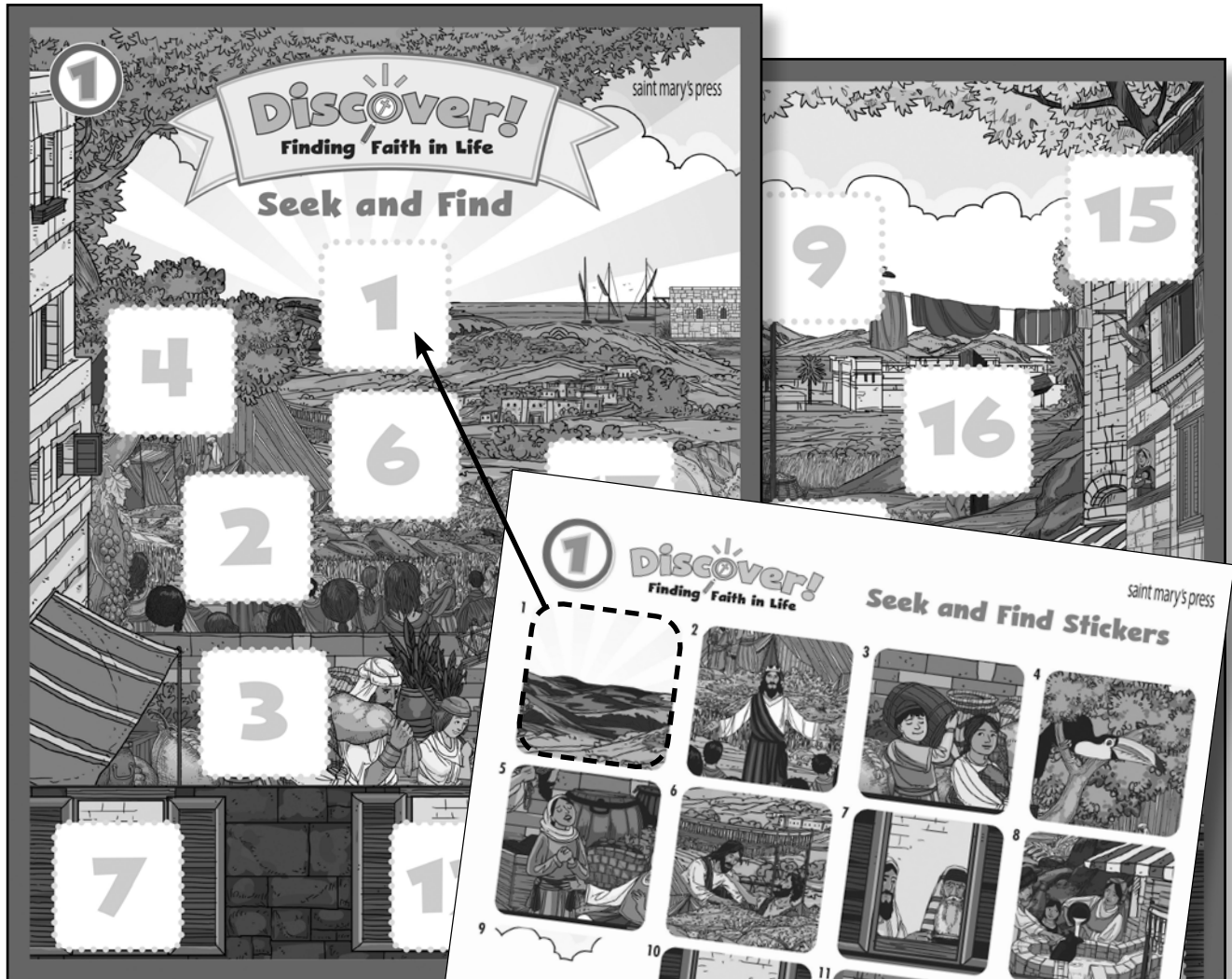
When we make the Sign of the Cross, we are praying in the names of the Three Persons in one God. We call these Three Persons in one God the **Holy Trinity**. The word *trinity* means "three."

We pray in the name of God the Father. God is our Father because he created us and because we are his children.

We pray in the name of God the Son. God the Son became man and was given the name **Jesus**, which means "God saves."

We pray in the name of God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us one with God, one with the family of God, the Church, and one with all people of good will. Each Person of the Holy Trinity is special and does a special work, but they work together always and cannot be separated.

Special Feature for Grade 1



Seek and Find Sheet
(front and back)

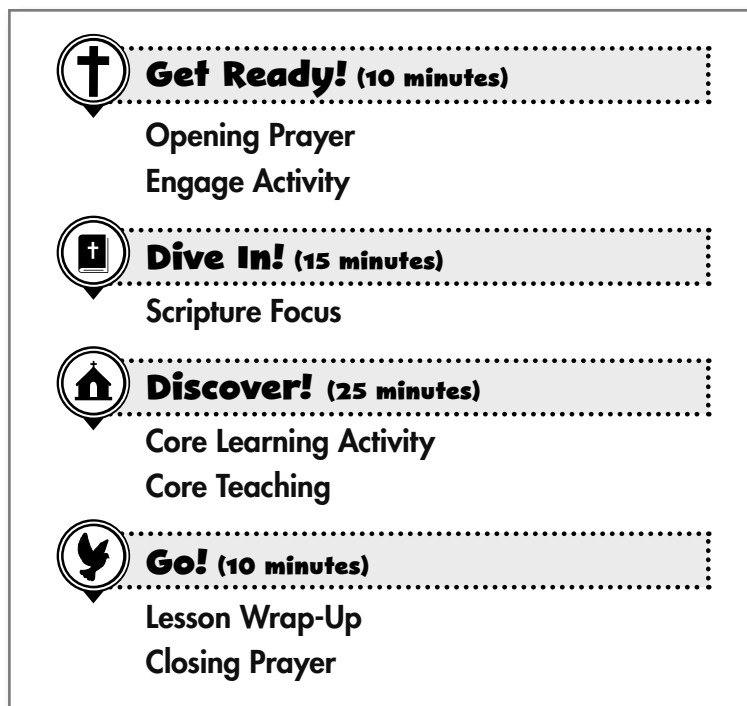
At the end of each of the twenty core lessons, the children will be encouraged to take a sticker and find where it belongs on the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Each week they will complete a different scene from Scripture.

Seek and Find Stickers

Key Elements of the Program

Catechist Guide

Each lesson follows the same overall structure and timing. It will be important to assess the time frames according to your unique group makeup and time parameters. Some activities may take longer for some groups than others. Reading through each lesson prior to the session will guide you in making necessary adjustments to ensure success in your particular setting. The 60-minute timing structure is presented as follows:



Get Ready!

This first part of the lesson starts with an opening prayer and an engage activity that lays the foundation for the lesson by accessing the children's prior knowledge and experience. This engages the children by providing them with an early opportunity for success by prompting discussion and activity around concepts they are familiar with and then connecting those concepts with content they will be learning in the lesson.

Dive In!

This part of the lesson immerses the children in the Bible through a key Scripture passage. This part always focuses on helping the children to understand the Scripture story and involves processing the content presented in the Understand It!, Live It!, and Tell It! features of *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Discover!

This part of the lesson involves a core learning activity (a craft in the liturgical season lessons) that brings to life one of the themes of the lesson 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 lesson. The core teaching part of the lesson is presented after this learning activity, giving you essential catechetical information to share and questions to ask to assess comprehension.

Go!

This part of the lesson wraps up the session with a final check and recall of the core lesson goals. The children close with one additional fun activity (in the twenty core lessons) that rewards them for completing the lesson and builds excitement for the lessons to come. The session then ends with a closing prayer.

Activity Booklets

A fun and colorful activity booklet accompanies each chapter. The activities provided in these booklets may be used in the group lesson or may be completed at home with the family, depending on time parameters. Each booklet includes the opening prayer used for each lesson, two activity pages that support the learning of the chapter, and a family page that offers families background information on the chapter topic, suggested activities, and a family prayer. *Note:* In the liturgical season lessons, the activity on page 3 is replaced with a prayer service that can be used at the end of the lesson.

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 to expand the core concepts covered in the program. Directions in the catechist guide pinpoint which articles from this resource relate to which chapters in the program. Some articles may be referred to multiple times, as they may relate to several chapters. Other content in this resource may not be referred to directly in lessons, 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 Feature for Grade 1

Each lesson of the twenty core chapters has a sticker with an image that relates to the chapter. At the end of each lesson, the children will be encouraged to take the sticker and find where it belongs on the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. As the children progress through the chapters, they will continue to discover where each sticker goes and complete the different scenes from Scripture.

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 all the songs for the program, please see the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* resources at www.smp.org/discover_grade1. Of course, you may also wish to add your own favorite hymns or songs, such as those popular in your parish community.

Videos

Options for activities that incorporate fun and engaging videos are provided throughout the program. If you have access to the necessary technology, you can use 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 you do not use them within the formal learning environment, the children can enjoy them at home with their families. Quick links to the video resources that are referenced throughout this program are available as part of the online resources for this program, found at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Handouts

Some chapters include additional handouts for the lesson. These handouts can be accessed three different ways:

1. They can be found at the end of the chapter in the catechist guide.
2. They can be accessed as part of the online teaching resources for this grade at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.
3. They can be accessed individually at www.smp.org. Click on "Resource Center," and then type the document number (such as TX006171) into the search bar.

Grade 1

Scope and Sequence

Unit 1: God Loves Us					
Chapter Number and Title	1. God Created the World	2. We Celebrate God's Love	3. We Share God's Love with Others	4. We Care for God's Creatures	5. We Pray to God
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	279–301	50–73 456–463 1066–1199	751–757 777–810 2045–2046	337–349 2415–2418	2623–2649 2697–2699 2738–2745
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall that God created all things to identify that God created everything out of love to state that it is important that we respect all of God's creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that nothing can separate us from God's love to explain that Jesus shows us God's love to name how we celebrate God's love as a parish community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to summarize that we all have different gifts to share to indicate that we are called to cheerfully share our gifts with others to identify that we help the Church by sharing our gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall that God created all creatures to state the different ways that creatures help us to identify that we must care for and respect all creatures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall the importance of gratitude to define <i>prayer</i> and identify the different ways we can pray to identify the Mass as the greatest prayer of thanksgiving
Scripture	Genesis 1:1–5 (p. 21)	Romans 8:35, 37–39 (p. 1780)	Romans 12:6–8 (p. 1788)	Genesis 1:26–31 (p. 22)	Colossians 3:15–17 (p. 1866)
Key Words*	creation respect	<i>persecution</i> <i>victory</i> revealed parish	<i>accordance</i> <i>grace</i> <i>encourage</i> <i>generously</i> <i>authority</i> Church	<i>created</i> <i>descendants</i> creatures praise	<i>decision</i> grateful gratitude prayer
People of Faith	Blessed Julian of Norwich	Saint Paul the Apostle	Saint John of the Cross	Saint Francis of Assisi	Saint Clare of Assisi

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Unit 2: God Sends His Only Son					
Chapter Number and Title	6. God Sends Jesus	7. We Celebrate Baptism	8. We Promise to Live as Jesus Taught	9. Jesus Shows Us God's Care	10. Jesus Teaches Us to Pray
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	44–48 232–267 599–623 733–741	1213–1284 2156–2159	2052–2055 2083–2094 2196	214–231 301 356–361 1700	2759–2865
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall that God loves all creation to recognize that God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus to define the Trinity as three Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to review that we are born again in Baptism to state that in Baptism we become children of God and members of the Church to identify Baptism as one of the Seven Sacraments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to restate the Great Commandment, which is actually two commandments of love to indicate that following the Great Commandment makes us more like God to explain that we should evaluate our daily words and actions using the Great Commandment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus knows that we worry to articulate that God takes care of us always to identify the virtue of trust in God as the way to fight against worry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to review the meaning of prayer as talking to and listening to God to identify that Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer to name the meaning of the different parts of the Lord's Prayer
Scripture	John 3:16–17 (p. 1656)	John 3:4–6 (p. 1658)	Mark 12:28–31 (p. 1556)	Luke 12:22–25 (p. 1614)	Matthew 6:9–13 (p. 1460)
Key Words*	Savior sin Heaven mystery	<i>womb</i> <i>physically</i> <i>spiritually</i> sacrament grace	commandment soul Old Testament New Testament	<i>disciple</i> <i>harvest</i> <i>storage</i> anxious	<i>will</i> <i>Evil One</i> communicate hallowed trespasses temptation
People of Faith	Saint Damien of Molokai	Saint Francis Xavier	Saint Margaret of Scotland	Saint Mother Théodore Guérin	Saint Teresa of Ávila

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Unit 3: Jesus Teaches Us					
Chapter Number and Title	11. Jesus Teaches about the Kingdom	12. We Celebrate Together at Mass	13. We Live God's Word	14. Welcoming Everyone	15. We Pray at Mass
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	541–570 763–769 2046	1322–1419	74–141 1100–1101	1928–1948 2212–2213	1322–1419
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explain that Jesus teaches us about the importance of the Kingdom of Heaven to define the Kingdom of Heaven as wherever God rules over people's hearts to state the ways in which we can help the Kingdom of Heaven to come 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to review that Jesus gave us his Body and Blood at the Last Supper to state that in every Mass Jesus gives himself to us as he did at the Last Supper to explain that ordinary bread is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ at every Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that we learn about God's message through the Bible and the Church to discuss what it means to open our hearts to receive God's message to explain that we are called to listen to God's message and to act on it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that God calls us to be kind and welcoming to everyone to recognize that kindness includes gentleness and patience to articulate that we can apologize when we are mean or upset others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that we rejoice and give thanks because of Jesus to identify that at Mass we give thanks for all God's gifts, especially for Jesus to explain that we can express our praise and thanksgiving at Mass through prayers and responses
Scripture	Matthew 13:44–46 (p. 1480)	Mark 14:22–24 (p. 1560)	Mark 4:16–20 (p. 1534)	Ephesians 4:1–6 (p. 1846)	Philippians 4:4–7 (p. 1858)
Key Words*	<i>Kingdom of Heaven</i> parables valuable	<i>disciple</i> <i>covenant</i> miracle communal	<i>persecution</i> <i>sown</i> <i>bear</i> Word of God	<i>humble</i> <i>tolerant</i> <i>preserve</i> <i>unity</i> apologize	<i>union</i> <i>rejoice</i> <i>attitude</i> participate worthy
People of Faith	Saint Elizabeth of Hungary	Saint John Vianney	Saint Fiacre	Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta)	Pope Saint Pius X

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Unit 4: Jesus Is with Us Now					
Chapter Number and Title	16. Jesus Died for Us	17. We Celebrate the Resurrection	18. We Live as Alleluia People	19. We Care for Those Who Are Poor	20. We Can Pray at All Times
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	595–623	638–658 1136–1199 1322–1419	601 645 1372–1381 2589 2639–2643	1822–1829 2196 2443–2449	2566–2768
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify the cross as a sign of Christian faith to recognize that Jesus died on the cross out of love for us to indicate that Jesus' death is a passageway to new life forever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that Jesus rose from the dead and is with us now to identify that we will be raised to new life after we die because of Jesus' Resurrection to explain that we celebrate the Resurrection every time we go to Mass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that Jesus is with us always, even in times of sadness or discouragement to explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the Mass to name how we might live each day in praise and joy because of the Risen Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us on the cross to identify that we give our lives for others by loving them, even when it is not easy to explain that true love is expressed not only in words but in actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explain that God's help and protection is like a suit of armor to state that we can ask for God's help in prayer to identify prayer as an important way we can help others
Scripture	Matthew 27:50–54 (p. 1516)	Mark 16:1–6 (p. 1568)	Luke 24:28–32 (p. 1644)	1 John 3:11, 16–18 (p. 1936)	Ephesians 6:14–18 (p. 1850)
Key Words*	<i>Temple</i> <i>Holy City</i> Christian sacrifice passageway	<i>anoint</i> <i>tomb</i> <i>alarmed</i> Resurrection hope	Alleluia	<i>claim</i>	<i>righteousness</i> <i>breastplate</i> <i>Evil One</i> <i>alert</i> armor
People of Faith	Saint Cecilia	Saint Mary Magdalene	Our Lady of the Way	Saint Peter Claver	Saint Joan of Arc

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Liturgical Season Lessons				
Liturgical Season	All Saints' Day	Advent	Christmas	Lent
Chapter Title	A Call to Holiness	Preparing for Jesus	We Celebrate Jesus' Birth	Following Jesus More Closely
Catechism References	946–962 992–996	522–524	456–460 477–478 527–530	976–987 1846–1851
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explain that Jesus brought a little girl to life as a hint of resurrection and eternal life to identify that the saints live forever through the power of Jesus' Resurrection to discuss our own resurrection and eternal life with God and the saints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to indicate that John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus to identify ourselves as wanting to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas to describe ways we can make ourselves ready for Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explain that angels are God's messengers to identify that the shepherds' fear was turned to joy when they heard about Jesus' birth to name that Jesus' birth is Good News for us too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that the father in the story is a reminder of God and his forgiveness to state that during Lent we make a special effort to be kind and to forgive others to recall our need to ask for forgiveness
Scripture	Mark 5:38–42 (p. 1538)	Mark 1:4–8 (p. 1526)	Luke 2:8–11, 13 (p. 1578)	Luke 15:11, 20–24 (p. 1620)
Key Words*	<i>confusion</i> <i>wailing</i> Communion of Saints Purgatory	<i>locust</i> prepare	<i>shepherd</i> <i>flock</i> angel Savior	<i>pity</i> <i>prize</i> Alleluia almsgiving
People of Faith	All Saints	Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception	Saint Nicholas of Myra	Saint Joseph

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.

Liturgical Season Lessons				
Liturgical Season	Easter	Pentecost	Ordinary Time	Mary
Chapter Title	We Celebrate the Resurrection	Filled with the Holy Spirit	We Learn from Jesus	Saying “Yes” to God
Catechism References	638–644 651–658 997–1004	731–741	2598–2616 2629–2633	963–975
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to indicate that Jesus rose from the dead to state that we celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter Sunday to explain that Jesus’ Resurrection means that we also will rise with him one day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost to identify that Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church to name that we were filled with the Holy Spirit at our Baptism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to state that Jesus wants us to ask God for what we need to recall that God loves us and that we can pray to him at any time to identify Ordinary Time as the time to learn more about Jesus and how he revealed God’s love for us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify Mary as the wife of Joseph and the mother of Jesus to identify that Mary trusted God and this made the birth of Jesus possible to state that we can also trust God in our lives
Scripture	Mark 16:1–6 (p. 1568)	Acts 2:1–6 (p. 1714)	Matthew 7:7–11 (p. 1464)	Luke 1:30–33, 38 (p. 1574)
Key Words*	<i>anoint</i> <i>tomb</i> <i>alarmed</i>	<i>Pentecost</i> <i>tongues of fire</i> <i>Holy Spirit</i>	<i>seek</i> Ordinary Time	<i>gracious</i> <i>ancestor</i> <i>descendants</i> <i>grotto</i> <i>responsibility</i>
People of Faith	Saint Salome	Saint Luke	Saint Thérèse of Lisieux	Our Lady of Fátima

* Italicized key words indicate terms introduced and defined in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*.

Support Articles

Characteristics of 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 insure 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 level. It is best to keep them moving by doing such things as starting the class in a prayer circle in a 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, or playing a game in the middle of the room. Better yet, take them 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 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 span is 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.

Summary

These are general characteristics of first graders. Although these characteristics might not describe every child, an awareness of these qualities will help you plan developmentally appropriate learning activities for your group. The more you learn about the spectrum of child development, the more you will understand where the children you teach have “come from” and where they are headed in their next phase of development. Each child develops at her or his own pace, and it is likely an uneven pace at that! One child may be far ahead intellectually but a little behind socially. Another child’s social development may be right on target, but he or she may face challenges in thinking skills. The activities in this guide are varied so that you are sure to find some to meet almost any child’s need to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

One way to give every child a chance to grow and develop in your classroom, even if your group meets only once a week, is to give each child a job. Line leader, paper passer, prayer leader, movement leader, Bible carrier—whatever small job is available should be assigned. Assign these small jobs for one session (or one week), and then reassign them for the next one. Keep a running list of assignments so that each child gets a turn at doing each job. Write the assignments for each session on the board. Elementary-age children love to help and enjoy feeling appreciated, and you will be rewarded with a smooth-running group of proud and happy children.

Biblical Literacy and the Teaching of Scripture

As a teacher or catechist of Catholic children, you 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 in catechesis, the Church’s teaching documents always call us to make the Bible an integral part of our ministry.

Catechesis 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 your catechetical ministry with children, you equip them with the essential knowledge and skills required for their lifelong journey of faith. When it comes to the Bible, you want to begin teaching the knowledge and skills that will help the 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 biblical 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, your primary focus should be developing the **Access** competencies and introducing some **Big-Picture** knowledge. You will probably not focus on the **Context** competencies, because they require more abstract reasoning than most young children are capable of. However, you will use specific **Context** skills and knowledge competencies as you teach children about the meaning of specific Bible stories.

Let's take a closer look at these three goals and how you 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 children 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 catechist 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.

Refer to these sections when the children look up passages in the Bible. Say things like, "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 simple system for finding a particular passage in the Bible is 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, help them to develop 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. You will find help in teaching navigation skills to children in the section of this catechist guide 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. You can best help children develop this knowledge by exposing them to key people and events in Scripture. *The Catholic Children's Bible* helps you 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 can 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 you 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' intentions. 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 on 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 their way around 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 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 you as a teacher of children when it comes to these dark passages of Scripture? The best advice is to avoid these passages completely, because they 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 you do not have to worry about coming across any dark stories when you use these special two-page spreads.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 1

God Loves Us

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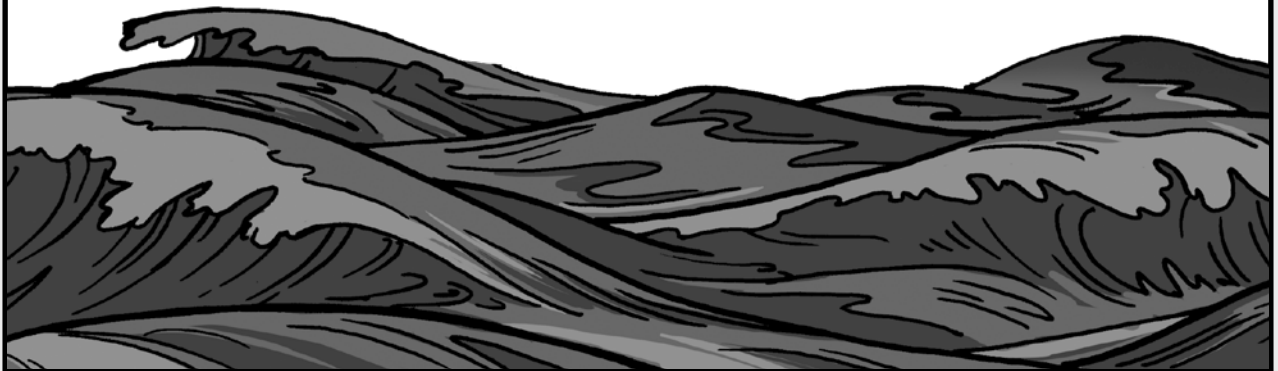
Chapter 5

We Pray to God 74

Chapter

1

God Created the World




 Chapter
1

Lesson at a Glance

Chapter 1

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1:1–5

Lesson Goals

- to recall that God created all things
- to identify that God created everything out of love
- to state that it is important that we respect all of God's creation

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

279–301

Key Words

creation, respect

Music Suggestions

- "God of Wonders," by Catholic Children Worship (Catapult)
- "All Creatures of Our God and King," by Sing 'Em Again, *Favorite Vacation Bible School Songs for Families*, vol. 7 (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 1 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- blank paper
- markers or crayons
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

The best gifts we receive are often handmade and not store-bought. Handmade gifts are unique and hold significance both to the giver and the receiver. The love of the giver's heart is revealed in the special care taken to create the gift. These tangible gifts of love we receive from another are only a small reflection of the gift of God's love revealed in creation.

Each Sunday at Mass when we pray the Nicene Creed, we proclaim God as "maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible" (*Roman Missal*). Everything we see in creation came into existence through God. And just like the gifts we give and receive show love and care, everything God creates reveals his amazing love.

This chapter focuses on God as creator of all things. God brought everything into creation as an expression and a sharing of his infinite love. The more we can see God in creation, the more we can help children to know God as creator of life and giver of love.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

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 in another place where the children can see.
- Ask the children if they know who created all of these wonderful things. *(God)*
- Explain that today’s lesson is about God’s **creation**. Tell them that when we speak of creation, we are talking about all of the things that God has made.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find 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 to the children. 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 page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- 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 the Live It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- 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.



Discover! (25 minutes)

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.
- Have the children cup their hands around their eyes to create pretend binoculars to look through. Ask them to imagine what it might be like if God had not created the water for us to drink or bathe or play in. Ask them to imagine what it might be like if God had not created the sky to see clouds, stars, and the sun. Invite them to share how that might look.

- Invite the children to stand up and look at the ground. Ask them to imagine if God had not created the dry land for us to stand, run, or play our favorite games on.
- Ask the children to cup their hands in front of them to make a bowl. Ask them to imagine if God had not created trees and other plants to play around, to give us shade, and to provide so many delicious things like fruit, vegetables, and nuts to eat.
- Have the children reach one of their hands out as if they were going to pet something. Ask them to imagine if God had not created birds, fish, animals, or any of our favorite pets.
- 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

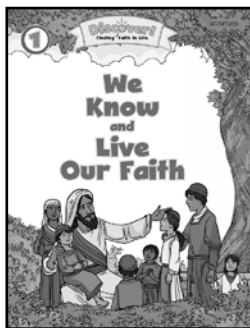
- Remind the children that God created all things out of love for us. When we see all created things, we can be thankful that God has created them.
- Invite the children to repeat the following statements after you, to show thankfulness for creation:
 - Thank you, God, for creating light.
 - Thank you, 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 49 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain how God created everything out of love, using the following as suggested points:
 - Love is about providing for and caring for another person. We know that 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. When they have finished, tell them that *all* the pictures show ways we can care for God’s creation.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Blessed Julian of Norwich, and encourage the children to say, “Blessed Julian, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

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

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)



Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - God created all things.
 - God created everything out of love.
 - It is important that we respect all of God's creation.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite each child to name one thing she or he is thankful for.
- Play one of the suggested songs, if you have time, to further support the lesson.
- Read aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet, pausing at various points so the children can repeat after you. Close with the Sign of the Cross.

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 one of the pictures and inviting them to guess what you are acting out.
- Invite volunteers to come up to the front of the room, and give them a piece of paper with a picture on it. Have the rest of the class try to guess what the volunteer is acting out.
- Play several times, and remind the children that all these things were created by God. Explain that we can thank God for all of the wonderful things he 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 (Genesis 1–2)" (YouTube, 3:49). Tell the children that this cartoon retells the story of Creation that is in the Bible.
- Invite the children to share their reaction to the video and their favorite part.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons. Have the children choose one of the days of Creation (they can look at page 2 of the activity booklet to see what was created on what day) and draw a picture of God creating the things that were created on that day.
- Invite volunteers to share and explain their drawings with the large group.
- Say a quick prayer of thanksgiving to God for all of creation.



Chapter
2

We Celebrate God's Love




 Chapter
2

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Romans 8:35, 37–39

Lesson Goals

- to identify that nothing can separate us from God's love
- to explain that Jesus shows us God's love
- to name how we celebrate God's love as a parish community

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

50–73, 456–463, 1066–1199

Key Words

persecution, victory, revealed, parish

Music Suggestions

- "O the Deep, Deep Love," by Yancy (Standard Publishing)
- "I Could Sing of Your Love Forever," by Monica's Joy Choir, Ed Archer conducting (GIA)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 2 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- a paper heart or other small heart-shaped object
- pink or red construction paper
- several pairs of scissors
- a picture of each child, printed on regular paper
- markers
- several bottles of glue
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

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 the children understand God's love for them as his beloved children.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 2 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to think of things or people they love (God, family, food, games, toys, etc.), allowing time for everyone to share.
- Write the named things or people on the board or in a place where the children can see. Then ask the following questions:
 - Do you love some of these things more than the others?
 - Do you think your love of some of these things might ever change?
 - Is there anything that you know for sure you will love forever?
- Help the children understand that we use the word *love* in different ways and that sometimes our love for something changes. Tell them that today they are going to learn about how deep God's love is for each of us, how it never changes, and how we celebrate God's love together with others.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Romans 8:31–39 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1779). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1780. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1780–1781. Invite them to describe what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1780.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What separates us from God's love? (*nothing*)
 - Who brings us the love of God? (*Jesus*)

- Tell them that the Scripture story lists some specific things that cannot separate, or divide, us from God's love. Point out that some of these things include trouble, hunger, danger, and death. Then remind the children that the Bible story ends by saying that nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1781, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The mother in the story tells her daughter that she will always love her, even if she accidentally breaks something, is naughty, or is mean.
 - Jesus has this same unending love for us.
 - Jesus' love for us can help us through whatever hard things we face.
 - Nothing can stop God from loving us.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1781, or have a volunteer read it.
- Have the materials ready, and help the children follow the instructions to complete the heart project.
- Ask the children if they understand why they wrote their name underneath "God Loves," and invite a few volunteers to share.
- Remind them that God loves them every day. Tell them that it is important to remember that God will never stop loving us even when we are sad, angry, in trouble, or when we make mistakes.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1781.
- Invite several volunteers to share what is being shown in each image and how each image relates to the Scripture story.
- Invite them to look at the images while you reread the Scripture story on page 1780.



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Share the Love Game

- Invite everyone to stand or sit in a circle. Explain to them that you are going to hand a paper heart to the child on your right. Tell them that when that child receives the heart (or other heart-shaped object), the group will say together, "God loves (name) always!"
- Tell them that the first child will then hand the heart to the next child to his or her right. Explain that when that child receives the heart, the class will again say together, "God loves (name) always!"
- Help the children with everyone's names if they are not yet known.
- Continue to play the game, making sure that everyone, including yourself, gets a chance.
- Play the game again, but this time go the other way and tell the children that you will try to go even faster for fun.
- Consider other versions of the game, such as one in which you play music while the heart is passed around the group. When you stop the music, the group says, "God loves (name) always!" to the child left holding the heart. Repeat until every child ends up with the heart so no one is left out. Another possibility is to include hand motions with each word, such as *God* (hands in prayer) *loves* (arms crossed over heart) *name* (two hands pointing toward the child) *always* (pointer finger making a continuous circle).

Process the Activity

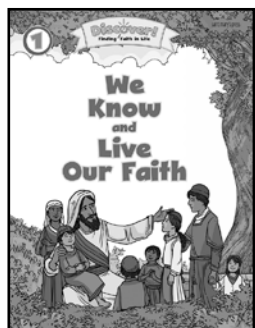
- Invite the children to share what it was like to hear everyone tell them that they are loved by God always.
- Tell them this is a reminder that we need to share with others how much God loves us. Explain that God's love is a reason to celebrate!

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 57 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain that Jesus was sent by God to show us God's love. Tell the children that we sometimes use the word **revealed** as another word for *showed*, so we can say Jesus revealed God's love to us.
- Continue by sharing some of the following points:
 - Jesus showed us God's love through his words and actions. The Bible teaches about all the wonderful things Jesus did on Earth. Jesus healed people. Jesus loved those who felt alone and made them feel special. Jesus showed us that nothing can separate us from God's love.
 - A **parish** is a group of people who gather together to celebrate or remember God's love. Your parish is your church family. *(Help the children identify the name of their parish.)*
 - We celebrate God's love in many ways in our parish: we go to Mass, we sing together, we pray, we are kind to one another. Our prayers and songs to God allow us to remember his love and share our joy with him. At Mass, we receive God's love through the Bible readings, the special prayers that we pray with our parish community, and the Eucharist.
 - We are kind to one another because we know that God loves each person and we should too. The more we can understand God's love for us the more we want to celebrate it with others.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - How did Jesus show us God's love? *(through his words and actions)*
 - What is a parish? *(a gathering together of people who remember and celebrate God's love)*
 - What ways can we celebrate God's love in our parish community? *(go to Mass, sing together, pray together, and be kind to one another)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Paul the Apostle, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Paul the Apostle, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Jesus Saves People from Their Sins," page 14
- "Sunday," page 20

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 2 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Chapter 2

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to open their hands in their laps to show a physical sign of being ready to receive.
- Invite them to slowly repeat after you the following:
 - Dear God / nothing can ever stop you from loving us.
 - We open our hands / to receive your gift of love.
 - We open our hearts / to know your love / in every moment of our lives.
 - We smile / as we celebrate your amazing love for us.
- Play a piece of music, if time allows, that speaks about being loved by God.
- End by saying: "May God bless us as we continue to learn and grow to celebrate the love of God. Amen." Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers or crayons
- emojis drawn on the board or printed on individual sheets for each child to cut out
- several pairs of scissors
- several bottles of glue

Materials Needed

- black construction paper
- star stickers, several for each child plus extras to take home
- instruction sheet to parents explaining how to continue this activity at home

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

No Matter What (15 minutes)

- Create emotion-face emojis (happy, sad, angry, etc.) in advance. You can either draw these on the board and invite the children to copy them to the best of their ability, or you can copy these on a sheet for each child and they can cut them out and glue them on their paper.
- Explain that this activity is meant to help the children remember that no matter what they feel or experience in their day, God loves them always.
 - Provide each child with a piece of blank paper and a marker or crayon. Write the following words on the board for them to copy on the top of their papers: "God Loves Me."
 - Invite the children to select two or three emojis that represent how they have felt throughout the day or week and to draw or cut out and glue them on their paper.
 - Tell them that they can hang these pictures somewhere at home to remind them that no matter what they are feeling, God still loves them.

Countless as the Stars (15 minutes)

- Provide each child with a piece of black construction paper and several star stickers. Invite the children to take turns sharing examples of how they felt loved by God today. You may need to help them with some ideas. For each example they can come up with, invite them to place a star on the black paper.
- Explain to the children that there are so many stars in the sky that we could never count them all. If we take time to pay attention, God's love for us is shown throughout each day in too many ways to count, just like the stars in the sky.
- Send extra star stickers home with directions for parents to continue this activity to encourage awareness of the many different ways we can see God's love. Invite parents to use this activity to prepare their children to be ready to thank God for his love when they go to Mass.

God Is with Us in Our Day (15 minutes)

- Show the video "VeggieTales—My Day" (YouTube, 2:42).
- Invite volunteers to explain what happened in the video.
- Ask the children to share how the video reflects how we can celebrate God's love throughout our day.
- Celebrate of God's love by counting to three and inviting the children to jump, put their hands up in the air, cheer, or do all three. Do this several times, counting faster and slower to make it more exciting.
- Remind the children that when they are happy, sad, or busy, God's love remains the same. God is always pouring out his love for us to receive and to celebrate.

Chapter

3

We Share God's Love with Others




**Chapter
3**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Romans 12:6–8

Lesson Goals

- to summarize that we all have different gifts
- to indicate that we are called to share our gifts with others
- to identify that we help the Church by sharing our gifts

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

751–757, 777–810, 2045–2046

Key Words

accordance, grace, encourage, generously, authority, Church

Music Suggestions

- “This Little Light of Mine,” by Dr. Jean Feldman (Dr. Jean and Friends)
- “We All Have Gifts to Share,” by Susan Kay Wyatt (All Gifts Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 3 activity booklet
- disposable cups, one for each child
- permanent markers, one for each child
- a small box
- wrapping paper and tape
- small pieces of paper or index cards
- a handheld mirror with a sticker that says “The Gifts Are Inside You”
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Do you remember the moment when you saw your baby or maybe a family's or friend's baby for the first time? You likely wondered what that child would grow up to be like and what characteristics and gifts that child would have.

When God creates and blesses people with life, he gives them a unique mix of gifts and abilities. In Romans, chapter 12, each person's gifts in relation to the larger community are compared to parts of a human body. The function and gifts of each part are necessary for the good of the whole body. Without each part fulfilling its purpose, the body would not work as it is supposed to.

In this chapter, the children will learn that God equips each person with the gifts they need to love him and to share his love with others to build up the Church. Allow yourself time to reflect on your own God-given gifts and be ready to share your experience with the children.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 3 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Prepare a small box in advance, following these steps:
 - Write the name of each child on a separate piece of paper or index note-card.
 - On the back of each card, write down one way that child has shown God's love in the last couple of classes. Examples include smiling, listening, loving, being filled with life, being kind to others, being prayerful, being funny.
 - Place the cards in the box. On top of these, place a mirror with a sticker on it that says, "The Gifts Are Inside You."
 - Close and wrap the gift box.
- Ask the children to think about the best gift they ever received. Ask a few volunteers to share their examples. Then place the gift box you prepared on the table for all the children to see. Tell them that they are going to open a gift and see what is inside.
- Allow all the children to gather around as several selected volunteers unwrap and open the box. Show the box to everyone so they can see themselves in the mirror inside the box.
- Read the sticker on the mirror to them. Ask the group what these words mean. Explain to them that they have gifts inside of them that they can share with others and that these gifts are not things like toys or things they create to give away.
- Pull the mirror out of the box to reveal the pieces of paper. Give each child their piece of paper, reading aloud each child's name and what you wrote down. Explain to them that these pieces of paper state what you have seen in them.
- Explain that the gifts they have been given are more than just talents (playing football or dancing); they are God-given abilities to serve God and others. Tell them that when we use these gifts, we are sharing God's love.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Romans 12:1–8 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1786). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1788. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1788–1789 and share what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and the verses on page 1788. Review the key words with the children, making sure they understand them.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does the Scripture story say that we should do with the gifts God has given to us? (*We should use them.*)
 - Should we share with other generously? (*yes*)
 - How should we show kindness to others? (*cheerfully*)
- Remind the children that we all have different gifts that God gives to us. Tell them that this Scripture instructs us to use our gifts and share them with joy.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1789, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - We each have different gifts.
 - We need to use our gifts to help others who might not have our same gift.
 - Not using one of God's gifts would be like getting a new toy and never playing with it.
 - When we use God's gifts, we can do great things and become better people.
- Tell them that we should not look down on those who don't have the same gifts we do. Explain that we should help them with our own gifts, and others should help us with the gifts they have that we don't have.
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet. Read the instructions. Then read each statement, encouraging the children to circle the emoji that applies to them. *Answers will vary.*
- Remind the children that we are all different and that we will continue to discover the gifts that we have throughout our lives. Tell them that it is great that God gives us different gifts, because this is the way that we can best live and work together.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1789, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the different questions that are posed.
- Invite the class to say thank you to God for each person by leading a prayer and then going around the room having each child state aloud the person they are thankful for.
- Remind them to help encourage others to live out their gifts from God by saying thank you to people when they see them using their gifts.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1789.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows someone with the gift of speaking. Image 2 shows someone with the gift of teaching. Image 3 shows someone with the gift of serving.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****It Takes All of Us**

- Provide each child with a disposable cup and a permanent marker.
- Have them turn their cup upside down, and then write their name on the side of the cup.
- Invite them to come to a place you designate and begin to build a tower of cups. Encourage the children to create at least three or four levels of cups.
- Pick a child whose cup is near the middle or bottom of the tower to come forward. Ask that child if he or she would be able to remove his or her cup and have the tower still stand strong.
- Allow that child to take his or her cup away and see what happens. If the tower falls, rebuild the tower and invite another child to take away his or her cup near the middle or bottom. Play the game a few times, giving several children a chance to pull their cup.

Process the Activity

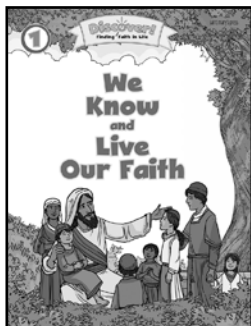
- Explain to the children that the tower is strongest when all the cups are together. When one of the cups is missing or not part of the tower, the tower becomes weaker and sometimes even falls.
- Tell the children that all of our gifts are strongest when they are shared with one another. Explain that no one person has all of the gifts that are needed. Tell the group that we each need a combination of one another's gifts, and if we don't share our gifts with others, we and others will be missing out.

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 pages 64–65 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that the gifts they have are given by God to be shared with others, including those within the **Church**. Explain that a church is a building, but Church is also the name we give to the followers of Jesus who worship and serve God together.
- Help the children understand that God has a plan for their gifts to help the Church. Explain that God created some people with gifts to be teachers, some to be healers, and some to be leaders. Tell them that God needs each unique gift to be used fully to help the Church.
- Explain that each of us using our gifts helps the Church to grow in knowledge and love for God. Tell the group that we need to learn how to share our gifts to make the Church stronger.
- Tell the children that as they grow older they will learn and understand more about their gifts and how to use them to serve and love God.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is another name for the followers of Jesus who worship and serve God together? (*Church*)
 - Why is every unique person important to the Church? (*because the Church needs everyone to share their unique gifts*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answer: WE ARE THE CHURCH!*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint John of the Cross, and encourage the children to say, “Saint John of the Cross, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “Jesus Teaches Us to Love,” page 36

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - We all have different gifts.
 - We are called to share our gifts with others.
 - We help the Church by sharing our gifts.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 3 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Chapter 3

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to repeat this prayer after you:
 - God, thank you / for helping me learn / about the gifts you have given to me. / Help me to use them / to share your love with others.
- Conclude the closing prayer with "Amen."
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- colored dots or stickers that are marked uniquely for each child, ten to twenty for each child

Love Needs to Spread (15 minutes)

- Give each child ten to twenty colored dots or stickers that are marked in a way specific for them, such as with their initials.
- Explain that these stickers represent the gifts that God gives us to share.
- Instruct the children to place all of their stickers on their arms or sleeves.
- Invite them to look around the room and see how unique each person is with their own colored dots.
- Tell the children that they will share their colored dots with one another. You can allow them to do this on their own, or you can line them up in two lines facing each other. Ask them to move down the lines, exchanging a few dots with each child in front of them, until they have all given out their dots.
- Invite them, after sharing their dots, to look around the room and see how each person looks, marked with all of the differently marked colored dots that they shared with one another.
- Remind them that our gifts are not meant to be kept to ourselves but are meant to be shared with one another. Explain that love needs to be spread by using our gifts to help each other.

Materials Needed

- cutouts of different body parts, one for each child
- a sheet of poster board with "One Body" written at the top
- a bottle of glue

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

One Body (15 minutes)

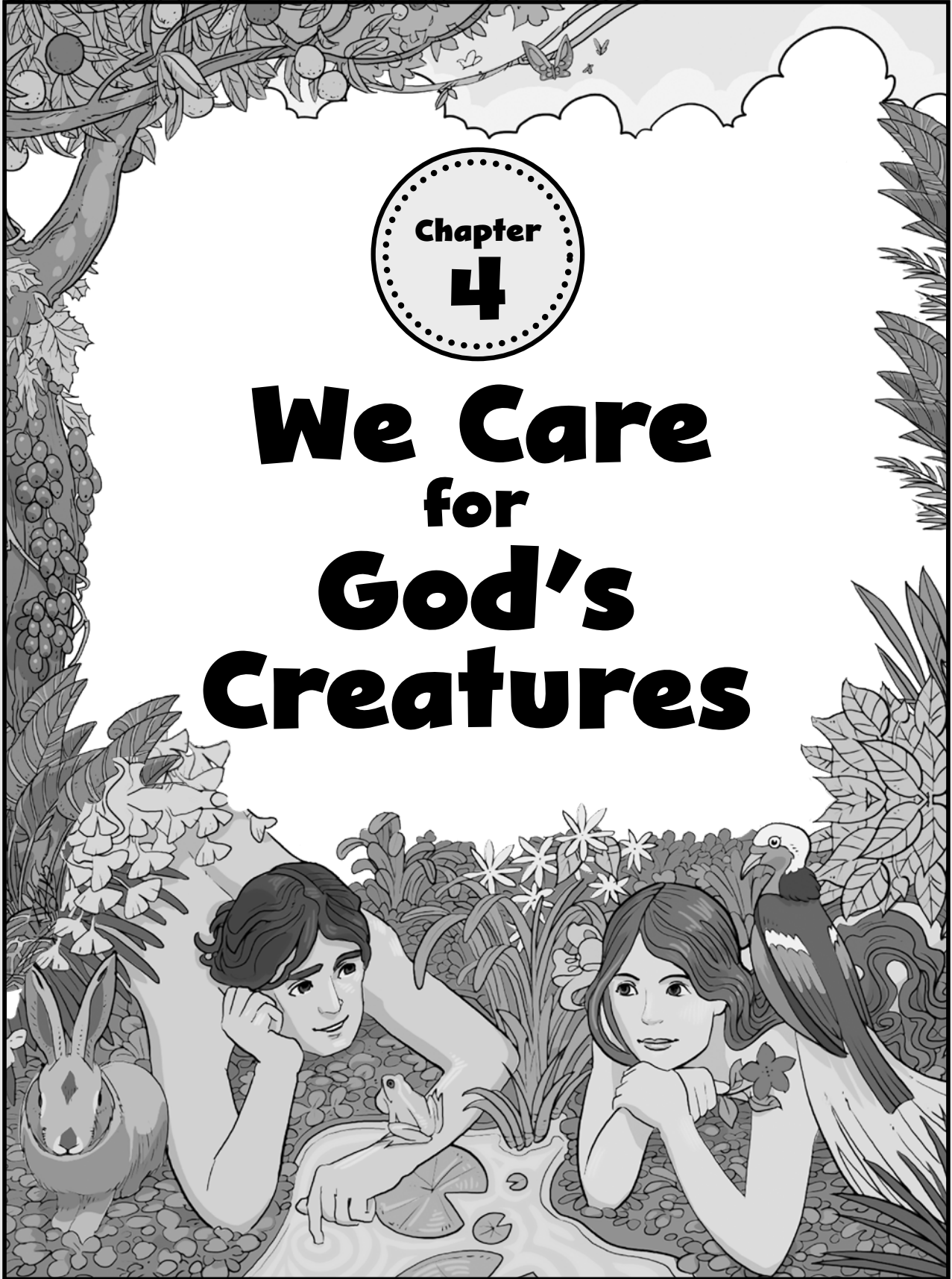
- Prepare in advance cutout parts of a body with enough parts for each child in your class. Suggested body parts could include head, torso, two arms, two legs, two feet, two hands, two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a mouth. Write "One Body" on the top of a sheet of poster board.
- Distribute the cutouts of different body parts, and ask the children to think about the specific part of the body they were given so they can share it with the class.
- Invite each to share the body part she or he has and what it does for the body. Then invite the children to glue the parts onto the poster board.
- Ask them what would happen if a part of the body stopped doing its job, and invite volunteers to share their responses.
- Remind the children how important it is for that body part to do its special job and not want to be another body part. Explain that each part has a special gift that it must use to make the body work. Tell them that we are like parts of the body in the Church. We all have unique and special gifts that, together with others, make up one, complete body.

Made for This (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Made For This | Maker Fun Factory VBS | Group Publishing" (YouTube, 2:58).
- Ask the children to share what they saw and what they heard in the video.
- Point out to the children how the video reflects that we each have a purpose.
- Ask them what they thought of the fun contraption the children in the video were making, and ask them some of the following questions to further their comprehension:
 - Could that contraption be made easily by just one person? (*no*)
 - Did it take everyone working together to make it special? (*yes*)
 - Does the group making the contraption show us that our gifts work together to bring about something wonderful? (*yes*)
- Have the children watch the video again, and allow them to think about what purpose God made them for.

Chapter
4

**We Care
for
God's
Creatures**




 Chapter
4

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1:26–31

Lesson Goals

- to recall that God created all creatures
- to state the different ways that creatures help us
- to identify that we must care for and respect all creatures

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

Care for God's Creation

Catechism References

337–349, 2415–2418

Key Words

created, descendants, creatures, praise

Music Suggestions

- "Creation," by Quigley James (4th teepee on the right music)
- "God Made Animals," by Promiseland (Promiseland Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 4 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Whether or not you are an animal lover, you can't deny the role that animals play in every human's life. Not all creatures are easy to love, and it's not always easy to understand their role in creation, but God had a plan for each of them when he created them. The fact that they are creatures of God requires us to respect and appreciate them, and to treat all animals with kindness.

The presence of animals on the Earth is a glorious sign of God's love and creativity. Saint Francis of Assisi is known as the patron of animals because he saw God through all created things. He loved animals not as a possession but rather as proof of God's love.

This chapter teaches why all creatures deserve respect. As the children take time to grow in their understanding of respect for God's creation, make sure to help them appreciate all of God's creatures, from the pesky mosquito to the gigantic blue whale. The Lord God made them all!



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 4 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Tell the children that you are going to write on the board as many animals as they think of within 6 minutes. Remind them they can think of any animal, insect, reptile, or fish.
- Express to the children excitement at how many **creatures**, or created living things, they came up with and remind them that God created such an amazing variety of living things on Earth.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Genesis 1:1–2:3 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 21 and 24). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 22. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 22–23 and describe what they see.
- Remind the children of learning about how God created the world and all of the things in it. Explain that this is part of that same story.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key words to help the children understand. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who did God put in charge of the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals? (*human beings*)
 - Did God provide food for the animals as well as the people? (*yes*)
 - When God looked at everything he had made, was he pleased? (*yes*)

- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the directions and help any children who are having difficulty finding the words. *Solution:*

A H U M A N S
 L Y R J G O D
 P L E A S E D
 I Q E P B L K
 K F E A R T H
 C R E A T E D
 A N I M A L S

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 23 to the children, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite volunteers to summarize what they just heard, and ask the group key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - God made you and created the whole universe.
 - God loves us so much that he gives us powers that are like his powers.
 - God gave us the power to think, to make choices, to love God back, and to love other people.
- Explain to the children that God's love brought everything into life, and this includes all animals, insects, fish, and reptiles.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 23, or have a volunteer read it.
- Explain the term **praise** to the children. Tell them that this means showing love, respect, and thankfulness to God. Help them to understand that praise is one of the ways we show love to God.
- Read the prayer of praise to the group, and invite the children to respond, "Glory to you, God." Explain that when we say "Glory to you, God," this is a way to praise God and share with him how wonderful we think he is.
- Invite the children to help come up with five more lines of praise, putting in other words for the bold blue words.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 23.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows all that God created. Image 2 shows the creation of male and female, Adam and Eve. Image 3 shows that God was very pleased with everything he created.*) You may need to read the words in image 3 for the children.

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****What Am I?**

- Ask the children to think of one animal but not to say that animal aloud right now.
- Tell them that they are going to take turns acting out their chosen animal either by making the animal's sound and/or by showing the action.
- Give them an example by showing them how to act out a horse. Shake your head while you make a horse sound (neigh). Then ask them to guess what animal you were.
- Allow each child to act out their animal and give time for the other children to guess.

Process the Activity

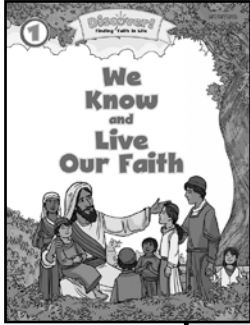
- Invite the children to share how this activity made them think more about how important animals are in our lives.
- Express to the children that God created many amazing animals for us to enjoy.

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 73 in its place.

Core Teaching

- State that animals, insects, and reptiles are created by God and are his special creatures. Use the following points for discussion:
 - Creatures were created by God, and they receive their gift of life from God.
 - Creatures belong to God, so we must show a special respect to them.
 - We must treat them with kindness because they are God's gifts to us to help us.
- Share with the children the ways that creatures help us by stating that they share love, provide food, help us to do hard things, protect us from other creatures, and remind us of the amazing creativity of God.
- State that God entrusts us to take care of his creatures even if it is hard to understand their purpose or if they don't seem to have a way to help us.
- Explain that respect of creation reminds us that we should treat creatures kindly. Share the following points:
 - We should not tease or hurt a creature, including not stomping on ants.
 - We should not purposefully scare or chase birds.
 - We should help creatures find a safe place to live. We can ask adults to help take insects or other creatures outside that might have made their way inside the house.
 - We should love our pets and spend time with them.
- Remind the children that we must take care of and treat all creatures with kindness and respect, because every creature's life was given to them by God.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who created the creatures and gave them the gift of life? (*God*)
 - Did God create animals and all creatures to help us? (*yes*)
 - How are we supposed to treat animals? (*with respect and kindness*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Francis of Assisi, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Francis, pray for us" during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

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

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - God created all creatures.
 - Creatures help us in different ways.
 - We must care for and respect all creatures.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 4 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- 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,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer. If the children do not know the prayer yet, allow them to follow along by looking at page 1990 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*, or direct them to repeat each line after you.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers or crayons

Create Your Own (15 minutes)

- Provide the children with a piece of blank paper and markers or crayons.
- Invite them to imagine that they can create a brand new kind of animal. Tell them that they will have 6 minutes to draw this new kind of animal. Tell them to be creative and come up with a name for their created animal.
- Invite volunteers to share their creation and what is special about their own created animals.
- Remind them at the end that God made so many animals and that we should be amazed at how different and special all animals are to God who created them.

Materials Needed

- a prepared list of twenty situations

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of a time a list of about twenty situations that include examples of caring for God's creatures along with examples of not caring for God's creatures. Examples might include stopping for a bird to cross the street, petting a dog, harming a spider, or squishing an ant.
- Tell the children that you are going to slowly read through a list of statements. Explain that after you finish reading each statement, they are to put their thumbs up if the statement is a way we care for creatures or put their thumbs down if the statement is not a way we care for creatures.
- After each thumbs-down statement, invite a volunteer to share how they could change the statement to be a way of caring for God's creature.

Materials Needed

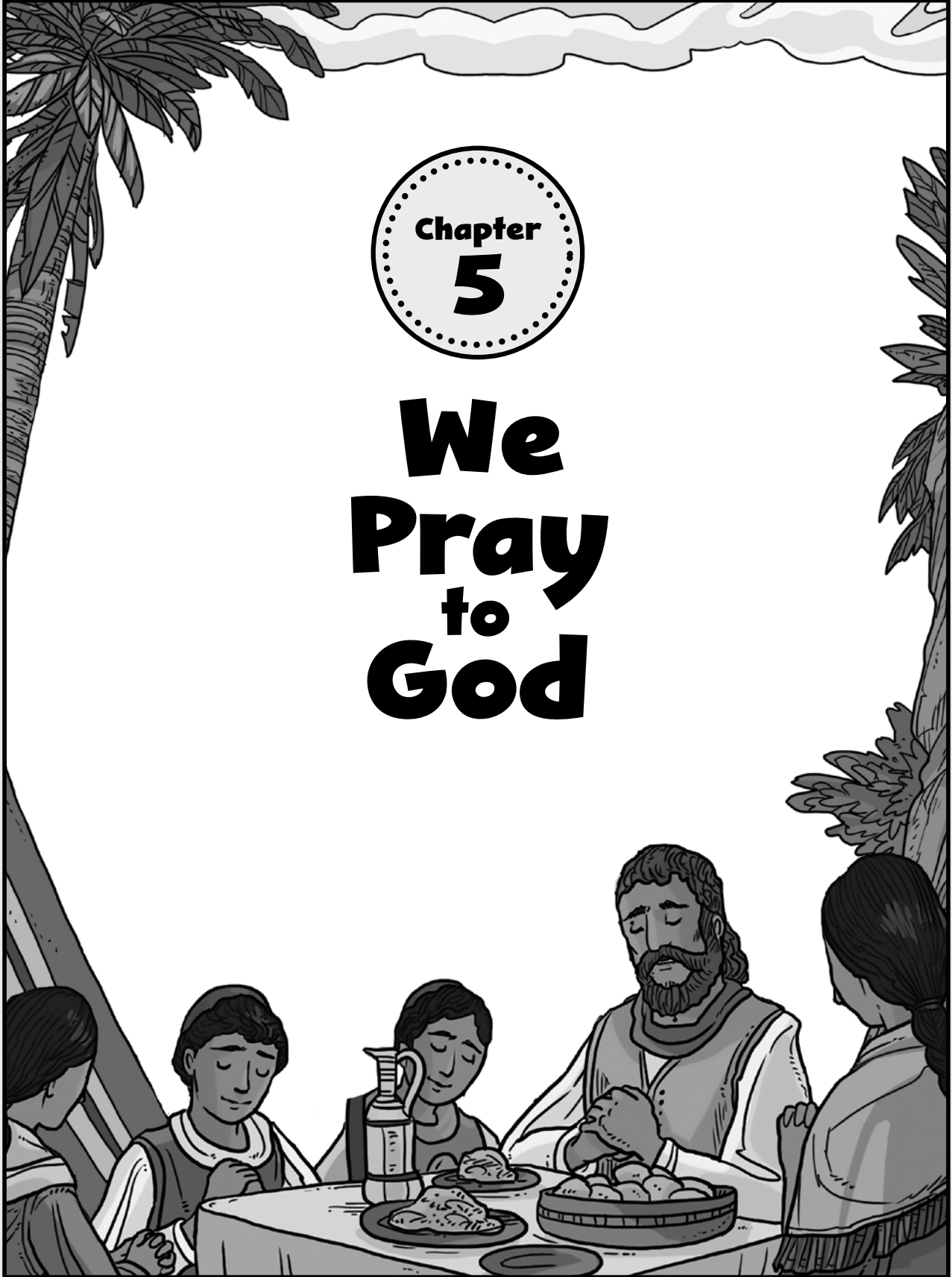
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

So Many Animals (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Kids! Sing Along! God Made You and Me" (YouTube, 2:22).
- Ask the children to recall the animals they saw in the video.
- Invite the children to share any ways that these animals help people.
- Discuss the positive characteristics of each animal and how each is beautiful and a gift of God in its own way.
- Recall how much imagination God used to make so many animals.

Chapter
5

**We
Pray
to
God**




**Chapter
5**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Colossians 3:15–17

Lesson Goals

- to recall the importance of gratitude
- to define *prayer* and identify different ways we can pray
- to identify the Mass as the greatest prayer of thanksgiving

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

2623–2649, 2697–2699, 2738–2745

Key Words

decision, grateful, gratitude, prayer

Music Suggestions

- “Lord, I Thank You (feat. Jim Wideman),” by Yancy & Little Praise Party (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)
- “Thankful (2008 Power Lab),” by Group Music (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 5 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Relationships grow through communication. Taking the time to talk and listen to another is an important part of strengthening a crucial bond. Our relationship with God requires the same care, and prayer is a key way we can take the time to communicate with and grow closer to God.

Prayer can be memorized vocal prayer or silent reflective prayer. And our prayers can express a wide range of emotions and feelings. Prayer is always meant to be from the heart and not merely words coming from our lips. Our heart speaks through our prayer, and we grow closer to God through our exchange.

This chapter will explain how our gratitude for all the gifts we have been given can form the basis for prayer to God, especially in the greatest prayer of thanksgiving, the Mass. As you help the children develop their understanding of prayer and gratitude, be sure to spend time reflecting on how you can grow your own prayer life and better open your grateful heart to our loving God.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 5 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Instruct the children to sit in a circle, making sure they are not too close to the person next to them.
- Explain that they are going to play the telephone game, following this process:
 - I will start with a certain word that only I know.
 - I will whisper that word to the child to my right, who will listen and then whisper to the person on his or her right.
 - We will continue all the way around the circle until the last person on my left shares what she or he heard.
 - Then I will share the word that the last person whispered to me and how it compares to the word I started the round with.
- Remind the group that each person can whisper the word only once to the other person.
- Go through two to three rounds of the telephone game using the following suggested words: *heart, thankful, prayer*.
- Help the children understand that it is important in this game to be ready to hear what is said, to take time to listen, and to share what we heard. Explain that today they will learn about talking to God, which involves both listening and talking.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Colossians 3:12–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1864–1865). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1866. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.

- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1866–1867 and describe what they see.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key word with the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does Christ give to us to help guide us in our decisions? (*peace*)
 - What should we have in our heart when we sing to God? (*thanks or thanksgiving*)
 - Where should Christ’s message live? (*in our hearts*)
 - Everything we do or say should be done in the name of whom? (*Jesus*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the words to the children and help them determine which words do not come from the reading and do not have anything to do with thankfulness. *Answers: sad, mad, alone, upset (crossed out)*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1867, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Because God has given us so many gifts, we should tell him thanks.
 - God gave us his Son, Jesus, to help us live forever in Heaven.
 - We can give thanks to God many times throughout the day.
 - The Mass is a time when we can especially say thanks to God for Jesus.
- Explain to the children that knowing how much God loves us should fill our hearts with thanks. Tell them that this makes us ready to share the reason why we are thankful with other people.
- Ask them to name things they are thankful for. Write these answers on the board or in a place where the children can see them throughout the class.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1867, or have a volunteer read it.
- Explain to the children the term **grateful**, which means “showing or feeling thanks.”
- Discuss ways they can take care of something that God has given to them.
- Point out that when they have a new gift, they cannot wait to share and talk about it, because they are excited and thankful for the gift.
- Help them to understand that because we know everything is a gift from God, our heart should be ready and wanting to thank God throughout the day.
- Remind them that a simple way to show our **gratitude**, or feeling of being thankful, is to say, “Thank you, God.”

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1867.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows people being thankful. Image 2 shows people singing because they are thankful. Image 3 shows a boy thanking God.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****In Our Mind**

- Tell the children that they are going to use their mind and imagination for this part of the lesson.
- Ask the children to close their eyes, to remain quiet without talking, and to sit as comfortably still as they can.
- Use the following prompts to guide a visualization, pausing in between each prompt to give the children time to use their imagination:
 - I want you to see in your mind God sitting in a very comfortable chair. You can imagine God to look like anything you want, because we don't know what God looks like.
 - You approach God and climb into his lap.
 - You cannot wait to tell God about your day with its great parts and its hard parts.
 - You quietly think about something you want to share and say it in your mind without saying anything out loud.
 - You want to just sit and stay with God because you feel safe and loved.
 - He then tells you how much you are loved and how special you are.
 - You say in your mind without words, "Thank you" and you tell him how wonderful he is too.
 - Now slowly open your eyes.

Process the Activity

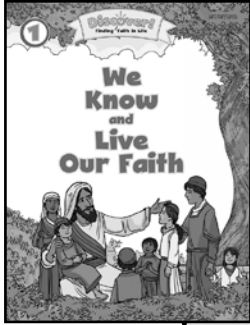
- Ask the children how this experience felt for them. Allow them time to share.
- Explain that this activity is to help us understand how we can use our heart and mind to speak with God.
- State that God created us so that we can use words and our mind to share our thoughts and feelings with him.

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 81 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that talking to God is so much more than talking to another person. Share the following points with them to understand that **prayer** is a special way we can talk to and share with God:
 - God made you and knows everything about you before you even ask, but God wants you to ask and share with him so that you can feel close to him.
 - When we talk to God, we can use words that we say out loud, or we can talk to God in our mind.
 - We do not need to be in a special place to pray or talk to God; we can pray anywhere and in any way.
- Teach them that there are different ways that we can pray to God, using the following suggested points:
 - We can ask God to help others.
 - We can ask God to help each of us individually.
 - We can thank God for all the things he has given to us and done for us.
 - We can praise and honor God. These prayers focus on God and how amazing he is.
- Explain to the children that at Mass, we pray in each of these ways, both out-loud prayers and in-our-mind prayers. Point out that singing is another way we can pray.
- Explain to them that the Mass is the greatest prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of Jesus. Tell them that we say thanks in many parts of the Mass for God giving us Jesus.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Can we pray to God both out loud and in our mind? (*yes*)
 - Where can we pray to God? (*anywhere*)
 - What are some different ways that we can pray to God? (*ask for help for others, ask God to help us each individually, thank God, and praise God*)
 - At Mass, what gift do we especially thank God for? (*Jesus*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the words and sentences one-by-one, and help them select the correct answers. *Answers: 1. Jesus, 2. friend, 3. love, 4. good*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Clare of Assisi, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Clare, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activities in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “Prayer Is Talking to God” + activity, pages 48–49
- “We Pray Together” + activity, pages 52–53

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin an activity, or have them complete the activities with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - It is important to have gratitude.
 - We can pray in many different ways.
 - The Mass is the greatest prayer of thanksgiving.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 5 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Chapter 5

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Start the prayer time with these opening lines:
 - God, our hearts are filled with thanks for all that you have done for us. You have given us everything because you love us so much. We want to offer our thanks to you by sharing these prayers with you.
- Remind the children that because prayer is a sharing with God, they are going to offer up their own individual prayers of thanksgiving out loud. Explain that you will go around the room and each person will say something they are thankful for that God has given to them. Tell them that after each person shares their prayer, everyone will say, “Thank you, God,” together.
- Start by sharing what you are thankful for as an example to the children. Help them, as needed, to think of things they are thankful for.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- long strips of construction paper, three for each child
- markers or crayons
- a stapler

Materials Needed

- small, soft balls, one for each pair of children

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Prayer Chain (15 minutes)

- Prepare three long strips of construction paper for each child. Distribute the strips and the markers or crayons.
- Explain to the children that they should think of three things God has given to them that they are thankful for. Tell them that they will then draw pictures of those three things on their strips of paper, one per strip of paper.
- Invite the children to bring their strips of paper to you, and proceed to create one, long gratitude chain by linking and stapling each strip of paper in a circle around another. Do this with all of the papers from the class.
- Leave this gratitude chain in the center of the room to remind the children of how many things we can thank God for.

Catch Being Thankful (15 minutes)

- Form two lines of children with each line facing the other. Tell the children that they should be ready to catch a ball from the child across from them.
- Explain to them that they are going to gently throw the ball in a way that the other person can easily catch it.
- State that when the other player catches the ball, they will have to think of and say out loud something they are thankful for.
- Allow the children to play until the time runs out.

How to Pray (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Thankful (children’s Thanksgiving song)” (YouTube, 2:11).
- Ask the children to share what they heard and saw in the video.
- Remind the children that we thank God for all that he has given us in a special way on Thanksgiving Day, but we can show our gratitude and thankfulness to God every day.
- Take time now to create a group prayer by asking children what things they want to thank God for and then what they want to ask God for help with. Write down their answers in two separate lists.
- Create a prayer, and have the children repeat after you:
 - Dear God,
 - We thank you for [insert the group list].
 - We ask you for [insert the group list].
 - Help us to be the best we can be.
 - We love you.
 - In the name of Jesus Christ,
 - Amen.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 2

God Sends His Only Son

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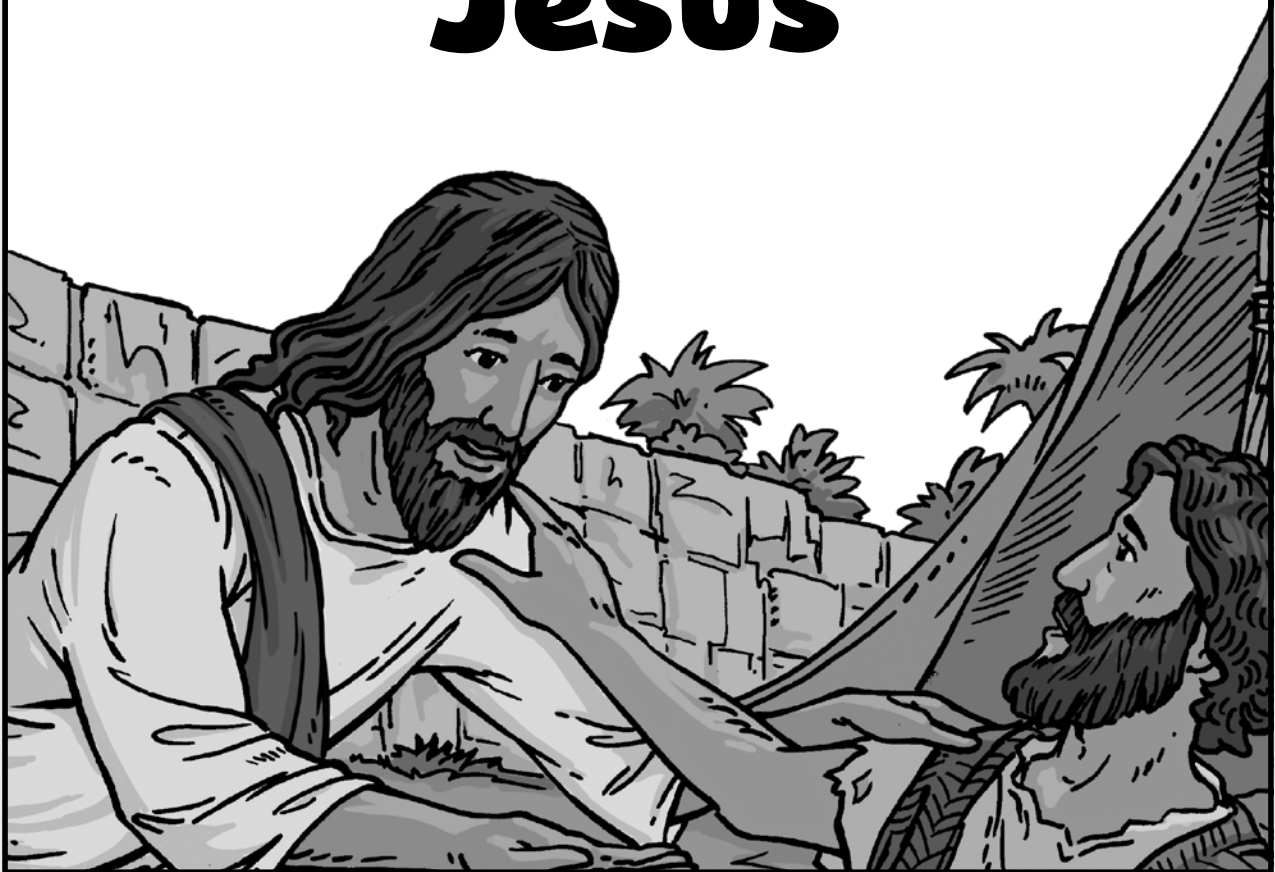
Chapter 10

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray 118

Chapter

6

God Sends Jesus




 Chapter
6

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 3:16–17

Lesson Goals

- to recall that God loves all of creation
- to recognize that God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus
- to define the Trinity as three Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

44–48, 232–267, 599–623, 733–741

Key Words

Savior, sin, Heaven, mystery

Music Suggestions

- “For God So Loved the World (John 3:16),” by The Wonder Kids and Kay Dekalb Smith (Wonder Kids)
- “The Trinity Song,” by Foxhoven Singers Kids (Foxhoven Family Singers)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 6 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- craft sticks, three for each child
- glue
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

God loves all of creation. He loves everything that he made. God loves people too, but he saw that they were walking away from his gift of love. His love was so strong that he sought to repair the relationship by sending his Son, Jesus, to the Earth to save us from our sins and give us a path to Heaven. When Jesus was on the Earth, he revealed God’s love for us and called us back to a relationship with the Father. He also revealed that God the Holy Spirit would be our helper.

The central mystery of our faith is the understanding of God in Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As you help the children to know more about the Trinity and God’s plan for salvation, be sure to take time to reflect on your own understanding of the mystery of faith. We recall our faith in the Trinity every time we make the Sign of the Cross.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 6 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to recall that God created all things and loves all of the things he created.
- Ask them to list some of the things that God created that he loves. Write these on the board or in a place where the children can see. Make sure to write "People" on the board and circle it. Remind the children that God loves them very much.
- Help the children understand that when we love someone very much, we want to help that person be his or her very best. Explain that God loves us so much that he wants to help us too. Tell the children that today they will learn about one way God showed us his love by helping us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find John 3:16–17 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1656).
- Tell them that today's Scripture passage is short. Read the Scripture passage to the children.
- Explain to the children that one of the names we give Jesus is **Savior**. Tell them that a savior is someone who helps to save others and note that Jesus helps us in a very special way. Point out how the word *savior* sounds somewhat like the word *save*.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who is God's only Son? (*Jesus*)
 - God sent Jesus so that everyone who believes in him will have what? (*eternal life, Heaven*)
 - Was Jesus sent to be a judge or a savior? (*savior*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - God loved everything he made.
 - When the people did not keep the rules God gave them, God sent his Son, Jesus, to save them.
 - Jesus died on the cross and rose again for every person.
 - Jesus came to save us from our **sin** and to bring us to Heaven. Sins are freely chosen thoughts, words, or actions that are against God's Law.
 - If we follow Jesus, we will be happy in this life, and we will live forever in Heaven.
- Explain that **Heaven** is life forever with God. It is where those who love God and follow his ways get to be after life on Earth.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Ask the children the following questions to check for understanding:
 - Why is the cross important? (*It shows God's love and the way Jesus died for us.*)
 - What prayer do we say that involves making a cross? (*Sign of the Cross*)
- Review how to make the Sign of the Cross, being sure they use the correct hand (right hand) and that they place their hands on the correct places during each part of the prayer. Stand with your back to the children and show them where their hands belong.
- Point out that the Sign of the Cross reminds us of God's love.

Tell It!

- Invite several volunteers to retell the Scripture passage in their own words.
- Affirm the children for the points they remember. Help them with key points they may have left out.



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

All Three Equal

- Prepare in advance by placing paper, craft sticks (three for each child), and glue sticks or bottles on a table.
- Explain to the children that you are going to ask them some questions. Tell them that they have to get all three questions correct in order to move forward with the craft.

- Draw a picture of a triangle on the board or in a place the children can see, then ask the following questions:
 - Who can name this shape? (*triangle*)
 - How many sides does a triangle have? (*three*)
 - Do the sides look the same or different? (*same*)
- Invite each child or a representative from each row to come up to the craft table and get three sticks for each child and a piece of paper. Distribute the glue according to how much you have, explaining that the children may need to share.
- Ask them to place their craft sticks on top of the piece of paper.
- Instruct them to connect each end of a craft stick to the end of another craft stick to make a shape that has three equal sides.
- Help them glue the craft sticks together at each point to make sure the triangle stays together.

Process the Activity

- Point out that they created triangles by gluing together three craft sticks of equal size.
- Invite them to keep their triangles at their table to dry and look at as you explain more about why we sometimes think of God like a triangle.

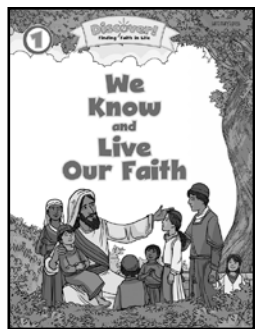
Additional Activity Options

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 91 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that understanding God is a **mystery** of faith. Tell them that a mystery of faith means it is something that is difficult or impossible to fully understand or explain.
- Assure them that because it can be confusing, it is okay to not understand fully. Explain to them that they will continue to grow in their understanding as they get older.
- Point to the triangle that you previously drew on the board, or draw a new one. Explain that we understand that God is made up of three Persons, whom we call the Trinity.
- Write the following by each part of the triangle:
 - At the top of the triangle, write "Father."
 - At the bottom left side of the triangle, write "Son."
 - At the bottom right side of the triangle, write "Holy Spirit."
 - In the center of the triangle, write "God."

- Explain that the whole triangle is God but that God is made up of three different Persons of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Tell them that the three Persons of the Trinity are all equal, just like the sides of the triangle are all equal.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who are the three Persons of the Trinity? (*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*)
 - Are all three Persons of the Trinity equal? (*yes*)
 - Sometimes we don't fully understand certain things about our faith, such as the Trinity. What do we call this? (*a mystery of faith*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: top—Father, left—Son, right—Holy Spirit*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Damien of Molokai, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Damien, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Three Persons in One God" + activity, pages 8–9

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



GO! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - God loves all of creation.
 - God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus.
 - The Trinity is the Three Persons in one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Ask the children find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 6 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Tell the group that they are going to slowly go through each part of the Sign of the Cross, pausing for each part of it to help us to understand more.
- Begin the prayer by saying the following:
 - In the name of the Father—We place our hand on our forehead, the place of our mind, because God the Father created us to know him and to know how much we are loved.
 - and of the Son—We place our hand near our waist (at the mid-point of our body) to remind us that Jesus came down to Earth in a human body to teach us, to die for us, and to show us God’s love.
 - and of the Holy—We move our hand to our left shoulder as we begin to call upon the Holy Spirit, who is our helper.
 - Spirit—We move to our right shoulder to complete the prayer to the Holy Spirit to open our heart to receive his help and protection.
 - Amen—We end our prayer with our hands together, knowing that this prayer, the Sign of the Cross, blesses our mind, heart, and whole body.
- If you have time, play a piece of music that supports the focus of the lesson.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

Simon Says (15 minutes)

- Teach the children how to play Simon Says. Explain that when you say “Simon Says” and name an action, they should do that action. If you do not say “Simon Says,” they should not do the action. If they do, they will sit down.
- Play a few slow rounds so the children can get an idea of the game. Then play a few more rounds, speeding up as the group can handle the pace.
- Remind the children that “following” someone can be hard. Explain that God sent us Jesus so that we can follow him. Remind them that Jesus is our leader, showing us the way back to God and to Heaven.
- Distribute the blank paper and encourage the children to draw a cross. Write this statement on the board: “Jesus loves me this much!”
- Tell the children to write this on their paper and markers or crayons, near the cross to remind them that Jesus, the Son of God and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, came to show us God’s love.

Materials Needed

- a board or poster to write on
- paper with three same-sized heart shapes, one paper for each person
- scissors, glue, and markers
- crayons (red or green)
- craft sticks, one for each person

Shamrock Craft (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, taught people about the Trinity as three Persons in one God by using a shamrock, which is one plant that has three leaves. Draw a picture of a shamrock on the board.
- Provide each child with a piece of paper that you have prepared ahead of time with three hearts that are the same size.
- Write the following on the board for them to write down inside each of the hearts: “God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.”
- Give the children time to color in their hearts (red or green) and then instruct them to cut out the heart shapes. If you think cutting will be too difficult or time-consuming for the children, cut the hearts out in advance.
- Show them how to glue the heart shapes onto a craft stick to create their very own shamrocks.

Materials Needed

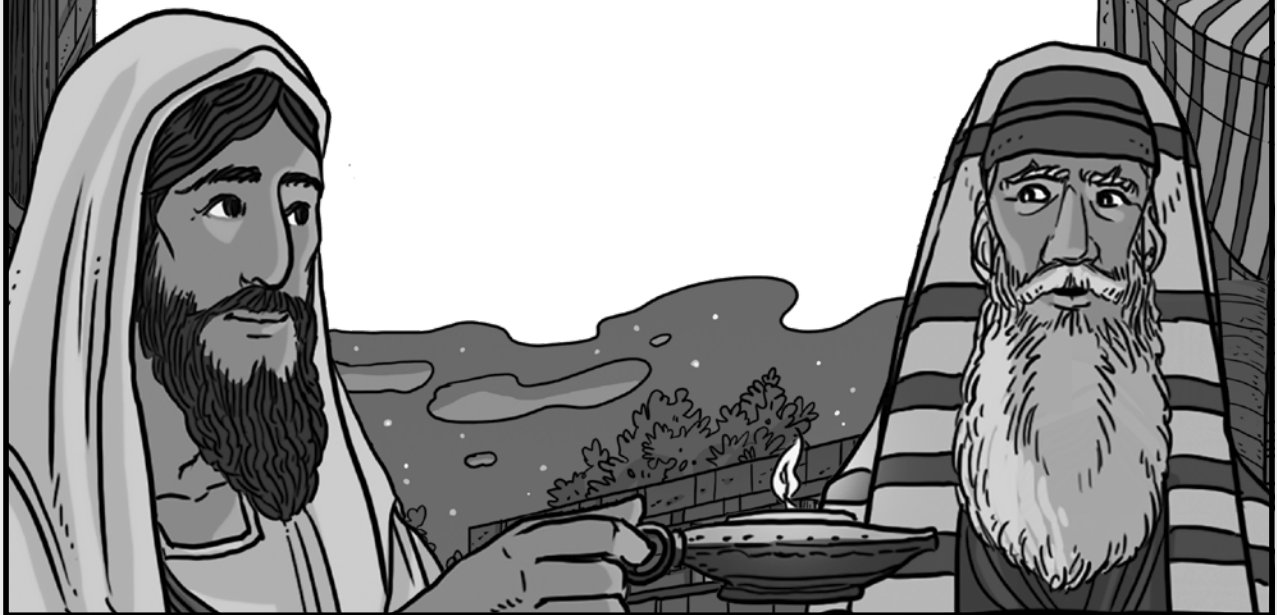
- a poster with this sentence at the top: “God sent his Son, Jesus, because God loves us.”
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- crayons or markers

His Name Is Jesus (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time a poster with the following sentence at the top: “God sent his Son, Jesus, because God loves us.” Leave empty space at the bottom.
- Show the video “John 3:1—VBS 2017” (YouTube, 2:27). Teach the words to the children, and invite them to try to use the hand motions.
- Explain to them that the word *perish* is another word for *die*.
- Review with the children why God sent Jesus and how important Jesus is to save us.
- Give the children time to write their names at the bottom of the prepared poster so they can remember how much God loves each of them.

Chapter
7

We Celebrate Baptism




 Chapter
7

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 3:4–6

Lesson Goals

- to review that we are born again in Baptism
- to state that in Baptism we become children of God and members of the Church
- to identify Baptism as one of the Seven Sacraments

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

1213–1284, 2156–2159

Key Words

womb, physically, spiritually, sacrament, grace

Music Suggestions

- “Great Big Family of God—Worship for Life Children Spring 2015—Single,” by LifeWay Kids Worship (LifeWay Kids Worship)
- “Family of God,” by Karen & Kids (Karen & Kids)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 7 activity booklet
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Being part of a family and having a sense of belonging are part of what it means to be human. Each person was created by God to be a part of his family. To restore the perfect relationship with God broken by Original Sin, God has given us the grace of new birth in Baptism. This grace removes Original Sin, restores our friendship with God, and brings us into God’s family.

Baptism is the first of the Seven Sacraments and the one that starts our walk of faith with God and the Church. The new birth that we receive in Baptism is not something that is visible to the eye but is a spiritual transformation in which God marks our souls as forever belonging to Christ.

This chapter focuses on understanding the grace and new birth of Baptism. As you help the children develop their understanding of Baptism, be sure to also spend time reflecting on what it means to you to be a part of God’s family, the Church, and part of Christ’s mission.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 7 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share all the different ways we use water. Explore with them how important water is to our everyday lives, pointing out the fact that we need water in order to live.
- Explain to them that they are going to learn about how water also has another purpose in a very important and wonderful celebration in our Church.
- Ask the children if they might know what this celebration is called (*Baptism*). If they don’t know the answer, tell them that they will learn about it in today’s lesson.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find John 3:1–21 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1651 and 1656). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1658. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1658–1659 and to share what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1658.
- Read the key words and definitions. Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did Nicodemus want to know? (*how a grown man can be born again*)
 - What type of birth did Jesus say had to happen to enter the Kingdom of God? (*birth of water and the Spirit*)
 - How is this second birth different from the first physical birth from your parents? (*It is spiritual, of the Spirit.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: again, second, Kingdom, Spirit*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1659, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Jesus was talking to Nicodemus about Baptism as another birth.
 - In Baptism, we receive spiritual life with God.
 - Through Baptism, we become children of God and members of his family, the Church.
 - Baptism saves us from sin.
 - Baptism makes us Christians who will one day live with God forever in Heaven.
- Ask the children if any of them have seen a Baptism. If any children have, invite them to share what they remember from that day.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1659, or have a volunteer read it. Then lead the children in a quick prayer, thanking God for the gift of water, which helps us in many ways.
- Tell the children they can complete the Live It! activity at home with their parents.
- Point out that holy water is placed at entrances to church to remind us of our Baptism. Explain that when we enter the church, we make the Sign of the Cross with holy water recalling the three Persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1659.
- Read the text in the boxes, and invite volunteers to share what else they see in the images. *(Image 1 shows Nicodemus asking Jesus a question. Image 2 shows Jesus explaining that we must be born again spiritually. Image 3 shows a person being baptized.)*



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

God's Family

- Invite the children to stand in a large circle, facing in. Explain that when you say something that God's family does, they will act out that action. Instruct them that if it is not something that God's family does, then they should just stand there.

- Play the game, giving the following directions:
 - God’s family helps others by reaching out their hand to someone nearby.
 - God’s family opens their heart to God by touching their heart.
 - God’s family says mean and hurtful things by opening their mouths wide (*should stand still*).
 - God’s family celebrates the gift of Jesus by raising their hands high in the air.
 - God’s family ignores those in need by turning their backs on one another (*should stand still*).
 - God’s family remembers God’s gift of love and life by making the Sign of the Cross.
 - God’s family turns away from the loving gaze of God and looks down at the ground (*should stand still*).
 - God’s family remembers that they receive many gifts from God by holding their hands out to receive a gift.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children that we are all part of God’s family.
- Explain to them that they will now learn how we become children of God and members of his family, the Church, through Baptism.

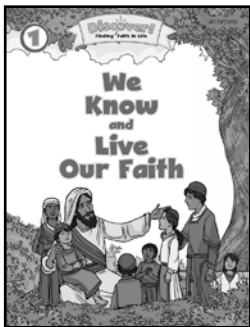
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 98–99 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Ask the children if they’ve ever heard the word **sacrament** before. Tell them that a sacrament is a sign of God’s love that gives us a share in God’s life. Explain that Jesus gave the Church the Seven Sacraments.
- Write the Seven Sacraments on the board, and give the children a brief description of each: Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.
- Instruct the children that in each of these sacraments, God gives us **grace**. Explain that this is the name of a special spiritual gift that helps us to live out our faith. Grace is a share of God’s own life in us.
- Review with the group that Baptism is the first sacrament and is how we become part of the family of God. Use the following points to help explain:
 - God loves us so much that during Baptism, we become his children and we are invited into a new life with him.
 - Baptism is our birth into God’s family, the Church.
 - The gift and grace of Baptism is not something we can see with our eyes.
 - Because we are a child of God through Baptism, we can meet Jesus in a special way and share his love with others.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What do we call a sign of God’s love that give us a share in God’s life? (*sacrament*)
 - How many sacraments are there? (*seven*)
 - What is the first sacrament? (*Baptism*)
 - Who do we meet in the sacraments? (*Jesus*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Francis Xavier, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Francis Xavier, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “The Sacraments” + activity, pages 27–29

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - We are born again in Baptism.
 - In Baptism, we become children of God and members of the Church.
 - Baptism is one of the Seven Sacraments.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 7 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 4 of the activity booklet as the closing prayer.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a prepared handout with symbols, one for each child
- dough or clay for each child

Symbols of Baptism (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time a handout with the following symbols as clip art, large enough for the children to cover with dough or clay: a cross, a dove, a heart, water, a candle, a baptismal font.
- Instruct the children to look over these symbols of Baptism. Tell them that they can fill in each symbol with dough or clay after you have read a statement that matches that symbol.
- Read these statements slowly one at a time to give the children time to fill in the respective shape:
 - This is a symbol for the sign that is made on the child’s head and that we make when we enter a Church. (*cross*)
 - This is a symbol for the Holy Spirit, who is called down upon the child in Baptism and is often pictured as this animal. (*dove*)
 - This is a symbol for God’s love and the new life he gives us. (*heart*)
 - This is a symbol of the new birth and washing away of sin. (*water*)
 - This is a symbol for receiving the light of Christ. (*candle*)
 - This is a symbol for where the priest, parents, and godparents gather for a child’s Baptism. (*baptismal font*)
- Explain further any symbol that they struggle to understand.
- Remind them that God uses things we can see with our eyes to help us understand what he gives us that is unseen.

Materials Needed

- a baby doll or dolls
- a white dress or a white blanket or cloth for each doll
- a small bowl with water and cup for pouring

Baptism Reenactment (15 minutes)

- Reenact a Baptism with a doll to help this sacrament come alive for the children.
- Remind them that this is a pretend Baptism, just to help them understand some of the actions. Explain that they will be acting out only one part of a Baptism.
- Select volunteers to be the priest, parents, and godparents. The remaining children can be the family and friends. If you have a large class, you can have several babies and families by providing dolls, garments, and candles for each baby's family.
- Invite the parents to dress their doll in a white garment and have the godparents stand beside them. Give the parents a few moments to choose a name for their baby.
- Have the priest take a small cup of water from the bowl and pour it over the doll's head. Tell the priest to repeat after you, "(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Baptism for Children*). Have the rest of the class applaud after the "Baptism."
- Repeat the process as many times as you have time for, inviting different volunteers to take the different roles.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- a sheet of paper for each child with this statement at the top: "A person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- markers or crayons

What Is Baptism? (15 minutes)

- Show a clip (5:00–7:39) from the video "Catholic Baby Baptism" (YouTube, 9:17) to the children.
- Provide each child with a prepared sheet of paper with the following statement written across the top: "A person is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- Distribute the markers or crayons, and give the children time to draw a picture of an infant Baptism on the paper.

Chapter
8

**We Promise
to Live as
Jesus
Taught**




**Chapter
8**

Lesson at a Glance

**Chapter
8**

Scripture Focus

Mark 12:28–31

Lesson Goals

- to restate the Great Commandment, which is actually two commandments of love
- to indicate that following the Great Commandment makes us more like God
- to explain that we should evaluate our daily words and actions using the Great Commandment

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

2052–2055, 2083–2094, 2196

Key Words

commandment, soul, Old Testament, New Testament

Music Suggestions

- “Give It Away,” by Sing ‘Em Again! Favorite VBS Songs for Families—Vol. 7, by Group Music (Group Publishing)
- “Jesus Fill My Heart,” by Cat.Chat (Cat.Chat)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 8 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- a large heart cut from red construction paper
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Rules are a part of life. They set boundaries and create safe ways to live. As Christians, God has rules for our lives to keep us safe and within the boundaries of what we were created for. God’s rules provide us with the way we are to live and love.

When Jesus was asked by the teacher of the law in this Scripture story, he said that the most important or greatest law to follow is to love God completely and to love others as you love yourself. These two commands, known together as the Great Commandment, fulfill all the laws found in the Ten Commandments that were given to Moses.

This lesson focuses on love as the Great Commandment and how we need to be sure our daily words and actions follow this most important rule from God. As you help the children to develop their understanding of these two commands of love, take time to reflect on how you live out the Great Commandment in your own daily life in all your words and actions.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 8 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to stand in a circle. Explain to them that you will go around the circle counting from 1 to 10. Tell them that everyone must listen to know what to say when it comes to them.
- Explain that to make this more fun, instead of saying the number 5 and the number 10, the children should say "Love!" Begin with a practice round, helping the child who has the number 5 and the child who has number 10 remember to say "Love!" instead of the number. You may want to walk around the circle to help each child.
- Begin the game and start counting again from 1 after the group has reached the number 10. This will give different children the chance to say "Love!"
- Ask the children if they know what today's lesson might be about. Tell them that they are going to hear a story from the Bible in which Jesus tells us how we should love God and love others.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Mark 12:28–34 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1554–1555). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1556. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1556–1557. Invite them to point out what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1556.

- Discuss the following words with them to assist with understanding:
 - A **commandment** is a rule that God provides to us to keep us safe and to help us follow what he wants for us.
 - A **soul** is the invisible, spiritual part of humans that allows us to know God.
- Use the following points to explain how these two important commandments are called the Great Commandment:
 - In the **Old Testament**, which are the stories and events in the Bible that happened before Jesus was born, God gave his people the Ten Commandments to help them live the way they are supposed to.
 - You may not have heard of these Ten Commandments, but they tell us how we are to love God and others in very specific ways. We will learn more about the Ten Commandments later in the year. The people were expected to follow lots of other laws in addition to the Ten Commandments.
 - In this Scripture story, the teacher of the Law, who knew all these Laws very well, asked Jesus, of all these Laws, which was the most important.
 - Jesus answered him by stating that all of God's Law, all God's commandments or rules, can be understood by following these two commandments: to love God and to love others as yourself.
 - These two commandments together are known as the Great Commandment because together they state the most important things we must do to follow God's Law.
 - When we follow the Great Commandment, we are following all of God's Law, including the Ten Commandments.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does the word *commandment* mean? (*A commandment is God's rule.*)
 - What is the first of the two most important commandments that Jesus told us in this story? (*Love the Lord our God.*)
 - What is the second most important commandment that Jesus told us? (*Love your neighbor as you love yourself.*)
 - What are these two commandments known as? (*the Great Commandment*)
 - Does the Great Commandment help us follow the Ten Commandments? (*yes*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Work together as a class to help the children think through the answers. Point out the first letters of the words and the length of the words as clues. *Answers: 1. commandment, 2. soul, 3. mind, 4. heart, 5. God, 6. neighbor, 7. strength*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1557, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Love is the greatest thing we can do on this Earth.
 - Loving God and others is what Jesus said are the two most important commandments.
 - When we love, we are like God; for God is love and created us to love.
 - God created a law telling us how to love because it is so important.
 - We can ask God in prayer to help us to grow in our abilities to love.

Live It!

- Create two headings on the board: “Love God” and “Love Others.” Help the children name ways we can show our love to God and to others through our words and actions.
- Write on the board the ideas that the children come up with. Keep them up for the remainder of the class.
- Tell the children they can do the Live It! activity at home with their families.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1557.
- Read the words in the boxes to the children, and then share with them that these images remind us of the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the teacher of the Law asking Jesus a question. Image 2 shows Jesus telling the man the first part of the Great Commandment. Image 3 shows Jesus telling the man the second part of the Great Commandment.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****Wrinkled**

- Prepare ahead of time a large red heart from construction paper.
- Have the children sit in a circle, and explain to them that this heart represents one person’s heart.
- Ask them to think of something that would be hurtful to someone. Make a small fold in the heart each time the children come up with something hurtful. (*Possible hurtful things include being teased or made fun of, not being helped when in need, fighting with someone, etc.*) At the end of their sharing, the heart should be folded up small.

- Ask them how that person’s heart feels now. (*Possible answers might be: hurt, broken, sad.*)
- Ask them what things we can do or say to help their heart feel better. (*Possible answers might be: say sorry, help, become their friend, show love, etc.*)
- Unfold a part of the heart each time they think of something to help.
- Show them the heart when it’s back to shape and ask them what happened to the heart. (*It is back together, but it has wrinkles from the unloving things that happened.*)

Process the Activity

- Explain to the children that each time we are not loving we put a “wrinkle” in someone’s heart that is hard to remove completely.
- Tell them that is why Jesus told us that loving God and loving others is the Great Commandment.

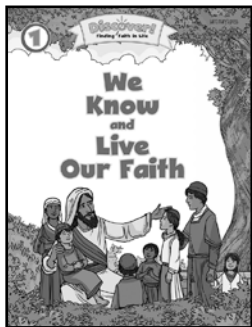
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 108–109 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that Jesus showed us the love of God in many ways in his life on Earth by helping, healing, loving, and teaching. Tell them that throughout the **New Testament**, which comprises the Bible stories and events from the life of Jesus and his earlier followers, Jesus taught the people of his time how to better love God and others.
- Remind the children that Jesus is our teacher on how to love God and others better. Explain that all of Jesus’ teachings, words, and actions help us learn to follow him.
- Teach the children how Jesus wants us to treat others with love in our words and actions by discussing the following points:
 - Jesus taught us that it is both what we say and what we do that shows our love.
 - When we follow the Great Commandment to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and when we love others as we love ourselves, we are loving like God loves.
 - In order to be sure we can love more like God, we must think about our daily words and actions using these two commandments of love.
 - Thinking about our words and actions leads us to think before we act or say something so that we can see if what we want to do or say will follow these commands to love.

- Remind the children that in our love for God, we promise to live as Jesus taught us.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who is our teacher on how to love God? (*Jesus*)
 - In what two ways does Jesus want us to love God and others? (*in our words and actions; in what we say and do*)
 - When we follow the Great Commandment, whom are we loving like? (*God*)
 - What do we need to do about our words and actions to be sure they are how God wants us to love? (*think about them*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. (*Answer: Love God and love others.*) Help the children read the final answer if necessary. If you run out of time, encourage the children to finish this activity at home.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Margaret of Scotland, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Margaret, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “Jesus Teaches Us to Love,” page 36
- “Jesus Teaches Us to Follow God’s Law” + activity, pages 37–39

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)



Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - The Great Commandment is actually two commandments of love.
 - When we follow these two commandments, we become more like God.
 - We should evaluate our daily words and actions using the Great Commandment.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 8 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in praying "A Prayer to Jesus," by Saint Richard of Chichester, found in the prayer section of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1993). Because this is the children's first time with this prayer, ask them to follow along in their Bibles and say each line after you say it first.
- Invite the children to share with each other a sign of peace by shaking hands and saying, "Peace be with you." This prayerful action shows love for our neighbors.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blindfolds for half the class

Follow Me (15 minutes)

- Split the class into pairs, and have all the children line up together on one side of the room. Tell them that one person in each pair should put on the blindfold, and the other person will be the guide.
- Explain that the role of the guide is to make sure the blindfolded partner does not bump into anything or get hurt. Tell them that the guide cannot speak, but can direct the other child through touch.
- Tell them that they will have to listen for your voice and reach you across the room. Explain that every time you speak, they can take three steps forward. You can move around the room at different points to add some challenge.
- Have the children switch parts after they have reached you so that the children who were guides are now blindfolded and being guided by the other children.
- Ask for volunteers to share how it felt to be guided and to follow your voice.
- Share with the children how important listening was in the game and how important it was for the blindfolded children to follow and trust their guide.
- Remind them that Jesus teaches us so much about how to love God and others if we are listening to him and follow him.

Materials Needed

- prepared strips of paper for bookmarks
- markers or crayons
- stickers, stamps, or other decorations

Love Bookmark (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time strips of papers for making bookmarks.
- Tell the children that one way of loving God is to learn more about him in the Bible.
- Instruct them that they will make a bookmark that they can keep inside their Bible to remind them to follow the Great Commandment to love God and love others.
- Distribute the art supplies, and direct the children to write "Love God" on one side of the paper and "Love others" on the other side. You may need to write this on the board for them to copy.
- Give the children time to color and decorate their bookmark so it can be special for them.
- Remind them to place their bookmark in their Bible to keep it safe and to remind them of this important way to love.

**Materials
Needed**

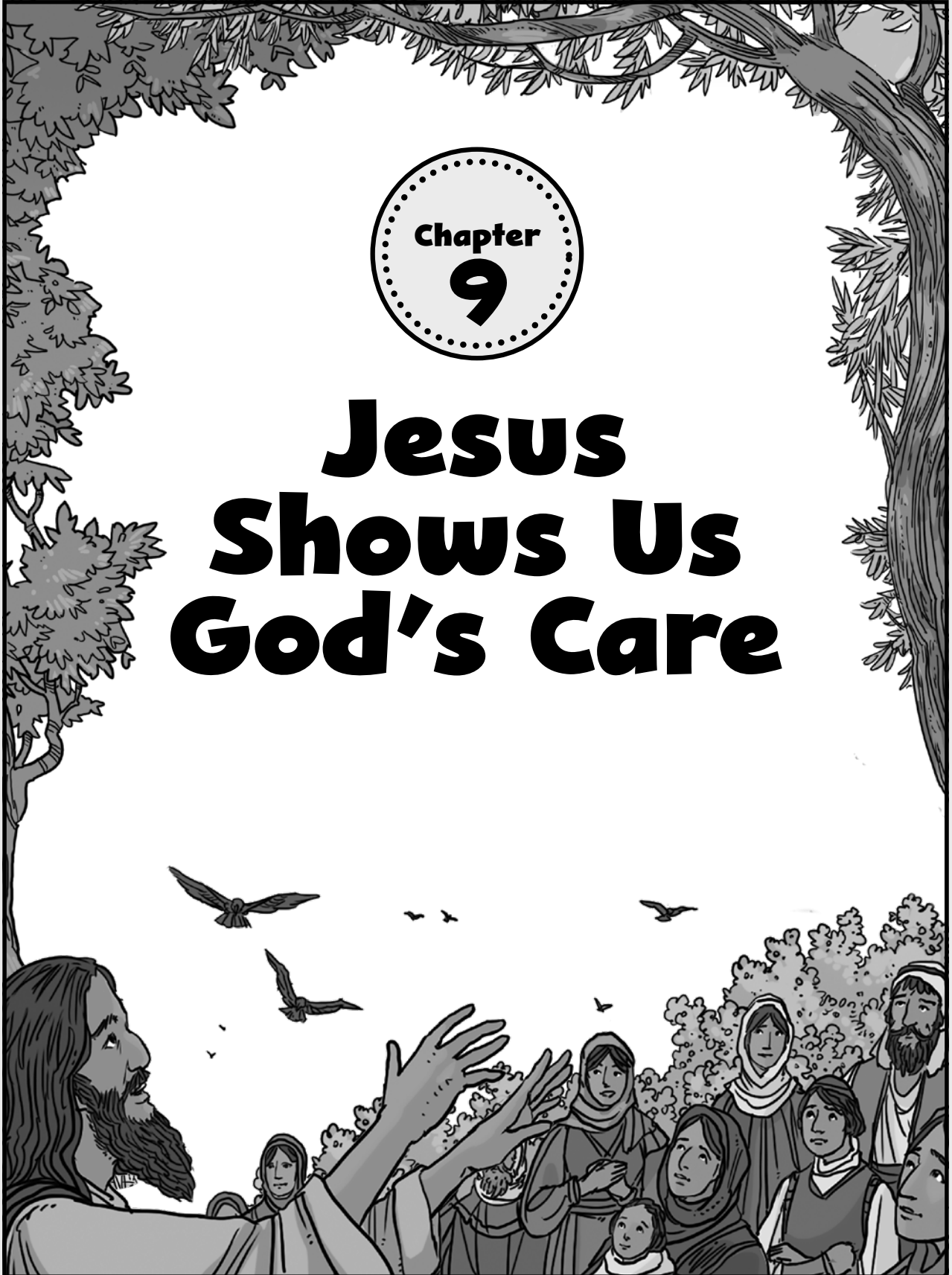
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Jesus, Our Teacher (15 minutes)

- Show the video “THE GREATEST AMONG US” (YouTube, 4:24).
- State how the pictures on the video are just some of the ways that Jesus taught us how to love during his time on Earth.
- Ask the children how it felt to watch how much Jesus loved all people.
- Invite children to share what stories of Jesus they recognized in the video. If they do not know any of them, discuss with them some of the stories— healing, Last Supper, preaching, etc.
- Ask them to think of what ways they can love like Jesus did in the video. (*Possible answers might be: love all people, help those in need, don’t judge them, love God.*)
- Remind the group that the more they read the Bible the more they will learn how to love like Jesus.

Chapter
9

Jesus Shows Us God's Care




 Chapter
9

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 12:22–25

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus knows that we worry
- to articulate that God takes care of us always
- to identify the virtue of trust in God as the way to fight against worry

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Catechism References

214–231, 301, 356–361, 1700

Key Words

disciple, harvest, storage, anxious

Music Suggestions

- “Give All Your Worries to God (1 Peter 5:7),” by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)
- “He’s Got the Whole World,” by CedarMont Kids (CedarMont Kids)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 9 activity booklet
- two or three inflated balloons
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

As adults, worry is part of our daily lives. We worry about making money, paying bills, our kids, our work, our friendships, our health, and so much more. Worry is often based in fear that we cannot provide or make something work. We do not know everything that will happen today let alone tomorrow.

God wants us to trust him. He loves us and wants what is best for us. In this Scripture story, Jesus tells his disciples not to worry and reminds them how much God takes care of all of his creation. God’s loving care is even more profound for us who he created in his own likeness and who share dignity as created children of God.

This chapter focuses on Jesus telling us not to worry but to trust in God. As you help the children develop their understanding of God’s care, pray that you can be more open every day to God, trusting him with everything.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 9 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Gather the children together in a circle facing one another, and ask them to hold hands while you explain the directions to them.
- Show the group an inflated balloon.
- Tell the group that they are in charge of keeping the balloon from touching the floor.
- Explain that after you toss the balloon into the air, the goal is to see how many times they can tap it lightly to keep it in the air *without letting go of one another’s hands*. Explain that you will keep count. Tell them that once the balloon hits the floor, the count begins again.
- Allow about 5 minutes to play as many rounds as they can. To add difficulty, you can have two or three balloons going at the same time. Be sure to have an extra balloon ready in case the balloon breaks during play.
- State that all the children must learn to work together to keep the balloon from hitting the floor or popping.
- Praise them for their careful planning and care to keep the balloon safe.
- Tell the children that today they will learn about the ways we are called to trust that God loves us and cares for us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 12:22–31 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1612). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1614. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1614–1615.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1614.
- Remind the children that the words of Scripture that Jesus said are for each and every one of us today too.

- Discuss the word *worry* with the children by sharing the following points:
 - Worry is when we are **anxious**—nervous, fearful, or uneasy—about something.
 - Worry can lead us to focus on hard things that we don't know how to do.
 - Sometimes when we worry, our mind focuses on scary thoughts of what might happen.
 - Worrying is normal, but we can talk about it to someone who can help.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who was Jesus talking to in the story? (*directly to his disciples but also to each one of us*)
 - What things did Jesus tell us not to worry about? (*food you need to stay alive and clothes you need for your body*)
 - What did Jesus tell us to look at to stop our worrying and why? (*the crows, because God feeds them and we are worth so much more than crows*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the sentences and the possible answers to the children and help them with the answers. *Answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. a, 4. c, 5. b*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1615, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Consider listening to or reading the lyrics to the song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," if time permits.
- Review some of the key points with the children:
 - God watches over his world, and he cares for each of us.
 - We are his children made to be like him, so his love and care for us is even more than for the birds.
 - We can trust God to care for us.

Live It!

- Read the directions and the prayer in the Live It! on page 1615, or have a volunteer read them.
- Pause for a few moments so the children can think of some things they might worry about.
- State that the best way to stop worrying is to pray for help and to trust in the love and care of God.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1615.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows Jesus pointing to the crows. Image 2 shows someone worrying about food. Image 3 shows Jesus teaching about a crow that God is feeding. Image 4 shows Jesus telling the disciples that people are worth even more than crows to God.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****Goodbye Worries**

- Write the word *worry* on the board, and ask the children to name some things they and other people worry about.
- Invite them to write the word *worry* on a piece of paper.
- Tell them that you would like them to imagine that the piece of paper is one of their biggest worries. Tell them that they don't need to share what that is with others.
- Move a wastebasket or a box to a part of the room, and tell the children that they are going to practice throwing their worry away.
- Explain that when you say "Go," they will crumple their worry paper. Tell them that they can then throw their worry away by trying to "make a basket" in the wastebasket or box. Point out that they can stand, but they will try to make the basket from wherever they are without moving around or getting closer to the basket.
- Tell them that as they throw their paper, they should say, "I trust in God."
- Count down and then say, "Go." If a child's paper does not make it into the basket, invite them to come forward, take any crumpled piece of paper (they will likely not be able to find their own), and try again. Remind them to say, "I trust in God," for every chance they take.
- Continue the activity until all of the papers are in the wastebasket or box.

Process the Activity

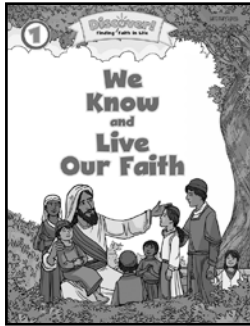
- Invite the children to share how the activity of throwing their worries away made them feel.
- Explain to them that it is not always so easy to let go of our worries and to trust God, but it is helpful to remember that God cares for us and all people equally and he doesn't want us to worry.

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 117 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that in the Scripture story, Jesus tells us to not worry about things and that even the birds are taken care of.
- Ask the children to name ways they know that God takes care of us always.
- Ask the children the following questions:
 - Can you make a thunderstorm go away by worrying about it?
 - Can you make an illness disappear by worrying about it?
 - Can you make a test easier at school by worrying about it?
- Share with the children that often when we worry, we think we cannot handle the situation all by ourselves, or we don't know how the situation will work out in the end.
- Teach why we can trust God to help us, using the following statements:
 - God is always with us, and he knows that we cannot do everything on our own. He knows what is best for us. He provides friends, family, teachers, and others every day to help us.
 - He loves us so much and does not want us to feel alone when we do things, so we should invite him into our daily activities.
 - Praying every day helps us remember that God is there with us, and we can call upon him to help us.
 - We can trust that God will help us get through the hard things.
 - We can trust God because he loves us, takes care of us, knows what we need, and wants to be with us.
 - God cares for all of his children equally; therefore, we should treat everyone with the same care and respect that God has for them. *(You may want to briefly mention that caring for and respecting others does not mean that they can treat us badly. If we are experiencing bullying or mistreatment, we should tell a trusted adult.)*
- Share an experience with the group about a time you were worried about something but trusted in God.
- Explain how trusting helps us feel calm and allows us to know we are being taken care of. Tell the children that often God helps us handle our problems or difficulties even better than we could have imagined.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Can worrying about anything help things to be better? *(no)*
 - When we worry, what do we often think? *(that we cannot do it on our own, or we do not how it will be in the end)*
 - What ways can trusting in God help us? *(makes us feel calm again, helps us know we are taken care of)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. Explain how to complete a dot-to-dot for those children who do not know. *Answer: The dot-to-dot spells the word TRUST.*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Mother Théodore Guérin, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Mother Théodore, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The activity on page 15 of the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource corresponds to concepts introduced in this lesson.

Invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus knows that we worry.
 - God cares for us and for all people.
 - Trusting in God is the way to fight against worry.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 9 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Tell the group that you will read a prayer and that they should respond to each statement by saying, "God, we trust in you."

Leader: When things are hard,

All: God, we trust in you.

Leader: When we are not sure what will happen,

All: God, we trust in you.

Leader: When we feel alone or afraid,

All: God, we trust in you.

Leader: When we worry,

All: God, we trust in you.

Leader: Jesus, you love us so much. Thank you for taking care of us and reminding us not to worry about anything. Help us to trust in God throughout our day.

- Invite the children to say "Amen," and close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a large paper cross or an actual cross
- sticky notes, one for each child

Lay It Down (15 minutes)

- Explain that we know Jesus knows that we worry and what we worry about.
- Teach that one prayer action we can do is to lay down our worries at the cross and ask Jesus to help us.
- Prepare ahead of time a large cross from paper, or bring an actual large cross.
- Give each child a sticky note and tell them to write on it the one main thing they worry about.
- Invite the children to come forward to lay their worries on the cross, to let them go and let God have control of them.
- Encourage the children to say out loud, "Jesus, I lay down my worry, and I trust in you!" as they place their worries on the cross.
- Conclude the activity with praying the following prayer for the children:
 - Jesus, we know how much you love us and how you understand that we worry. We trust God to take care of all the worries we just lay down as well as the other worries still in our heart. Amen.

Materials Needed

- four small cups and a plastic spoon
- baking soda, water, and grape juice
- a piece of paper
- two paint brushes

Invisible or Not? (15 minutes)

- Gather all the materials listed. Fill one cup with baking soda, one with water, and one grape juice.
- Ask the children to gather around and watch you lead this activity.
- Use the last cup to combine four spoonfuls of baking soda with four spoonfuls of water, mixing it well, to create "invisible ink."
- Use a paint brush to write "Don't worry!" on the paper with the invisible ink.
- Allow the writing to dry slightly, and then use the other paint brush to paint over the writing with the grape juice. Encourage the children to notice that what was invisible is now visible.
- Tell them that the writing was there the whole time even though they couldn't see it. Explain that this can be similar to trusting that God is there always even though we can't see him with our eyes.
- Remind the children that when we remember to give our worries over to God, something that seemed so hard to see and to understand is made clear with his help.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- one slip of paper for each child
- markers or crayons

Watch It in Action (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Changing Worry to Trust | Children's Ministry Magazine" (YouTube, 1:59).
- Give the children their own slip of paper and guide them in doing the activity from the video.
- Distribute the markers or crayons, and have the children write *worry* under the sad-face picture and *trust* under the happy-face picture.
- Discuss how the activity shows how when we give our worries over to God, we can be happy again.

Chapter

10

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray




**Chapter
10**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 6:9–13

Lesson Goals

- to review the meaning of prayer as talking to and listening to God
- to identify that Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer
- to name the meaning of the different parts of the Lord's Prayer

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

2759–2865

Key Words

will, Evil One, communicate, hallowed, trespasses, temptation

Music Suggestions

- "God Is Listening," by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)
- "Our Father," by The Rennas (Avilarose, Inc.)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 10 activity booklet
- a newspaper, a notebook, a cell phone, a book, a greeting card, a picture of a computer, and a picture of a television
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Communication is an essential part of being human. It enables us to stay connected, to know what is going on, and to learn from one another. God gave us the gift of communication to remain close and in touch with him. Prayer is the method by which we can communicate with God.

During the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spent time teaching the disciples many things. One of them was about how we should pray. He shared the words of the Our Father, also known as the Lord's Prayer. He gave us the perfect prayer to help us grow in our ability to communicate with God.

Make time to grow in your commitment to prayer so you can be a living witness to the children. Pray the Lord's Prayer today with renewed intentionality to communicate daily with God.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 10 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Place on the table the following items: a newspaper, a notebook, a cell phone, a book, a greeting card, a picture of a computer, and a picture of a television.
- Ask the children the following questions and invite them to look at the items on the table to help them answer:
 - If we wanted to learn about something that happened in the news, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If we needed to write down something we learned about, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If we needed to share with somebody what happened today, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If we wanted to share our love with someone in a special way, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If we needed to learn something new and needed to look it up, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If we wanted to have some fun and watch something that made us laugh, what would we use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
 - If you wanted to enjoy the company of a good friend, what would you use? *(Accept all reasonable responses.)*
- Tell the children that these items have one thing in common. Explain that they are all ways we **communicate**, which means talking with and listening to others. Point out that communication is a way we stay connected with other people.
- State that today the lesson will focus on how we communicate with God through a prayer that Jesus taught us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Matthew 6:5–13 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1459). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1460. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.

- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1460–1461 and describe what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1460.
- Ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who taught us to pray using these words? (*Jesus*)
 - What name do we call God when we start the prayer? (*Our Father*)
 - What do we ask God to give us today? (*food we need*)
 - What do we ask God not to bring to us? (*hard testing*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Help them identify what the picture is showing and what the answer might be to finish the sentence. Write the word on the board to help them write it in on the line. *Answer: pray*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1461, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The Lord’s Prayer is a special prayer because Jesus taught it.
 - In this prayer, we call God *Father*, just as Jesus did. God is our Father because he made us and loves us.
 - The Lord’s Prayer is so important that we say it at every Mass.
- Tell the children that they will also hear the Lord’s Prayer called by another name. Ask them if they know what that other name is. If no one knows, tell them that it is also called the Our Father.

Live It!

- Read the Lord’s Prayer together with the class line-by-line to give them time to reflect on this wording of the prayer. Explain that the text in the Scripture passage is a little bit different, but it is the same prayer.
- Discuss with the children to help them understand the following words:
 - *Art* is another word for *are*.
 - *Thy* is another word for *your*.
 - **Hallowed** means “holy and greatly respected.”
 - **Trespasses** are sins or wrongs we have done.
 - **Temptation** is a desire to do something wrong.
- Explain that Jesus taught this prayer to his followers. Remind the children that we are Jesus’ followers today.
- Remind them that this is an important prayer and that we should learn it by heart.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1461.
- Invite volunteers to share what they see in the images and how the images might be related to the Lord's Prayer. (*Image 1 shows a girl praying the Our Father. Image 2 shows the part of the prayer "on earth as it is in heaven." Image 3 shows the part of the prayer "Give us the food we need." Image 4 shows the part of the prayer "Forgive us . . . as we forgive others."*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****Act It Out**

- Tell the children that they are going to act out the different parts of the Lord's Prayer with various hand motions. Walk through the different motions with them one at a time. When they understand the motions for each part, say the whole prayer together.
 - "Our Father, who art in Heaven"—Tell them to give themselves a hug like a loving Father would do.
 - "hallowed be thy name"—Tell them to bow their heads to honor God's name.
 - "thy kingdom come"—Tell them to touch their fingertips together with both hands to make a circle and then to move their hands to the top of their head to make a crown.
 - "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—Tell them to draw a circle in front of them in the air with their finger to remind us of Earth and then point to the sky for Heaven.
 - "Give us this day our daily bread"—Have them place their hands in front of them, cupping them together to be ready to receive.
 - "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"—Tell them to hold their hand over their heart and to bow their head as if asking for forgiveness.
 - "and lead us not into temptation"—Have them cross their arms in front of themselves to say no to sin.
 - "but deliver us from evil"—Have them hold their hand out in front of themselves as a shield.
 - "Amen"—Have them bring their hands down, fold them together at the waist, and bow their heads to finish the prayer. Explain that "Amen" means "So be it" or "Let it be."

Process the Activity

- Assure the children that they will learn this prayer the more that they say it. If they have difficulty with the words, encourage them, for now, to focus on the motions.
- Tell the children that these hand motions can help them remember the words of the Our Father and the meaning of the prayer that Jesus taught us.

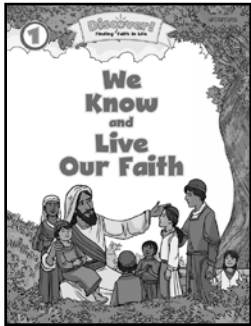
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 125–126 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Ask the children to share how we talk and listen to God. (*prayer*)
- Remind the group that prayer is our way to talk and listen to God in a special way. Point out that we cannot call God on the phone, but we can communicate with him in our heart and words through prayer.
- Share with the children that God loves to hear us talk to him, and he is always ready to listen. Tell them that we should take time every day to communicate with God like we would with a good friend or others who we love.
- Discuss the different parts of the Our Father, using the following possible statements:
 - The Lord’s Prayer, or the Our Father, has two important parts to it. The first part is about honoring God because of who he is. The second part is about asking for God’s help in our lives.
 - The Lord’s Prayer starts with Jesus teaching us to call God “Our Father” because God loves us like his own children.
 - The prayer continues, stating that we know that God’s name is holy and that we must do everything we can to honor his name with our words and actions.
 - Jesus teaches us to pray that God’s Kingdom comes, which means that we ask for goodness, peace, and love for everyone.
 - Next Jesus tells us to pray that God’s will, or his desire, for our lives be done. We need to be open to how God is leading us, because he has a plan for us here on Earth and a plan for us to live with him in Heaven.
 - We then ask God to help us with all of our needs. The prayer says “daily bread,” but it is really asking God for all of our daily needs, including food.
 - Next we ask God to forgive us and we say that we will forgive others.
 - Because temptation takes us away from the good God has for us, we need to pray that God will help us avoid temptations.
 - God is powerful, and so the last request is that he will deliver, or remove, us from the evil that hurts our relationship with him.

- Remind the children that the more they say this prayer, the easier it will be to remember by heart. Encourage them to say the prayer with their family each night, and remind them that the words to the prayer are in their Bibles (pages 1461 and 1990).
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension:
 - What two main things does the Our Father focus on? (*honoring God and asking him for help*)
 - Can you remember any part of the prayer and what its meaning is in your own words? (*Accept all reasonable responses.*)
 - Why it is important to learn the Lord's prayer by heart? (*It is a prayer that Jesus taught us to pray; we pray this at every Mass.*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Teresa of Ávila, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Teresa, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Prayer Is Talking to God" + activity, pages 48–49
- "Prayer Is Listening to God" + activity, pages 50–51
- "We Pray the Prayer That Jesus Taught," page 54

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin an activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Prayer is talking to and listening to God.
 - Jesus taught us the Lord's Prayer.
 - The Lord's Prayer has two parts: honoring God and asking for God's help.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 10 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Have the children turn to the Catholic Prayers section on page 1990 and follow along there. Point out that this is an easy place for them to later look when they want to see the words for the Our Father prayer.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray the Lord's Prayer together slowly one line at a time, or have the children repeat each line after you.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- numbered pieces of paper with the phrases of the Our Father written on them

Put It in Order (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time the words of the Our Father, broken up into different phrases. Have each phrase of the prayer on a different piece of paper. Number the pieces of paper to match the order of the prayer.
- Read the parts of the prayer on the pieces of paper and hand each paper to one child.
- Invite the children to stand, one-by-one, as you read the prayer (for example, the child with the number 1 on his or her piece of paper will stand first and you will read "Our Father, who art in Heaven." Then the child with the number 2 will stand and you will read that piece of paper.)
- Encourage the children to read along or say the prayer with you as they can remember it.
- Invite the children with pieces of paper to give their papers to other children when the first round is over.
- Begin again and say the prayer together, having the children stand as their part of the prayer is read.

Materials Needed

- precut elastic stretchy jewelry cord or string for each student
- seven color-specific beads sorted into plastic baggies, one for each child
- prepared color key for each child

Lord's Prayer Bracelet (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time cut lengths of cord or string for each bracelet, and knot one end of each string so they are ready to hold the beads in place. Sort out the specific color beads listed below, and place those in a small plastic bag with the prepared string, one bag for each child.
- Create a small color key for each child with the following wording, to help the children understand the meaning of each colored bead on their Our Father bracelet. Place the color keys in the baggies with the beads and string.
 - Blue reminds us of Our Father in Heaven.
 - White reminds us of God's holy name that we honor.
 - Gold reminds us of God's kingdom of peace and love.
 - Green reminds us of the Earth where his will is done.
 - Yellow reminds us of the food that God gives us.
 - Red reminds us of Jesus who forgives us when we forgive others.
 - Black remind us of the temptations and evil that God keeps us safe from.
- Give the children their baggie, and explain that they will assemble their Our Father bracelets in the order of the printout.
- Assist any child who has trouble threading the beads or understanding the order.
- Help tie the bracelets around the childrens' wrists with plenty of room to spare so they can take them off later.
- Encourage the children to put their bracelet near their bed when they are not using it to remind them to pray the Our Father every day.

Materials Needed

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

Remember Jesus' Teaching (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Animated Bible Story of The Lord's Prayer On DVD" (YouTube, 2:14).
- Ask volunteers to share what they saw and heard in the video.
- Remind the children that prayer is talking and listening to God and that we should pray to God each day.
- Tell them that the Lord's Prayer is one way we can pray to God each day.
- Distribute the paper and markers or crayons, and invite the children to draw a picture of themselves praying. Then encourage them to take this picture home and hang it in a place where they will see it each day. Explain that this will be a reminder for them to pray.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 3

Jesus Teaches Us

Chapter 11

Jesus Teaches about the Kingdom . . . 128

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Chapter

11

Jesus Teaches about the Kingdom




 Chapter
11

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 13:44–46

Lesson Goals

- to explain that Jesus teaches us about the importance of the Kingdom of Heaven
- to define the Kingdom of Heaven as wherever God rules over people's hearts
- to state the ways in which we can help the Kingdom of Heaven to come

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

541–570, 763–769, 2046

Key Words

Kingdom of heaven, parables, valuable

Music Suggestions

- “The Kingdom of God (Matt 6:13b),” by Janie Owens Collins (Fairhill Music, Inc.)
- “King of Majesty (Live),” by Hillsong Kids (Hillsong Church T/A Hillsong Music Australia)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 11 activity booklet
- three plastic cups and one coin for every three or four children
- a board or poster to write on
- several coins (plastic or real)
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Jesus teaches us that there is something far more valuable than any treasure ever found here on Earth. It is the Kingdom of God. In the Gospel of Matthew, we read two stories, known as parables, that Jesus used to teach about this Kingdom. In these parables, one man finds a treasure hidden in a field and another man a pearl of great value. Both men see the importance of their treasure so much so that they are willing to sell everything to have it.

Jesus wants us to see God's Kingdom with the same desire and excitement. His parables teach us to see God's Kingdom as greater than any other treasure. He shows us that we must be ready to do anything needed to help God's Kingdom come.

As you help the children develop an initial understanding of God's Kingdom, take time to reflect on what you value most. Pray that Jesus will teach you to treasure God's Kingdom by seeking ways to bring it forth into the world every day.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 11 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Have the children form groups of three or four. Distribute three plastic cups and a coin to each group.
- Show them how to place a coin under an upside-down cup and then move the cups around to mix up where the cup with the coin is.
- Tell the children they need to find the coin under the correct cup. Tell them to take turns so everyone gets a chance to hide the coin under a cup and to guess where it is.
- Invite them to share how exciting it was to find the coin. Explain that today’s Scripture will be a story Jesus told about two different men who find something that they are excited about.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Matthew 13:44–46 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1478). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1480. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1480–1481 and invite them to share what they see.
- Point out the bold key word, and read the definition to the children.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story, and then the verses on page 1480. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who told the stories of the two men in this Scripture story? (*Jesus*)
 - What is the Kingdom of Heaven? (*wherever God rules over people’s hearts*)
 - What did the first man in the story find in the field? (*a hidden treasure*)
 - What does he do to buy the field where the treasure is? (*sells everything and buys the field*)

- What does the second man in the story find? (*an unusually fine pearl*)
- What does he do to get the pearl? (*sells everything to buy the pearl*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1481, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Invite the children to answer the opening questions in this section.
- Point out again the definition on the bottom of page 1480, and explain that the Kingdom of Heaven is wherever people are trying to live out God's call to love and forgive.
- Explain that the following terms are all ways to say Kingdom of Heaven: *Kingdom of God, God's Kingdom, and Reign of God.*
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Treasure is something we want so much that we give up many things to get it.
 - God's Kingdom is the most valuable treasure and worth so much more than a treasure chest or a costly pearl.
 - We should be ready to work and give up time to help God's Kingdom come.
 - God's Kingdom gives us eternal happiness and love in Heaven.
- Tell the children that Jesus taught the disciples, and us, through stories, which are called **parables**. Explain that parables are stories Jesus told to teach a lesson.

Live It!

- Invite the children to share what their greatest treasures are, and write some of these on the board or in a place the children can see.
- Read the Live It! aloud to the group on page 1481. Explain that the word **valuable** means "expensive" or "important."
- Ask the children to think about how they would finish the sentence naming something very valuable to them.
- Tell them that they might wish to make a poster at home with their family to remind themselves that the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than any of the others things we might treasure.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1481.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows the man finding the hidden treasure. Image 2 shows the man going back to buy the field where he found the treasure after he sells all his things. Image 3 shows the man who found the pearl and buys it after he sold all his things too.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Treasure Hunt

- Prepare in advance by hiding several coins (real or plastic) throughout the room in places where they can easily be found.
- Explain to the children that there is hidden treasure in the room today. Tell them that there are coins placed throughout the room, but they are in plain sight. Explain that they do not need to move anything in order to find the coins; they just need to look around.
- Tell the group that as soon as they find a coin, they should take it and sit down. Explain that this will allow others to have the chance to find a coin.
- Tell the children how many coins are hidden, and signal them to begin the search. As children find the coins, remind them how many are left to be found.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children if they were excited to be looking for this treasure, and invite those children who located a coin to share how they felt to find it.
- State that Jesus wants us to have even more excitement and desire for the Kingdom of Heaven than we do for other things we might call treasure.

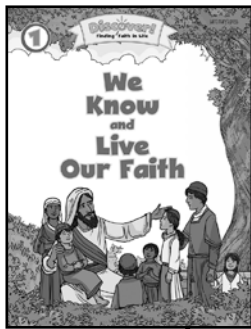
Additional Activity Options

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 135 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children of some of the valuable things they named in the Live It! activity.
- Recall that Jesus wants us to know that God's Kingdom is more important and worth so much more than any other kind of treasure.
- Help them understand more about the Kingdom of Heaven by sharing the following points:
 - When you think of a kingdom, you might be thinking about a king that rules over his kingdom. Good kings make plans to keep their people safe and protect them from danger. Kings want their people to be happy and live in peace.
 - God is our King. As our King, God wants us to follow him so we can have lasting happiness.

- The Kingdom of Heaven is wherever people are trying to live out God’s call to love and forgiveness so that we can all be part of God’s Kingdom.
- God’s Kingdom is one of great joy and love that makes us happy for all time in Heaven. We are called to work at building God’s Kingdom here on Earth.
- Remind the children that they learned about the Our Father prayer in the last lesson. Point out the part of the prayer in which we pray for God’s Kingdom to come.
- Discuss ways we can help God’s Kingdom to come. *(Possible answers might include: pray, learn about God, stay close to Jesus, make choices that show our love for God, love others, follow God’s commands, and share with others about God’s love.)*
- Remind the children that the men in the parables were willing to give up everything they had in order to gain the treasure they were seeking. Discuss what we might need to give up in order to work toward the Kingdom of God. *(Possible answers might include: give up always getting what we want, give our time and focus to helping others, give away gently used toys and clothing, and give time for Mass on Sunday and prayer time.)*
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - In these two parables, what was Jesus telling us? *(The Kingdom of Heaven is greater than any treasure.)*
 - What is the Kingdom of Heaven? *(It is wherever people are trying to live out God’s call to love and forgiveness.)*
 - Will we have to do something to be part of God’s Kingdom? *(yes)*
 - Will we have to give anything up for God’s Kingdom? *(yes)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: All boxes should be checked.*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “We Pray the Prayer That Jesus Taught,” page 54 (second paragraph)

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up



- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus teaches us about the importance of the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - The Kingdom of Heaven is wherever God rules over people's hearts.
 - There are many ways in which we can help the Kingdom of Heaven to come.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 11 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer after you:
 - Dear God, we love you
 - and want to be happy with you forever.
 - May we help
 - the Kingdom of Heaven to come
 - in every action we do
 - and every word we say.
- Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with the Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- three envelopes labeled “TREASURE” with coins (plastic or real) inside

Treasure Hunt (15 minutes)

- Prepare in advance by hiding three envelopes with “TREASURE” written on them throughout the room (e.g., taped under a desk, on a shelf, in a book). Place coins (plastic or real) in the envelopes and seal them closed.
- Explain to the children that there are three different treasures hidden in the room in envelopes. Tell them that you will select three volunteers to go, one-by-one, around the room. Explain that you will guide them by saying “hot,” “warm,” or “cold.” Tell them that “hot” means they are very close to one of the treasures, “warm” means that they are somewhat close, and “cold” means they aren’t very close at all.
- Invite the first volunteer to come to the front of the room to begin. Encourage the volunteer to start walking, and use the signals to help direct her or him to one of the treasures. As soon as one of the treasures is found, select another volunteer, and continue until all three treasures are located.
- Encourage the children to connect with the excitement of looking for and finding the treasure. Remind them that there are many things that we consider to be treasures in our life and that Jesus’ parables tell us that greater than any of those things is God’s Kingdom, wherever people are trying to live out God’s call to love and forgiveness.

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers or crayons
- preprinted stickers from mailing labels

Most Valuable (15 minutes)

- Give the children blank paper and markers or crayons. Instruct them to draw on their paper something they treasure or like very much.
- Give each child a set of three preprinted stickers that you have made. Each sticker should have one of the following statements on it:
 - I love Jesus more!
 - God’s Kingdom is more special!
 - God rules over my heart!
- Tell the children to trace over the words on the labels with their favorite color and then place the stickers over their drawing of their favorite thing to remind them how much more important God’s Kingdom is to them than even their favorite thing.

Materials Needed

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

What’s It Worth to You? (15 minutes)

- Watch the video “Finding Treasure” (YouTube, 2:48), published by Dust and Rags Media.
- Discuss with the children what happened in this video and how it relates to one of the parables that Jesus taught.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons, and invite the children to draw a picture that reminds them of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure or the Parable of the Pearl.
- Ask the children what things they need to give up today to live close to Jesus and bring about God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Chapter

12

We Celebrate Together at Mass




**Chapter
12**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 14:22–24

Lesson Goals

- to review that Jesus gave us his Body and Blood at the Last Supper
- to state that at every Mass Jesus gives himself to us as he did at the Last Supper
- to explain that ordinary bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ at every Mass

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

1322–1419

Key Words

disciple, covenant, miracle, communal

Music Suggestions

- “Bread of Life,” by Catholic Kids Worship (Catapult)
- “My God, I Believe,” by Foxhoven Family Singers Kids (Foxhoven Family Singers)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 12 activity booklet
- a long tablecloth or piece of fabric, a paper cutout of a round piece of bread, and a paper cutout of a chalice or glass of wine
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

At the Last Supper, Jesus shared with his disciples the most amazing gift—the gift of his very Body and Blood, given to them to take and eat in the form of bread and wine. Jesus knew that his hour of death was coming and that he would soon be raised from the dead. He gave his disciples a way that they could be made more like him by receiving him into their very bodies.

This chapter teaches that what Jesus shared at the Last Supper is really and truly his Body and Blood given for us, not just a symbol. We receive this gift each time we receive Holy Communion. As you help the children to develop their understanding of the Eucharist, take time to pray that you might continue to grow in recognition of this amazing gift yourself.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 12 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Recall times when your family shares special meals, and discuss the following:
 - When do we have special meals in our family? (Thanksgiving, Christmas, birthdays, Mother’s Day or Father’s Day, etc. as applicable)
 - Can you think of some special foods we have at those special meals? (Turkey on Thanksgiving, birthday cake on birthdays, etc. as applicable.)
 - Why do you think these meals are special? (We all celebrate together, perhaps more family members and friends come, we have food we don’t have all the time, we take time to visit with one another and share ourselves and our lives with one another.)
- Tell the children that today they will learn about a time when Jesus and his followers shared a special meal. Explain that this is an important story that helps us understand the wonderful gift of the Eucharist.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Mark 14:12–26 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1559 and 1562). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1560. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on these pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1560–1561 and encourage them to share what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and then the verses on page 1560.
- Point out the bold key words and share the definitions with the children.

- Ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who was Jesus eating supper with? (*his disciples or close followers*)
 - What did Jesus do with the bread? (*gave thanks for it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples*)
 - What did he say to his disciples about the bread? (*Take it. . . . This is my body.*)
 - What did Jesus do with the cup? (*gave thanks to God and handed it to his disciples*)
 - What did he say that the wine was? (*This is my blood.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Help them as needed. *Answers: bread, body, cup, blood*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1561, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Explain that the bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Jesus are also called the Eucharist or Holy Communion.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Jesus wants to be so close to us that before he left this Earth, he gave us the gift of the Eucharist so he could remain always with us.
 - At every Mass, the power of the Holy Spirit makes the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus, just like at the Last Supper.
 - The bread and wine truly become Jesus.
 - When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we are receiving him into our hearts, so we get closer to him and to one another.
 - His Body and Blood give us strength to follow him and be more like him.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1561, or have a volunteer read it.
- Discuss with the children that next year they will prepare to receive Jesus' Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
- Tell them that until they celebrate their First Eucharist, they can say a silent prayer while everyone else at Mass is receiving Holy Communion. Explain that they can simply say: "Thank you, Jesus. I look forward to my First Eucharist."
- Explain that they can write a longer prayer at home with their family if they would like. Tell them that their family can follow the directions in the Live It! on this page.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1561.
- Invite volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows Jesus taking a piece of bread. Image 2 shows Jesus breaking the bread and sharing it with his disciples. Image 3 shows Jesus taking a cup. Image 4 shows Jesus handing the cup to his disciples.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Reenact the Last Supper

- Prepare in advance a paper cutout of a round piece of bread (like pita bread) and a paper cutout of a chalice or cup of wine.
- Lay the tablecloth or fabric on the floor, and invite the children to gather around the edges, like the disciples at the Last Supper.
- Select a volunteer to be Jesus and give this child the paper cutout of the bread and the wine.
- Read the Scripture passage aloud, and stop to have the volunteer reenact the motions and words of Jesus. Have the child repeat the words of Jesus after you, and then pass the bread and wine around the group of children for them to pretend to eat and drink.
- Select other volunteers, as time allows, to play the role of Jesus and repeat the Scripture passage.

Process the Activity

- Explain to the children that today they just pretended to be at the Last Supper, acting like Jesus and his disciples.
- Explain that at Mass, we do not pretend. We share bread and wine as Jesus and the disciples did at the Last Supper. Emphasize that at Mass, in a special way, Jesus truly *becomes present* in the bread and wine.

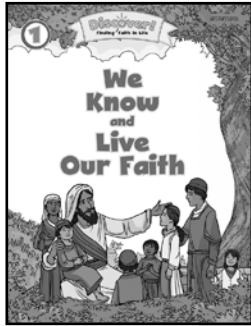
Additional Activity Options

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 143 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Teach the children about the Last Supper and how it is the first Mass, using the following suggested points:
 - At the Last Supper, Jesus brought his followers together to celebrate a special meal. It is a meal we continue to celebrate today at Mass.
 - At the Last Supper, Jesus used his words and actions to change ordinary bread and wine into his Body and Blood.
 - At every Mass, Jesus gives himself to us as he did at the Last Supper in what we call a **miracle**, or something amazing or wonderful that only God can do. This miracle takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit, and through the words and actions of the priest that are the same words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper.

- Tell the children that bread and wine becoming the Body and Blood of Christ may sound confusing. Explain to them that this is a mystery, or something we cannot fully understand. Explain that although we cannot fully understand this, we believe it because Jesus said that this is what he wanted us to do. Remind the children that this can happen through the words of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit only.
- Share that we believe that the Body and Blood of Christ is a real gift and one that will change us to become more loving, like Jesus.
- Continue by sharing the following points:
 - Jesus wanted this gift of his Body and Blood to be celebrated in a **communal** gathering. *Communal* means “shared by a group of people.”
 - The Mass is a celebration of the gift of Jesus. It is a time and place to come together to worship him, to be united with him, to receive together the gifts of God, and to support each other as a Church family.
 - Mass can be celebrated by a priest only, and so families must gather together with the priest, usually in our parish church, to receive this amazing gift from Jesus.
- Discuss with the children some basic ways they can celebrate the Mass with love and respect for Jesus, using the following points:
 - At Mass, we need to listen, pray, and pay attention to what is going on.
 - We need to come to Mass every Sunday (or Saturday evening) to worship together with our Church family because it is what Jesus wants us to do.
 - Just as we eat food three times a day for strength, we come to Mass at least once a week to gain strength for our lives from the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Is the Last Supper the first Mass that Jesus shared? *(yes)*
 - At Mass, what do the ordinary bread and wine become? *(Jesus’ Body and Blood)*
 - When we do not fully understand something, what do we call it? *(a mystery)*
 - What are some ways we can celebrate the Mass together to honor Jesus’ gift to us? *(listen, pray, pay attention, come every Sunday)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet. Read the statements to the children and help them determine whether a check mark should be placed. *Answers: All the boxes should be checked.*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint John Vianney, and encourage the children to say, “Saint John Vianney, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activities in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “We Pray Together” + activity, pages 52–53
- “Sunday” and “The Mass” + activity, pages 20–23
- “The Eucharist,” page 28

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin an activity, or have them complete the activities with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus gave us his Body and Blood at the Last Supper.
 - At every Mass, Jesus gives himself to us as he did at the Last Supper.
 - Ordinary bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ at every Mass.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 12 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray the prayer on page 4 of the activity booklet.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a prepared list of statements for the game
- a poster that says “We Celebrate Jesus at Mass”

Celebrate and Jump Ahead (15 minutes)

- Line the children up on one side of the room. Instruct them that they are going to play a game where they will advance forward by jumping one small jump forward when they hear something that will help them to celebrate Jesus more at Mass. Explain that the goal is to get across the room to the “We Celebrate Jesus at Mass” poster before the end of the game. However, when they hear something that would not help them celebrate at Mass, they have to stay in place.
- Some suggested jump statements include: *listen to the readings from the Bible, pray the prayers, sing the songs, focus on Jesus, read the Sunday reading ahead of time, learn a new Mass prayer.*
- Some suggested stay-in-place statements include: *play around at Church, complain about going, don’t listen, don’t say the prayers, make noises, fight with your siblings.*
- Remind the children that there is a certain way to act for any special event and that this is also true for Mass. Share that the more that we learn about the Mass the more we can enter into the celebration of Jesus and his gift of the Eucharist.

Materials Needed

- copies of clipart images, one for each child
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

The Body and Blood of Christ (15 minutes)

- Ahead of time, find some online, age-appropriate, black-and-white clipart images of a chalice and host. This can be done by typing “First Eucharist Clipart” into a search browser and finding images.
- Print out these images, distribute the markers or crayons, and invite the children to color the images. Consider playing some music that focuses on the Eucharist while they are coloring.
- Write “The Body and Blood of Christ” on the board or in a place where the children can see.
- Invite the children to copy the words down on their coloring pages.
- Encourage the children to take their pictures home and put them somewhere to remind their family of the importance of the Eucharist in our lives.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- printed lyrics of the song to help discuss the meaning of the letters

Eucharist Song (15 minutes)

- Show the video “The E-U-C-H-A-R-I-S-T Song” (YouTube, 2:53).
- Search the internet for “The E-U-C-H-A-R-I-S-T Song lyrics” for the easiest reference to all the aspects discussed in the song.
- Ask the children if they can remember any of the things that each letter of the song stands for, and discuss what the Eucharist means to them.

Chapter

13

We Live God's Word




**Chapter
13**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 4:16–20

Lesson Goals

- to state that we learn about God's message through the Bible and the Church
- to discuss what it means to open our hearts to receive God's message
- to explain that we are called to listen to God's message and to act on it

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

74–141, 1100–1101

Key Words

persecution, sown, bear, Word of God

Music Suggestions

- "Thy Word," by Cedarmonk Kids (Cedarmonk Music, LLC)
- "I'm Gonna Hide God's Word Inside My Heart," by Marantha! Kids' Praise! Company (Marantha! Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 13 activity booklet
- three bowls, a sponge, a rock, several handfuls of toothpicks, a cup of water
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Each chapter of this program is rooted in God's Word. The children have been encountering Scripture in each lesson and are encouraged and challenged to find meaning in their lives today as young Christians.

We hear Scripture each Sunday and may spend additional time in prayer, reflection, and study with God's Word. But we know that hearing and reading God's Word is not enough. We must open our hearts to receive it and then live it. That is the lesson in today's reading, which is the Parable of the Sower in the Gospel of Mark. This parable challenges us to properly prepare our hearts as "good soil," so that God's Word can take root, grow, and flourish.

As you help the children to develop their understanding of the Bible and God's message, take some extra time with God's Word so it can continue to bear fruit in your life.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 13 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Discuss with the children the various ways stories can be made and shared—written in a book, shared between friends or families, or passed down from older generations to younger generations.
- Share with the children a favorite story you have, and explain to them why it is one of your favorite stories. Keep it short as an example for the children. For example: “My favorite story is when my dad took me to see my favorite baseball team. I caught the ball, and it was a special memory for both of us.”
- Invite several volunteers to share one of their favorite stories and why it means so much to them.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Mark 4:1–20 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1532–1533). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1534. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1534–1535, and invite them to share what they see.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and the verses on page 1534.
- Discuss the bold key words with the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - How can people be like the seeds sown in the rocky ground? (*They receive the message gladly, but it does not sink in, so they give up when troubles come.*)
 - How can people be like the seeds sown in the thorn bushes? (*They let worries and desires for other things choke the message.*)
 - How can people be like the seeds sown in good soil? (*They hear the message, they accept it, and it bears fruit.*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1535, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite volunteers to summarize what they just heard, and ask the group key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Explain that Jesus' Word that is referred to in the title of this story is far more than just the words Jesus said. Teach them that the term *Word of God* refers to the Bible, the written Word of God. Share that another term for *Word of God* is *God's Word*.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - In this parable, the seed stands for God's Word, his message for us. The soil stands for our hearts, which need to be ready to receive God's message.
 - Jesus is comparing plants growing in different conditions to people allowing God's Word to grow in their hearts.
 - The people who are like seeds in the rocky soil don't let God's Word grow deep; when it gets hard to follow God, they give up.
 - The people who are like the seeds in the thorns do not have room for God's Word to grow in their hearts.
 - The people who are like good soil allow God's Word to grow strong, and their lives show how much they love God by bringing much good into the world.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1535, or have a volunteer read it.
- Provide the children with paper and crayons or markers.
- Explain that one way to allow God's Word to take root and to grow within us is to do good actions that show our love for God and others.
- Allow the children time to draw their healthy garden with the good acts next to the plants.
- Remind them that they can finish their drawing at home if they run out of time in class.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1535.
- Invite several volunteers to describe what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the seed that fell on rocky ground. Image 2 shows the seed sown among the thorn bushes. Image 3 shows the seed sown in good soil.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Soak or Not?

- Prepare ahead of time a bowl with a sponge in it, a bowl with rocks in it, and a bowl with a large pile of toothpicks in it. Fill a cup with water.
- Place the bowls on a table and have the children gather around.
- Ask the children what unique thing happens in each bowl when you add water. Discuss the following suggested points as you pour the water into each bowl in this order:
 - The rocks are hard so the water runs off and does not soak in, just like a hard heart that does not want to receive or accept God’s Word.
 - The toothpicks float and do not absorb the water. This is like hearts that choke the message and do not allow God’s Word to grow in them because other things are more important to them.
 - The sponge soaks and absorbs the water like a soft, open heart ready to receive and accept God’s Word.

Process the Activity

- Help the children to see the connection among the rocks, toothpicks, and sponge: It is important to open our hearts to receive God’s message so it can soak in.
- Explain that opening our heart to God’s Word is a way to say that we are ready to listen, to receive, to accept, and to allow God’s Word to help us become more like God.

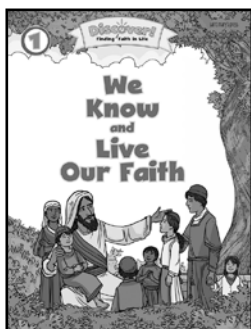
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 150–151 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Emphasize that we want to be good soil by listening to God’s Word and living it in our lives with love.
- Explain that when we open our hearts to receive and share the Good News of God’s love, our hearts are so filled with the Word of God that we cannot help but bear good fruit and share it with others.
- Ask the children if they can remember a time when they were so filled with joy and love that it was like it was bubbling out from them or overflowing so much they could not contain it. State that this experience is what God can do in our hearts when we are open and ready to receive his love—the more open we are, the more that we will have to share.

- Give the example of a glass: the bigger the glass is, the more water it can contain. When we open our hearts, not in a physical way but in a way of readiness to receive, we can grow bigger and produce more love for others.
- Share that when God's love grows in us, we bear good fruit. Explain that the good fruit can be seen in our actions—being kind, having patience, helping at all times, and doing everything with love.
- State that we learn about God's message, known as the Word of God, through the Bible and through the Church. Share with the children the following points:
 - The Bible is the written Word of God.
 - Jesus wanted his teaching about God's love to be shared over the years, so he gave special tasks to certain people in the Church (the priests, deacons, bishops, and the Pope) to share the message of God's love with others.
 - The Church helps us understand the Word of God and how to live it out.
- Teach that at the end of Mass we are sent forth to carry God's love and to bear the fruit of his Word in our hearts to others.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - How can we be good soil to receive God's Word? *(by listening and being ready to act on it)*
 - In what ways can we bear good fruit when God's Word grows in us? *(by being kind, patient, and helping, and by doing everything with love)*
 - What two places do we learn about the Word of God? *(from the Bible and the Church)*
 - At the end of Mass, what are we sent forth to do? *(carry God's love and bear the fruit of his Word to others)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: kindness, patience, helping others, sharing love*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Fiacre, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Fiacre, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "The Mass," page 21 (last paragraph)
- "We Listen to God's Word" + activity, pages 24–25

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)



Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - We learn about God's message through the Bible and the Church.
 - We open our hearts to receive God's message.
 - We are called to listen to God's message and to act on it.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 13 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 4 of the activity booklet.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible*

Act It Out (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into three groups, one group for each soil—rocks, thorns, and good soil.
- Select a volunteer to be the sower and select several volunteers to act as the seed.
- Use the following actions for the children to simulate:
 - When the seed is placed in the midst of the rocks, encourage the rocks to just stay still, but have the seed pretend to wither.
 - When the seed is placed in the thorns, invite the thorns to gently press together around the seed. Encourage the seed to then wither.
 - When the seed is placed in the good soil, invite the seed to slowly open his or her arms and grow tall.
- Read aloud Mark 4:16–20 and pause after each soil type in the passage to allow the children to act it out.

Materials Needed

- precut paper strips, one for each child
- a board or poster to write on
- markers or crayons
- several rolls of tape
- seeds, two or three for each child

Seeds to Share (15 minutes)

- Cut sheets of 8½-x-11-inch paper in half lengthwise in advance to create long strips, one strip for each child.
- Explain to the children that they should fold their strip of paper in half, bringing the top and bottom together.
- Write “Be Good Soil” on the board, and invite the children to copy the words onto one of the outside panels of their folded paper. Encourage them to decorate the outside panels with images that remind them of the Scripture story: plants, flowers, seeds, sunshine, etc.
- Tape the sides of the folded paper strips together when the children are done decorating, and tell the children that these are packets for seeds. Distribute the seeds to the children. Direct them to place the seeds into their packet and then tape the top closed.
- Discuss with the children what they should do with the seeds to plant them in good soil. Tell them that if their family cannot plant the seeds outside, they should keep the seeds in the packet to remind them to be good soil for God's Word.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

What Soil Are You? (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Kidz Church: The Parable of the Sower” (YouTube, 4:37).
- Invite volunteers to discuss what they saw in the video.
- Ask the children to get comfortable where they are seated to prepare for a quiet time during which you will be asking them to use their imagination. Tell them to close their eyes (if they are comfortable doing so). Say the following prompts to guide them:
 - Imagine yourself as the soil that seed will be planted on. *(pause)*
 - Look for any rocks in your soil that might make it hard for you to stay close to God, like when people make fun of you for loving God, when they call you names or don't want to be your friend. . . . Now imagine in your mind these rocks are no longer in your soil. *(pause)*
 - Look for any thorns that might prevent seeds from growing strong. Thorns could be such things as worrying about things, being selfish, or being mean to someone. . . . Now imagine these thorns disappearing. *(pause)*
 - Now that you have cleaned and prepared your soil, imagine how the seeds can grow into tall plants and be shared with others. *(pause)*
 - Ask Jesus to help you keep good soil in your heart so that God's Word can grow and bear fruit in your life.
- Invite the children to open their eyes and share what happened in their meditation.

Chapter
14

Welcoming Everyone





**Chapter
14**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Ephesians 4:1–6

Lesson Goals

- to state that God calls us to be kind and welcoming to all
- to identify that kindness includes gentleness and patience
- to explain that we can apologize when we are mean or we upset others

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

Solidarity

Catechism References

1928–1948, 2212–2213

Key Words

humble, tolerant, preserve, unity, apologize

Music Suggestions

- “Love One Another (feat. Denver),” by Little Praise Party & Yancy (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)
- “Do to Others (Galilee, 2007),” by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 14 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

God created humans to be one family—his family. He wants us to find ways to preserve the unity of love and heal any wounds that divide us. The more times and ways we can show kindness, the less opportunity there is for division to occur.

The kindness to which God calls his family involves being humble enough to admit that we might not know everything, gentle to those most in need of care, patient with those who frustrate us the most, and tolerant of others’ differences. These acts of kindness, though sometimes small, can at times seem very big indeed, and can cost us.

This lesson focuses on how we are called to treat one another as part of God’s family. As the children are focused on this lesson, take time to reflect on the ways you have shown kindness lately, as well as the moments when you may have declined to pay the price. Then ask Jesus to help you as you strive to be kind and welcoming to all.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 14 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Write the word *kindness* on the board, and ask the children if they know what this word means.
- Invite definitions of the word and encourage the children to share examples of kindness to others. Have them share when they have experienced kindness from others and when they have been kind to someone.
- Encourage them to share how it feels to receive kindness or to be kind to others. Tell them that today’s lesson will focus on how we, as Christians, are called to treat everyone with kindness.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Ephesians 4:1–6 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1844–1845). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1846. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1846–1847 and to point out any images that might show kindness.
- Read aloud the title of the Featured Story and the verses on page 1846.
- Discuss the bold key words with the children. Then ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What are some of the specific ways we are called to live as God wants us to? (*be humble, gentle, patient; show love by being tolerant; protect peace*)
 - What does *unity* mean? (*to be whole, one, together*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: humble, gentle, patient, love, unity*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1847, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension and allowing them to discuss the first few questions in the section.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - When someone hurts us, we are no longer one and we are not at peace. We might not want to speak to that person or be with them.
 - Peace is kept when people are kind and gentle.
 - It is hard to be kind, especially when we are sad, angry, don't feel good, don't like a person or what that person does.
 - We can work to be humble, apologize, and repair the hurt by being extra kind.
 - The Holy Spirit will help us to be kind, especially when it's hard.

Live It!

- Remind the children that we can pray to be more kind to others.
- Read the Live It! prayer on page 1847, and ask the children to pray this in their hearts.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1847.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows. (*Image 1 shows a mother showing kindness by caring for an upset child. Image 2 shows two people being kind to each other. Image 3 shows Jesus holding the whole world in his love.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Role-Play Time

- Invite the children to pair up by finding another child who is similar in height. Tell them to stand with their partner on one side of the room.
- Explain to the children that they should stand back-to-back with their partner. Tell them that when you say “go” they will walk to the other side of the room, remaining connected to their partner by their backs only.
- Tell the partners that their backs must be touching at all times. Explain that if they stop touching, they must go back to the beginning of the race to start again. Emphasize that the pairs are not to run.
- Select two or three pairs to start, and count down to begin. After the first pairs complete the race, select two of three more pairs, and continue until all of the pairs have completed the race.

Process the Activity

- Talk to the children about this game and how they had to help one another get to the other side of the room. Remind them that they couldn't have finished the race alone; they needed another person to help.
- Tell them that this game can remind us that we should always work together and be kind to one another. Explain that when we are united, even when we might be very different from one another, we can do great things.

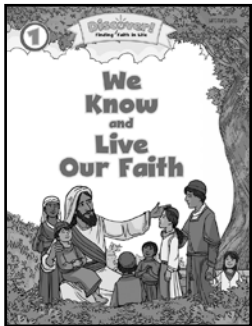
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 158–159 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Discuss how God calls us to be kind and welcoming to everyone, using the following points:
 - God made each of us, and he wants us to show love and respect to every human person. *Respect* means to treat someone with kindness.
 - No person likes to feel unwelcome, so God calls us to make others feel loved and to take time to focus on the good in others.
 - Being kind makes the person who shows kindness and the person who receives kindness feel good.
 - Kindness is especially important to those who are different from us. God created each of us to be different and unique for very special reasons, so judging or teasing people who are different does not show respect, either to God or to the person God created.
- Ask the children to share words and actions that can be used to show kindness. (*Answers might include: being gentle to others, being patient, using nice words like please and thank you, giving compliments or encouraging someone who is sad, helping someone who is in need, sharing with others, and understanding how the other person feels.*)
- Tell the children that if we forget to show kindness, we need to make things better. Share with the children the following points:
 - We can **apologize** when we are mean or have upset others and admit we did wrong. The word *apologize* means to say we're sorry.
 - We can show how we want to make things better with that person.
 - We can take time to think about how we would feel if we were the other person.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Why does God call us to be kind and welcome all? (*He wants us all to experience love and respect.*)
 - Do we need to show kindness to people different from us? (*Yes. God purposefully made them special and different so they deserve our respect.*)
 - What are some of the things we need to do if we don't show kindness to others? (*apologize, admit mistakes, show the person we want to make things better, think about how the other person feels*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet. Read the directions and the sentences to the children, helping them answer the questions as a group. *Answers: YES—parent helping child with homework; YES—parent and child hugging; YES—children helping each other; NO—child throwing recyclable bottle on the trash pile.*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta) and encourage the children to say, “Saint Mother Teresa, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “The Mass,” page 21 (last paragraph)
- “Virtue,” pages 44–45

Read aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, the selections as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - God calls us to be kind and welcoming to all.
 - Kindness to others includes gentleness and patience.
 - We can apologize when we are mean or upset others.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 14 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Invite the children to prayer the following prayer with you by repeating the lines after you:
 - Dear Jesus,
 - Help me to be kind
 - and help me to welcome
 - everyone I meet.
 - When I forget to show kindness,
 - help me to remember
 - that I can always say I’m sorry
 - and start again.
 - Amen.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Try a Little Kindness (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Sesame Street: Try a Little Kindness (with Tori Kelly)” (YouTube, 1:55).
- Invite the children to share some of the ways kindness is shown in the video. You may want to play the video several times.
- Ask the children to think of some ways we can show kindness to others. Then invite small groups to come to the front of class to role-play these scenarios. Help the children form an idea for their role-play and then ask them to act it out for the whole group.
- Continue with additional ideas until everyone has had a chance to be in a role-play.
- Remind the children that being kind is not always easy but that we can always pray to have the strength to be kind, even if difficult at times.

Materials Needed

- construction paper, one piece for each child
- medium heart cutouts, one for each child
- several glue sticks
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

Feel It, Show It, Speak It (15 minutes)

- Give each child a piece of construction paper, a cutout of a medium-sized heart. Distribute glue sticks and markers or crayons for the children to share.
- Write “Feel Kindness,” “Show Kindness,” and “Speak Kindness” on the board.
- Tell the children to write their names at the top of the paper. Then have them write “Feel Kindness” on the heart before they glue it into the center of their construction paper.
- Have them trace around their hands on each side of the heart and write “Show Kindness” under their handprints.
- Invite the children to share some kind words. Write these on the board. Then have the children select one of these words and write it on their papers. Invite them to write “Say Kindness” next to the word they have chosen.
- Explain to the children that these are three ways to be kind. Tell them that we must feel kindness in our hearts, and then we are able to show and speak kindness to others.

Materials Needed

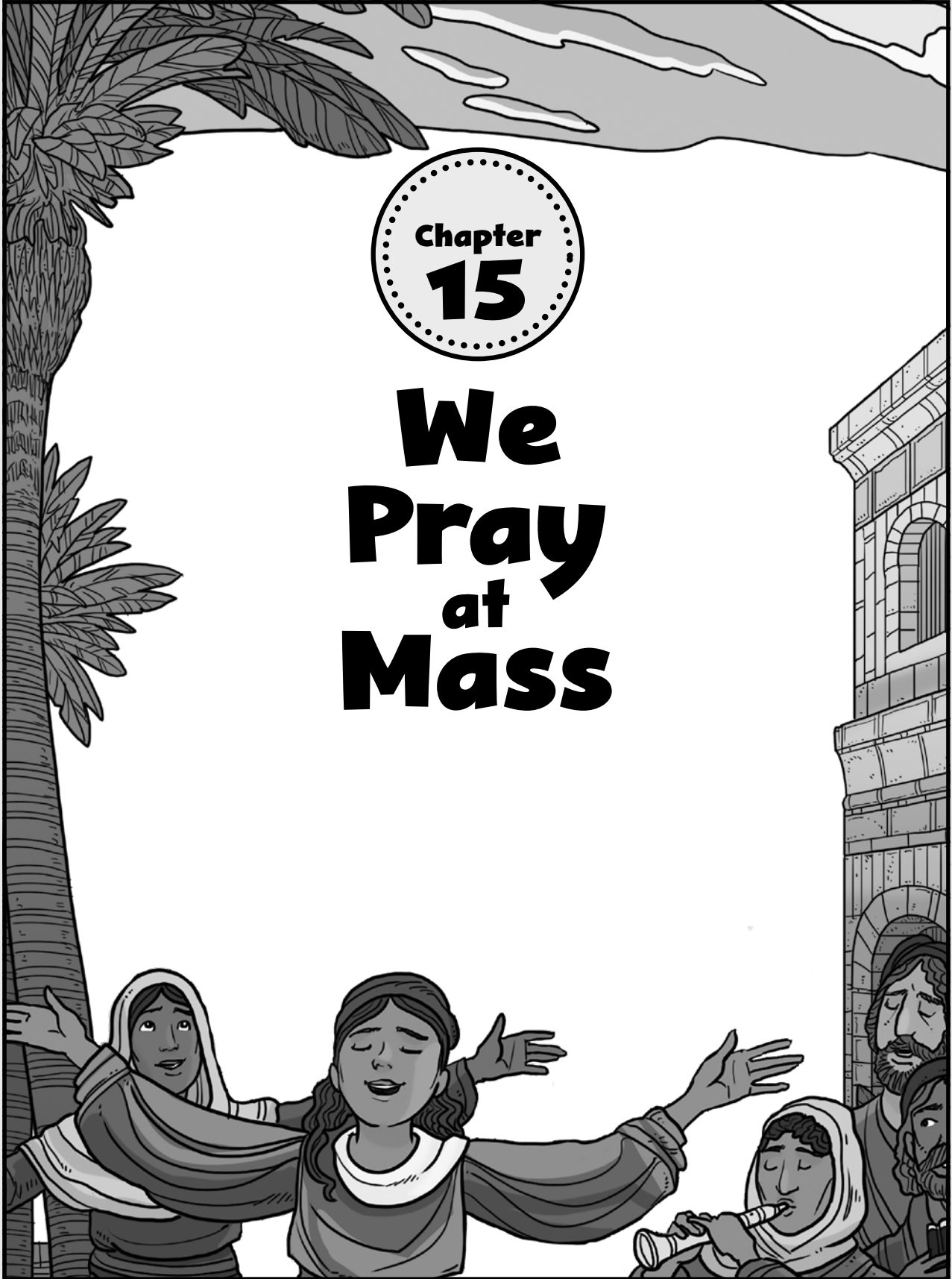
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- markers or crayons

Color Your World (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Color Your World with Kindness” (YouTube, 2:14).
- Guide the children to discuss how kindness makes the world a better place. Point out that each time a person in the video did an act of kindness, the person they were kind to was then kind to others.
- Discuss that the children might not see the “colors” their acts of kindness might bring, like in the video, but they can trust that they made a difference because they showed kindness and loved others the way God wants us to.
- Ask the children to name some small acts of kindness they can do this week, and then to write them on the board. These can be as simple as *smile, help my mother, say a nice thing, pray for someone*.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons. Write “Acts of Kindness” on the board, and invite the children to copy this onto their paper and to also write one way they will show kindness this week. If there is time, they could also draw a picture of themselves doing this act of kindness.

Chapter
15

**We
Pray
at
Mass**




**Chapter
15**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Philippians 4:4–7

Lesson Goals

- to state that we rejoice and give thanks because of Jesus
- to identify that at Mass we give thanks for all God's gifts, especially for Jesus
- to explain that we can express our praise and thanksgiving at Mass through prayers and responses

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

1322–1419

Key Words

union, rejoice, attitude, participate, worthy

Music Suggestions

- "Lord, I Thank You (feat. Jim Wideman)," by Yancy & Little Praise Party (Yancy Ministries, Inc.)
- "Rejoice in the Lord Always (Philippians 4:4)," by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 15 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

In the Scripture for this lesson, Saint Paul is writing from prison and reminding the Philippians to always be joyful in their relationship with God. He reminds them that no matter where they are in their lives, they have plenty of things that can fill them with a desire to give God thanks.

Through Saint Paul's writing, we are reminded to seek to be joyful and close to Jesus, unworried about anything, and thankful for all that God has blessed us with. When we are filled with such joy and gratitude, we can fully participate in the greatest celebration of thanksgiving, our Catholic Mass. For the death and Resurrection of Jesus are God's greatest gifts to us, and our participation in the Holy Eucharist is our participation in that gift in our own lives.

In this lesson, the children learn the importance of being joyful and giving thanks to God. As you teach them readiness to thank God through the prayers of the Mass, take time to read through the prayers yourself, allowing the richness and meaning of these words to resonate in your heart.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 15 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share ways people can show that they are happy and ways they can show they are thankful.
- Gather the children around in a circle, standing, to play a variation of "If You're Happy and You Know It," using some of the following prompts:
 - If you're thankful and you know it, smile really big.
 - If you're thankful and you know it, raise your arms high.
 - If you're thankful and you know it, shout, "Jesus!"
 - If you're thankful and you know it, do all three.
- Explain to the children that being joyful and thankful is a part of loving Jesus and celebrating the fact that he is always with us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Philippians 4:4–9 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1857). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1858. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1858–1859, and explain that the people in the images are joyful and giving thanks.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key words with the children to help them understand.
- Explain that when we are close to Jesus and are together or united with him, it changes us inside, both in how we feel and how we treat others. Share that when we are close to Jesus, we are filled with joy and thankfulness.

- Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What should our union with the Lord cause? (*joy, rejoicing/celebrating/being happy*)
 - What type of attitude should we show toward everyone? (*a gentle attitude*)
 - Instead of worrying, what should we do? (*In prayer, ask God for what we need with a thankful heart.*)
 - What will God's peace help us to do? (*keep our hearts and minds safe and in union with Jesus*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the directions to the group, and help the children with spelling as needed. *Answers will vary.*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1859, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - We can be the happiest people in the world because of Jesus. He saved us and made it possible for us to live forever.
 - Paul wrote this part of the Bible while he was in prison and things were hard for him. Paul wanted us to know that no matter what happens or even if things are hard, we can have a deep peace and joy inside of us.
 - We know that we are God's children and he hears our prayers.
 - We should let the joy inside of us show on our faces and in our actions.
- Explain that we should have a heart that is filled with thanksgiving for all that God has and continues to do for us, especially for giving us Jesus.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1859, or have a volunteer read it.
- Give the children time to think of three good things that happened to them today or yesterday. Then ask them to share one of the three good things with the group.
- Encourage the children to consider finding a place at home to write down or draw a picture of things that make them happy and they can be grateful for. Tell them that this activity will help them continue to have joy and thankfulness for all that God does for them because they will be taking time to be aware of him working in their lives.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1859.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows people filled with joy. Image 2 shows someone showing gentleness and love. Image 3 shows someone praying with a thankful heart to God. Image 4 shows people safe and close to Jesus because of the peace he has given them.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Gratitude Relay

- Arrange the children into three or four small groups, and invite each small group to form a line on one side of the room.
- Explain to them that they will be participating in a gratitude, or thanksgiving, relay. Tell them that when you indicate, the first person in each line will walk quickly to the other end of the room. Point out that when they reach the other side of the room, they should shout out one thing they are grateful or thankful for.
- Tell them that after they have shouted out the thing they are thankful for, they should walk quickly back to their line and tag the next person. Explain that each person in the line will take their turn walking to the other side of the room, shouting out something they are thankful for, and then returning to the line to tag the next person.
- Note that these three or four lines will be walking, tagging, and shouting simultaneously, so there is no need to wait for another line to finish.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children that in today's Scripture passage we are reminded that we should always rejoice and be thankful for all that God has done for us, especially for the gift of Jesus.
- Tell the group that we can always be thankful. Explain that even when we are sad or upset, we can still always find things to be thankful for. Point out that being mindful of all the good things in our life is a good way to show our gratitude to God.

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 pages 167–168 in its place.

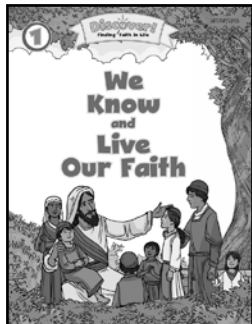
Core Teaching

- Tell the children that we can give our praise and thanksgiving to God in many ways. Explain that one important way we gather with others to give our thanks and praise to God is by attending Mass. Remind them that at Mass we give thanks for all God's gifts, especially for the gift of Jesus.
- Remind the children that at Mass we receive the Eucharist. Explain to them that the word *Eucharist* means "thanksgiving," so Mass is a celebration of thanksgiving.
- State that when we are at Mass we are called to **participate**, or take an active part, in the actions and prayers at Mass. Explain that singing, responding, and praying are some things everyone should do. Tell them that these actions and prayers are not just for adults.

- Explain that when we say the prayers and responses, we are giving thanks to God for all he has given to us.
 - Ask the children if they can remember any of the prayers or responses said or sung at Mass. Encourage them to share anything they recall. Remind them that they are familiar with the Sign of the Cross and that they may have heard of the Our Father prayer before.
 - Review with the children the following basic responses and prayers at Mass:
 - “And with your spirit” (*Roman Missal*) is a way of saying we know that the Holy Spirit is at work in the priest. This response is said at the start of Mass, before the Gospel reading, at the start of the Eucharistic prayer, during the Sign of Peace, and at the concluding blessing of Mass.
 - “Thanks be to God” (*Roman Missal*) is thanking God for the gift he has given. This response is said after the first and second reading of the Mass after the reader says, “The Word of the Lord,” and at the very end of Mass.
 - “Amen” (*Roman Missal*) says to God, “I agree” or “I believe.” This response is said by both the priest and the people many times throughout the Mass, to state our belief in all that God is doing and teaching us.
 - The “Preface” states the “reasons why” we gather for the Eucharist today and that we need to get ready to give thanks to Jesus. The following prayer is said:
 - Priest:** The Lord be with you.
 - People:** And with your spirit.
 - Priest:** Lift up your hearts.
 - People:** We lift them up to the Lord.
 - Priest:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
 - People:** It is right and just.

(Roman Missal)
 - This prayer starts the greatest prayer of thanksgiving at Mass, the Eucharistic Prayer, when the bread and wine become Christ’s Body and Blood.
 - “Lamb of God” is a prayer asking Jesus, the Lamb of God, to have mercy on us and forgive us for our sins. This prayer is said as the priest breaks the bread that has become the Body of Christ. Take time to read this prayer to the children from a worship aid or print off the Order of Catholic Mass found online.
 - “Prayer before Communion” is when we ask Jesus to make us **worthy** to receive Holy Communion. *Worthy* means being prepared for something very valuable. The prayer is: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed” (*Roman Missal*).
 - This prayer is said as the priest holds up the Body and Blood of Christ, inviting the people to come and ask Jesus to help them be worthy to receive his Body and Blood in Communion.
- Invite the children to repeat these prayers and responses after you. Assure them that it may take them a little time to learn these prayers and responses by heart, but that with practice, they will easily recall them.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What do we give thanks for at Mass? (*We give thanks for all God's gifts, especially for Jesus.*)
 - What does the word *Eucharist* mean? (*thanksgiving*)
 - What does it mean to participate in Mass? (*We are all called to take an active part in Mass by singing, responding, and praying.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. Assist them, if help is needed for understanding, by going through the responses together as they match them. *Answers: "And with your spirit"—God's Holy Spirit is at work in the priest; "Thanks be to God"—Thanks God for his gifts; "Amen"—Means "I agree" or "I believe"; "Preface"—States "reasons why" we gather and that we need to be ready to give thanks to Jesus; "Lamb of God"—Asks Jesus, the Lamb of God, to have mercy on us; "Prayer before Communion"—Asks Jesus to make us worthy to receive Communion*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Pope Saint Pius X, and encourage the children to say, "Pope Saint Pius X, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "We Pray Together" + activity, pages 52–53
- "Sunday," page 20

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - We rejoice and give thanks because of Jesus.
 - At Mass, we give thanks for all God's gifts, especially for Jesus.
 - We can express our praise and thanksgiving at Mass through prayers and responses.



- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 15 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Say "A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians." Then read the Featured Story (Philippians 4:4–7) on page 1858.
- Conclude by saying, "The Word of the Lord," and help the children respond, "Thanks be to God."
- Invite them to quietly in their mind and heart offer a simple prayer of thanks to God for what he has done for them.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- paper plates, one for each child
- small cardstock arrows, one for each child
- round-head paper fasteners (brads), one for each child
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

I Give Thanks (15 minutes)

- Prepare one paper plate per child by making a hole in the center of the plate through which to fit a paper fastener. Cut out small arrows made of cardstock, write the words "I give thanks with my" on them, and punch a small hole for the paper fastener. (This arrow will be used as the spinner on the plate.)
- Distribute the paper plates and markers or crayons. Write on the board these words for the children to write on the edges of their plates: *body, words, prayers, love*. Encourage them to write the words or draw a picture of the words and to put their name on the back of the plate.
- State that when they are done with their plate they can raise their hands and you will help them attach the spinner (arrow with the words "I give thanks with my" written on it) to their decorated paper plate with the paper fastener.
- Explain that they can spin the arrow to give them an idea for how they can give thanks.

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- markers or crayons
- paper with printout of gift box, one for each child

Stand, Sit, and Kneel (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that they will play a fun game. They will need to listen as you slowly list movements one at a time. They should do the movements as you call them out: sit, stand, sit, stand, sit, stand, kneel, stand, kneel, stand, kneel, stand.
- State that each of these actions is used during a different part of Mass, and each movement is important.
- Ask the children if they remember which action is used for these parts of the Mass: start of Mass when priest is coming up the aisle to the front of church (*stand*), first two readings (*sit*), Gospel reading (*stand*), when the priest is talking to us about the readings (*sit*), Prayer of the Faithful and other prayers when the priest says, “Let us pray” (*stand*), time when Jesus becomes present in the Bread and Wine during the Eucharistic Prayer (*kneel*).
- Have them practice the movements again in the order that you state them. Then remind them that this is a way that we can use our bodies to help us give thanks to God during Mass.

A Gift Worth Taking Part In (15 minutes)

- Show the video “C4: Ignite Your Catholic Faith—What Happens at Mass?” (YouTube, 3:31).
- Discuss the important elements of Mass that were shared in the video and why it is essential for them to focus at Mass. State that we can receive better the joy of Christ and experience the power of the Mass when we take part in this gift from God.
- Ask the children how they are called to take part in Mass. (*Possible answers: listen, pay attention, pray, love God, open their hearts, be ready to do the actions of Mass, and stay focused.*)
- Distribute the markers or crayons and the printouts you prepared ahead of time with a picture of a gift box and the words “My Gift to Jesus at Mass” at the top of the page.
- Invite the children to draw a picture inside the gift box of one thing they will do to take part as a gift back to Jesus at the next Mass they attend. Invite them to place the gift box picture in a place where they will see it every day to remind them.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 4

Jesus Is with Us Now

Chapter 16

Jesus Died for Us 170

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We Celebrate the Resurrection 178

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Chapter 19

We Care for Those Who Are Poor . . 196

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We Can Pray at All Times 204

Chapter
16

Jesus Died for Us




 Chapter
16

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 27:50–54

Lesson Goals

- to identify the cross as a sign of Christian faith
- to state that Jesus died on the cross out of love for us
- to indicate that Jesus' death is a passageway to new life forever

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

595–623

Key Words

Temple, Holy City, Christian, sacrifice, passageway

Music Suggestions

- "His Great Love," by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)
- "You Gave," by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 16 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Crosses are popular wall decorations or pieces of jewelry. As Christians, we see so much more than a fancy image or pretty decoration when we see a cross. We see the incredible love of God that sent his Son to teach us, to love us, and then finally to die for our sins. We see in a cross the complete reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus.

Jesus died for each and every person who would ever live, so that we might live in fullness of life, now and eternally. He bore all our sins, gave up everything to set us free, and showed us true love. He willingly gave his life for us.

As you help the children to learn more about the true love and incredible sacrifice of Jesus, allow yourself to open your heart even more. Commit yourself to seek a daily way to thank Jesus in return for his gift of sacrificial love.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 16 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Instruct the children that they will be playing a game called "Does Jesus Love Everyone?" Invite them to bring their chairs and sit in a circle. Remove one chair, and ask a volunteer to stand in the middle of the circle.
- Explain that the child in the middle will walk up to any child seated in the circle and say, "Does Jesus love everyone?" Tell the group that the child being asked will respond, "Yes, Jesus loves everyone, especially children _____." Explain that the child will complete the sentence by adding something, such as "with brown hair," "wearing blue," "wearing glasses," "with curly hair," "who play sports."
- Tell the group that any child seated who matches what is called out must stand up and find a new place to sit. The person who was in the middle also tries to find a place to sit. Explain that the child left without a place to sit will be in the middle and will start the next round by asking, "Does Jesus love everyone?"
- Explain to the children that this game reminds us that no matter who we are, what we look like, or where we come from, Jesus loves everyone.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Matthew 27:32–56 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1518–1519). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1516. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the following pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1516–1517 and point out different things that they notice.

- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key words with the children to help them understand. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What happened to Jesus in this story? (*He gave a loud cry and breathed his last; Jesus died on the cross.*)
 - What other events happened after Jesus died? (*The curtain in the Temple tore in half, the Earth shook, the rocks split apart, the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were raised to life.*)
 - What did the army officer and soldiers say when everything happened after Jesus died? (*"He really was the Son of God" [verse 54].*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. breathed, 2. rose, 3. City, 4. split, 5. Temple, 6. God*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1517, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The cross is a sign of **Christian** faith. A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus, whom we call Christ.
 - Jesus' death on the cross saves us from sin and death.
 - The Temple curtain is torn to show us that because of Jesus' death something new is now happening.
 - The earthquakes show that Jesus' death shook the whole world.
 - Dead people walking around shows how Jesus' death brings new life.
 - The death of Jesus shows us that God loves us so much that he sent his Son to save us.
- Emphasize to the children that the cross is a key sign of Christian faith. Tell them that the cross is found in Christian churches and homes. Ask the children whether they have a cross at home and where it is kept.
- Keep in mind that it is not always possible to access Catholic religious items easily. You may want to ask friends and colleagues for extra crosses or crucifixes to give to families who may not have one. Or, sponsor a "giveaway" in which extra religious items (rosaries, statues, crucifixes) can be collected, blessed, and then offered to those who wish to take them.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1517, or have a volunteer read it. Tell the children to follow the directions. Pause after each statement to give the children time to complete the step.
- Finish with a Sign of the Cross. Review with the children how to make the Sign of the Cross as a sign of our faith and as a reminder of how important the cross is to us.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1517.
- Invite several volunteers to share what they see in each image and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows Jesus dying on the cross. Image 2 shows the curtain in the Temple tearing down the middle. Image 3 shows rocks splitting during the earthquake. Image 4 shows the soldiers proclaiming that Jesus really was the Son of God.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity****Showing Love to Others**

- Prepare ahead of time situations that you will read to the children for this activity. They should be scenarios of showing love and scenarios of not showing love. Possible situations might include the following:
 - giving a flower to a sick friend
 - laughing at someone who made a mistake
 - teaching a younger brother or sister how to catch a ball
 - taking something that is not yours
 - lying about breaking something at home
 - helping your brother or sister up when he or she falls while running
 - putting video games aside to help a parent
- Explain to the children that true love is seeking good things for others, giving something up to help someone, and wanting the best for those that you love.
- Invite the children to stand and face you. Tell them that you will read some situations aloud to them. Explain that if the situation describes true love, they should jump up and down with their hands in the air. If the situation does not describe true love, they should bend down to touch the ground.
- Tell them that once the situation is read and they have acted out their response, they can stand again with arms at their sides so they will be ready for the next situation.
- Read the statements aloud, affirming the children for choosing the correct action in response.

Process the Activity

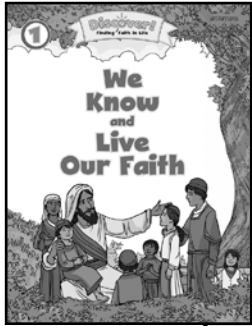
- Tell the children that when we really love someone, we choose actions that show that love.
- Review how today's Scripture story was all about love. Review with the children that God loved us so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, to come to Earth, and Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to suffer and die on a cross to save us from sin and death.

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 177 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Tell the children that Jesus' death on the cross was an amazing **sacrifice** of love. Explain that *sacrifice* means "to give up something." Point out that Jesus gave up his very life to save us from sin and death.
- Explain to the children that God knew that Jesus was the only one who could take away the sins, or wrong choices, of people; therefore, God sent his only Son, Jesus, to save us and free us from our sins.
- Tell the children that Jesus willingly gave up his life on the cross to free us from the sins we would commit in our life that harm our relationship with God.
- Explain that Jesus' death is a **passageway**, or a path that enables us to go through to new life forever in Heaven after our time on Earth is ended. Tell them that Jesus restored a way for us to get to Heaven and to live forever with God.
- Remind them that Jesus' true love for us shows us the way to love others. He wants us to be willing to give up things for the love of other people.
- Explain that the gift of his life on the cross should lead us to recall how much God loves us and to work to show our love for God more each day.
- Tell the children that every time they see a cross on a wall or on a necklace it is a chance to remember how Jesus gave his life for us in a great gift of love.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Did Jesus willingly die on the cross and give his life for us? *(yes)*
 - What did Jesus' death on the cross do? *(made a passageway to new life forever in Heaven, restored a way for us to get to Heaven and live forever with God)*
 - What does Jesus' true love remind us to do? *(love others, give up things when needed to show love, love God more, and remember his gift of love whenever we see a cross)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Cecilia, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Cecilia, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Jesus Died on a Cross," page 14

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - The cross is a sign of Christian faith.
 - Jesus died on the cross out of love for us.
 - Jesus' death is a passageway to new life forever.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 16 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in this prayer as they say the lines after you:
 - Jesus, we thank you for all you did for us on the cross.
 - We thank you for your love and kindness.
 - We thank you for freeing us from our sins.
 - We thank you for giving us a way to get to Heaven.
 - Help us to share your love with others. Amen.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- prepared scenarios

What Would You Do? (15 minutes)

- Create scenarios in which the children explore what it means to give something up as a sign of love for another, such as the following:
 - Both you and your brother or sister want the last cookie in the jar.
 - Your younger brother or sister wants someone to play with, and your mother is busy cooking dinner.
 - Your teacher needs help doing something, but it's time for recess.
 - Your friends want to play one game, but you would rather play another.
- Invite the children to form small groups. Tell them that you will read a situation and that the groups will have 60 seconds to discuss what they could give up in each situation in order to show love to another person.
- After each discussion, call on different groups to share their answers.
- Remind the children that giving up something is a sign of true love. State that when we really love someone, we are willing to give up something for ourselves to help that person.

Materials Needed

- prepared white cardstock, one for each child
- brown construction paper, one piece for each child
- prepared clipart, one for each child
- scissors, glue, and markers or crayons

Design a Crucifix (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time sheets of white cardstock, one for each child, with the words "Jesus truly loves me and gave his life for me" at the top. Search on the internet for clip art that shows Jesus' body on the cross. Make one copy for each child and cut out the images of Jesus' body.
- Distribute the cardstock, the brown construction paper, the clip art of Jesus' body, scissors, and markers or crayons for decorating.
- Direct the children to create a cross from the brown construction paper and then to color the clip art of Jesus. While they are working, discuss that true love often requires giving things up. Have the children glue the cross and clip art of Jess to their cardstock when they are done coloring.

Materials Needed

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

Jesus' Gift (15 minutes)

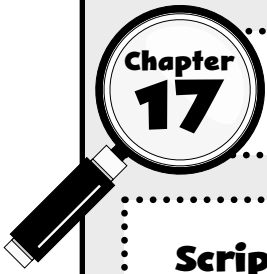
- Show the video "The Story of Easter (Jesus' Sacrifice)" (YouTube, 5:22).
- Review the events around Jesus' death and Resurrection for the children. Ask them if they know when we remember Jesus' death in a special way (*Good Friday*) and when we celebrate his Resurrection (*Easter*).
- Help them to understand that the story of the death of Jesus on the cross can be fully understood as a gift and an act of true love only when we know that Jesus gave his life to save us from our sins to give us new life.
- Give each child a piece of paper and markers or crayons. Ask the children to draw a heart on the piece of paper and then a picture of a way they can show true love for Jesus in their lives. Allow them time to draw and decorate.

Chapter

17

We Celebrate the Resurrection





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 16:1–6

Lesson Goals

- to state that Jesus rose from the dead and is with us now
- to identify that we will be raised to new life after we die because of Jesus’ Resurrection
- to explain that we celebrate the Resurrection every time we go to Mass

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

638–658, 1136–1199, 1322–1419

Key Words

anoint, tomb, alarmed, Resurrection, hope

Music Suggestions

- “Jesus Is Alive (feat. Latricia Robinson),” by Orange Kids Music (Orange Kids Music)
- “He Is Risen (Luke 24:5b–6a),” by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 17 activity booklet
- prepared script, spices in a container, a picture of a sunrise, a tablecloth or sheet for the tomb, costumes for the three women, a white sheet, and a rock cut from cardboard
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Three days after Jesus’ death on the cross, three women came to complete the burial custom of placing spices on his body. Instead of finding his tomb blocked by a large stone, they found the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, and a young man present who told them that Jesus had been raised!

Jesus’ presence did not end at the cross or in the grave. Jesus is with us now and always. And because of his Resurrection, we know that we will be raised to new life after we die. Easter Sunday is a key moment when we mark and celebrate the day of Jesus’ rising from the dead. But for Catholics, every Sunday Mass is a celebration of Easter!

This chapter focuses on helping the children understand how they celebrate the Resurrection at the Sunday Mass. Allow the following words to ring in *your* heart and ears for the eternal impact of Easter Sunday: Jesus rose from the dead! He is with us now and always!

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 17 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to share how they feel when they are really happy and want to celebrate something, such as the birth of a new brother or sister, their own or another’s birthday, etc.
- Ask volunteers to share what their face looks like when they are really happy and want to celebrate something. Encourage them to use their bodies, such as putting their arms in the air, clapping, etc.
- Tell them that in today’s lesson, they are going to learn about something that makes Christians very, very happy, full of joy, and is a cause for great celebration. You may ask the children if they know what this is, but just take answers and tell them that they will find out very soon.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find Mark 16:1–8 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1566). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1568. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1566.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1568–1569 and invite them to share what they notice.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key words with the children to help them understand. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who went to visit Jesus’ tomb? (*Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome*)
 - Why did they go to the tomb? (*to anoint the body of Jesus with spices*)
 - What day did they go to the tomb? (*on Sunday morning*)
 - What did they find when they arrived? (*The stone was rolled away, the tomb was empty, Jesus’ body was not there, and a young man wearing a white robe was inside the tomb.*)

- What did the young man say to the women? (*“Don’t be alarmed. . . . I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here—he has been raised!”* [verse 6].)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1569 to the children, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - After Jesus died on the cross, his body was placed on a stone slab inside a cave and a large heavy stone was placed in front of the cave.
 - Three days after Jesus died, three women came to anoint his body with sweet-smelling spices.
 - When the women arrived, the stone had been rolled away and Jesus’ body was not there. Instead, there was an angel who told them that Jesus had risen from the dead.
 - Because of Jesus’ **Resurrection**, the term we use for when Jesus rose from the dead, we know that we will be raised to new life too!
- Explain to the children more about why the women were going to the cave and why they waited three days to go, using the following points:
 - People in ancient times would anoint a body with sweet-smelling spices to honor the person’s body after death and prepare it for burial.
 - Jesus died on Friday, and the Sabbath (or holy day for the people of Jesus’ time) was the next day, Saturday. On the Sabbath, the people had to rest and spend the day honoring God. Therefore, the women had to wait until early Sunday morning before they could go anoint the body of Jesus with the sweet-smelling spices.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1569, or have a volunteer read it.
- Provide the children with paper to draw their large egg on. Give them scissors to cut out the egg and crayons or markers to decorate the egg.
- Remind them that if they run out of time they can finish the project at home.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1569.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the women buying the spices. Image 2 shows the women walking to the tomb of Jesus. Image 3 shows the women seeing the empty tomb and the young man. Image 4 shows the young man telling them that Jesus has been raised.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Act It Out

- Prepare ahead of time a script using the Scripture passage, or read directly from the story while the children act out what they hear to participate in the story.
- Bring props, such as spices in a container, a picture of a sunrise, a long tablecloth or sheet to place over a table for a tomb, costumes for the three women, a white sheet for the young man in the tomb, and a rock cut from cardboard.
- Select or recruit volunteers to play the key parts of the reenactment.
- Read the script, and invite volunteers to act out the Scripture. As time allows, select new volunteers and repeat the process.

Process the Activity

- Discuss with the children afterward that the women were afraid and did not understand right away what it meant that the stone was rolled away or the young man's news that Jesus had been raised. Share with the children that this surprise was the most amazing news: Jesus is alive!
- Remind the children that we will be raised to new life after we die because of Jesus' Resurrection. Explain that this is Good News and is why we celebrate Easter with such joy!

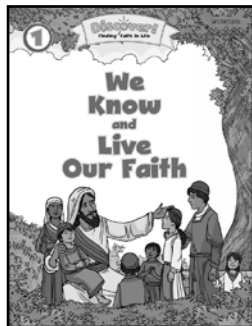
Additional Activity Options

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 185 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Tell the children that Jesus is with us now because his Resurrection means that he can be everywhere. Point out that he is no longer confined to a body.
- Explain to the children that death is not an ending of our life but a change. Tell them that we will be with God forever if we have lived good lives and have followed Jesus.
- Point out that because Jesus defeated death and freed us from our sins, he will give the gift of eternal life to those who follow him. Tell the children that we should be filled with **hope**, which is a trust in something happening, in one day living forever with God in Heaven.

- Share that Sunday is called the Lord’s Day because it is the day Jesus rose from the dead. State that we keep the Lord’s Day holy by attending Mass and spending extra time focusing on God.
- Teach the children that we celebrate the Resurrection every time we go to Mass. Explain that the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus are celebrated through the readings of Scripture, prayers and responses said together, as well as receiving Holy Communion during Mass.
- Tell the children that in the Mass, we celebrate Jesus’ gift of his Body and Blood at the Last Supper, his sacrifice on the cross on Good Friday, and the Resurrection, because we receive the resurrected Lord in the Eucharist on the very same day he rose from the dead—Sunday.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does it mean to say that Jesus rose from the dead? (*Jesus’ body was no longer in the grave, he defeated death and freed us from our sins, and he promised to give the gift of eternal life to those who follow him.*)
 - What day of the week is called the Lord’s Day? (*Sunday*)
 - How do we celebrate the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus at every Mass? (*through readings, prayers, and receiving the Eucharist*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. Help them follow the code, offering individual help as needed. *Answers: What: MASS; When: EVERY SUNDAY; Why: NEW LIFE; From: JESUS*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Mary Magdalene, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- “Easter,” page 34
- “Heaven,” page 18 (last two paragraphs)
- “Sunday,” page 20

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus rose from the dead and is with us now.
 - We will be raised to new life after we die because of Jesus' Resurrection.
 - We celebrate the Resurrection every time we go to Mass.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 17 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Chapter 17

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray or sing together one of the Memorial Acclamations used in your parish to proclaim our faith in Jesus' death and Resurrection.
- Explain to the children that there are three choices that can be used for this prayer and read the other prayers for them.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Materials Needed

- pieces of newspaper, white round coffee filters, and pipe cleaners, one of each for each child
- washable markers
- fishing line

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper

Lift His Name on High (15 minutes)

- Preview and learn the hand motions to the song “Lord I Lift Your Name On High—Hometown Nazareth” (YouTube, 2:14).
- Teach the children the hand motions and show the video several times so they can practice.
- Tell the children that singing this song is one way to celebrate the gift of Jesus’ Resurrection.
- Explain that our prayers are like hot air balloons in the videos, bringing us closer to God and lifting our hearts to him.

New Life (15 minutes)

- Give each child a piece of newspaper, a coffee filter, and a pipe cleaner.
- Tell them to place the coffee filter on top of the newspaper and to decorate the coffee filter by coloring or making designs with washable markers.
- Show the children how to accordion-fold the coffee filter and then hold it in the middle. Tell them to wrap their pipe cleaner around the middle of the coffee filter to form the body of a butterfly. Help them to use the remaining pipe cleaner to curl and make antennae for the butterfly. Then have them spread the “wings.”
- Invite the children to come to you when they are finished. As they do, tie some fishing line to the “body” of their butterfly so they can hang their craft at home.
- Explain to the children that butterflies remind us of new life. State that butterflies start out as caterpillars, and then go into their cocoon and come out with a new life as a butterfly. Share that this is just like when Jesus comes out of the tomb with new resurrected life.

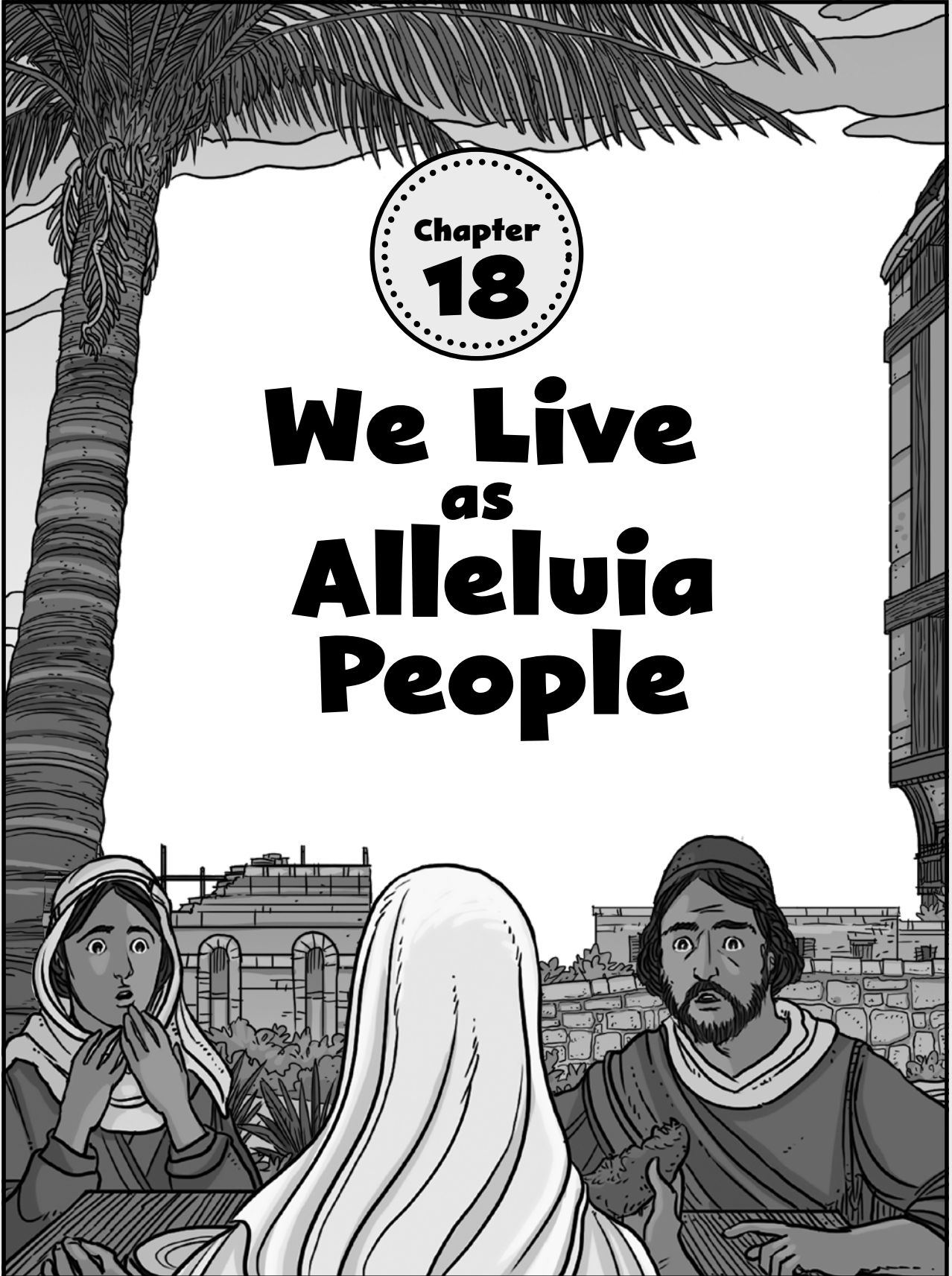
Focus on Easter (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Top 5 List: Easter Sunday | Jesus and the Journey to the Cross #3” (YouTube, 3:10).
- Ask the children to recall the important things about the celebration of Easter.
- Provide blank paper for them to draw or write down one or two ways they will focus on the gift of Jesus’ Resurrection next Easter.
- Remind the group that Easter is a time for focusing on our new life that awaits us in Heaven after we have loved and followed Jesus.

Chapter

18

We Live as Alleluia People




**Chapter
18**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 24:28–32

Lesson Goals

- to state that Jesus is with us always, even in times of sadness or discouragement
- to explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the Mass
- to name how we might live each day in praise and joy because of the Risen Jesus

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

601, 645, 1372–1381, 2589,
2639–2643

Key Word

Alleluia

Music Suggestions

- “Alleluia Alleluia Give Thanks,” by LifeWay Praise Kids (LifeWay Worship)
- “Praise the Lord (Psalm 150:6),” by GroupMusic (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 18 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

In this Scripture story, two disciples are walking to the town of Emmaus when they are joined by another person. They do not recognize who this person is because they are too focused on the recent sad events of Jesus’ death. With the sharing of the blessed bread, their eyes are opened, and they realize that it is Jesus who is present with them.

Jesus gave us the gift of the Eucharist so he could be present to us in a very special and profound way. Knowing this should create a desire to honor, love, and praise him. When our hearts are filled with the love of God and we can experience his presence in our lives, our hearts want to cry out, “Alleluia!” and “Praise the Lord!”

This lesson focuses on recognizing Jesus’ presence in our lives today and thanking and praising God for this incredible gift. Take time to ask Jesus to open your eyes a little wider to see him more clearly in the Eucharist, in your life, and in one another.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 18 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Play the I Spy game, choosing objects around the room and giving clues of the object you see. Ask the children to raise their hand when they think they know the answer, and select a volunteer to make a guess.
- Play a few rounds with the children with you selecting the objects. If time allows, you may wish to invite individual volunteers to take turns selecting an object around the room and giving clues to the rest of the group.
- Tell the children that this game involves guessing things that we can see with our eyes. Explain that today they will learn that Jesus is with us at all times, even though we cannot not see him.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 24:13–35 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1643 and 1646). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1644. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the other pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1644–1645.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did the two people want Jesus to do when they arrived near the village? (*to stay with them because it was getting dark*)
 - When they sat down to eat what did Jesus do? (*He took bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them.*)

- What happened to the people after Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them? *(Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.)*
- What did they say it was like when Jesus talked to them on the road and explained the Scriptures to them? *(like a fire burning in us)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. Stay, 2. bread, 3. broke, 4. opened, 5. fire*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1645, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The two disciples were sad because they thought Jesus was gone forever.
 - Jesus joined them on the road and explained the stories of Scripture that spoke about how the Savior would suffer.
 - The disciples came to know that it was Jesus only when he blessed and broke bread and gave it to them.
 - Jesus is with us too. He speaks to us in Scripture, and we receive his Body and Blood when we receive the Eucharist.
- Share that Jesus is with us always, even in times of sadness or discouragement. State that in this story Jesus listens and helps the two disciples who were sad understand that the Savior must suffer as part of God's plan to save his people.
- Tell the children that when they feel sad or upset, Jesus is there to help them through the sad moment. Explain that he will help us to grow stronger and make it through hard times.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1645, or have a volunteer read it. Pause after each part to allow them time to imagine how they would feel.
- Create a quick spontaneous prayer, asking Jesus to help us see him in other people, in the Bible, and in the Eucharist.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1645.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. *(Image 1 shows Jesus acting like he was going farther. Image 2 shows the two disciples inviting Jesus to stay. Image 3 shows Jesus blessing, breaking, and sharing the bread with them. Image 4 shows the disciples realizing it was Jesus.)*



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Jesus Speaks to Us Today

- Remind the children that we can meet Jesus in other people, through words of Scripture, and in the Eucharist. Remind children that they will likely be preparing to receive Jesus in the Eucharist in another year.
- Tell the children that even though we don't see Jesus in the same way we see other people, we know that he is with us always. Explain to them that they are going to play a game, imagining that they can hear the voice of Jesus.
- Gather the group in a circle, and tell them that you will pretend to be Jesus and will share a message with them. Explain that you will whisper a message to the first person in the circle, and they will whisper it to the person on their right. Tell them this message will pass from person to person.
- Point out that once it reaches the last person, that person will share it with the large group and you will check to see if it is the message that you began with. Tell them that it is helpful to listen very carefully and to whisper as clearly as they can without letting others hear them.
- Play the game, starting with the message, "I am always with you!" Help the children follow the directions, and keep them on track. If you have extra time, you could invite the children to brainstorm other things Jesus might say if he could speak directly to us today. Gather responses, choose one, and start the sharing circle again.
- Listen for the message at the end and share whether this was the beginning message or not. Reveal the beginning message if it didn't make it around the circle.

Process the Activity

- Explain to the children that the message of today's Scripture is that Jesus is risen and is with us at all times, even when we are sad or discouraged like the disciples in today's Scripture were.
- Help them understand that even though we might not hear Jesus in the same way that we hear others, he speaks to us in Scripture, through the loving actions of other people, and he is present in a special way at Mass.

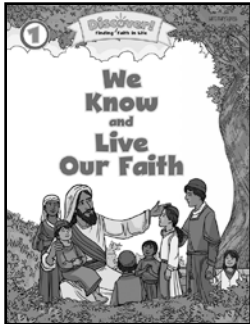
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 194–195 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that the disciples in today’s Scripture talked with Jesus but did not recognize him at first.
- State that it was not until Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and shared it with them that they could truly see him for the first time as the Risen Jesus. Explain that we learn that Jesus’ presence can be very powerfully and truly known in the Eucharist.
- Share that Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist is the greatest gift of presence that we have been given because we receive him into our very body and become united with him.
- State that one of the ways we can state our love for God and Jesus is to praise them. Remind the children that the meaning of *praise* is “to express reverence, honor, and gratitude as an act of worship.”
- Share that one word we use often at Mass and in other times of honoring God and Jesus is the word *Alleluia*, which means “Praise the Lord!” (*Write the word on the board for the children to see.*)
- Share that *Alleluia* is a word of joy that we sing before the reading of the Gospel at Mass. Practice your parish’s version of “Alleluia” with the children so they can learn it and participate better in singing it at Mass.
- Teach the children that we do not just want to sing the word *Alleluia*, but we want to become Alleluia people. Explain that this means we are people of praise and joy because of the Resurrection of Jesus, the gift of eternal life, and because we know that Jesus is always with us.
- Tell the children we should look for ways to praise God and live in joy each day. Ask them to share some ways they think they could live each day in praise and joy because of the Risen Jesus. Help them with some of the following suggestions:
 - Take time to think of the amazing gift of eternal life and the love of God.
 - Live our life for Jesus so we can feel his joy more inside of us.
 - Make choices that lead us to be closer to Jesus and his love.
 - Surround ourselves with people who draw us closer to Jesus.
 - Pray often and include songs and prayers of praise and joy to God so we express what is in our hearts.
 - Know that when we get sad or discouraged, we have Jesus to help us. We will still have hard times and pain even being Alleluia people, but we know that we are never alone and God’s love will help us get through whatever is hard for us.
 - Participate in the Mass with great focus, love, and joy so that we can receive all that Jesus wants to give us and we can give him all the praise he deserves.

- Express that knowing that Jesus is always with us in our heart, in those we love, in a very real way in the Eucharist, and awaiting us in Heaven, are surely reasons to want to sing praises to God and be filled with the greatest joy.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the greatest gift of Jesus' presence to us? (*the Eucharist*)
 - What does the word *praise* mean? (*to express reverence, honor, and gratitude as an act of worship*)
 - What does *Alleluia* mean? (*"Praise the Lord!"*)
 - Why should we live as Alleluia people? (*because of Jesus' Resurrection, the gift of eternal life, and knowing that Jesus is always with us*)
 - What are some of the ways we can live as Alleluia people? (*Accept all reasonable responses.*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answer: PRAISE*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Our Lady of the Way, and encourage the children to say, "Our Lady of the Way, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Easter," page 34

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up



- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus is with us always, even in times of sadness or discouragement.
 - Jesus is present to us in a special way in the Mass.
 - There are many ways we might live each day in praise and joy because of the Risen Jesus.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 18 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray together the following prayer, saying it one line at a time and inviting the children to repeat after you:
 - Praise the Lord for his love eternal.
 - Praise the Lord for his life on Earth.
 - Praise the Lord for his death on the cross.
 - Praise the Lord for his rising from the dead.
 - Praise the Lord for his gift of eternal life for us.
 - Praise the Lord for his love eternal that calls us to be close to him.
 - Alleluia, Alleluia, praise the Lord!
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a board or poster to write on

Cheerful Shouts (15 minutes)

- Write the following on the board or in a place where the children can see:
 - #1 . . . created us!
 - #2 . . . loves us!
 - #3 . . . is with us!
 - #4 . . . forgives us!
 - #5 . . . is good to us!
 - #6 . . . helps us!
- Invite the children to stand. Read through the six statements to make sure they understand them. Explain to the group that you are going to play a game where we cheer God for all he does for us. Tell the children that you will call out “God!” and then a number. Point out that the children will finish the sentence with the words that match the number that you shout. For example, if you call out, “God, number 6!” the children will shout “helps us!”
- Explain to the children that they should throw their arms in the air and jump up when they shout the words that match the number. Explain to them that you will start out slowly and slowly build up speed. Encourage them to pay attention and to listen closely.
- Play the game as time allows. You may also consider having different volunteers become the caller.
- Explain that when we speak of the good things of God, we are honoring what he does for us and showing our gratitude. Share that seeing the gifts of God is the first step to loving him more.

Materials Needed

- cardstock, one piece for each child
- markers
- several rolls of tape
- bowls of rice, popcorn seeds, and dried beans
- a plastic spoon
- a song or hymn to sing

Joyful Noises (15 minutes)

- Prepare in advance small bowls of rice, popcorn seeds, and dried beans (to make instruments that sound different from one another).
- Provide the children with cardstock and markers. Tell the children to decorate one side of the cardstock.
- Have them roll up their cardstock to make a tube and tape it down the side to keep it rolled together. Then have them fold one end of the tube and tape it closed.
- Allow them to come to the small bowls and select one of the items (rice, popcorn seeds, or beans). Use the plastic spoon to scoop a tablespoon of the item into their tube. Then direct the children to seal the other end of the tube by folding the open end down and taping it.
- Explain that one way to show God how much we love him and appreciate everything he does is to make a joyful noise. Allow the children to shake their shakers while you say aloud some things that make us joyful about God, such as, "God made us," "God loves us," "Jesus rose from the dead," "Jesus is with us," "We love Jesus," etc.
- Play a song or hymn, and ask the students to shake their shakers to the beat of the music.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

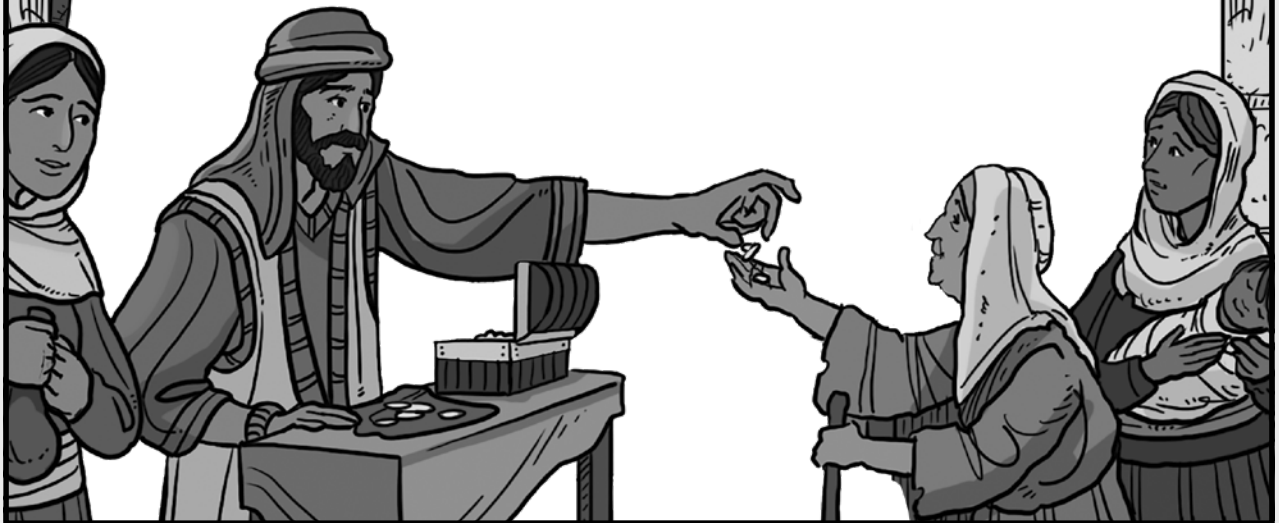
Praise Every Day (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that when we recognize that Jesus is present to us today and that it shows us how much God loves us, we are filled with praise and joy. Explain to them that *praise* means "to express reverence, honor, and gratitude."
- Show the video "02 Praise the Lord Every Day" (YouTube, 3:11), and invite the children to sing along.
- Invite the group to come up with motions they can do for part of the song. Tell them that they can just move in place for the rest of the song.
- Play the video several times so the children can practice the motions with the music.

Chapter

19

We Care for Those Who Are Poor




**Chapter
19**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

1 John 3:11, 16–18

Lesson Goals

- to state that Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us on the cross
- to identify that we give our lives for others by loving them even when it is not easy
- to explain that true love is expressed not only in words but in actions

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Catechism References

1822–1829, 2196, 2443–2449

Key Word

claim

Music Suggestions

- “Love Your Neighbor,” by VeggieTales (Big Idea Entertainment)
- “Love One Another,” by Children’s Music Series (LifeWay Worship)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 19 activity booklet
- clay or dough
- paper plates, cotton balls, buttons or beads
- red pipe cleaners, brown markers, bottles of glue
- small paper bags
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Throughout his life and by his death, Jesus showed us powerful examples of true love. He gave us everything because of his love and he made it clear that we are called to the same level of love in our lives through our words and actions.

We know that we cannot merely say we love God and then disregard other people who are God’s children. Loving others is one of the most authentic ways to show God how much we love him. In a special way, our love and care should extend to those who are poor or vulnerable. In this way, we can help others experience God’s love through us. It is also a way our love for others can help change the world.

In this chapter, the message is clear: we must love one another. As you share this message with the children, be sure you have taken time to ask Jesus to help you to be more like him, to love more like him, in the words and actions of your everyday life.

**Get Ready! (10 minutes)****Opening Prayer**

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 19 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children to share some of the ways they have experienced love in their lives. Invite them to share how they know they are loved, and ask them how they show their love to other people.
- Tell them that we should thank God for the people in our lives who love us. Ask the children to name some of those people aloud. Help them to recall how much love they are shown and how that helps them to understand the great love God has for them.
- Explain that in today’s lesson they will be reminded how important it is to share love with everyone, especially those most in need.

**Dive In! (15 minutes)****Scripture Focus**

- Invite the children to find 1 John 3:11–18 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1934). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1936. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1934.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key word with the children to help them understand. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What is the message of this story? (*We must love one another.*)
 - How do we know what love is? (*because Christ gave his life for us*)
 - What is the best way to show our love? (*through our words and actions*)
- Remind the children that Jesus loves us so much that he gave his life for us on the cross. State that Jesus’ gift of love by dying on the cross for us shows us that we too must give of our lives out of love, so we can be like him. Explain to them that this doesn’t mean that we have to give up our life on a cross like Jesus did, but it means we have to give of ourselves—our time and gifts—sometimes denying what we may want, in order to show love to others.

- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Help the children or work together as needed. *Answers: another, gave, others, words, true, action*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1937, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Both brothers showed love for each other by knowing what the other needed and putting their love into action.
 - The two brothers lived out the message about love from the First Letter of John.
 - When we love God and others, we cannot just say the words, but we must show our love and do things to help.
- Share with the children that these brothers showed what it is to give of ourselves and our lives to show love for another. State that they did not wait to be asked for help but gave from their heart to help the other.
- Explain that this type of brotherly love is not meant just for family members; it is meant for all people, because we are all our brothers and sisters in God's family.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read the Live It! on page 1937 or read it aloud to the group.
- Discuss together what things the children could do for their family members this week.
- Share other ways that we can love our family more using the following suggested ideas: be extra patient, happily let a sibling have their way, help around the house just because, ask what you can do to help your parents, and clean up without being asked.
- Remind the children that love is a choice and involves action, not just words. State that love is not just good feelings toward another but showing love by how we act toward others. Explain that we show love by how we treat others throughout the day, even when it's not easy.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1937.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the message from John to love one another. Image 2 shows Jesus giving his life for us. Image 3 shows the rich giving to the poor. Image 4 shows a child showing love in action by sharing with the poor.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Sharing Is the Only Way

- Prepare ahead of time a smiley face on a paper plate as a sample in this suggested way: use cotton balls for eyes, a button or bead for the nose, a red pipe cleaner for the smile, and brown marker to draw hair.
- Make sure that there are supplies for each child to complete the project. Then gather these supplies in individual paper bags, one for each child. However, prepare the bags so that no one child has everything they need to complete the craft. The goal is for the children to figure out that they must share from what they have to allow everyone to make the smiley face.
- Provide the children with a paper plate and a paper bag of supplies and tell them that they will need to make a smiley face. Tell them that they can only use the exact same materials as you did in your sample plate to make their own smiley faces.
- Explain that you will remain silent for this activity and cannot help them other than showing them the sample smiley face.
- Invite them to begin to build their smiley faces. Remain silent during the activity and give the children permission to share supplies only if they don't offer to do this on their own.

Process the Activity

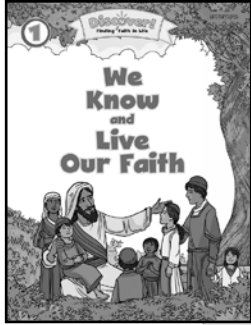
- Share with the children that one way we can show our love for one another is to share what we have, especially with those who don't have enough.
- Explain how the different bags mirror the different gifts and abilities that we all have. Tell them that when we share our gifts and abilities with others, we can all be happier.

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 203 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the group that we are called to love all of God’s children, even though this is not always easy. Teach that Jesus loved all people, even those who did not love him back. Tell the children that Jesus’ love was not reserved just for the people who were easy to love; his love was given to all people everywhere.
- Tell the children that true love is not about giving to get something back; it is a willingness to give of ourselves because it is what God wants us to do. State that this is the type of love we are called to. Explain that we can give this kind of love the more we receive Jesus into our hearts and become more like him.
- Clarify that loving others does not mean we accept bullying or abuse. State that if we are being bullied or abused by someone, we need to tell a trusted adult, so they can stop these unloving actions from occurring.
- Teach that in today’s Scripture, we hear that we must love and help those who are in need because our love for God is shown in loving those who have less. State that Jesus showed us by his words and actions how important it is to take care of others who are poor or in need.
- Explain that our call to love others like Jesus did is not just about giving only material things like money, toys, or food. Tell them that loving others is also shown through other actions. Provide additional examples of how children might share love: being kind to someone who is sad, smiling and greeting people you meet, teaching another person something you know, becoming a friend to someone who is lonely, or offering to help someone do something.
- State that this type of sharing of our very lives and actions is a very important and necessary way to show true love to others.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What ways did Jesus show us true love? *(He gave his life for everyone, including those who were not easy to love and those who would never love him in return.)*
 - Does loving others mean you accept being bullied or abused? *(No. We must tell a trusted adult when someone is treating us in an unloving way.)*
 - What are some of the ways we are called to show true love? *(Accept reasonable responses.)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. Help the children, or complete the activity as a group if necessary. *Answers will vary.*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Peter Claver, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Peter Claver, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “The Mass,” page 21 (last paragraph)

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus loved us so much that he gave his life for us on the cross.
 - We give our lives for others by loving them even when it is not easy.
 - True love is expressed not only in words but in actions.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 19 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray together the Act of Love found in the “Catholic Prayers” section at the back of *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (page 1994).
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- two sheets of poster board
- a marker
- a list of situations that show “true love”

True Love or Not (15 minutes)

- Prepare a list of situations or actions that show “true love” (caring for others, giving from the heart, forgiving, deeply listening to someone, etc.) and a list of situations or actions that don’t show true love (thinking of self only, giving to get something back, not reaching out to those who are hurting, etc.).
- Place a sign on one side of the room that says “True Love” and another sign on the other side of the room that says “Not True Love.”
- Tell the children to line up in the middle of the room. Explain that you will read a situation or action, and they will decide if the situation or action shows true love or not.
- Point out they will then walk to the side of the room that matches the situation or action. When everybody has selected a side, review by having volunteers explain why it is or is not a true-love situation or action.
- Invite everyone back to the middle of the room and read the next situation or action.

Materials Needed

- paper lunch bags, one for each child
- markers or crayons
- small heart cutouts, seven for each child
- a board or poster to write on

Sharing Love (15 minutes)

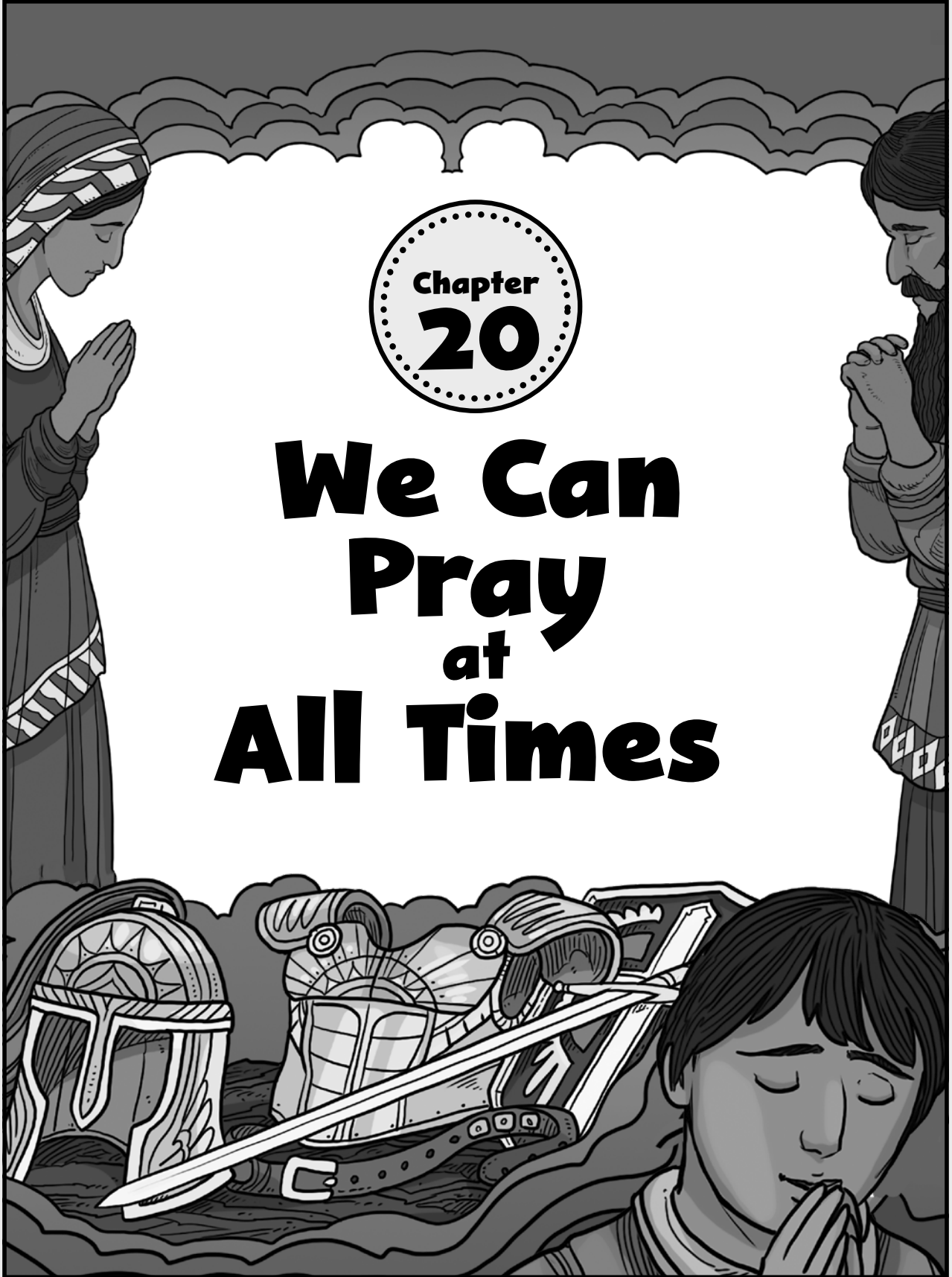
- Provide each child with a paper lunch bag, markers or crayons, and seven small heart cutouts.
- Give them time to decorate their paper bags with words or pictures about love. Write the following words on the board: *hug, share, help, pray.*
- Invite the children to write the name of a different person on each heart. Tell them to write one of the words on the board under each name. Explain that this will be an action of love they are willing to share with the person whose name is written on the heart.
- Tell them that they should pick one heart from their bag every day this week to share their love in the way written with the person named on the heart.
- Remind them that love is an action and must be shown and not just said or felt. State that giving ourselves to others like Jesus did is one way to share God’s love.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- a board or poster to write on

A Gift and an Action (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Love Comes From God | VALENTINE’S DAY” (YouTube, 2:10). Read the words as they appear on the video to help the children.
- Ask the children to share what they learned in the video.
- Discuss together what they know of love so far, including such things as how God shows us love, how people who love us show their love, and how we show others love.
- Invite the children to share different ways they can show love to others, such as family members, friends, classmates, and people they don’t even know. Write their responses on the board.
- Have the children choose one or two ways that they will show love to others and tell them to make a plan to do this action in the next week.



Chapter

20

**We Can
Pray
at
All Times**


**Chapter
20**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Ephesians 6:14–18

Lesson Goals

- to explain that God’s help and protection is like a suit of armor
- to state that we can ask for God’s help in prayer
- to identify prayer as an important way we can help others

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

2566–2768

Key Words

righteousness, breastplate, Evil One, alert, armor

Music Suggestions

- “Be Strong and Put On (The Armour of God),” by Elevation Music (Elevation Kids)
- “Only a Prayer Away,” by Group-Music (GroupMusic)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 20 activity booklet
- half-sheets of paper and markers, one of each for each child
- masking tape
- a board or poster to write on
- printed copies of Saint Patrick’s prayer on page 1851, one for each child
- a large bowl filled with water, two oranges, paper towels or wet wipes
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

In the Scripture for this lesson, we learn how our faith relates to the protective armor of a knight or a soldier. This helps us understand how God provides us with everything we need to be protected against sin and to gain eternal life.

Prayer is a gift from God that draws us closer to him and allows us to ask for the things we need. God knows all our needs, but he wants us to share our needs and the needs of others as an act of love and trust in him. We are reminded to pray at all times.

In this chapter, the children learn about the tools we have to keep us strong in faith, especially prayer. As you prepare to teach this lesson, spend time asking God to deepen your own prayer life to enable you to witness to the children about this incredible gift.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 20 activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Provide each child with a half-sheet of paper and a marker. Write the word *sin* on the board and ask the children to copy this word on their papers. While they are doing this, place a piece of masking tape on the floor to divide the room into two sections.
- Have half of the children bring their papers and markers and stand at least 2 feet away from one side of the marked line. Have the other half bring their papers and markers and stand an equal distance away on the opposite side of the line.
- Explain that when you say "Go," they will crumple their piece of paper and try to throw it over the line. Explain that they can help move the "sin" away after the first throw by using their markers to push the papers over the line. Point out that both sides will be trying to push the sin away. Note that they are not allowed to cross or stand on the line.
- Allow the children to play for 4 minutes, and then ask them to pick up a paper near them, throw it in the wastebasket, and go back to their seats.
- State that they just had a pretend battle against sin. Tell them that in today's lesson they will learn what gifts they have to protect themselves against sin.

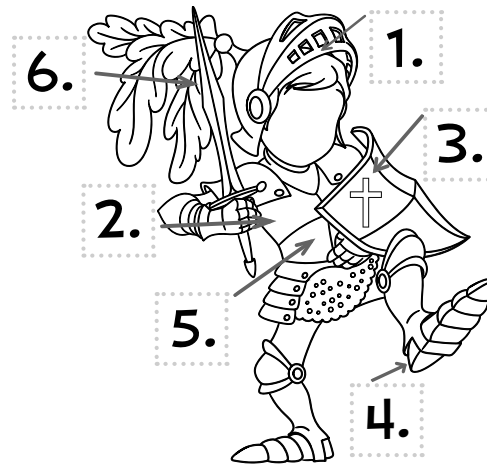


Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Ephesians 6:10–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1849). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1850. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1850–1851 and to share what they see.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Be sure to discuss the bold key words with the children to help them understand.
- Discuss with the children that **armor** is metal coverings worn by soldiers or warriors to protect the body in battle. Explain that in this story the various pieces of armor are compared with important parts of our faith to show how God keeps us safe.

- Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Can you name the parts of armor that were mentioned in the story? (*belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, sword*)
 - What is another very important aspect of God’s help and protection for us? (*Prayer—we should pray and ask God for help for ourselves and for others.*)
 - Should we give up when things get hard? (*No, we should keep alert, never give up, and pray always.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1851, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The devil, or Evil One, wants to harm us by making us do wrong.
 - God protects us by giving us spiritual armor that can’t be seen. With this armor, we can stand strong against sin.
 - This Scripture passage from Ephesians tells us about the kinds of spiritual armor.

Live It!

- Read the *Live It!* on page 1851, or have a volunteer read it.
- To save time, provide a printed version of the prayer for the children to take home as a prayer card instead of having them write out the whole prayer.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1851.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows truth as a belt and righteousness as a breastplate. Image 2 shows faith as a shield protecting from arrows shot by the Evil One. Image 3 shows salvation as a helmet and the Word of God as the sword. Image 4 shows a person in a suit of armor praying for God’s help.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Are You Protected?

- Prepare a bowl of water, big enough for two oranges to fit inside it, on a table. Invite the children to come and stand around the table so they can see.
- Show the children the two oranges that have their “armor” on, and place them in the bowl of water. Ask, “Will the oranges float or sink with their armor on?” *(They will float.)*
- Take one of the oranges out, and take off part of the orange peel as you tell the children that this orange forgot to put his shield of faith on today.
- Place the orange back into the water, and ask the children if they notice anything different. The orange will not float as well and will start to sink.
- Continue to name the different parts of spiritual armor that were mentioned in the Scripture passage (see list below), telling the children that the orange forgot to wear or use a part of its spiritual armor, and take a piece of the orange peel off each time. Place the orange back in the water each time, and invite the children to watch what happens.
 - helmet of salvation
 - breastplate of righteousness (goodness)
 - shoes of good news of peace
 - belt of truth
 - sword of the Word of God
- Invite the children to continually compare the orange that is being peeled away (i.e., not using its spiritual armor) with the orange that still has its full “armor” intact.
- End the activity by peeling the rest of the peel off, saying that the orange didn’t even remember to pray. The orange, at this point, should sink completely.

Process the Activity

- Discuss with the children the importance of each part of the armor to protect ourselves from sin and the difficult things that can happen in life.
- State that through its day, if the orange had prayed for help, God would have provided it with the protection and guidance it needed. Tell the children that prayer is our way to stay close to God and to ask for his help, so we can be ready for whatever happens in our day.

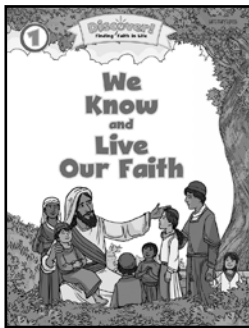
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 211–212 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain that life is not always easy, and sometimes we have to be prepared to do hard things and to be ready to put on God’s armor.
- Share that we need to be like football players, who wear a type of protection or armor and run with the ball, no matter what might be trying to knock them down. Remind the children that verse 18 in the story tells us that we must pray always and never give up.
- State that when we know we are protected, we are not afraid of what is ahead for us—even if it might be hard times.
- Tell the group that knowing we can ask for God’s help by praying to him is what makes spiritual armor so powerful to keep us safe. State that being under the protection of God is the best protection anyone can have.
- Review that prayer is talking and listening to God and is something we should do throughout our day.
- State that we should always be comfortable talking to God with our own words to ask for his help. Tell the children that we can talk to God like we talk to our parents or friends.
- Teach that learning prayers that Jesus and his Church give to us is important, as they are gifts to us to give us words of love to talk to God and ask him for help.
- Introduce or review the prayers in the “Catholic Prayers” section of *The Catholic Children’s Bible* on pages 1990–1997. Congratulate the children for prayers that they have already learned, and remind them that saying prayers regularly will help them continue to learn these prayers by heart.
- Explain that prayer is an important way we can ask God to help us and others. Use the following points:
 - Jesus taught us how important prayer is. The Bible tells us that he prayed on many occasions, asking God the Father for help.
 - When we know someone needs help, one of the most powerful ways to help is to pray to God for them.
 - The more we pray for ourselves and others, the more we can see God answering our prayers, and we can see how he answers them in better ways than we ever thought possible.
- Explain that our prayers to God may not always give us exactly what we request. State that God knows, even better than we do, what is best for us. Share an example from your life to help the children understand that God’s answer to prayer might not be exactly what we want, but in the end, it is the best that could happen to us.
- Teach that the closer we get to Jesus and the more of our spiritual armor we put on, the more we can see how powerful praying to God is, and we can learn to trust him more for help and protection.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does today's Scripture passage tell us about giving up? (*It tells us that we should keep going and never give up.*)
 - What are some different ways to pray? (*We can pray for ourselves or others with our own words. We can pray using the prayers of the Church.*)
 - Does God always answer our prayers? (*Yes, but not always in the exact way we want. God always knows what is best for us.*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Joan of Arc, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Joan of Arc, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Prayer Is Talking to God," page 48

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - God's help and protection is like a suit of armor.
 - We can ask for God's help in prayer.
 - Prayer is an important way we can help others.
- Ask the children to find the sticker sheet and the Seek and Find sheet in their folders. Direct them to place the chapter 20 sticker in the correct location on the Seek and Find sheet.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray together the Angel of God prayer on page 1991, which asks for help from guardian angels. Explain to the children that this is another form of protection and help we have. If the children have difficulty reading, read each line and have them repeat after you.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers or crayons
- a board or poster to write on

Five-Finger Prayer (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that God has given us five fingers to use for many different things. Explain that one important use is to help us remember those we need to pray for.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons, and instruct the children to trace one of their hands.
- Write the following on the board:
 - Thumb—Family and Friends
 - Index—Teachers
 - Middle—Leaders
 - Ring—Sick People
 - Pinky—Myself
- Invite the children to write the people listed on the board in the correct place on their hand to remind them who to pray for. Explain, using the following points:
 - Our thumb is closest to us so we are reminded to pray for those closest to us, like family and friends.
 - Our pointer finger reminds us to pray for those who point us in the right direction.
 - Our middle finger is our tallest finger, so it reminds us to pray for those who lead our way.
 - Our ring finger is our weakest finger, so we pray for those who are weak or struggling.
 - Our pinky finger is our last finger, so we remember to pray for ourselves last.
- Tell the children that the next time they fold their hands in prayer, they can remember all the people they can pray for.

Materials Needed

- an image of Jesus
- four foam pool noodles
- LED tealight candles, one for each child

Lighting the Way (15 minutes)

- Have the children stand on one side of the room. Dim the lights, but do not make it completely dark. Place an image of Jesus on the other side of the room and place four foam pool noodles on the floor as obstacles along the path to the image of Jesus.
- Give each child an LED tealight candle. Instruct two children at a time to turn on their candles. Allow them to walk to the other side of the room to the image of Jesus. Tell them to watch out for the obstacles on the floor.
- Explain that when they reach the image, they should keep their candles on and stand facing the children that still need to come.
- Point out how bright their candles are together when they all have reached the image of Jesus.
- Explain that the candles represent prayers to God. Tell them that our prayers light the way to love and goodness and protect us from the darkness of sin.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- a board or poster to write on

I Will Pray Always (15 minutes)

- Show the video “I Will Pray” (YouTube, 2:55), and invite the children to share what they learned from the video.
- Share how we should pray always and on every occasion, as today’s Scripture passage tells us.
- Invite the children to give examples of when or where they might be able to pray each day. Encourage them to notice that there are few boundaries for when and where we can pray. Point out that a prayer doesn’t have to be long. It can take just a few seconds.
- Draw a clock on the board with lines coming from each number. Ask the children to think of things we might pray for at each hour of the day and to write these things on the lines that come from the numbers.
- Tell the children that they can create a similar clock at home with their families to give them ideas for what they might pray for each hour of the day.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Liturgical Season Lessons

All Saints' Day

A Call to Holiness 214

Advent

Preparing for Jesus 224

Christmas

We Celebrate Jesus' Birth 236

Lent

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Easter

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Pentecost

Filled with the Holy Spirit 266

Ordinary Time

We Learn from Jesus 276

Mary

Saying "Yes" to God 286

All Saints' Day



A Call to Holiness





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 5:38–42

Lesson Goals

- to explain that Jesus brought a little girl to life as a hint of resurrection and eternal life
- to identify that the saints live forever through the power of Jesus' Resurrection
- to discuss our own resurrection and eternal life with God and the saints

Catechism References

946–962, 992–996

Key Words

confusion, wailing,
Communion of Saints, Purgatory

Music Suggestions

- "Walk Humbly (Micah 6:8)," by Group Music (Group Publishing)
- "Lord We Hear Your Call (feat. Jane Mitchell & Andrew Chinn)," by Drew Lane (Butterfly Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the All Saints' Day activity booklet
- 3-x-5-inch index cards, one for each child
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- a basket for the index cards
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

November concludes the Church's liturgical year. It comes toward the end of the calendar year as well. We begin to turn our thoughts toward the year's end and to plan new beginnings. So it is an appropriate time to remember those who have gone before us.

We set the tone for this process with the Feast of All Saints. We start not by grieving our losses but by celebrating those who have already reached the goal we strive for: holiness, peace, and joy in Heaven forever.

We look to the lives of the saints to find inspiration and hope for what we can also become. We pursue a call to holiness, a life of love, which invites us all to peace and joy in the face of the suffering and pain in life. We look to this goal, and we start anew.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the All Saints' Day activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children whether they know anyone who is holy. Invite them to think of parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, babysitters, or even friends who they believe to be holy.
- Give the children index cards and markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Have the children draw and label a picture of one holy person in their lives. Allow a few minutes for the children to work.
- Have the children come forward to place their cards in the basket you have provided.
- Pull out a few cards and show them to the group. Affirm that most of the children probably know at least one person who is holy. Tell them that in today's Scripture, they will see a hint of the new life that God offers everyone who loves and follows his way.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Mark 5:21–43 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1537 and 1540). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1538. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the surrounding pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1538–1539 and to describe what they see.

- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Why were the people at Jairus's house upset? (*The little girl, Jairus's daughter, had just died.*)
 - What did Jesus do first? (*He told her family that the girl was only sleeping.*)
 - What did he do next? (*He went into the girl's room, healed her, and brought her back to life.*)
 - What did the girl do? (*She got up and began walking around.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the directions and help any children who are having difficulty finding the words. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1539, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - It is natural to be sad when someone dies. The girl's family was sad when she died.
 - The people made fun of Jesus when he said that the girl was only sleeping. This was because she really had died.
 - Jesus really raised the girl from the dead.
 - The joy the parents felt is just a hint of the joy we will experience when we reach Heaven.
 - At the end of time, we will all live again. We know this because Jesus defeated death by dying and rising from the dead. He showed he has power over death.
- Share with the children that this story of Jesus raising the girl gives us a hint of resurrection and eternal life.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1539, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite volunteers to share what they might have said to the girl if they had been the girl's father or mother. Affirm all reasonable answers.
- Ask the children to say a quick silent prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of life they received from God.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1539.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the family upset about the girl's death. Image 2 shows Jesus putting the mourning people out. Image 3 shows Jesus telling the little girl to get up. Image 4 shows the parents hugging their living daughter.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity (Craft)****Imagining Sainthood for Me**

- Tell the children that saints were born ordinary people like us. Explain that the difference is that they became holy because of their focus on living with love as Jesus taught us. Point out that we are all called to live holy lives; God wants all of us to become saints.
- Invite the children to imagine what it would be like to be a saint. Ask the children to think about what might be the same about their life and what might be different.
- Distribute the markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of themselves on a piece of paper.
- Write the word *Saint* on the board and invite the children to write this word underneath their picture followed by their name.

Process the Activity

- Invite volunteers to share their drawings with the group.
- Tell the children that many saints wanted to be saints from a very early age—sometimes as young as three or four. Let the children know they are not too young to pray and act with love, like the saints did.

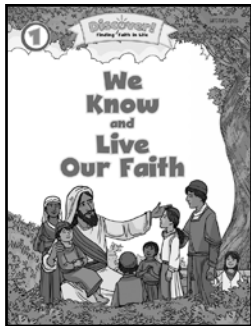
Additional Activity Options

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 223 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that saints are holy people who followed Jesus during their lives on Earth and live in joy forever with God in Heaven.
- Point out that on All Saints' Day, we celebrate everyone in Heaven—not just saints who have special days on the calendar.
- Remind the group that God calls every person to become a saint. Explain that this means that God calls everyone to holiness. Tell the children that God can give us everything we need to live in love and to become holy.
- Explain that the **Communion of Saints** refers to all the people who are members of the Body of Christ. Tell the children that this includes all the saints already in Heaven and everyone living as part of the Body of Christ, the Church, on Earth right now.
- Tell the children that the Communion of Saints also includes us, because we are members of the Body of Christ and are joined to the Church in Heaven. Explain that we can talk to the saints and ask for their prayers. Explain that *communion* means “union with.” Point out that as members of the Communion of Saints, we all share love and prayers with all the other members of the Body of Christ—in Heaven, on Earth, and in **Purgatory**. Briefly mention that Purgatory is a final cleansing some may need to go through after death before entry into Heaven.
- Tell the children there are many holy people on Earth today and that some of them might be in our families, parishes, and neighborhoods.
- Explain that we all look forward to the day when we will all be united with God and with one another in Heaven.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who are the saints? (*They are holy people who followed the loving way of Jesus. They live forever with God in Heaven.*)
 - What do we celebrate on All Saints' Day? (*We celebrate all people who are in Heaven, whether they are known saints or not.*)
 - Does God call everyone to be a saint? (*Yes, God calls everyone to live in love and to be holy.*)

- Will God give us everything we need to be a saint? *(Yes, God will help us be saints if we ask him to.)*
- What is the Communion of Saints? *(It is all of the people who are part of the Body of Christ—in Heaven, on Earth, and those waiting for Heaven in Purgatory. We are part of the Communion of Saints.)*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Invite the children to draw a picture of a kind and loving person that they know in the space provided. Help them to write the name of that person below the picture. Invite them to say a quick prayer for that person in their mind and heart.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “Our Friends, the Saints” + activity, pages 55–56

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Jesus brought a little girl to life as a hint of resurrection and eternal life.
 - The saints live forever through the power of Jesus’ Resurrection.
 - We look forward to our own resurrection and eternal life with God and the saints.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in the following prayer:
 - Loving God, your saints show us that everyone, from every place, can become holy. We ask Blessed Julian to help us know God’s love. We ask Saint Francis to help us care for God’s world. We ask Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint Damien of Molokai to help us love God and others.
 - We ask all the saints to help us and pray for us, in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord.
- Invite the children to respond with “Amen,” and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Praying with the Saints

Tell the children that we ask the saints to pray with us and for us to God, because they are close to God in Heaven. Explain to the children that different saints are known for responding to different requests. Saints become the "patron saint" of their special area.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Loving God, you give us the gift of your saints' lives to show us that everyone, from every place, can become holy. All the saints, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Blessed Julian of Norwich, who taught us about God's love for us, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Paul the Apostle, who changed his life to follow Jesus, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Francis of Assisi, who taught us to care for God's world, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Damien of Molokai, who cared for those in most need, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Margaret of Scotland, whose whose faith and love helped the poorest of her people, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Saint Teresa of Ávila, who showed us the way to God in prayer, . . .

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Amen.

Invite the children to make the Sign of the Cross. Then conclude by playing or singing an appropriate hymn or song.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- strips of craft paper (metallic, floral, or other decorative motif), straight on one side and zig-zagged on the other, one strip per child (plus spares in case of mistakes)
- markers or crayons
- a stapler

Materials Needed

- a bulletin board with several pictures of saints
- circles of yellow construction paper
- double-sided tape or sticky tack for attaching the halos
- two blindfolds

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- song sheets or hymnals for the hymn you choose

All Saints' Day Crowns (15 minutes)

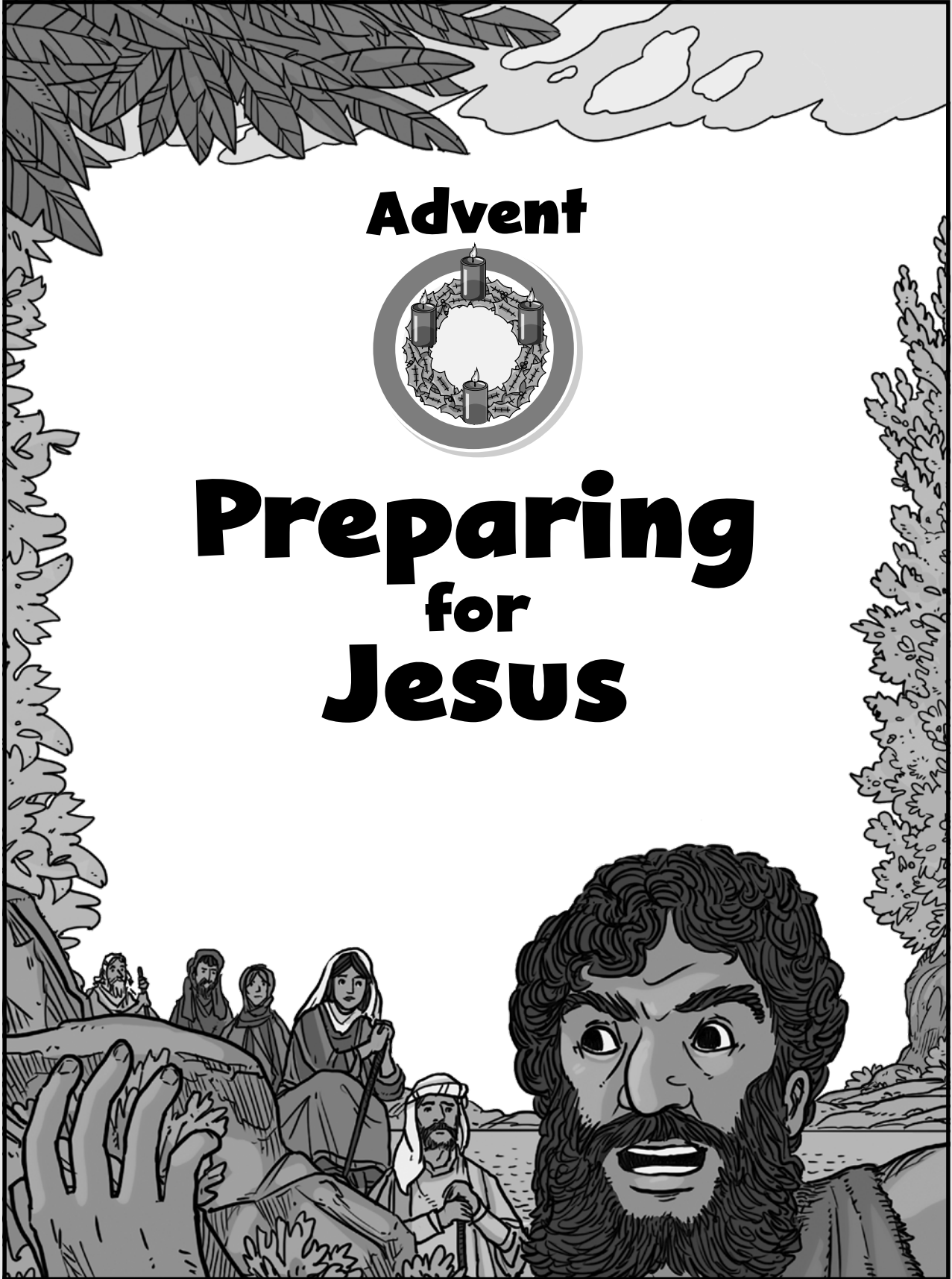
- Prepare a sample crown ahead of time to show the children.
- Tell the children that they will make paper crowns to wear to celebrate the crowns that the saints wear with Jesus in Heaven. Show the children the sample crown you made.
- Distribute the strips of paper and the markers or crayons to the children. Direct the children to draw jewels, flowers, or other decorative patterns that suggest the type of saint they want to be.
- Help the children staple their strips into a circle and place the crowns on their heads.
- Invite volunteers to explain their decorating choices.
- Tell the children to take their crowns home to show their families.

Pin the Halo on the Saint (15 minutes)

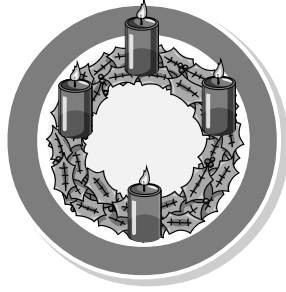
- Invite the children to play "Pin the Halo on the Saint."
- Give each child a yellow circle and a piece of tape or sticky tack to put on the back of the circles.
- Blindfold two children. Have them turn in three circles and then walk toward the bulletin board covered with several pictures of saints. Ask them to try to stick their halos to a saint without looking.
- Continue the activity until all the children have had a turn.
- Ask the children to share what are some qualities that saints have. Remind them that the saints in Heaven are holy people who followed the way of Jesus. Invite them to share one thing they might do to follow the way of Jesus today.

All Saints' Day Review (15 minutes)

- Show the video "All Saints Day for Kids" (YouTube, 1:26) to the group.
- Ask the children the following questions to check for comprehension:
 - When is All Saints' Day? (*All Saints' Day is November 1, the day after Halloween.*)
 - Who are saints? (*Saints are people who love God and others.*)
 - Why do we remember the saints? (*We remember them for their example of faith and for loving a lot.*)
- Teach the children an All Saints' Day hymn, such as "For All the Saints." Distribute song sheets or hymnals, and sing the song together.

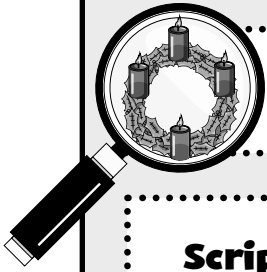


Advent



**Preparing
for
Jesus**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 1:4–8

Lesson Goals

- to indicate that John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus
- to identify ourselves as wanting to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas
- to describe ways we can make ourselves ready for Jesus

Catechism References

522–524

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

locust, prepare

Music Suggestions

- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” by The Little Sunshine Kids (Starting Five Media)
- “Hope, Peace, Joy and Love (Advent Song),” by Lumin8 Children’s Choir (Calvary Church)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Advent activity booklet
- a Nativity scene with large, sturdy manger
- cotton balls, one for each child
- copies of the handout “Preparing for Jesus” (TX006171), one for each child
- round-tipped scissors
- tape or glue sticks
- envelopes, one for each child
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Anyone who has ever helped prepare to welcome a new baby into a family already has some sense of what Advent can mean to us. The sacrifices we make, as we prepare space in our homes and hearts for this new member of our family, are made with excitement and anticipation. In a similar way, when we choose to take on sacrifices or penances as part of our Advent practice, we make room for the love of Jesus in our lives.

Sacrifice and *penance* are really shorthand terms for “loving.” Love means going beyond ourselves to care for the good of another. Learning to love is a lifelong task. We practice this task more mindfully in Advent. As adults, we too can learn from the practice of placing straw into the manger to prepare “a soft bed” for Jesus, marking our acts of love (or penance, or sacrifice). Sharing this practice with children helps us to realize that even our smallest acts of love have infinite value in the eyes of Jesus.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Advent activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think about times when they have been excited about something that is about to happen. (Examples might include a promised treat, a special family trip, or the birth of a new sibling.) Ask volunteers to share some examples.
- Invite the volunteers into a conversation about their feelings as they looked forward to that special event. Ask the following questions:
 - How long did you have to wait for your special event?
 - Was it hard for you to wait?
 - What did you do to help you to be patient?
 - Did you do anything special to get ready? If so, what?
- Tell the children that in this lesson, they will be learning that God helped his people to get ready for Jesus by sending John the Baptist to **prepare** them. Explain that the word *prepare* means "to get ready."
- Tell the children that during this season of Advent, the Church is getting ready for Christmas. Explain to the group that in this lesson, they will learn what they need to do to prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmas.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Mark 1:1–8 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1524). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1526. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1524.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1526–1527 and to describe what they see.

- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did John tell the people? (*“Turn away from your sins and be baptized . . . and God will forgive your sins” [verse 4].*)
 - After the people confessed their sins, what did John do? (*He baptized them in the Jordan River.*)
 - John told people that a man would come after him who would be much greater than he was. Who might this person be? (*Accept all responses. Tell the children they will find out who this was shortly.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.. Read the instructions and help the children remember the answer from the Bible story. *Answer: JOHN*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1527, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - We get ready for important visitors.
 - When Jesus came to walk on Earth, God sent John the Baptist to help people to get ready for Jesus.
 - John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus by asking people to turn away from their sins. He also invited them to be baptized as a sign that they were ready to change their hearts.
 - John told people that Jesus was coming. John said that Jesus’ Baptism would be more powerful than John’s. We have received the Baptism of Jesus, and we are part of the Church, the family of God.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1527, or have a volunteer read it.
- Read the prayer for the children. Then ask them to repeat it after you, going slowly, phrase by phrase.
- Let the children know that they will see this prayer again when they are preparing for First Reconciliation. Explain that this will most likely be next year, when they are in second grade. Tell them that this prayer shows God that we are sorry for making wrong choices, and we pray for God’s help to make better choices in the future.
- Explain that this prayer is a good one for Advent because, in Advent, we are preparing ourselves to welcome Jesus.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1527.
- Invite several volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows John the Baptist. Image 2 shows John calling people away from sin and to Baptism. Image 3 shows the many people who went to John. Image 4 shows John baptizing with water.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

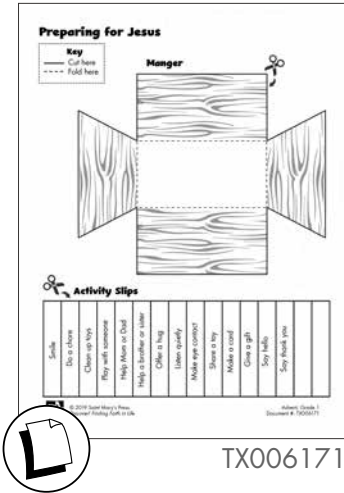
Advent

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Making a Manger to Welcome Jesus

- Distribute the copies of the handout and envelopes, one each per child. Have scissors and tape or glue sticks ready for the next steps.
- Tell the children to look over the page but to wait for instructions before beginning. Tell them to first watch what you do. Explain that then it will be their turn to try.
- Explain to the children that they will be making a manger that resembles the one that the infant Jesus would have slept in when he was born.
- Distribute the scissors. Show the children how to cut out the mangers. You may want to take an extra copy of the sheet and show them exactly how to do this.
- Show the children how to fold the manger and tape it into a 3-D shape. It may also help to have a completed version already done, so that you can show them what the finished product can look like.
- Tell them that they will have the chance to fill the manger with soft “bedding” for Jesus by doing kind actions.
- Invite them to cut out their activity slips and place these in their envelopes. If they have ideas to write on the blank slips, you may need to help them by writing their ideas down for them.



Process the Activity

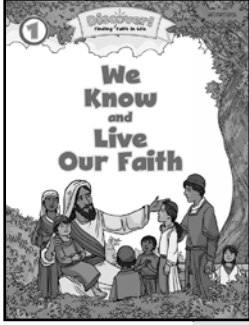
- Encourage the children to take their mangers home and practice doing kind actions for others there. Tell them that whenever they do a kind action for a family member, they can find the slip that lists that action and make it part of the “bed” for the Baby Jesus in the manger.
- Explain that on Christmas Eve, the night before Christmas, they may put the cutout of Baby Jesus into the manger. Tell them that all of their actions will make a soft bed for the Baby Jesus.

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 pages 233–234 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that John the Baptist came to call people to turn away from their sins and to believe in God. Tell them that he told people to trust that God would forgive their sins.
- Continue with some of the following points:
 - John the Baptist baptized people in the Jordan River. John’s baptism was for people who wanted to change their hearts and turn to God. This baptism was different from the Baptism that Jesus brought to us. Our Baptism brought us into God’s family and made us members of the Church.
 - John said the Baptism that Jesus gives is more powerful than his own. John wanted to get people ready to receive Jesus.
 - In Advent, we are preparing to receive Jesus, just as the people were in the time of John the Baptist; we are preparing to celebrate Christmas.
 - We can get ready for Jesus in Advent by praying, telling God we are sorry for our sins, and doing kind actions for others. We change our hearts. We change from being mean or selfish to being more loving and kind.
 - In Advent, the Church uses the color purple to stand for being sorry and turning away from sins and the color rose (pink) to stand for joy.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What does it mean to turn away from sins? *(We change our hearts. We do the best we can to follow Jesus, to be loving and kind.)*
 - What does the season of Advent prepare us to do? *(It helps us prepare to receive Jesus into our lives. It helps us prepare to celebrate Christmas.)*
 - What can we do to get ready to welcome Jesus? *(We can pray, tell God we are sorry for our sins, and do kind actions for others.)*
 - Why do we use purple and pink in church during Advent? *(Purple means being sorry and turning away from sin. Pink means joy.)*
- Have the children turn to page 4 in the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, and encourage the children to say, “Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us,” during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “Advent,” page 31

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - John the Baptist prepared the people for Jesus.
 - In Advent, we take time to prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.
 - We can get ready for Jesus in Advent by praying, telling God we are sorry for our sins, and doing kind actions for others.

Short Closing Prayer (*optional*)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to repeat "Come, Lord Jesus" after you as you pray this short litany:

Leader: To our family and friends this Christmas: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To all of us here together: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our parish and all our parish helpers: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our Church around the world: Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: To our town or our city, our country and the whole world:
Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

A Soft Welcome for Baby Jesus

Prepare by setting up the Nativity scene with large manger (but without the Baby Jesus) in the prayer corner or other appropriate spot in the classroom. Give each child a cotton ball. Tell the group that at a certain point in the prayer service, they will make a procession. Tell them that this means that they will line up and walk slowly, one by one, toward the manger. Explain that they will place their cotton ball in the manger to represent all of the good actions they will do throughout Advent. At the end, as an option, the model of the Baby Jesus may also be placed in the manger by the last child in line.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)*

Leader: Lord Jesus, you are truly God and truly human. More than two thousand years ago, you came into the world as a tiny baby.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: As we prepare to welcome you at Christmas, we offer you all of our good actions throughout this Advent.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We offer you our lives, our hearts, and everything that you have given to us.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will look for your presence in our world and in one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

Leader: We will welcome you with every kind action that we do for one another.

All: Come, Lord Jesus!

All form into a single line for the procession. Each child places his or her cotton ball into the manger. At the end, as an option, the model of the Baby Jesus may also be placed in the manger. Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- handouts with a colorable image of an Advent wreath, one for each child
- markers or crayons
- Advent music and a device for playing it

Advent Coloring (15 minutes)

- Search the internet for a simple black-and-white image of an Advent wreath that can be colored.
- Print enough copies for each child. Distribute the handouts along with markers or crayons, and invite the children to color in the wreath with the correct colors for the candles. You may also encourage them to write numbers on the candles, so they can understand that the third candle marks a special Sunday in Advent.
- Play some Advent music in the background while the children color.
- Encourage them to finish their coloring at home if they do not complete it in the time available.

Materials Needed

- tape or glue sticks
- paper plates, one for each child
- 1- to 2-inch sections of cardboard tube from paper towels or toilet paper, four for each child
- 1- to 2-inch strips of purple and rose paper, three purple and one rose for each child
- yellow tissue paper "flames," four for each child
- leaves cut from green paper, artificial greenery, or real evergreen branches

An Advent Wreath (15 minutes)

- Prepare ahead of time by making a sample Advent wreath according to the instructions below.
- Explain to the children that they will be making Advent wreaths. Tell them that Advent wreaths appear in churches as a sign of our preparation for Jesus coming to dwell with us. Explain that many families also use these wreaths in their homes as a way of counting down the weeks until Christmas.
- Show the children the process for making the Advent wreath: Take a paper plate, four cardboard tube "candles," three purple paper strips, one rose paper strip, and some tape or glue. Around each "candle," tape one paper strip. Arrange the "candles" on the plate, and tape or glue them down. Decorate the wreath with greenery of your choice, taping or gluing this down around the candles. Add paper "flames" in the center of each tube.
- Help the children follow the steps using the materials provided to complete their own Advent wreaths.
- Encourage the children to take their wreaths home and use them in their families, perhaps as a centerpiece at the family table or a feature on the home prayer table.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- precut paper hearts, one for each child
- red crayons, one for each child
- a board or poster to write on

The Message of John the Baptist (15 Minutes)

- Show the video “Tell Me the Story: John the Baptist” (YouTube, 2:23).
- Ask the following questions to check for comprehension:
 - What was John’s Good News? *(That Jesus was God’s Son who was coming to save the world.)*
 - Who came to John? *(People who were sorry for their sins.)*
 - How did John help people prepare for Jesus? *(He baptized them.)*
 - What did John say that he was doing? *(Baptizing with water.)*
 - How would Jesus baptize? *(Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.)*
 - How does the Holy Spirit help us? *(The Holy Spirit helps us to share God’s love.)*
- Remind the children that we learn about John the Baptist in Advent because John the Baptist reminds us to prepare our hearts for Jesus to come to us at Christmas.
- Distribute a precut paper heart and a red crayon to each child.
- Write on the board, “Come, Lord Jesus!” Instruct the children to copy the prayer onto their paper hearts in big letters.
- Direct the children to take their hearts home and to display them there. The hearts will remind them and their families to prepare for the coming of Jesus into their hearts at Christmas.

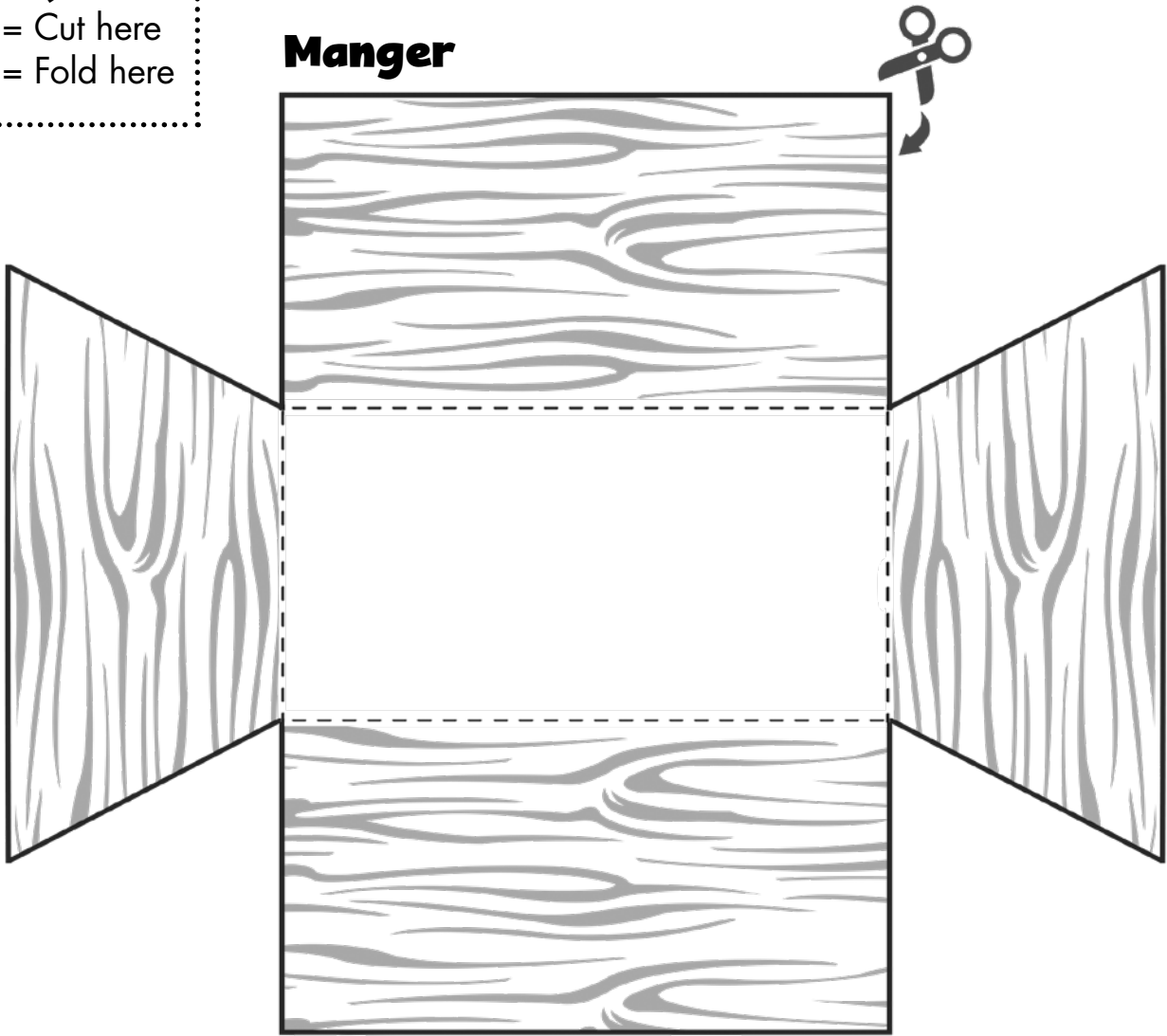
Preparing for Jesus

Key

— = Cut here

- - - = Fold here

Manger



Activity Slips

Smile
Do a chore
Clean up toys
Play with someone
Help Mom or Dad
Help a brother or sister
Offer a hug
Listen quietly
Make eye contact
Share a toy
Make a card
Give a gift
Say hello
Say thank you

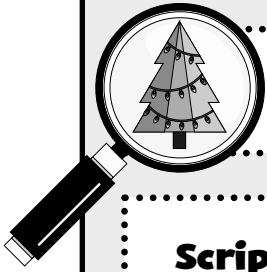


Christmas



We Celebrate Jesus' Birth





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 2:8–11, 13

Lesson Goals

- to explain that angels are God's messengers
- to identify that the shepherds' fear was turned to joy when they heard about Jesus' birth
- to name that Jesus' birth is Good News for us too

Catechism References

456–460, 477–478, 527–530

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

shepherd, flock, angel, savior

Music Suggestions

- "Silent Night," by The Countdown Kids (Suite 102)
- "O Come All Ye Faithful," by the Cedarmont Kids (Cedarmont Music, LLC)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Christmas activity booklet
- plain white paper coffee cups, one for each child
- 2-inch foam balls, one for each child
- white craft feathers, at least two for each child
- glue and markers
- newspaper and paper towels or wet wipes
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

When Jesus was born, God chose to share this world-changing, life-altering news with simple people rather than those who were considered powerful or important. God's "birth announcement," brought to the shepherds by an angel, was as simple and humble as Jesus' entry into the world, a newborn laid in a manger.

As the Christmas season can become stressful and complicated with the coordination of events and elaborate gift-giving, we can lose clear sight of the real meaning and purpose of the celebration. Let us pray for the ability to celebrate Christmas in the simple and receptive spirit of the shepherds and find, at the heart of the Christmas season, a reason to be filled with wonder and joy because of Jesus' birth.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Christmas activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think of a time when they found out that something really good had happened. Examples might include receiving a surprise visit from a loved relative, getting a special gift or new pet, or learning about a win by their favorite sports team. Ask them to remember where they were when they got the news, how they felt, and what they said or did in response.
- Ask volunteers to share what their good news was and their experience of receiving it. Point out that when something joyful happens, we often remember it clearly because of the strong feelings it brings.
- Share with the children that the Scripture story they will read today will tell us about some wonderful news that was shared a long time ago.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 2:1–20 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1576). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1578. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture story found on page 1576.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1578–1579 and to describe what they see.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What group of people was in the fields outside the city on the night Jesus was born? What were these people doing out there? (*They were shepherds. They were tending their sheep.*)
 - What did the **angel**, the messenger from God, tell the shepherds? (*The angel told them that Jesus, the **Savior**, had been born in Bethlehem.*)

- How did the shepherds feel about the news at first? *(They were afraid. They were not sure what was happening.)*
- How did the shepherds' feelings change? *(They stopped being afraid. They became filled with joy.)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the directions and help any children who are having difficulty finding the words. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1579, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The messenger who brought the news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds was an angel.
 - The shepherds were afraid of the angel at first. He was big and powerful. He might have looked scary to them. They might not have understood who he was at first.
 - The shepherds' fear turned to joy, because the angel brought news of Jesus' birth. The angel said Jesus would be their savior and would keep them safe from sin and death.
 - We celebrate Christmas as a time of joy every year because Jesus' birth is Good News for all people.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1579, or have a volunteer read it.
- Ask volunteers to take the role of the "shepherds." Encourage each "shepherd" to tell the group what they saw and heard, how they felt, and what they will do now.
- Close by inviting the children to repeat the following prayer after you, "Thank you, Jesus, for coming to save us," and then lead the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1579.
- Invite the children to look at the images again, as you reread the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the shepherds taking care of their flocks. Image 2 shows the angel appearing to the shepherds. Image 3 shows Joseph and Mary with the newborn Jesus. Image 4 shows the great “army of angels” appearing to the shepherds.*)

**Discover! (25 minutes)****Core Learning Activity (Craft)****A Christmas Tree Angel**

- Make your own sample angel ahead of time using the directions below.
- Prepare the following supplies for each child: one plain white paper coffee cup, one foam ball, two white craft feathers, glue, and a marker. You may want to lay these out on a table ahead of time, so that children can come up to get their supplies independently when they are ready for each step in the process.
- Explain to the children that they will make an angel decoration that can be used for a Christmas tree ornament or topper or as a table decoration.
- Lay out a sheet of newspaper on each child’s desk before beginning the craft. Have paper towels or wet wipes ready to clean up any messes.
- Show the sample angel to the children. Explain that they will need to glue the head (foam ball) on the flat, closed end of the angel’s body (cup). Explain that they will then glue the feathers (wings) on the back, one on each side. Note that they can draw a face on the head with a marker, if they wish.
- Offer, as options, some or all of the following to allow children to embellish their craft: shiny star stickers, craft paper, glitter markers, glue, paint, sparkles, sequins, and so on.

Process the Activity

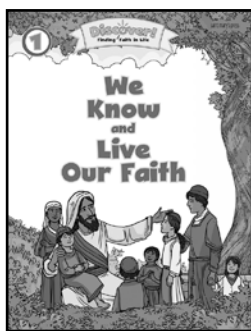
- Remind the children that the angel in the story brought God’s message of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds. Explain that it was a message of joy and hope. Tell the children that these craft angels can be a reminder of Christmas joy and hope each time the children or their families look at them.

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 pages 244–245 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that an angel brought the message of Jesus' birth to the shepherds. Tell them that the shepherds were afraid at first, but their fear changed to joy when they understood the angel's message.
- Explain the following points about angels to the children:
 - Angels are pure spirits. This means that they do not have bodies, so they really do not have wings. We show angels with wings to show that they can move quickly from one place to another.
 - Angels sometimes act as messengers of God to human beings.
 - The angels see God and sing praise to God in Heaven at all times.
- Tell the children that we can be joyful about Jesus' birth, just as the shepherds were. Explain to them that Jesus' birth is Good News for us, because it means we have a savior, someone to keep us safe from sin and lead us toward Heaven.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What are angels? What do they do? (*Angels are pure spirits. They are messengers of God. They bring God's messages to people. They sing God's praises.*)
 - How did the shepherds feelings about the angel's message change? (*At first they were afraid, but later they were joyful.*)
 - Why is Jesus' birth Good News for us? (*Jesus is our savior who protects us from sin and leads us to Heaven.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Nicholas of Myra, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Nicholas, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Jesus Is Born" + activity, pages 12–13

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Angels are God's messengers.
 - The shepherds' fear was turned to joy when they heard about Jesus' birth.
 - Jesus' birth is Good News for us too.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Continue by saying, "Let us pray the prayer the angels sang at the birth of Jesus. I will say a part of the prayer, and you will answer, 'Amen.'"

Leader: Glory to God in the highest.

All: Amen.

Leader: And on Earth, peace to people of good will (*Roman Missal*).

All: Amen.

Leader: O God, we praise you.

All: Amen.

Leader: O God, we bless you.

All: Amen.

Leader: O God, we glorify you.

All: Amen.

Leader: O God, we thank you for sending Jesus to us!

All: Amen.

- Close by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Good News of Great Joy

Prepare by setting up the same Nativity scene you used in the Advent lesson. You may want to place a small throw pillow or cushion for comfortable kneeling in front of the manger. Choose a concluding Christmas carol to play or to sing together. Explain to the children that there will be a time during the prayer where they will make a procession, with each child taking a moment to kneel and to say, "Thank you, Jesus, for coming to be with me."

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* God's angel came to the shepherds to bring them Good News of great joy. The angel said that Jesus had been born to be a savior to all people.

All: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to be with us.

Leader: Let us come to visit the Baby Jesus as the shepherds did and offer him our thanks.

Invite the children to line up and form a procession toward the Nativity scene. Ask each child to take a moment to kneel in front of the Baby Jesus and to say, aloud or silently, "Thank you, Jesus, for coming to be with me." When all have returned to their places, conclude as follows:

Leader: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to be with us.

All: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to be with us.

Leader: Amen.

All: Amen.

Close with the Sign of the Cross and then play a familiar Christmas carol.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- a sample Christmas candle jar
- small, clear jars (baby food jars), one for each child
- templates for stars, triangles, and circles
- tissue paper cut in strips the same height as the jars, one for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- several bowls of glue mixed with a small amount of water
- paint brushes
- newspaper and paper towels or wet wipes

A Christmas Candle Jar (15 minutes)

- Make a sample Christmas candle jar ahead of time.
- Prepare templates of stars, triangles, and circles from stiff paper or cardboard.
- Prepare glue in cups. Mix the glue with a small amount of water until the mixture is the consistency of paint. Before beginning, place a sheet of newspaper on each child's desk to catch any messes from glue.
- Show the completed candle jar to the children. Explain that in this craft, they will make a candle holder that can be displayed at home to bring a little extra "glory" to the Christmas season.
- Explain the process before handing out supplies: Each child will be given templates of stars, circles, and triangles. They will trace these onto a strip of tissue paper and then cut out the shapes. Then they will glue the paper like a label around the outside of the jar. When a small votive candle is placed in the jar and lighted, the light will shine through the shapes and allow the color of the paper to glow.
- Allow the children to trace the shapes, cut them out, then use paint brushes to glue the paper to the outside of their jars.
- Remind the children that every light we see during the Christmas season is a sign of Jesus, the light of the world, who was born for us!

Materials Needed

- a sample clothespin angel
- wooden clothespins (painted ahead of time or left plain), at least one for each child
- white paper doilies or coffee filters, at least one for each child
- 3-inch gold or silver wire ties or chenille stems, one for each child
- glue and markers
- glitter, stickers, sequins, etc. *(optional)*
- newspaper and paper towels or wet wipes

A Clothespin Angel (15 minutes)

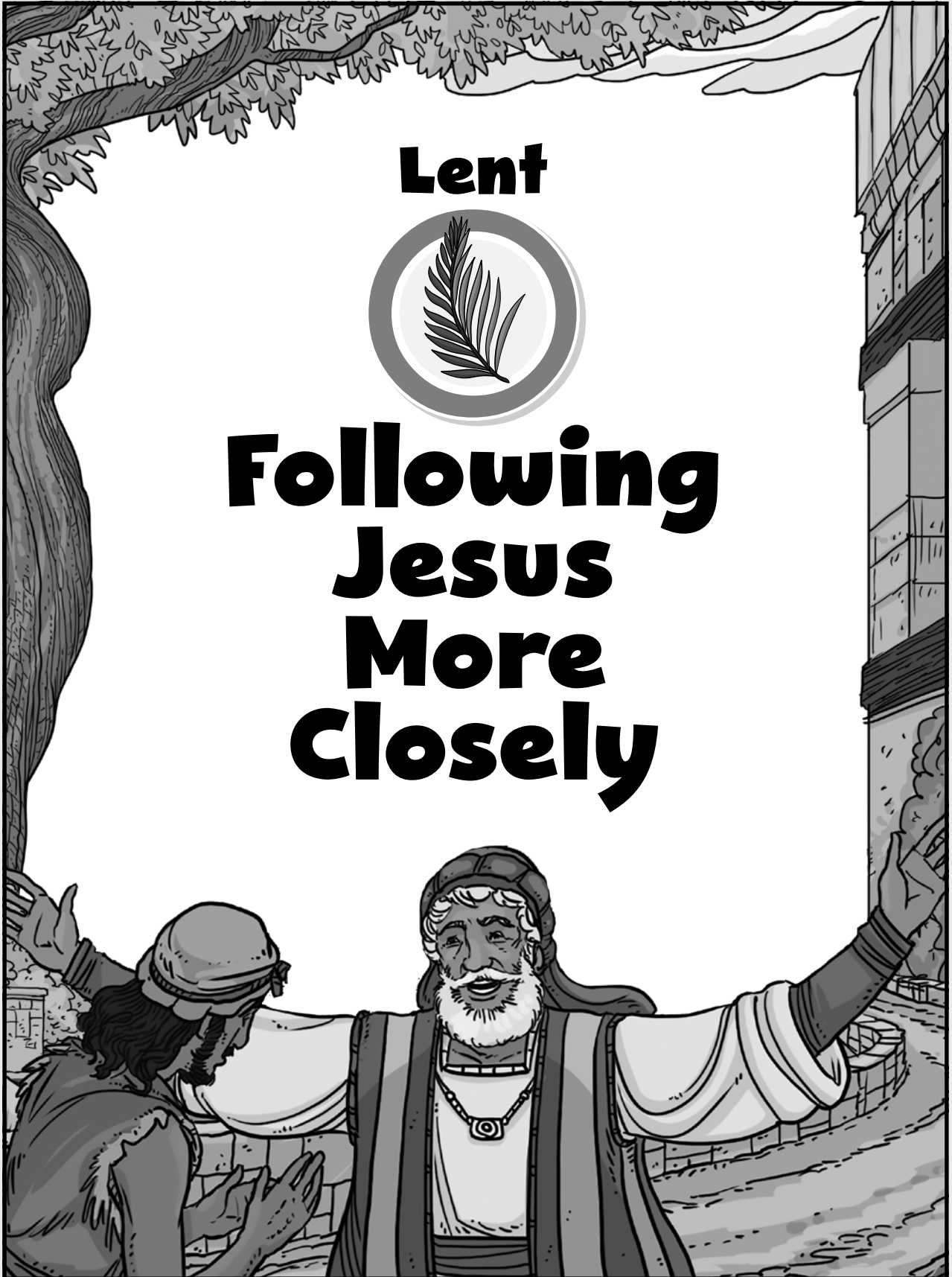
- Prepare for this activity by making a sample angel ahead of time and gathering supplies in a central location for easy access.
- Prepare the desks by laying out a sheet of newspaper on each child's desk. Have paper towels or hand wipes ready to clean up any messes.
- Show your sample clothespin angel to the children, and have the children begin with one clothespin; this is the angel's body. On one of the flat sides of the top, allow children to use a marker to draw a small face.
- Have the children fold a paper doily or coffee filter in half to make a crease, then open again to form "wings." Direct the children to glue this doily or coffee filter to the back of the clothespin.
- Instruct the children to glue the length of gold or silver wire or chenille stem to the head, looped around to make a "halo."
- Invite the children, as time allows, to decorate their angels with markers, glitter, stickers, sequins, or other supplies.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- crayons or colored pencils

The Christmas Story (15 minutes)

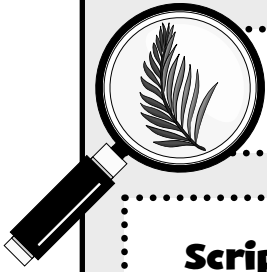
- Show the video "THE CHRISTMAS STORY FOR KIDS—told with LEGO Stop Motion," published by the QuadSquad (YouTube, 4:43). You may want to stop the video at 3:12, before the story of the Magi begins.
- Help the children recall the important parts of the story: the Angel Gabriel and Mary, Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem, the innkeeper, the stable, the angels and the shepherds. Ask the children to think about what these scenes might look like.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons or colored pencils. Ask the children to make a drawing of the part of the story that they remember best. They can draw "LEGO" people if they wish. Encourage the children to take their drawings home and share them with their families.



Lent



**Following
Jesus
More
Closely**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

Lesson Goals

- to identify that the father in the story is a reminder of God and his forgiveness
- to state that during Lent we make a special effort to be kind and to forgive others
- to recall our need to ask for forgiveness

Catechism References

976–987, 1846–1851

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

pity, prize, Alleluia, almsgiving

Music Suggestions

- “Every Little Thing,” by Cat.Chat (Cat.Chat Productions)
- “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” by The Wonder Kids (Wonder Workshop)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- copies of the handout “Following Jesus More Closely” (TX006172), one for each child
- craft sticks, two for each child
- markers or crayons
- several pairs of scissors
- several bottles of glue
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

As children are learning, they naturally make mistakes, and sometimes these mistakes hurt others. As adults, we too make mistakes that hurt others, and sometimes these mistakes involve or are witnessed by children. Our mistakes can become excellent opportunities to learn and teach the forgiveness we are called to ask for and offer to others.

When we forgive children or ask them for forgiveness, we give them an opportunity to see, experience, and practice important skills they can use throughout their lives. And sometimes we may find that children can teach *us* about forgiveness.

The scriptural focus of this lesson offers a beautiful image of how God forgives us. It is the best model for how we might respond to the grace of forgiveness by practicing this important skill in all of our relationships.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Lent activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think of as many ways as they can to be kind to others. List everyone's ideas on the left side of the board.
- Ask the children to think about actions that are unkind to others. Invite volunteers to share their ideas, and list as many as possible on the right side of the board.
- Invite the children to think about the way they feel when someone is kind to them. Encourage responses, and write these under the list of actions on the left. Then ask them to think about the way they feel when someone is *unkind* to them. Encourage responses, and write these under the list of actions on the right.
- Ask the children, "When you have been unkind, what can be done to make things right again?" Invite responses, and affirm all reasonable answers. When someone offers the answer "apologize" or "say you are sorry," point out that this is asking for forgiveness. Explain that we all do wrong from time to time. Tell the group that when we do, we need to ask forgiveness from God and from others.
- Tell the children that they are about to hear a story that Jesus told about forgiveness. Explain that it shows us how to ask for forgiveness and how God responds to us when we do this.

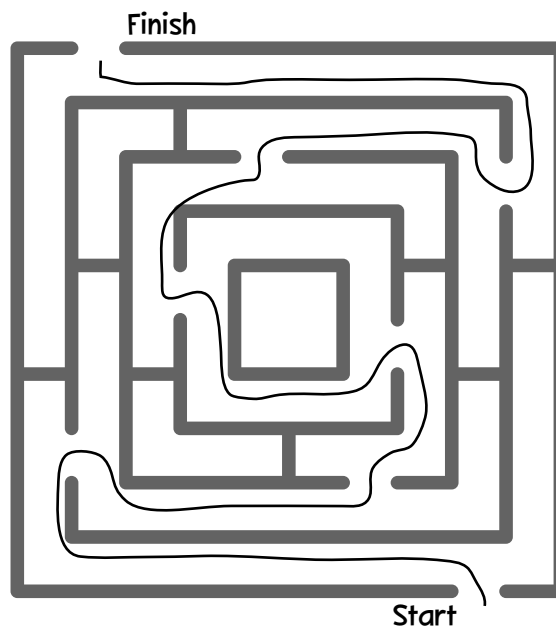


Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 15:11–32 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1619 and 1622). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and at the end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1620. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the other pages.

- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1620–1621. Invite the children to identify the father in the pictures. Then ask them how the son is different in the top picture versus the bottom picture. *(In the top image, he is wearing ragged clothing. In the bottom image, he is wearing a new green robe and a ring.)*
- Explain that the man with the red cap is a servant who is helping to put shoes on the son's feet.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - When the son was still a long way from home, what did the father do? *(He saw his son on the way. He ran to his son, hugged and kissed him, and called to the servants to bring him the best clothing.)*
 - How did the father feel when he saw the son on his way? *(His heart was filled with pity. This means he had a feeling of sadness for his son.)*
 - Why do you think the father felt this way? *(Allow all reasonable answers.)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Solution:*



Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1621, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - The story began when the son asked his father for money, then left home and wasted all of it. When the son ran out of money, he returned home for help.
 - The father could have been angry. Instead, he felt happy and joyful that his son had come home.

- The father forgave the son even before the son asked for forgiveness. The father gave the son gifts and threw a party to welcome him home.
- God is like the father in the story. God forgives us whenever we are sorry for our sins, no matter what. He always loves and forgives us. He always welcomes us back to him.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1621, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to think quietly over the questions. Allow a couple of quiet minutes for thinking.
- Close by inviting the children to take a quiet moment to pray as directed. Invite them to close their prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1621.
- Invite a volunteer to try retelling the story using the images. Help him or her identify what is happening in each image and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows the son coming home. Image 2 shows the son admitting his mistake. Image 3 shows the ring, robe, and shoes the father gives to the son. Image 4 shows the food for the celebration feast.*)



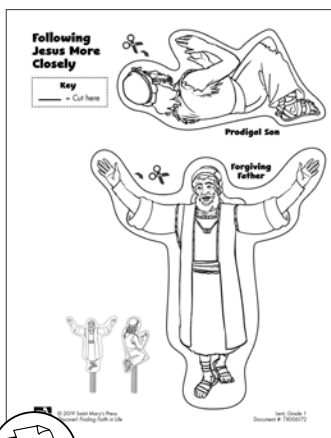
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

A Forgiving Father Play Set

- Prepare by making two stick puppets, the Forgiving Father and the Prodigal Son, as samples.
- Show your sample to the children. Explain that they will make their own stick puppet father and son set, which they can use to act out the story of the Forgiving Father.
- Set out materials on a table ahead of time. You may also want to set out crayons or markers if the children do not have their own sets.
- Give each child two craft sticks and a copy of the handout. Allow them to use markers or crayons to color the figures.
- Explain that after coloring the figures, they may cut them out with scissors and then glue the figures to the craft sticks.
- Ask volunteers to tell the story of the Forgiving Father, using their stick puppets.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.



TX006172



Process the Activity

- Encourage the children to use their stick puppets at home. Emphasize that reading, telling, and listening to favorite stories over and over is a good way to remember and understand them.
- Tell the children that just as they often want to play through a story again and again, the action of forgiving is something that we need to practice again and again. Explain that no one who is walking on Earth is perfect yet. Tell them that we will all make mistakes from time to time, and the more we practice forgiving one another, the better we understand it, and the easier it can become.
- Remind the children that we can always ask God to help us!

Additional Activity Options

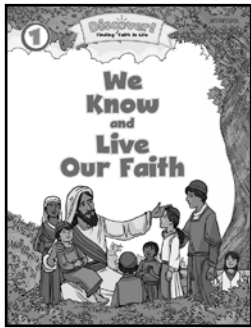
If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 255–256 in its place.

Lent

Core Teaching

- Explain that we are in the season of Lent, and cover the following points:
 - Lent is a time of year when we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus at Easter.
 - During Lent, we think of the ways we can follow Jesus more closely.
 - One of these ways is by asking forgiveness when we hurt others. Another way is by being kind and doing good things for others.
- Tell the children that during Lent, we decorate the insides of churches with purple to stand for our sorrow for sin and for Jesus' suffering on the cross. Explain that we do not sing or say the word **Alleluia** during Lent. Tell them that *Alleluia* is a joyful word that means "Praise the Lord!" Emphasize that we do not use it during Lent because we are expressing our sorrow for Jesus' death.
- Explain that during Lent, we try to follow Jesus more closely by doing extra acts of kindness. Tell the children that we can also give up treats like candy or TV. Explain that these are nice things to have, but if we go without them, we can use that time or money instead to help people who are in need. Tell the group that this is called **almsgiving**. Explain that almsgiving is using what we have to help those who would otherwise have to go without.

- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What do we focus on during Lent? (*During Lent, we prepare for Easter. We find ways to follow Jesus more closely. One of the ways is by asking forgiveness when we hurt others. Another way is by being kind and doing good for others.*)
 - What does the color purple mean? (*It shows our sorrow for sin and for Jesus' suffering on the cross.*)
 - Why do we not sing or say the word *Alleluia* in Lent? (*Alleluia is a joyful word, and not using it shows our sorrow for Jesus' death.*)
 - Why might we give up treats in Lent? (*If we go without treats, we can use the time or money spent on them to help others instead.*)
 - What is almsgiving? (*Almsgiving is using what we do have to help others who do not have what they need.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Joseph, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Joseph, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Lent," page 33

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - The father in the story is a reminder of God and his forgiveness.
 - During Lent, we make a special effort to be kind and to forgive others.
 - We need to ask for forgiveness.

Short Closing Prayer (*optional*)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Explain that the prayer "Lord, have mercy" is a prayer that the first Christians, the very first followers of Jesus, prayed often.
- Remind the children that we also pray this prayer at Mass, at the very beginning, when we ask forgiveness for our sins.
- Ask the children to repeat "Lord, have mercy" (*Roman Missal*) as you pray this short litany:

Leader: For all the times we have hurt others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we have disobeyed or talked back to our parents, teachers, or others in charge of us,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we have not been kind in playing with others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: For the times when we used mean words to or about others,

All: Lord, have mercy.

- Pray the following for the group:
 - Let us pray together: Lord Jesus, we ask forgiveness for things we have done that hurt others. Help us come closer to you this Lent. Help us to be as kind and loving as you are. Amen.
- Conclude by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

For the Needs of the World

Seat children together in a large circle. You may choose to light a candle near your own place in the circle as a reminder of the presence of God. As you pray the petitions, you may pass a small globe around the circle to symbolize God's care and love for the whole world.

Lent

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* As we gather together this Lent, we remember the many needs of people throughout the world. First, we ask God to fill our hearts with love toward others.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have enough to eat and drink,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have clean and warm clothes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not have safe homes,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are alone in the world,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who are afraid to do the right thing,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who need forgiveness and those who need to forgive,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For those who do not yet know God,

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Close by singing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" or a similar song that recalls God's love and care for all people.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- wooden or plastic beads of equal size, at least ½-inch across, with a large hole, ten for each child (pony beads work well)
- long plastic or fabric strings (if fabric, must have plastic shoelace-type ends), one for each child

Materials Needed

- plastic baggies filled with pretzels, one for each child
- index cards, one for each child
- tape
- markers or crayons

Sacrifice Beads (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that they will make a set of sacrifice beads that can be used to keep track of Lenten sacrifices and kind actions. Explain that moving a bead each time they do something good for others will help them to be aware of their actions, and will help them decide to be more loving, like Jesus.
- Make a set ahead of time to show to the children before they begin.
- Distribute the beads and strings, and then show the children how to start by threading one bead onto the center of the piece of string, so that the amount of string on either side of the bead is the same. Have the children thread ten beads.
- Assist the children as needed to tie a knot when they are done lacing the beads. Take the loose ends of the string, and tie a double knot no more than an inch away from the last bead in line. When the string is firmly tied, children should be able to move the beads one at a time toward the knot and then away from it again, to count their actions of Lenten practice.

Pretzel Prayer Cards (15 minutes)

- Prepare by first checking with parents about any food allergies that could affect a child's participation in this activity. If necessary, plan to have gluten-free pretzels or other alternate treats available for any child with allergies.
- Write "Jesus, help me follow you" on each index card, and tape a card to each baggie.
- Tell the children the story of how pretzels were first invented:
 - A long time ago, a monk had an idea for making a little bit of bread into a nice treat for children. He rolled a piece of bread dough until it was long and thin.
 - Then he folded it over itself twice, so that it looked like a pair of arms crossed in prayer. (*Demonstrate this by crossing your arms over your chest.*) He baked it in the oven until it became crispy.
 - The monk gave this to children as a reward for saying their prayers each day.
- Ask the children to cross their arms in prayer. Then ask the children to repeat this prayer after you: "Jesus, help me follow you."
- Distribute the pretzels with prayer cards taped to the bags. Tell the children that the cards say "Jesus, help me follow you." Challenge them to say their prayer each day for a week, or even throughout the whole season of Lent.
- Distribute the markers or crayons and allow the children to decorate the index cards if there is time.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- blank paper
- crayons or colored pencils

Lent Is For-Giving (15 minutes)

- Watch the video "Giving Makes You Happy _children" (YouTube, 1:27).
- Explain that during Lent, we try to find ways to give to others and to help others. Review ways the boy in the video helped at home. Share ideas on ways children in your group could help others at home and at school, especially during Lent.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons or colored pencils. Ask the children to make a drawing of themselves carrying out a loving action at home or at school. Encourage the children to take their drawings home and share them with their families.

Following Jesus More Closely

Key

— = Cut here

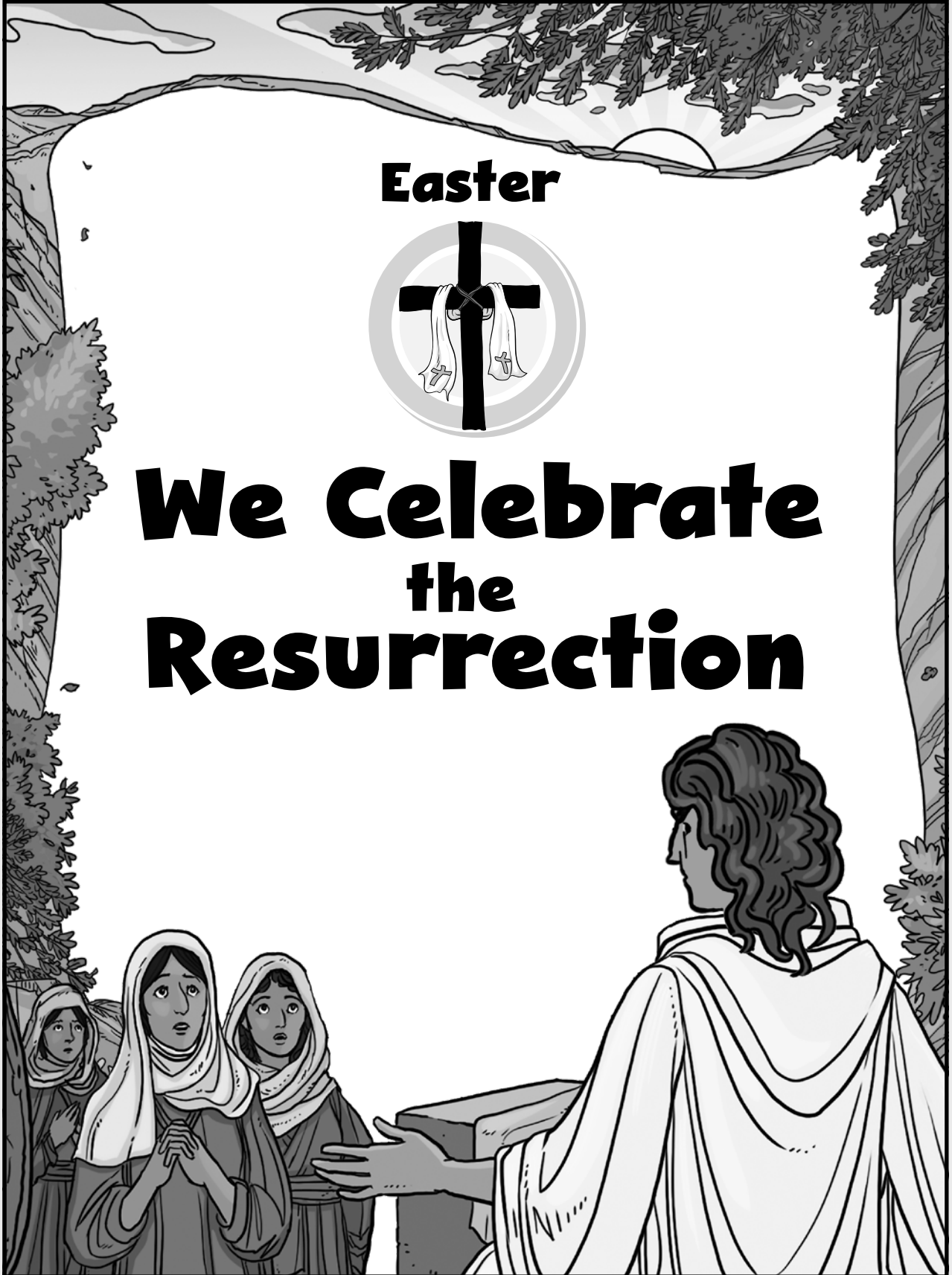


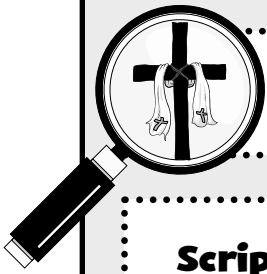
Prodigal Son



Forgiving Father







Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 16:1–6

Lesson Goals

- to indicate that Jesus rose from the dead
- to state that we celebrate Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter Sunday
- to explain that Jesus’ Resurrection means that we also will rise with him one day

Catechism References

638–644, 651–658, 997–1004

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

anoint, tomb, alarmed

Music Suggestions

- “The Day of Resurrection,” by God’s Kids Worship Band (God’s Kids Worship)
- “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” by Golden Books (Word Entertainment LLC)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Easter activity booklet
- blank paper
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- stickers, glitter, embellishments, glue, etc., for decorating
- several pairs of scissors
- a hole punch
- a roll of ribbon
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

On Easter, we proclaim, “Christ is risen!” The more it is repeated, the more joyful everyone seems to become. Easter liturgies and abundant feasts after a Lenten season of fasting point to the fact that Easter is the center and high point of the Church’s year.

The natural symbols found at Easter (eggs, spring flowers, and bunnies) express in simple and popular ways the Resurrection of Christ and the promise of new life it brings. If we have the reverence and gratitude to celebrate spring’s new life, how much more will we want to celebrate the promise of new life in Christ!

During this Easter season, let us pray for an outpouring of new life now rooted in the Good News of Jesus’ Resurrection that promises us new life forever.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Easter activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to think of a time when something surprising happened, something that they truly did not expect.
- Ask them to think about how they felt, what they said or did, and what happened next. Invite responses, and affirm all reasonable answers.
- Tell the children that they are about to hear the story of a truly surprising event: On the third day after he died on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead!



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Mark 16:1–8 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1566). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and at the end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1568. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous page.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1568–1569 and describe what they see.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who bought spices to prepare Jesus' body for burial? (*Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome*)
 - When did they visit Jesus' tomb? (*early on the Sunday morning after he died*)
 - When they arrived at the tomb, what did they find? (*The stone had already been rolled away.*)
 - What did the young man wearing the white robe say to the women? (*He told them not to be alarmed. He knew they were looking for Jesus, but Jesus was not in the tomb. He had risen from the dead.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. Read the sentences for the children and encourage them to find the picture that matches. *Answers: Two boxes on top: 2 and 3; Three boxes on bottom: 5, 1, and 4 (DELETE (pictures left to right) 2,3,5,1, 4)*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1569, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - On the third day after Jesus died on the cross and was buried, three women went to place spices on his body. This was something people in the ancient world usually did when people were buried.
 - When the women arrived at the tomb, they found it was already open and Jesus' body was not there.
 - An angel told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead. This is what we call the Resurrection of Jesus. The word *resurrection* means "rising from the dead." We celebrate Jesus' rising from the dead on Easter.
 - Because Jesus has risen from the dead, we know that we will also have new life after we die.

Live It!

- Ask the children if they color Easter eggs or go on Easter egg hunts during the Easter season.
- Invite them to share why they think Easter eggs might be a part of the Easter season.
- Read the first two sentences of the Live It! on page 1569. (The rest of the activity will be presented in the Discover! section.)
- Tell the children that every time they see Easter eggs, they can think of Jesus' Resurrection.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1569.
- Invite several volunteers to retell the story using the images. (*Image 1 shows the women buying spices. Image 2 shows the women walking toward the tomb. Image 3 shows the women seeing the young man. Image 4 shows the young man sharing the Good News.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Easter Season Door-Hangers

- Read the Live It! on page 1569, or have a volunteer read it.
- Distribute the blank paper, drawing materials, and scissors. Allow the children to follow the instructions in the Live It! for making and decorating paper Easter eggs.
- Print the words "He Is Risen" on the board so that children can copy them more easily onto their eggs.

- Have stickers, glitter, glue, or other art supplies available so that children can use them to decorate their eggs.
- Punch a hole into the top of each paper Easter egg.
- Distribute ribbon, and help the children to thread the ribbon through the hole and tie it in a knot.

Process the Activity

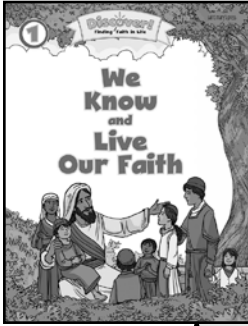
- Explain that we display beautiful decorations during the Easter season because we want to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.
- Encourage the children to hang their decorated eggs at home as a sign of hope.

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 265 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that because Jesus' Resurrection happened on a Sunday, every Sunday has become holy to Christians. Tell them that we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection every Sunday, but especially on Easter Sunday. Explain to them that we celebrate the Easter season for seven weeks: fifty days in all.
- Remind the children that *resurrection* means "rising from death to new life."
- Recall that because of Jesus' Resurrection, we know we will also rise to new life. Explain that we have new life now, because of God's life given to us in Baptism. Tell the children that this new life will not end after we die. Explain that we will have new life forever with God. Tell the children that Jesus has promised this, and we know that Jesus is true to his promises.
- Assure the children that the news of Jesus' Resurrection, and the promise of our resurrection, is good news. Remind them that this is a source of joy for us.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Why do we celebrate Easter Sunday? Why are Sundays holy to us? (*because Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday*)
 - What does *resurrection* mean? (*It means "rising from death to new life."*)
 - How long do we celebrate Easter? For just one Sunday? (*No, we celebrate Easter for seven weeks: fifty days in all.*)
 - What did Jesus promise to those who follow him faithfully? (*He promised that we would also rise with him.*)
 - Is the Resurrection good news? (*Yes! The Resurrection is a source of joy. It means that we will share in Jesus' new life now, through Baptism, and at the end of our lives.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Salome, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Salome, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Jesus Rises from the Dead" + activity, pages 16–17
- "Easter," page 34

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



GO! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, 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:
 - Jesus rose from the dead.
 - We celebrate Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday.
 - Jesus' Resurrection means that we also will rise with him one day.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to respond to each prayer below with "Rejoice! Alleluia!"

Leader: Lord, bless us as we celebrate your Resurrection during this Easter season.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: Lord, bless our families with peace and joy.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: Lord, bless our relatives and friends.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: Lord, bless all of us here, that we may celebrate the Easter season with joy in new life with you.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

- Conclude by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Rejoice! Alleluia!

Invite the children to gather in a circle with their Easter craft and stand during the prayer. Explain that at Mass, we usually stand for prayers and blessings. Tell the children that standing up during prayer is a sign of Jesus' Resurrection. Ask the children to raise their arms as they say, "Rejoice! Alleluia!" during the prayer.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence. Then invite the children to stand.)* Loving God, you sent your Son to Earth to save us from sin and lead us into new life, now and forever.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: You gave Jesus victory over death so that we could live in joy and peace.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: The Resurrection of Jesus was your wonderful surprise for us!

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: We praise you and thank you and give you glory.

All: Rejoice! Alleluia!

Leader: Let us close our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Conclude by playing one of the music suggestions given in this lesson, or by singing a familiar Easter hymn.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- paint or ink pads in a few pastel colors
- blank paper
- markers or colored pencils
- paper towels or wet wipes
- Easter music (*optional*)
- a board or poster to write on

Materials Needed

- wooden or plastic eggs, one for each child
- paint, paint brushes, and cups of water for each child
- two or three empty egg cartons
- newspaper and paper towels or wet wipes
- a sink or large bucket

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Thumbprint Easter Cards (15 minutes)

- Explain to the children that they will be making an Easter card with symbols of new life on it. Give them each a sheet of blank paper, and show them how to fold it in half and then in half again to create a card.
- Tell them that they will make paint or ink thumbprints on the card, which they will then turn into bunnies, chicks, or Easter eggs by using markers or colored pencils to add feet, ears, and faces, or stripes and dots.
- Have the children come to the craft table a few at a time, and help them to make several colored thumbprints on their cards. Then help them clean their hands. Instruct them to wait a few moments until the ink or paint dries before they begin to turn their thumbprints into bunnies, chicks, or Easter eggs. (You might play Easter music while the children are waiting for the cards to dry.)
- Display a few Easter messages on the board. Invite the children to copy one on the insides of their cards, like "Rejoice," "He Is Risen," and "Good News." Encourage them to add other decorations as time allows.
- Encourage the children to give their cards to someone they know who needs a message of Easter joy.

Painted Eggs (15 minutes)

- Lay a sheet of newspaper in front of each child before beginning this craft to prevent staining work areas. Distribute wooden or plastic eggs, paints, paint brushes, and cups of water to each child.
- Allow the children to paint eggs as they choose. Invite them to make patterns or designs, such as stripes, dots, chevrons, crosses, flowers, or faces.
- Collect the wet eggs in the empty egg cartons, where they can dry.
- Have the children come up a few at a time to turn in paints and paint brushes and to empty water cups into the sink or large bucket.

Jesus Is Alive! (15 minutes)

- Preview the video "Easter Children's Choir ~ Jump, Shout!" (YouTube, 1:20), write down the words to the refrain, and learn the actions.
- Teach the children the words to the refrain and the corresponding actions. Practice this several times before watching the video.
- Play the video. Invite the children to sing along and use the actions.
- Encourage them to learn the words and actions to the verse if you have time.
- Remind the children that we are joyful because of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Pentecost



Filled with the Holy Spirit





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Acts of the Apostles 2:1–6

Lesson Goals

- to state that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost
- to identify that Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church
- to name that we were filled with the Holy Spirit at our Baptism

Catechism References

731–741

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

Pentecost, tongues of fire, Holy Spirit

Music Suggestions

- “Peace Like a River, feat. Harvest,” by Listener Kids (Listener Records)
- “Clap When the Spirit Says Clap,” by We Kids Rock (We Kids Rock)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the Pentecost activity booklet
- scissors, one pair for each child
- quarter-sheets of red, orange, and yellow construction paper
- flame stencils
- strips of red construction paper, about 2 inches wide, long enough to fit around a child’s head, one strip per child
- several glue sticks
- a stapler
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

If you have ever felt that God was calling you to do something, then you have an idea of how the disciples felt on the day of Pentecost. God sent the Holy Spirit as a gift to them. Then God immediately sent them out to share his life with others through the Holy Spirit’s power. God gives us gifts as well, and, when we share our gifts with others, we become one with the creative work of the Spirit of God in our world.

Pentecost marks the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to the new Church and to us. The Holy Spirit is our link to Jesus. We know Jesus not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Pentecost also marks the beginning of the Church’s mission. Because we are part of this same Church, we can trust in God’s fulfillment of his promises to us. We can trust that when God gives us a task to carry out, he will also give us the grace we need to do it through the Holy Spirit.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Pentecost activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all of the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Ask the children if they have ever felt very certain about the right thing to do. Invite volunteers to answer these questions:
 - What was the situation?
 - How did you feel?
 - What did you do?
- Let the children know that today's story is about a time when Jesus' disciples became very certain about the right thing to do. Explain that today the group will learn how the Holy Spirit came to the disciples.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Acts of the Apostles 2:1–42 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1712–1713 and 1716). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1714. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the surrounding pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1714–1715. Point out the flames, or tongues of fire, in the art.
- Ask the children to look at the bold key words at the bottom of page 1714. Read aloud each definition and expand as needed.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Where were all the believers on the day of Pentecost? (*They were gathered in one place.*)
 - What happened after they heard the noise like a strong wind? (*They saw tongues of fire that spread out and touched each person.*)

- What happened to the believers after they saw what looked like tongues of fire? *(They were filled with the Holy Spirit.)*
- What did the believers do after they were filled with the Holy Spirit? *(They went out to speak to the people in many languages.)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: gathered, wind, tongues, touched, Holy Spirit, talk*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1715, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Nine days after Jesus returned to Heaven, Mary and the disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.
 - While they were gathered, they heard a loud noise. At that moment, the Holy Spirit came to them as wind and fire.
 - Afterward the disciples could speak in a way that everyone could understand—even in different languages.
 - The Holy Spirit fills us with God’s power in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1715, or have a volunteer read it.
- Practice reciting the words of the prayer aloud together, slowly. Consider using a rhythmic pattern or melody to help the children enjoy reciting it and to increase their recall of the words.
- Let the children know that whenever they need to memorize words, a good strategy is to repeat the words again and again.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1715.
- Arrange the children into pairs. Ask the pairs to work together to retell the story using the images as a guide. Allow a short time for the children to talk and work together.
- Invite volunteers to share their retelling of the story with the whole group, if time allows. *(Image 1 shows the believers gathered in prayer. Image 2 shows the sound of strong wind filling the room. Image 3 shows the tongues of fire touching each person.)*



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Holy Spirit Headbands

- Prepare a sample headband in advance.
- Tell the children that today they will make a headband that will help them think of how the disciples felt when the Holy Spirit arrived as tongues of fire. Show the children the sample you created.
- Distribute to each child a pair of scissors; three quarter-sheets of red, orange, and yellow construction paper; and a flame stencil (you can find samples online). Set aside the strips of red construction paper and glue sticks until needed.
- Show the children how to use the stencil to trace flame shapes on the quarter sheets. Then ask them to cut out their flames.
- Invite the children who have finished making flame shapes to come get a strip of red construction paper and glue stick to complete their headbands.
- Show the children how to glue the flame shapes to the front of their headbands.
- Ask the children to come to you when they are ready to have their headbands fitted to their heads and stapled together.

Process the Activity

- Allow the children a brief time to wear their headbands. Ask them to pretend that they are preaching and teaching about Jesus: What would they say about him?
- Remind the children that because of their Baptism, the Holy Spirit is within them and they are close to the Holy Spirit every day.

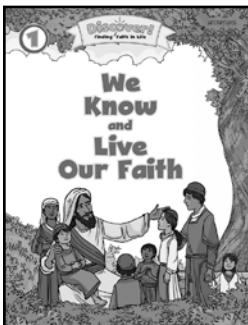
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 274–275 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Tell the children that in Scripture, wind and fire are signs of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Explain that wind is a sign of the power of the Holy Spirit. Remind the children that wind can be very powerful. Point out that fire is a sign of the love of the Holy Spirit. Remind the children that even though fire can be dangerous, it also warms us and gives us light.
- Explain to the children that Pentecost is often called “the birthday of the Church.” Tell them that on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit brought new life to the disciples, and they went out and spread that new life to others.
- Tell the group that we are filled with the Holy Spirit when we receive the Sacrament of Baptism and, because of this, we can tell others about Jesus too.
- Help the children understand that the Holy Spirit comes to us also in the Sacrament of Confirmation. *(Let the children know that they too will receive this sacrament one day. Depending on your diocese, this may be either in second grade or sometime in middle or high school.)*
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What are the signs of the Holy Spirit’s presence in Scripture? *(Wind and fire are signs of the Holy Spirit.)*
 - Why is Pentecost sometimes called the birthday of the Church? *(because the Holy Spirit gave new life to the disciples)*
 - What did the disciples do after they were filled with the Holy Spirit? *(They went out to tell others about Jesus.)*
 - What sacrament fills us with the Holy Spirit? *(Baptism fills us with the Holy Spirit.)*
 - In what other sacrament does the Holy Spirit come to us? *(the Sacrament of Confirmation)*
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Luke, and encourage the children to say, “Saint Luke, pray for us,” during the next week.

Pentecost



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “The Church,” page 26

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost.
 - Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church.
 - We were filled with the Holy Spirit at our Baptism.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Pray the following prayer, asking the children to listen closely to the words and to pray along in their minds and hearts:
 - God, you created us and you love us. Please stay with us today and every day. Give us the courage to do what is right and to share the truth with others. Please send your Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with your love.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Come, Holy Spirit!

Seat the children in a large circle. Light a candle near your place in the circle as a reminder of the presence of God. Allow a brief moment of silence. Ask the children to stand and hold hands.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* We will pray to the Holy Spirit. After each prayer, our response is "Come, Holy Spirit!"

Leader: Holy Spirit, you came to the Church on Pentecost. Stay with us today and every day.

All: Come, Holy Spirit!

Leader: Holy Spirit, give us the courage to do what we know is right.

All: Come, Holy Spirit!

Leader: Holy Spirit, give us the peace and joy we need to share the truth with others.

All: Come, Holy Spirit!

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with the fire of your love.

All: Come, Holy Spirit!

Leader: We ask all this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Conclude by singing or playing an appropriate hymn or song of your choice.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- red or orange construction paper
- white craft paint or finger paint
- paint trays
- aprons to cover clothing
- paper towels and handwashing area for cleanup
- markers or crayons

A Holy Spirit Dove (15 minutes)

- Set up materials before class at a teacher's table or station to one side of the room. Lay out materials in the order they will be used: paint in trays, red or orange paper, and paper towels and a handwashing station. Set the coloring supplies to one side, as you will use these after the paint dries.
- Tell the children that they are going to make a craft that introduces them to an image of the Holy Spirit: the dove.
- Have children line up at the table or station you prepared. Help them complete the following steps:
 - Cover their clothing with an apron.
 - Place one hand in a tray of white paint.
 - Make one white handprint on a piece of red or orange paper. Encourage the children to keep their fingers together rather than spreading them out.
 - Wash their hand clean. (If possible, have an assistant come into class to help children clean their hands quickly and neatly.)
 - Remove the apron and hand it to the next person in line.
- Allow the children to draw an eye and beak on the thumb to complete the "dove" as soon as paint is dry enough. (The fingers are the wing.)
- Encourage the children to take home their craft as a reminder of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Materials Needed

- 6-x-6-inch sheets of paper in different colors, at least two per child, plus extra to allow for mistakes
- several rulers
- several pairs of scissors
- paper fasteners (brads), one for each child
- wooden craft sticks, one for each child

A Spirit Pinwheel (15 minutes)

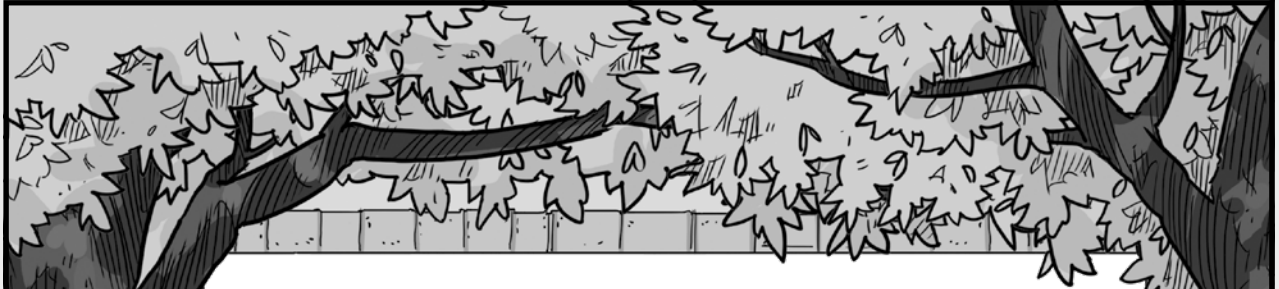
- Distribute the square paper sheets, rulers, and scissors to the children.
- Show the children how to use a ruler to draw a large X by drawing lines from corner to corner of each square of paper.
- Have the children cut along each arm of the X about halfway toward the center of the paper. (Have extra sheets of paper on hand in case children cut too far and need to start over.)
- Show the children how to fold the left-hand corner of each triangle of the X into the middle to form a pinwheel. Help the children fasten the corners to the center using a craft brad. Spin the pinwheel around the brad to enlarge the center hole.
- Help the children affix the craft stick to the back of the craft brad so that the paper pinwheel can spin freely.
- Remind the children that wind is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to remember the Holy Spirit every time they blow on their pinwheels.

Materials Needed

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

A LEGO Pentecost (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Pentecost explained with LEGO!” (YouTube, 3:30) to the group.
- Invite volunteers to summarize what happened in the video.
- Point out that Father Black learned that the Holy Spirit is a helper, but the Holy Spirit also has many other helpers. Ask the children to share who helps them when they need it.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers or crayons. Direct the children to fold their paper in half and in half again to make a card. Then invite the children to write “The Holy Spirit is my helper, and you are my helper too!” inside the card. Encourage them to decorate their card and to write any other messages of gratitude inside it.

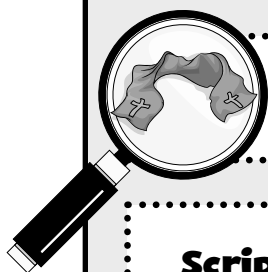


**Ordinary
Time**



**We Learn
from
Jesus**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 7:7–11

Lesson Goals

- to state that Jesus wants us to ask God for what we need
- to recall that God loves us and that we can pray to him at any time
- to identify Ordinary Time as the time to learn more about Jesus and how he revealed God's love for us

Catechism References

2598–2616, 2629–2633

Church Year Calendar

A Church year calendar is available in black-and-white (TX006169) and full-color (TX006170) at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Key Words

seek, Ordinary Time

Music Suggestions

- "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," by Cedarmont Kids (Cedarmont Music, LLC)
- "Everything We Need," by Group-Music (Group Publishing)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Ordinary Time activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- doorknob hangers precut from cardstock or cardboard, one for each child
- markers or crayons
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

How can we get excited about Ordinary Time? Too often we hear the word *ordinary* in a negative sense, as if the realities of daily life are not good enough to be extraordinary. This attitude ignores the example of saints, like Thérèse of Lisieux, who achieved extraordinary holiness by doing ordinary acts with great love for God and for others.

But the word *ordinary* in Ordinary Time doesn't mean "usual" or "unremarkable." It comes from the same root as the word *order*. So we can think of Ordinary Time as the season for the "extraordinary ordinary"—the regular order of things that might seem unremarkable but will lead us toward growth and maturity. If we help the children approach ordinary things in a state of grace and a spirit of love, they can find extraordinary holiness and extraordinary joy.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Ordinary Time activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross, and then say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to name some of the things people need. Write their responses on the board. As the children name some needs, help them to distinguish between something a person truly needs (something that is essential for one's health, security, or well-being) versus something a person may want (a desire that is not necessary for our health, security, or well-being).
- Tell the children that one thing we can always do, if we have a big need and do not know what to do about it, is to pray to God.
- Explain that in today's story, Jesus tells everyone to come to God with their needs, big or small, because God is a loving father who wants to help us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Matthew 7:7–11 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1462). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1464. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is the same Scripture passage found on page 1462.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1464–1465. Explain that the pictures show a father and a mother taking care of their children. Invite the children to share other things they notice about the images.
- Read the title and the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did Jesus tell people to do when they pray? (*Jesus told us to ask, seek, and knock.*)
 - What did Jesus say will happen to people who pray this way? (*He said they will receive what they want, find what they are looking for, and have the door opened for them.*)

- What did Jesus say that good fathers do for their children? (*Good fathers give their children things that are good for them. They do not give them things that are bad for them.*)
- How is God like a good parent? (*He does what a good father does. He gives us things that are good for us, not things that are bad for us.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. receive, 2. find, 3. opened, 4. good, 5. ask*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1465, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite volunteers to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Jesus teaches us to ask God for the things we need. God will answer like any loving father and help us to have what we need.
 - Loving parents give us the things we need, but not always the things we want, especially if they are not good for us.
 - Jesus told us in three different ways to turn to God to meet our needs: we should ask, seek, and knock. This is what God wants from us.
 - When we pray for our needs, God will always give us the best answer for us.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1465, or have a volunteer read it.
- Have the children hold one finger up, and tell them to think of someone who needs help. Tell them to ask God in their mind to help that person.
- Ask them to hold another finger up and to think of a need they have. Invite them to ask God to help them with that need.
- Invite them to hold a third finger up and tell them to thank God for listening to them.
- Remind them that they can use their fingers to pray anywhere and at any time for another's needs and their needs. Explain that they can end their prayer by thanking God.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1465.
- Invite volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture passage. (*Image 1 shows a child knocking on the door. Image 2 shows the child asking for what he needs. Image 3 shows the door being opened to the child; the child is receiving a loaf of bread.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Making a Doorknob Hanger

- Tell the children that today's craft will help them remember to pray. Show the children a sample you have already completed of the doorknob hanger.
- Distribute the precut doorknob hangers and the markers or crayons.
- Write "ASK," "SEEK," and "KNOCK" vertically on the board. Direct the children to print these words on their hangers and allow them to decorate their hangers.

Process the Activity

- Ask volunteers to remind the group how we know Jesus wants us to pray. *(He wants us to ask for what we need, seek God always, and "knock on the door" as often as we need to.)*
- Ask the group to brainstorm what makes it difficult or easy to pray. Affirm all reasonable answers, especially ones that involve remembering, making time, and choosing a quiet place if we can.
- Encourage the children to take their doorknob hangers home to display. Explain that they can hang the hangers on their bedroom doorknobs to remind themselves to pray or to let family members know that they're praying.

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 pages 284–285 in its place.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade1.

Core Teaching

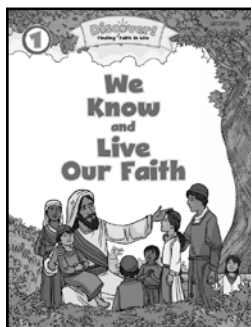
- Make a copy of the black-and-white Church year calendar on page 296 for the children to color, or print a color copy from www.smp.org/discover_online to show the children.
- Show the children the two parts of the year we call **Ordinary Time**. Point out that this season fills more than half of the year on the Church calendar.
- Tell the children that during Ordinary Time the priest's vestments and the altar cloths are green. Explain that green is a color that reminds us of life and growth.
- Tell the children that Ordinary Time is a time in the Church year when we grow in our understanding of Jesus and his life. Explain that this is the time we hear Scripture readings about the miracles Jesus performed and the stories he told to teach us about God.

Ordinary Time



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- Point out that one of the things Jesus taught us is that we can turn to God any time in prayer. Explain to the children that part of growing in our understanding of God is knowing that we can talk to God in prayer. Continue with the following points:
 - We can ask God for whatever we need at any time.
 - God answers all prayers, but not always in the way or at the time we expect.
 - Like the good parent, God gives us what we need and what is good for us. We don't always get what we want, especially if it's not good for us.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What Church season makes up more than half of the year? (*Ordinary Time*)
 - What color does the Church use during Ordinary Time? (*The Church uses the color green because it stands for life and growth. We grow in understanding of Jesus' life during Ordinary Time.*)
 - Does God answer all prayers the way we expect him to? (*No, but he does answer all prayers. Sometimes he responds by giving us what we need, not what we want.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following articles and activities in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "Prayer Is Talking to God" + activity, pages 48–49
- "Prayer Is Listening to God" + activity, pages 50–51

Read the selections aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin an activity, or have them complete the activities with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Jesus wants us to ask God for what we need.
 - God loves us, and we can pray to him at any time.
 - Ordinary Time is the time to learn more about Jesus and how he revealed God's love for us.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in the following prayer:
 - Lord Jesus, you taught us to turn to God for whatever we need. We thank you for our lives, for our families, and for Creation. We ask you to keep us and our families healthy and to give us what we need to live. We ask you to help us grow in love for God and for one another.
 - We ask you now, in silence, for something special for ourselves or for another person. *(Allow a moment of silence.)*
 - We ask for all that we need in your Holy Name.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Asking for What We Need

Seat the children together in a large circle. Light a candle near you as a reminder of the presence of God.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* Jesus taught us that God wants us to ask for what we need. Let us pray for the things we need every day. First, for good health so that we can learn and work and play, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our families, that they may be happy and healthy, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our own hearts, that we may love God and love others, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For our Earth, that we may take good care of it so it can give us what we need to live, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: For all people, that we may make peace and live in peace, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: We ask for these things, and for all that we need, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Conclude by playing one of the music suggestions or another appropriate song.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- egg cartons, cut apart, enough for each child to have one cup
- potting soil in a wide-mouthed container
- several plastic spoons
- seeds of your choice, two or three for each child
- waxed paper cups, one for each child
- a large container of water
- several eye droppers
- hand sanitizer or a handwashing station

Growing Time (15 minutes)

- Set the materials on a table ahead of time. Place them in order of use: egg carton cups, potting soil and spoons, seeds and craft sticks, and finally the hand sanitizer or handwashing station.
- Have the children come to the table in pairs or small groups. Instruct them to each scoop a small amount of dirt into one egg carton cup. Then have the children place the egg carton cup inside a waxed paper drinking cup to prevent leakage and make the project portable.
- Give the children two or three seeds to place into their cup of dirt. Show them how to push the seeds into the dirt with their fingers, making sure the seeds are covered. Have them use an eye dropper to place several drops of water on the soil.
- Direct the children to use the hand sanitizer or to wash their hands after working with the potting soil.
- Ask the children what color they think their plants will be when they sprout (*green*). Tell the children that the Church uses green as a sign of hope and life. Explain that during Ordinary Time, we learn stories about Jesus that help us grow in faith and give us hope.
- Remind them to place their seed cups in a well-lit spot at home, water them, and watch the sprouts grow.

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- green and brown markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- a board or poster to write on

Green Is for Growth (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that this activity will help them think about why the color for Ordinary Time is green.
- Distribute the blank paper and markers, crayons, or colored pencils.
- Draw a simple plant on the board, and ask the children to do the same in pencil on their papers: a long vertical stem, leaves coming from the sides, and a flower (a tulip or daisy) at the top. (Or, you may want to find copies of plants to color on the internet.)
- Ask the children, "What color should we make the stem and leaves of the plant we drew?" (*green*)
- Explain that the green leaves catch the rain and the sun and bring them down into the plant. Tell the children that the plant needs the rain and the sun in order to grow.
- Allow the children time to color their plants. Explain the following:
 - When plants are green, they are healthy, strong, and growing.
 - We use green as a sign of healthy, strong, growing faith.
 - During Ordinary Time, we learn stories about Jesus' life that help us grow in faith.
- Write this statement on the board: "We grow in faith in Ordinary Time." Ask the children to copy this at the bottom or along the side of their papers.

Materials Needed

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

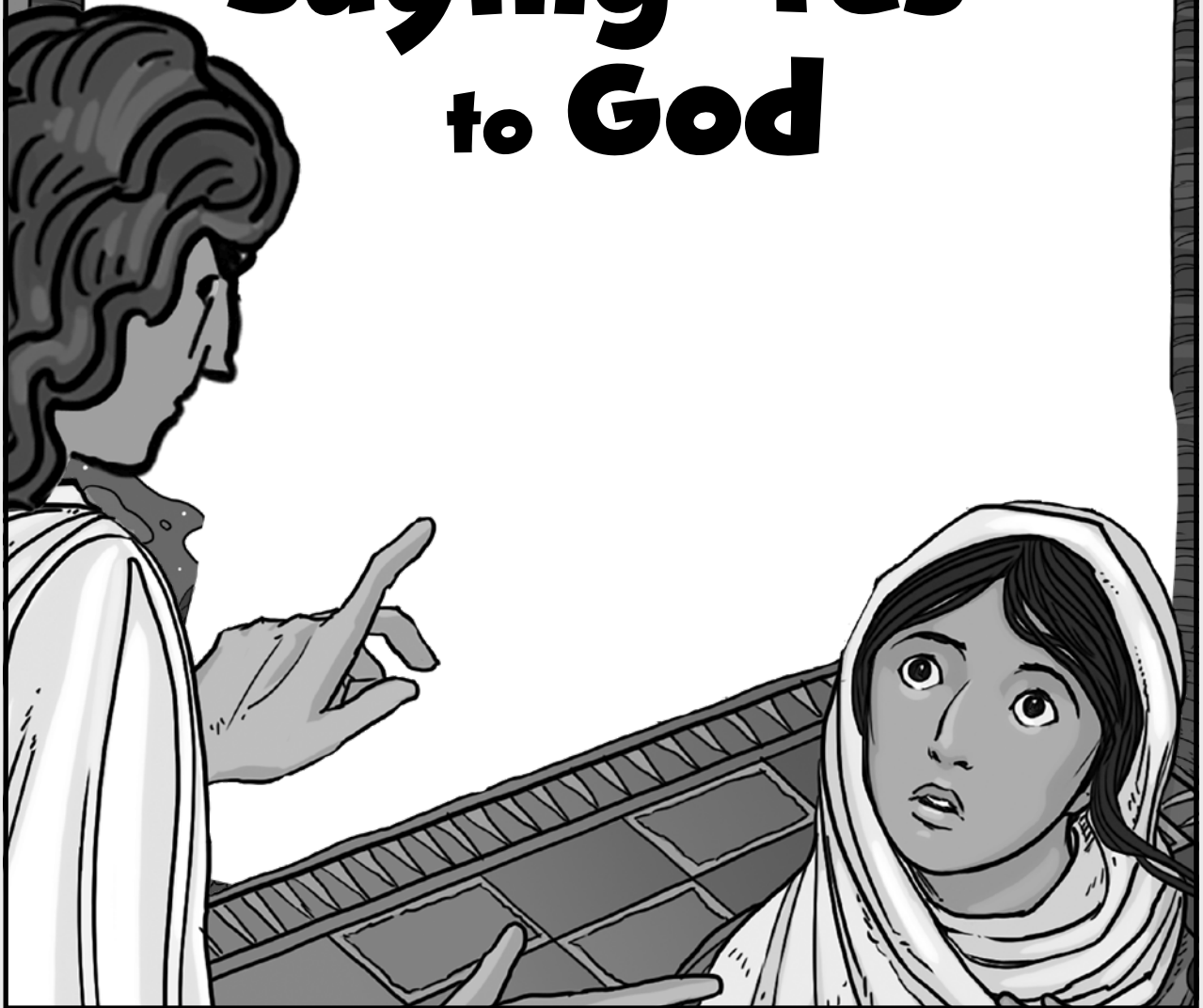
Love in Ordinary Time (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Love One Another" (YouTube, 2:44) to the group.
- Practice singing the song together as a class. Repeat the video more than once to review the lyrics if necessary.
- Tell the children that Jesus teaches us how to love one another and how to love God.
- Invite the children to brainstorm all the stories about Jesus they can remember from the Bible.
- Distribute the blank paper and the markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Encourage the children to draw one of their favorite stories about Jesus.
- Explain that we learn about Jesus and his teachings especially during a time in the Church year called Ordinary Time. Tell the children that this is when we hear about Jesus' life, his teachings about God, and how to love one another.

Mary



Saying "Yes" to God





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Lesson Goals

- to identify Mary as the wife of Joseph and the mother of Jesus
- to identify that Mary trusted God, which made the birth of Jesus possible
- to state that we can also trust God in our lives

Catechism References

963–975

Key Words

gracious, ancestor, descendants, grotto, responsibility

Music Suggestions

- "I Wanna Say Yes," by Cat.Chat (Cat.Chat)
- "Hail Mary (Echo Song)," by The Rennas (AvilaRose, Inc.)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Mary activity booklet
- five blindfolds
- shoeboxes, one for each child (or ask each child to bring one)
- images of Mary cut from old calendars or catalogs, one for each child
- glue sticks, one for each child
- decorative items: craft paper, craft tape, glitter, sparkles, rhinestones, beads, small silk or paper flowers
- a board or poster to write on
- a small vase of flowers
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Note

This lesson introduces Mary, the Mother of God, to the children. It can be used for any feast of Mary, or it may be used during May, the month of special Marian devotion.

Background Reflection

As we journey toward holiness, God asks for our trust. He asks us to say "yes" freely when he calls us to do good works. He asks us to say "yes" to using our abilities to choose well among the options available. He asks us to say "yes" in doing what we can and then allowing his plan to become clear in time. Saying "yes" to God marked the lives of all the saints, but in a special way marked the trust that Mary showed.

Mary's "yes" combined mature holiness with childlike trust. She believed in the goodness of God and his will for her life, so she consented freely and fully. She did what she could and trusted in God for everything else. This trust is what made the very birth of Jesus possible. Mary is a model of incredible faith for us. Where might we be called to deepen our trust in God and to respond with a firm "yes"?



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the Mary activity booklet.
- 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Explain that you are going to play a version of Follow the Leader called Stay on the Path. Tell the group that you will select five children who will wear blindfolds and follow you along a path. Explain that each child will hold onto the shoulders of the child ahead, going in the direction that child goes.
- Help each child put on a blindfold and then hold the shoulders of the child ahead. Invite the first child in the line to hold your hands as you put them behind you. Lead the children slowly on a short path around the room.
- When you have completed the path, ask the children to share if it was easy or hard to follow the person in front of them. Invite them to share some reasons why it was easy or difficult. Then ask them what this game taught them about trust.
- Point out that this game shows us that when we trust each other, we can do great things together. Tell the group that when we trust God, we can do great things with his help.
- Explain to the children that today's Scripture story is about Mary, who trusted God to lead her.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Luke 1:26–38 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1572). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1574. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on page 1572.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1574–1575 and to point out what they see.

- Read the title and the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - What did the angel say to Mary? *(He told her not to be afraid. He told her that she would become the mother of Jesus.)*
 - What did the angel say about Jesus? *(He said that Jesus would be great. Jesus would be the son of God. Jesus would become a king like David and would be the king of God's people forever. His Kingdom will never end.)*
 - What did Mary say to the angel? *(She said that she was the Lord's servant. She agreed to have everything happen as the angel said.)*
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it.

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1575, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - Mary was very young when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. Gabriel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus.
 - Gabriel also told Mary who Jesus would be and how he would lead his people.
 - Because Mary knew that God is good and loving, she trusted him enough to say yes.
 - Because of Mary's trust in God, Jesus came to Earth to save all people.
 - When we say yes to God, God will bring us good things as well.
- Ask the children if they remember who Mary's husband was (*Joseph*). Tell the children that God was Jesus' father, but Joseph took care of Jesus on Earth.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1575, or have a volunteer read it.
- Ask the children to take a few deep breaths to quiet themselves. Then read each line of the prayer again, and have the children repeat after you.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1575.
- Read the Scripture passage again, and invite the children to follow by looking at the images in the Tell It! *(Image 1 shows Mary listening to the angel. Image 2 shows the angel telling her that she will have a baby. Image 3 shows the angel explaining that the baby would become a king. Image 4 shows Mary's response to the angel.)*



Discover! (25 minutes)

Mary

Core Learning Activity (Craft)

Making a Shoebox Mary Grotto

- Prepare a sample shoebox grotto in advance.
- Show your sample grotto to the children. Tell the children that they will make their own grotto to display at home to honor Mary. Explain that a **grotto** is a cave or other protected spot, often with a religious image inside to help people pray.
- Give each child a shoebox, an image of Mary, and a glue stick. Show them how to attach the image of Mary to the inside bottom of their shoebox, which will become the back wall of their grotto.
- Allow the children to glue other small decorative objects—like craft paper, glitter, sparkles, rhinestones, beads, and small silk or paper flowers—around the borders of their images and around the insides of their boxes.

Process the Activity

- Invite volunteers to tell why we honor Mary with grottos, statues, and pictures. (*Affirm all reasonable answers. She is Jesus' mother, she was a holy person, she is an example for us, etc.*)
- Encourage the children to take their craft home and display it where it will remind them that Mary is with Jesus in Heaven and is always ready to help us. Tell them that when we want to pray to Jesus, we can ask Mary to pray for us and with us.

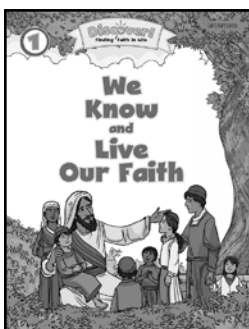
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 294–295 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Remind the children that saying “yes” to God’s plan was a big responsibility for Mary to accept. Tell them that a **responsibility** is something we must do to care for something good we have been given.
- Tell the children that saying “yes” to God is not always easy, but if we trust God as Mary did, he will help us do what he asks of us. Remind the children that God is always with us.

- Remind the children that we honor Mary in the months of May and October and on several days throughout the year, because of her special role in Jesus' life. Write this list on the board and explain a few points about each:
 - January 1, Feast of Mary, Mother of God
 - March 25, the Annunciation
 - October 7, Our Lady of the Rosary
 - December 8, the Immaculate Conception
 - December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe
 - Fourth Sunday of Advent
- Tell the children that today's Scripture is read on these days to recall the trust and faith that Mary had for God's plan in her life.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Why was it a big responsibility for Mary to say "yes" to God's plan for her to be the mother of Jesus? (*Having a baby is a big responsibility; being the Mother of God is a big responsibility.*)
 - What will God do for us if we trust him as Mary did? (*He will help us carry out his plan for us, as he did for Mary.*)
 - Do we honor Mary on one special day? (*No, we honor Mary on special days throughout the Church's year, because of her special role in Jesus' life.*)
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Our Lady of Fátima, and encourage the children to say, "Our Lady of Fátima, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- "Holy Mary, Mother of God" + activity, pages 10–11

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Mary was the wife of Joseph and the mother of Jesus and the Mother of God.
 - Mary trusted God, and this made the birth of Jesus possible.
 - We can also trust God in our lives.

Short Closing Prayer (optional)

Note: Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on the next page to close this lesson.

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in the following prayer, having them listen or repeat phrases after you:
 - God our Father, Mary showed us how to trust you. Mary showed us how to love your Son, Jesus. Mary showed us how to love our families. Help us to follow Mary's example of trust and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Prayer Service

Praying with Mary

Have an image of Mary as part of the prayer table, and choose one child ahead of time to bring a small vase of flowers to the prayer table as an offering to Mary when you tell him or her. Tell the child that he or she should walk slowly and respectfully, place the flowers on the prayer table, and then bow before taking a seat.

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. *(Allow about 10 seconds of silence.)* Mary showed us how to trust God. May we always trust God in every decision and in every struggle, as Mary did.

All: Holy Mary, pray for us.

Leader: Mary showed us how to love Jesus. May we always love Jesus and follow his way every day, as Mary did.

All: Holy Mary, pray for us.

Leader: Mary showed us how to love our family. May we always treat our family with respect and kindness, as Mary did.

All: Holy Mary, pray for us.

Invite the child to come forward and to offer the flowers to Mary. Close with the song "Immaculate Mary" or another Marian hymn of your choice and then the Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- small wooden peg dolls or peg clothespins, one for each child
- material for wings (doilies, cardstock, fabric, lace, craft paper), enough for each child to make two wings
- several pairs of scissors
- gold paper “halo” circles, one for each child
- several bottles of glue
- markers or paint pens

Materials Needed

- small paper plates, one for each child
- children’s air-dry modeling clay, enough for each child to get a 2- to 3-inch ball
- artificial flowers, one bloom or sprig for each child

An Angel Ornament (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that they will make angel ornaments to hang on their Christmas trees, as a reminder of the angel who visited Mary.
- Distribute a peg doll or peg clothespin and wing material to each child. Invite the children to shape wings out of the chosen material and glue them to the back of their peg dolls.
- Help the children glue a gold paper “halo” to the back of each doll’s head.
- Have the children use a marker or paint pen to draw a smiling face on the angel’s head.
- Invite volunteers to show their finished angels to the class. Remind them to take the angel home to remind them of the angel’s visit to Mary.

A Vase for a Mary Table (15 minutes)

- Tell the children that in this craft, they will use clay to make a small cup or vase that can hold flowers for a Mary table or prayer altar at home.
- Distribute a paper plate and a 2- to 3-inch ball of modeling clay to each child.
- Show the children how to shape the clay into a cylinder and then poke their fingers down into the middle of the cylinder to make a long, narrow vase. Have them gently push the bottom down on their plate to flatten it.
- Tell the children to take their vases home on the plates, and give each child an artificial flower to put in his or her vase at home when it finishes drying.
- Explain to the children that they should allow the clay a day to dry before they put the flowers in.
- Tell the children that they can place this vase and flower in their prayer space at home or next to an image of Mary the family may have.

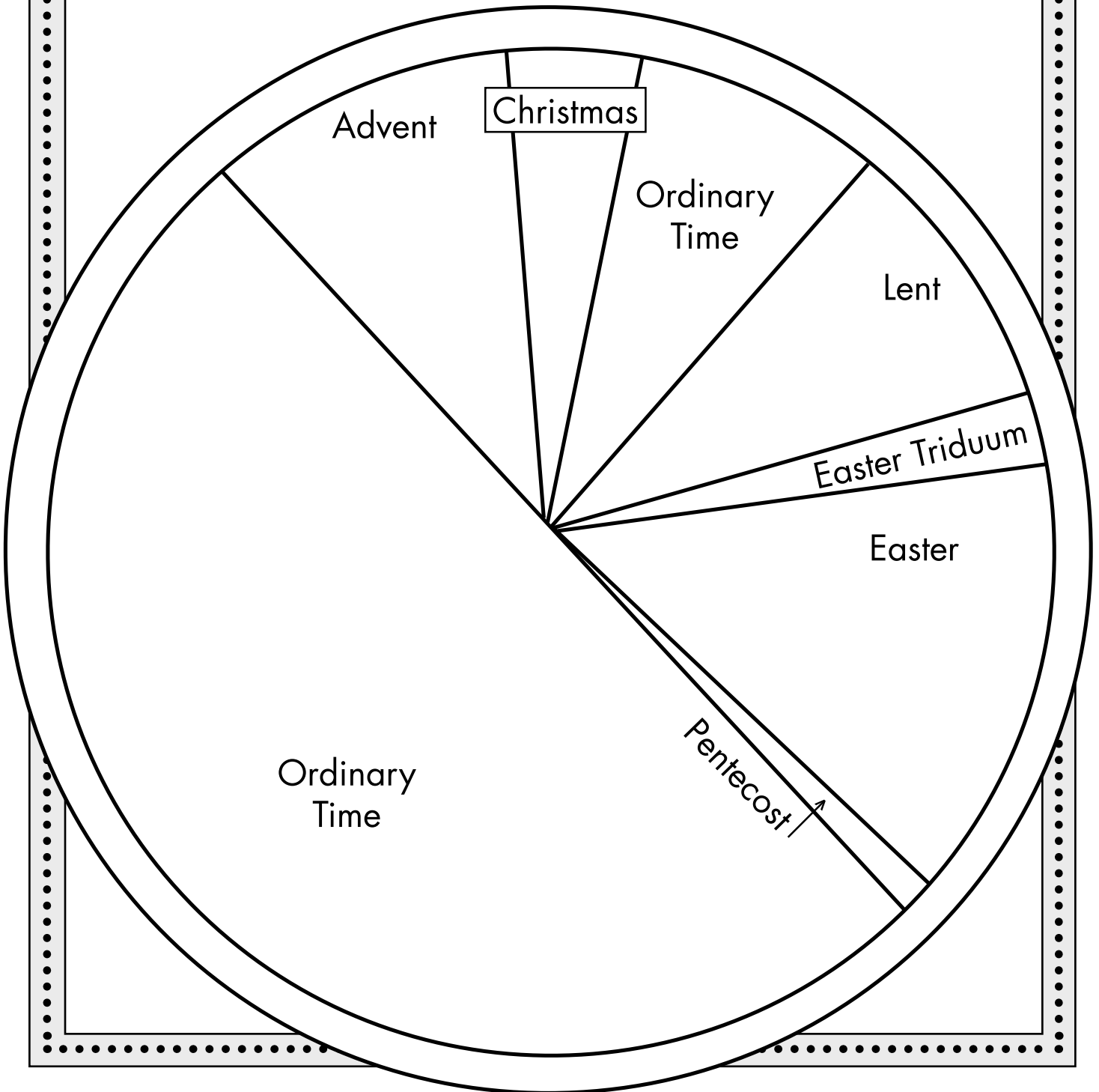
Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector
- *The Catholic Children’s Bible*

Mary, Mother of God (15 minutes)

- Show the video “The Annunciation (from the Nativity Bible)” (YouTube, 0:50).
- Tell the children that when we say prayers about Mary, we ask Mary to pray for us. Remind them that Jesus was God, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. Explain that this is why Mary is called the Mother of God.
- Invite the children to turn to page 1991 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*. Read the Hail Mary prayer to them several times. Ask the children if they have ever heard this prayer before.
- Encourage the children to say the prayer with you as you read it. If they already know the prayer, they can pray it with you. If they are still unfamiliar, read small parts of the prayer and have them repeat after you.
- Help the children recognize how the first part of the Hail Mary comes directly from what the angel said when he visited Mary, as they heard in the Featured Story in today’s lesson.

Church Year Calendar



Acknowledgments

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The second excerpt on page 30 and the excerpt on page 34 are from *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum, 1965)*, numbers 25 and 12, 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 38 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*.

