

Chapter

1

Jesus Is Always with Us



Chapter 1

Chapter at a Glance

Featured Story

The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–14, 16)

Lesson Goals

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

Materials Needed

- ☐ *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 from the Reconciliation Activity Book
- ☐ materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- "I Believe In Jesus," by Saddleback Kids Worship (InResponse Music)
- "With Us - Live," by Hillsong Worship (Hillsong Music)



Scan for
Playlist

Additional Resources

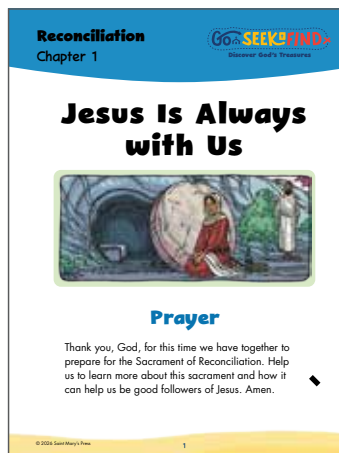
- the chapter 1 digital eLearning lesson for student or family review
- the chapter 1 Home Guide if this lesson will be taught at home or for reinforcement in the home

Background Focus

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

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

In every sacrament, our lives are mingled with Christ's living and risen presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that does not have an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) as part of its celebration. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sins. The presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by the priest's hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of his human voice: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*The Order of Penance*, 46).



Activity Book, Page 1

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to look at page 1 from the Activity Book.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read aloud the prayer on the page. Invite all of the children to say, "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

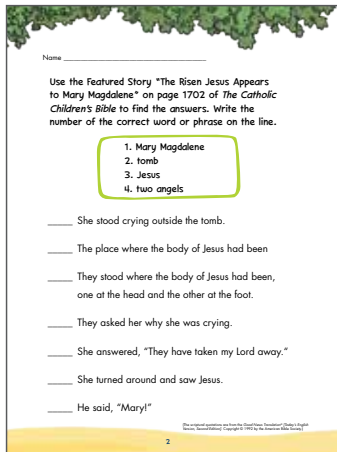
- Invite the children to recall everything they know about Jesus. Record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (*Responses might include: born in Bethlehem, is the Son of God, healed people and taught people about God, was crucified on the cross, etc.*)
- Emphasize the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

Seek (30 minutes)

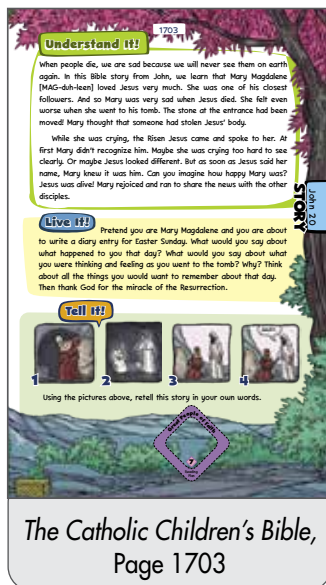
Featured Story

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





Activity Book, Page 2



- What did Mary Magdalene answer? (*"They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"*)
- What happened when Mary Magdalene turned around? (*She saw Jesus.*)

- Remind the children that this Bible story is the story of the very first Easter Sunday, when Jesus rose from the dead.
- Have the children turn to page 2 from the Activity Book and complete the activity with their Bibles open. *Answers: 1, 2, 4, 4, 1, 1, 3*

Understand It!

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

Live It!

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

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Encourage several volunteers to stand and summarize the Bible reading for the group, using the images in Tell It!
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages (pages 1702–1703) that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use in the remaining chapters.

Additional Activity Options

If the core learning activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 25 in its place.

Core Learning Activity

The Bible Says

- Invite the children to gather in a circle, if there is space, or to stand at their places with their hands at their sides.
- Explain that we will play a game similar to *Simon Says*.
- Give directions in these or similar words:
 - We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" everyone will crunch down, put their hands over their heads, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then everyone will stand up again with their hands at their sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" everyone will lift their arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means "Praise God!" Then everyone will put their hands at their sides again and wait for the next direction.
 - If I don't say, "The Bible says," then you are to stand still and do nothing.
 - If you move when I do not say, "The Bible says," you will be out of the game. The last person standing is the winner.
- Vary your directions, as in the game *Simon Says*, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it.
- Remind the children to stand with their hands at their sides while awaiting the next direction.
- End the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note.

Process the Activity

- Remind the children of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Tell the children that Jesus rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus continues to be present to us in a special way today.

Handout Options

You may wish to have the children read all or parts of the handout on pages 26–27 to supplement your presentation, or you may send it home for review with the family.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Tell the children that Jesus gave us seven great and holy signs of God's love, and that these signs are called **sacraments**. Explain that Jesus is present to us in a special way in the sacraments so that we can follow him more closely. Tell the children that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us stay away from **sin** and do good things. Explain that a sin is something we say, do, or think that does not follow God's Law.

- List the Seven Sacraments on the board for the children, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask the children how many of them know if they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell the children that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on the board.
- Remind the children that this time together is to help them prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tell them that this sacrament has many names:
 - Its official Church name is: the **Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**. Often this is shortened to “the Sacrament of Penance” or “the Sacrament of Reconciliation.”
 - Often we call this sacrament “**confession**,” because in it we confess what we have done wrong. We say, “We are going to confession tomorrow afternoon.”
 - Sometimes it is called “the sacrament of **conversion**,” because this sacrament helps us convert, or change, for the better.
- Help the children understand that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament in which we meet Jesus in a special way. In this sacrament, we ask God to forgive us. Explain to them that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite the children to complete the activity on page 3 from the Activity Book. *Answers: 1. forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better, Word at bottom: grace*

Name _____

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

better Baptism forgive
conversion confession

1. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we ask God to _____ us.
2. The word _____ means “change.”
3. In the Sacrament of _____, we become children of God.
4. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also called _____.
5. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we change for the _____.

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

What is it? God's life in us! _____

Activity Book, Page 3



Family Page Chapter 1 Jesus Is Always with Us

Background Focus
Every sacrament is a treasure because every sacrament is a gift of the presence of God. Christ is the Church by Jesus Christ, the sacraments bring his presence to us through human words and actions and through material elements like water, bread, wine, and oil.
The sacraments use the gifts of the material world to bring us into the realm of the spiritual. The sacraments are “doorways to the sacred.” There is a particular place in the life of each of us where and when we are changed in the faith, and we come to share in the life of Christ who humbly loved humanity in the water. The dignity of Christ in the water.
In every sacrament, we meet and are changed with Christ's living and saving presence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the sacraments that show us how an external material or earthly element (like water, bread, or oil) is part of the spiritual element in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the earthly element is the confession of sin. The presence of Christ in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by the priest's hand stretched in blessing and the comforting word of his human voice offering absolution and forgiveness of sin, in God's name.

Family Strategies
Our first community is the family, and learning to live in harmony at home is a first lesson in living in harmony with others. Harmony often involves following rules and procedures for the good of all. Parents and adults share these rules and procedures as a source of family pride and identity. For example, in our family, we do not use electronics during meals, or in our family, we do not call names, or in our family, we never guests for. You may soon have your child explaining proudly to friends, “In our family...”

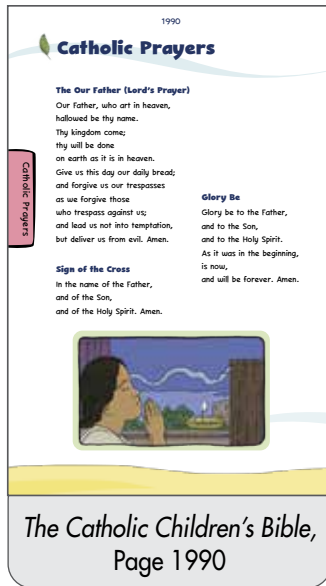
Family Activities
• Congratulate your child on beginning to prepare for Reconciliation. Tell about the sacrament together, and present the sacrament on an opportunity to experience God's love and forgiveness and a chance to start over.
• Read together the featured story on page 1702 of The Catholic Children's Bible (John 20:11-14, 16), or the longer version, (John 20:11-20). Remind your child that the Risen Jesus will be present in the Sacrament of Reconciliation but will not be seen.
• Watch the YouTube video “In Good Hands Baby Dedication Song” (audio version with lyrics) by Kate Gilman (2016), which expresses a powerful perspective on caring for “God's child.” Emphasize to your child that we are precious to God and are in God's good hands our entire lives.

Pray!!!
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.
Risen Jesus, be with us each moment, especially as [name of child] prepares to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us all to become good followers of Jesus. Amen.

Activity Book, Page 4

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.
- 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:
 - Christ died, rose from the dead, and is with us now.
 - We meet Jesus in the sacraments.
 - We confess our sins and are forgiven by God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure map.
- Remind the children to have their parents read the family page on page 4 from the Activity Book with them at home.
- Invite the children to complete the chapter 1 digital eLearning lesson at home for review, alone or with their family.



Closing Prayer

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

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

God Calls Me by Name (15 minutes)

- Invite the children to gather in a circle. Introduce yourself first, saying, "My name is ____, and I like ____." (Name something that starts with the first letter of your first name. For example, "I am Sara, and I like sassafras.")
- Instruct the child next to you to say your name and add theirs. (For example: "She is Sara, and she likes sassafras. My name is Lucy, and I like licorice.")
- The next child will say all three names and likes, including their own. (The group may help as needed, because the game will get more difficult. Keep the atmosphere light and fun, so no one feels inadequate for not being able to remember all the preceding names and likes.)
- At the end of the game, ask the children: "Did we have trouble remembering everyone's name and what they liked? (Yes) Does God have trouble remembering our names and what we like and don't like? (No) Why not? (God is all-knowing and all-loving. He loves us and knows us best of all.)
- Remind the children that they became children of God at Baptism.

Materials Needed

- plastic spoons, one for each child
- several plastic Easter eggs

Easter Egg Relay (15 minutes)

- Arrange the children into groups of four. Give each child in the group a plastic spoon.
- Invite the children in each group to stand together in a line, and give the first child in each line a plastic egg to balance on their spoon.
- Explain that this is a relay race and that the first person in the line will carry the egg on their spoon to the other end of the room and back. Tell them that if they drop the egg, they must come back to the front of the line and start over. (This rule can be skipped if this proves too difficult for the children.)
- Continue by telling the children that when they return, they should move the egg to the next person's spoon, trying not to use their hands. Explain that this person will then go to the other end of the room and back and that the race will continue until the last person in each group returns.
- Tell the children that the first group to have all members return wins.
- Explain that the Easter egg reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead. Just like a baby chick breaks out of an egg, so Jesus left the tomb and is with us today.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Jesus Loves Me (15 minutes)

- Show the video "Hey! Jesus loves me!," available on YouTube (3:48). This video, with lyrics, can be used to emphasize how much Jesus loves each one of us and how he is always ready to show us mercy.
- Invite volunteers to recall some of the ideas in the song.
- Remind the children that Jesus died and rose again to show us how much he loves us.



Scan for
Playlist