

## 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 our child or ask his or her forgiveness, we give our child an opportunity to see, experience, and practice important skills he or she can use throughout life. And sometimes we may find that our child can teach us about forgiveness.

The scriptural focus of this chapter 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.

## Family Activities

- Choose one of the extra liturgies or prayer services offered at your parish during Lent and go as a family. Take the opportunity to discuss why we pray and why it is important to give time to God every day, not just on Sundays and special feasts.
- Read together the Featured Story on page 1620 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Luke 15:11, 20–24). Invite your child to tell you what he or she remembers about the meaning of this Scripture.
- Watch the video "Giving Makes You Happy\_children" (YouTube, 1:27) together. Discuss your child's individual plan for Lent, and affirm his or her wishes to do good actions. Make practical plans for giving time, talent, or treasure as a family.

## People of Faith

### Saint Joseph (first century)

Saint Joseph was Mary's husband and Jesus' earthly father. Joseph cared for and protected Mary and Jesus. In the same way, he cares for and protects the Church, which is all of us. We celebrate the feast of Saint Joseph, patron saint of the Church, on March 19.

## Prayer

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

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with your forgiveness. Help our family always to ask for forgiveness when we need it and to offer forgiveness even before it is asked. We ask in your holy name. Amen.

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Discover!  
Finding Faith in Life

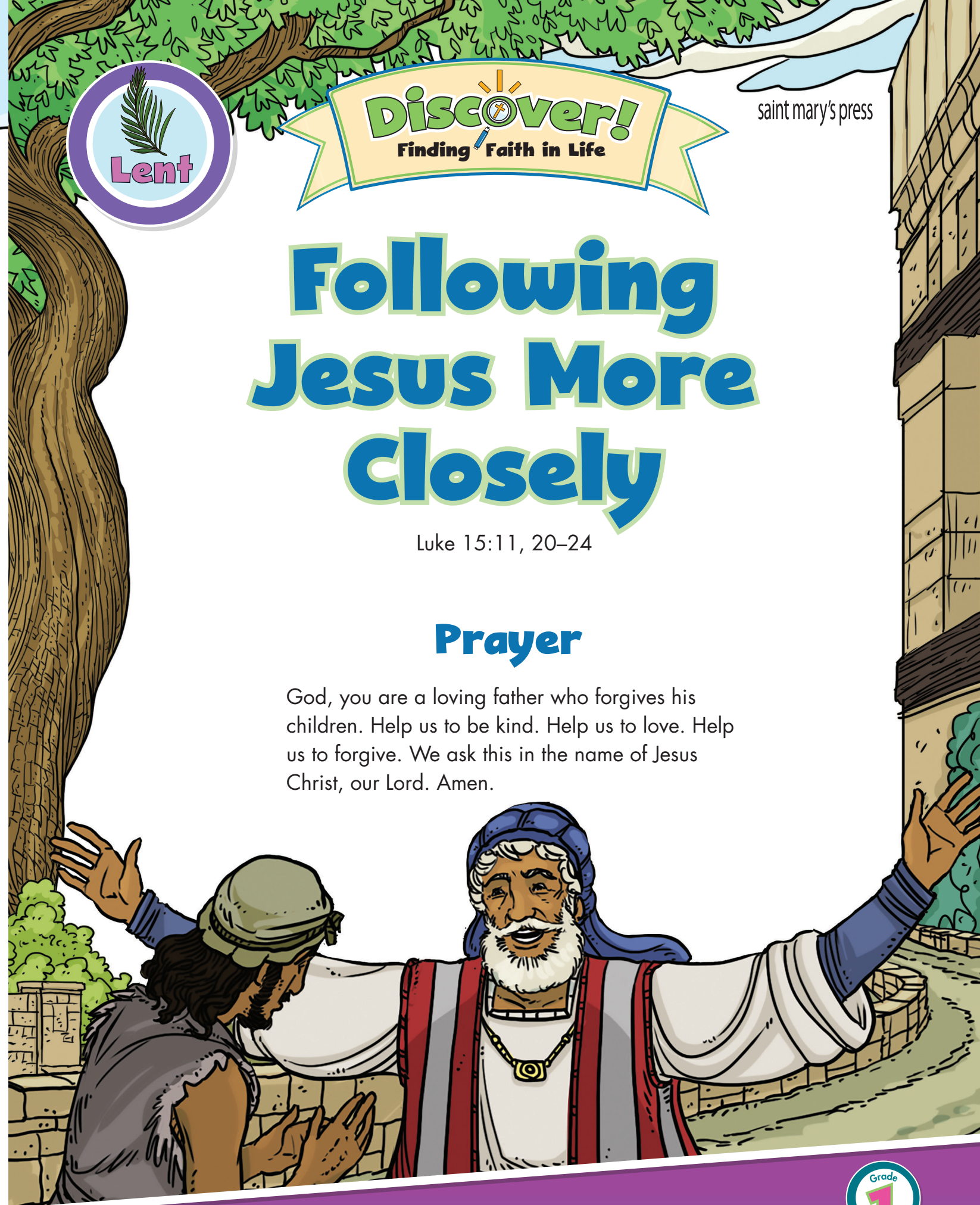
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# Following Jesus More Closely

Luke 15:11, 20–24

## Prayer

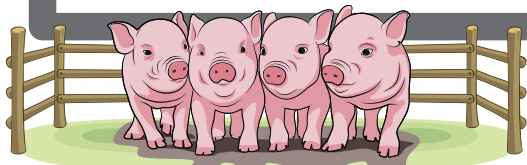
God, you are a loving father who forgives his children. Help us to be kind. Help us to love. Help us to forgive. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Use the Featured Story on page 1620 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Luke 15:11, 20–24) to remind you of God's love and forgiveness. Solve the maze to show the son returning to his father.



**Finish**



**Start**



**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. . . .  
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,

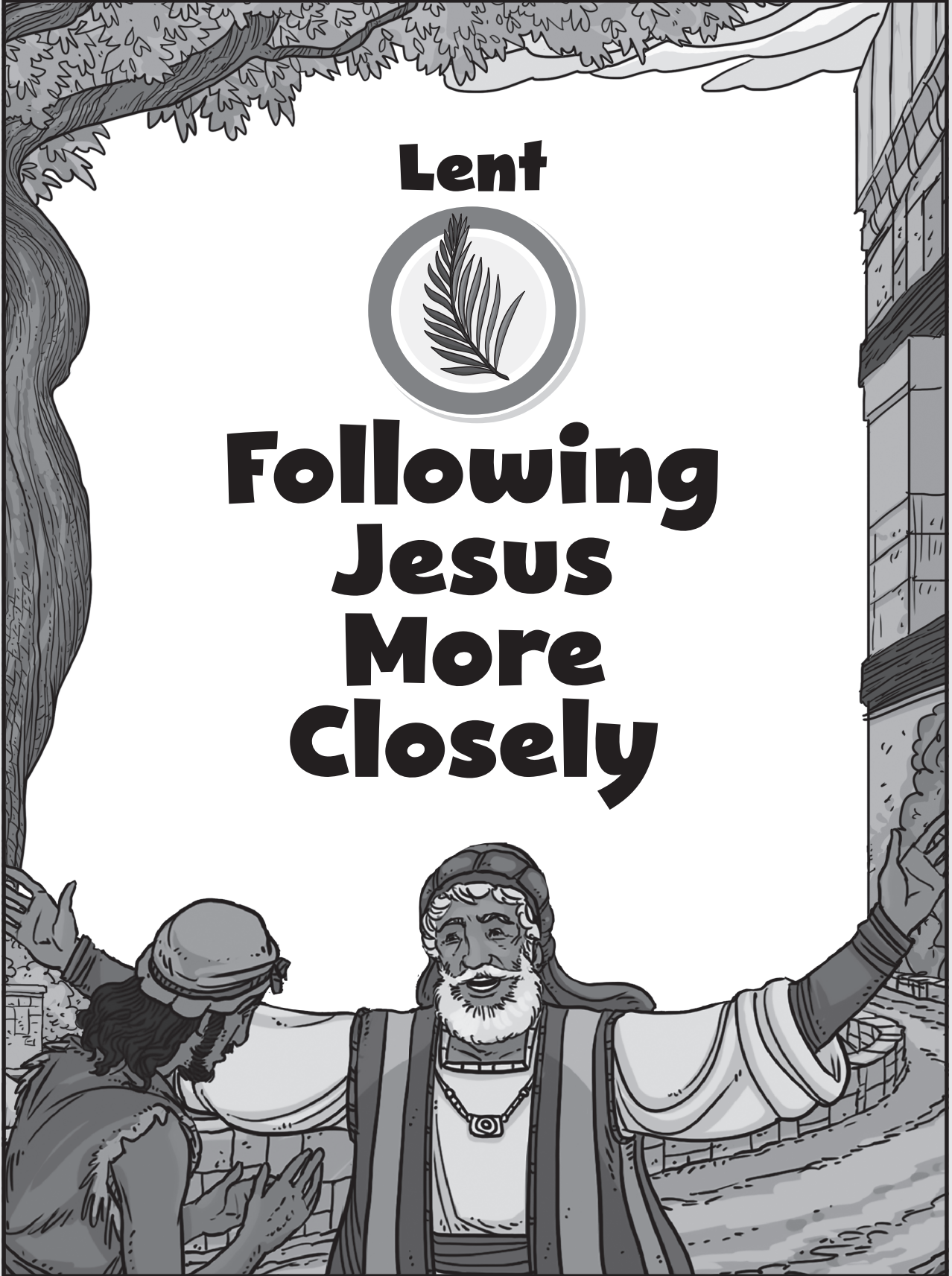
**All:** Lord, hear our prayer.

**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.



**Lent**



**Following  
Jesus  
More  
Closely**



## Chapter at a Glance

### Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

### Chapter 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 and full-color at [www.smp.org/discover\\_grade1school](http://www.smp.org/discover_grade1school).

### 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)

Lent

### 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 chapter 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.



## Day 1—Get Ready!

### Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- extra bookmarks for children who need replacements

### Opening

- 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 aloud the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet. Invite the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.
- Encourage the children to look at the image on the front of the activity booklet. Invite them to share what they see and to predict what the chapter might be about. Read the chapter title to the group.

### Engage Activity

- Invite the children to 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 children that when we do, we need to ask forgiveness from God and from others.
- Tell the children that in this chapter they will 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.

### Bible Background

- Tell the children that the Scripture passage for this chapter comes from the Gospel of Luke. Invite the children to turn to page 15 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* and find "Luke" on the bookshelf. Ask them to share whether the book is found in the Old or the New Testament (*New Testament*). Invite them to note the color of the book and that this book is part of a collection

of books called the Gospels and Acts. Encourage them to find this color on the bottom pages of the Bible to get a general sense for where these books are found.

- Help the children use the table of contents to find the first page of Luke (page 1570). If there is time, read aloud the introduction to this book if you have not already read it to the group.
- Invite the children to find Luke 15:11–32 (pages 1619 and 1622). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and 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 surrounding pages. Point out that the Scripture citation of the Featured Story matches the citation on the front of the activity booklet.
- Invite the children to place their bookmarks in these pages in *The Catholic Children's Bible*, and explain that you will read this Scripture on day 2 to discover what it says.

## Closing Prayer

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



## Day 2—Dive In!

### Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the Lent activity booklet

### Opening

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

### Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to use their bookmarks to return to pages 1620–1621 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Ask them to look at the artwork and share what they see.
- 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.



**Live It!**

- Read aloud the Live It! on page 1621.
- 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.*)

**Closing Prayer**

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

**Day 3—Discover!****Materials Needed**

- the Lent activity booklet
- copies of the handout "Following Jesus More Closely," one for each child
- craft sticks, two for each child
- markers or crayons
- several pairs of scissors
- several bottles of glue
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

**Opening**

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



**Note:** The handout “Following Jesus More Closely,” can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at [www.smp.org/discover\\_grade1\\_school](http://www.smp.org/discover_grade1_school).

## 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 samples 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 “Following Jesus More Closely.” 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.

### 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!

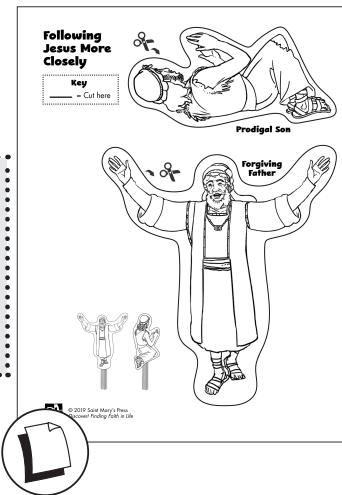
### Additional Activity Options

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 346–347 in its place.

## 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.

Lent



- 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.)*

## Closing Prayer

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



## Day 4—Go!

### Materials Needed

- the Lent activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- a candle *(optional)*
- copies of the handout “Lent Review,” one for each child

### Opening

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

### Review

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this chapter, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take 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 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.
- Give each child a copy of the handout “Lent Review” if you would like to incorporate an assessment on day 4. Help the children by reading the instructions. You may also find it helpful to complete the review together as a class. *Answers: 1. God, 2. Lent, 3. forgiveness, 4. kind, 5. almsgiving*

### Chapter Wrap-Up

- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the “People of Faith” section aloud. Add any other information you know about Saint Joseph, and lead the children in saying, “Saint Joseph, pray for us.” Assure them that they can ask for Saint Joseph’s help at any time.
- Encourage the children to remind their parents to read through the family page on the back of the activity booklet.

**Note:** The handout “Lent Review” can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at [www.smp.org/discover\\_grade1school](http://www.smp.org/discover_grade1school).

**Lent Review** Read the words in the clouds. Choose the correct word to complete each sentence below. Write it on the line.

Lent kind forgiveness  
God almsgiving

1. The father in the Scripture story reminds us of \_\_\_\_\_ and his forgiveness.
2. During \_\_\_\_\_ we make a special effort to forgive others.
3. We also need to ask for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. During this season, we make a special effort to be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. During Lent, we practice \_\_\_\_\_ by giving up something and helping others in need.

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Lent: Finding Faith in Life Lent, Grade 1



## Short Closing Prayer (*optional*)

**Note:** Use this prayer if you do not intend to use the longer prayer service on page 345 to close this chapter.

- 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.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.



## Day 5—Discover More! (optional)

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

### Journal or Artistic Reflection

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

### We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “Lent,” page 33

Read the selection aloud. Check for understanding by asking several questions. You may want to summarize the key concepts for the children.

### Additional Activity Options

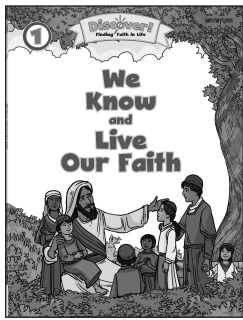
Use any of the additional activities on pages 346–347 not used during any of the lessons to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

### Review and Chapter Wrap-Up

If you have a full class period for day 5, you could consider using day 4 to incorporate one of the additional activities on pages 346–347 or the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource to reinforce the core concepts of the chapter. Then day 5 can include the verbal recall of the key learnings of the chapter, the “Lent Review,” and the chapter wrap-up.

### Liturgical Readings

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



# Prayer Service

## For the Needs of the World

Seat children together in a large circle. If it is allowed, you may consider lighting 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.

**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 be aware of their actions, and will help them decide to be more loving, like Jesus.
- Make a set ahead of time to show 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 “[Children’s Songs] Giving Makes You Happy” (YouTube, 2:37).
- 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**





# Lent Review

Read the words in the clouds. Choose the correct word to complete each sentence below. Write it on the line.

Lent

kind

forgiveness

God

almsgiving

1. The father in the Scripture story reminds us of \_\_\_\_\_ and his forgiveness.
2. During \_\_\_\_\_, we make a special effort to forgive others.
3. We also need to ask for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. During this season, we make a special effort to be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. During Lent, we practice \_\_\_\_\_ by giving up something and helping others in need.



## The Forgiving Father

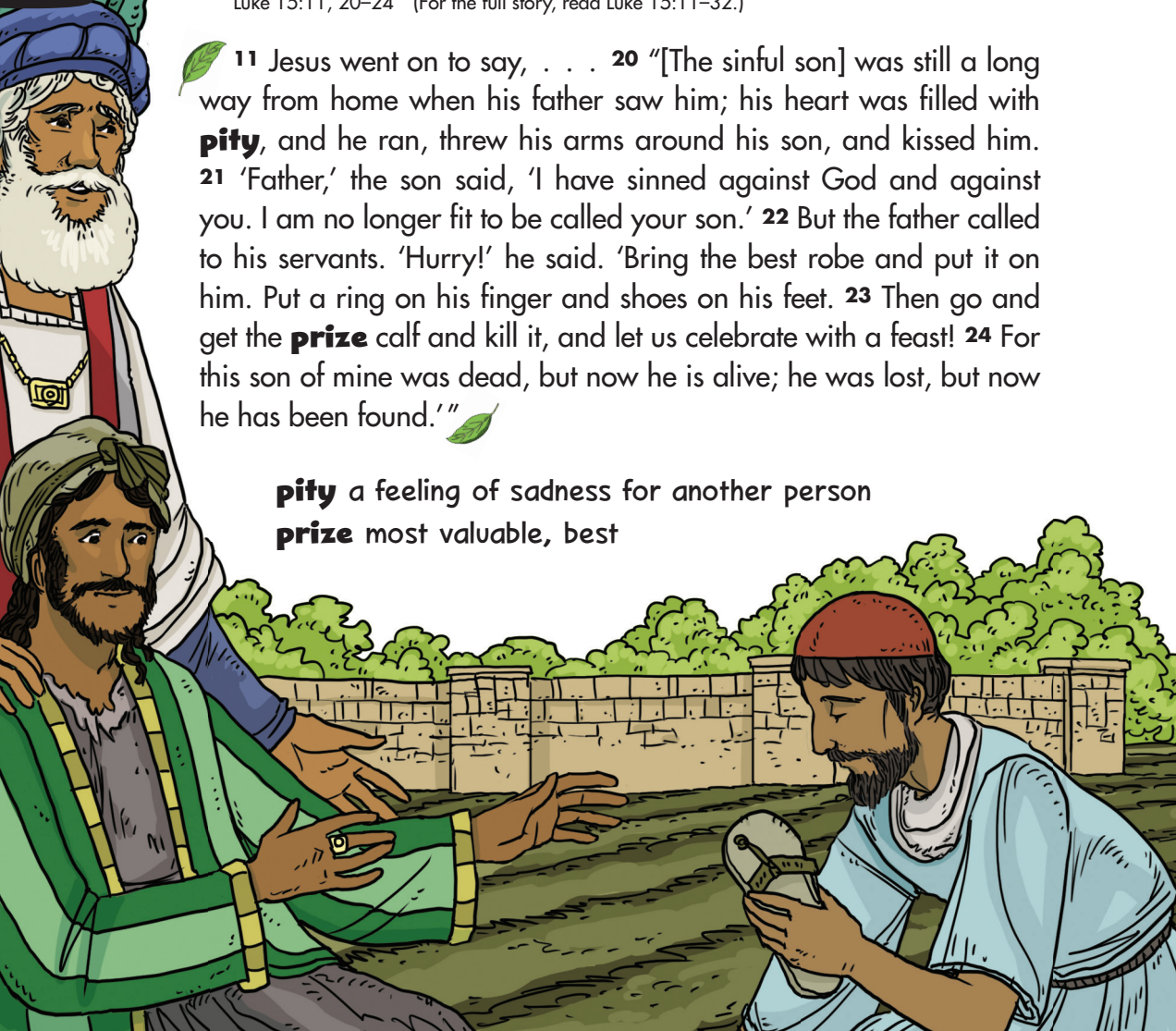


Luke 15:11, 20–24 (For the full story, read Luke 15:11–32.)

11 Jesus went on to say, . . . 20 “[The sinful son] was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with **pity**, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. 21 ‘Father,’ the son said, ‘I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.’ 22 But the father called to his servants. ‘Hurry!’ he said. ‘Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. 23 Then go and get the **prize** calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! 24 For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found.’”

**pity** a feeling of sadness for another person

**prize** most valuable, best



## Understand it!

This story Jesus told could be called "A Foolish Son and His Big-Hearted Father." This son asked his dad for a lot of money and then left home. He wasted every penny. When he was starving because he had no money left, he wanted to go home.

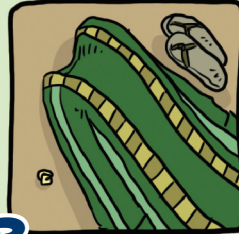
The father could have been angry. Instead, he loved his son so much that he ran to meet him. The father hugged his son even before the son said he was sorry. The father was so happy to have his son back that he gave him a gift. He held a big party to welcome him home. Jesus wants us to know that our Father in Heaven is like this loving father. No matter how much we sin, God will always love us and forgive us. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him.

STORY  
Luke 15

## Live It!

Think about a time when you behaved in a way that upset your mom or dad. What did you do to let them know you were sorry? How did they react? God is like a loving parent. He always welcomes us back when we turn to him after we've disobeyed his commandments. Thank God for loving you like the father in the story.

## Tell It!



Using the pictures above, retell this story in your own words.

