

CHAPTER 5

God Our Father

Core Activity

The Mystery of God

1. Conduct a forced-choice activity by posing the following questions and possible answers, and directing students who make the same choices to group together. After each question, give everyone a moment to group and to explain their reasons to at least one other person.

1. If you encountered something mysterious, what would you be more likely to do?
 - a. Go toward it.
 - b. Keep my distance.
2. If I said you were going to encounter something mysterious today, what would your reaction be?
 - a. curiosity
 - b. boredom
3. Think of some mysterious things. Which is a better image for them?
 - a. light
 - b. darkness
4. Which is more likely to be associated with a mystery?
 - a. a problem
 - b. a solution
5. Which holiday has more to do with mystery?
 - a. Halloween
 - b. Christmas

2. Ask the students to form pairs and define the word *mystery*. Invite a few volunteers to share their definitions with the class. Then ask the class to think about the question, “What is a mystery of faith?” Again ask for volunteers to respond.

3. Repeat the first two or three forced-choice questions from step 1. This time ask everyone to think of God as mystery when they consider their responses. After each question give everyone a moment to explain their choice to at least one other person. Also ask the students to indicate, by a show of hands, if they chose differently this time than last, and ask for volunteers to explain why or why not.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Core Activity Extension

Images of God in Scripture



As homework or class work, give each student a copy of the handout “Images of God in Scripture” (Document #: TX003177). Assign each student one Scripture passage from the list on the handout. Explain that the young people are to follow the directions on the the handout. Invite each student to share his or her creation with the class, or help the students create a display of their creations in the school. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Additional Activities

Gender Images of God

1. As homework or class work, ask the students to view paintings and sculptures of God from a variety of time periods and cultures; encourage them to search the Internet and in books for such images. Discuss the following questions with your students:

- When God is depicted in art, is God usually male or female?
- What are the physical characteristics that artists attribute to God?
- What impact do artistic representations of God have on the way we view women and men? people of various races and cultures?

2. Invite the students to select an image of God that is meaningful for or appealing to them. Have them write a reflection on why they chose that depiction of God, what they think the artist is saying about God, and what meaning that image of God has for them. If there is time, invite your students to share their reflections.

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Proofs for the Existence of God

Discuss with your students the Did You Know? article “Proofs for the Existence of God,” on page 58 of the *The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth, Third Edition (CFH)*. Have each student put together, from periodicals and other publications, a collage of images and words that are proofs of the existence of God for him or her. Invite the students to share with the class the reasons why they chose particular images and words, and how those elements relate to the five proofs of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Evidence of Good and Evil

Ask the students to find, from newspapers and other periodicals, articles that are evidence of good and evil in the world. Have each student write a short reflection on one of the articles, answering the following questions:

- What good or evil is depicted in the article?
- Is the good or evil a result of the choice someone made?
- Is the choice made by one person or by more than one person?
- If the good or evil is a result of someone's decision, what different choices might have produced a different outcome?
- What effects might the good or evil have in the future?
- Does the good or evil have the potential to affect whether others will choose good or evil?
- If the effect is evil, might something good come from it? If so, what?

(This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

Family Connection: An Image-of-God Interview

Invite the students to interview parents, grandparents, other older relatives, or older members of their parish to discover how images of God have changed or stayed the same over the years. Have the students report on what they learn in their interviews. (This activity is adapted from the *TC: Creed* manual.)

(The material labeled *TC: Creed* is adapted from *Total Catechesis: Catechetical Sessions on the Creed*, by Maura Thompson Hagarty, Michael J. Hagarty, Marilyn Kielbasa, and Barbara Murray, in the Total Catechesis series [Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2004]. Copyright © 2004 by Saint Mary's Press. All rights reserved.)