

# INSPIRE!

*Touching hearts. Igniting joy.*



ENACTING  
**EASTER**

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LOVE IN  
**ACTION**

PAGE 20

YOUR STUDENTS ARE LIVING  
IMAGES OF  
*Jesus.*

—SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE



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## ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Saint Mary's Press is a nonprofit, Lasallian Catholic publisher administered by the Christian Brothers of the Midwest District. Our focus is a contemporary expression of the Catholic Church's mission to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and the Lasallian mission to provide a human and Christian education for young people, including those who are economically deprived. With our partners in schools, parishes, and families, we share the Good News of Jesus Christ with Christian children and young people through publications and services.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Steven Ellair, Jill Johnson, Maureen Provencher, Laurie Ziliak



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# from the editor



The approach of spring is always exciting as we leave behind the darkness of winter and see the signs of new life appearing all around us. Our Church also leaves behind the season of Lent and journeys toward the new life celebrated at Easter. The journey of these months can be a powerful time of renewal within ourselves and our communities.

This issue of *Inspire!* includes activities to help you bring Easter into focus in your classrooms and gatherings of children. Culturally, Easter is not nearly as celebrated or recognized as Christmas, and yet it marks the most important event in our faith. Therefore, it is helpful to bring this celebration and the reality of the Resurrection of Christ to life for the children with whom we minister.

This issue also supports the season of First Communion as well as the National Eucharistic Revival, which invites people to renew their commitment to Christ in the Eucharist. "Love in Action" (see page 20) provides a reflection that invites people of all ages into a greater love for the Eucharist. As catechists and teachers, we have a unique opportunity to lead children into a deeper faith and connection with Christ as experienced in the Eucharist.

As Lent moves toward Easter and winter turns to spring, we hope these months bring new life. We are grateful for your ministry and your willingness to engage the hearts and minds of young people so that they may experience the new life in Christ that we celebrate each Easter.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . forever!

Steven Ellair

# Enacting Easter

BY LAURIE ZILIAK



If you were to ask most people about the story of Christmas, they could likely recall it in some detail. Religious or not, people would likely name the shepherds, the Wise Men, the star, or any number of other details. Even if they were not entirely accurate, or didn't understand the theological message of the birth of Christ, many people could tell you something about the Christmas story. We have Saint Francis of Assisi to thank for that.

In the thirteenth century, Saint Francis created the first Nativity scene. He was desperately trying to move the focus away from the material practice of gift-giving that had become so central to the celebration of Christmas, so he created a staged, live display reenacting the birth of Christ to encourage people to reflect on the true meaning and purpose of Christmas. It was a stroke of brilliance.

Today, Nativity scenes can be seen almost everywhere during the months of December and January. They are on front lawns, in churches, on Christmas cards and wrapping paper, and presented in countless other ways during those months. We invite children and families to act out the Nativity as live manger scenes in religious education classes and other church programs. Throughout the Christmas season, we sing songs that tell the story of the birth of Christ, and we are able to conjure images that look a lot like familiar Nativity scenes. Is it any wonder that Christmas is so prominent?





The same cannot be said for Easter. Culturally, this holiday does not have the same importance. Schools may or may not be out during the Easter holiday, and many businesses remain open. Some schools even have events on Easter Saturday, while they would likely never consider scheduling something on Christmas Eve.

The prominence of the celebration of Christmas might be traced to the fact that there are so many visual points of reference, and many people have a personal history of acting out or participating in the live retelling of the Christmas story.



What if we employed the same methods for Easter? Although we may not bring about a large cultural shift, we do have the unique opportunity as teachers and catechists to invite children into the telling of the Easter story in a way that can have a long-lasting impact. Such interactive strategies are powerful educational tools.

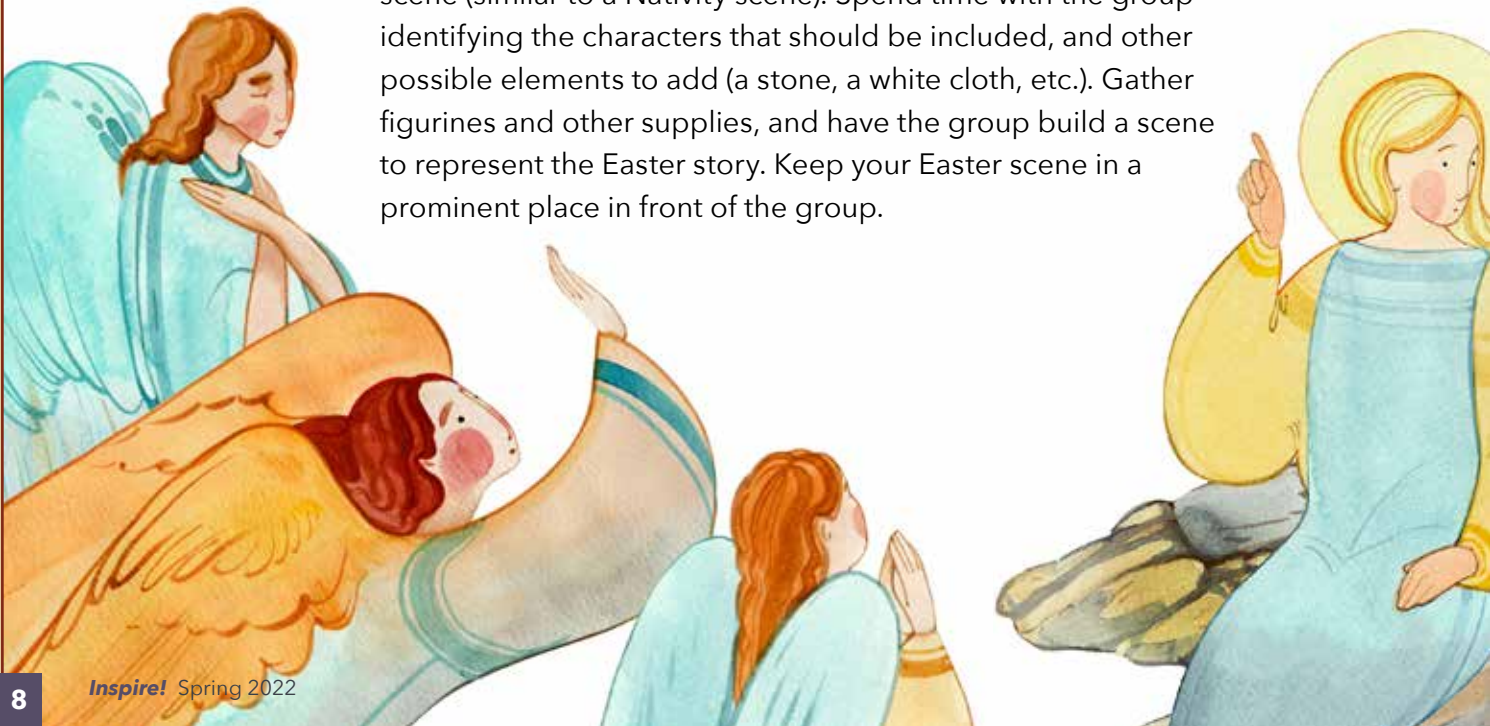
(continued on page 8) →

**E**ach Gospel tells of the first Easter, but the details in each account are different (just as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke differ in their telling of the birth of Christ). The account from the Gospel of John is used liturgically and provides a great place to start. Read John 20:1-18 with the children. For older children, you may want to include verses 19-23 as well. Then invite the children to visually and physically enact the first Easter.

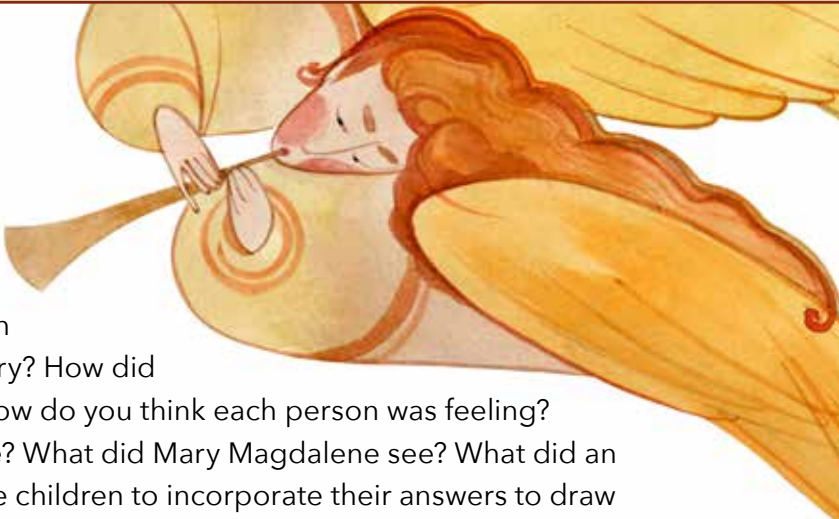
**Act It Out:** Invite the children to act out the Easter story. Read John 20:1-18, and assign the children to play characters such as Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, the other disciple, two angels, Jesus, and the rest of the disciples. With older children, expand the portrayal to include John 20:19-23 and Jesus' appearance to the disciples. Add costumes and create a simple background to enhance the portrayal. When all the children are rehearsed and ready, take your show on the road around the school or parish.

**Take It to Church:** Work with the pastor and parish staff to have the children act out the first Easter as part of the Easter Sunday morning Mass. Many parishes have children's masses for Christmas Eve in which the children play special roles in the liturgy (often acting out the Christmas Gospel) and the Homily is presented in a child-friendly way with age-appropriate material. Work with parish staff to expand what is usually a Christmas practice to the Easter celebration.

**Build It:** Work with the group to create a diorama or Easter scene (similar to a Nativity scene). Spend time with the group identifying the characters that should be included, and other possible elements to add (a stone, a white cloth, etc.). Gather figurines and other supplies, and have the group build a scene to represent the Easter story. Keep your Easter scene in a prominent place in front of the group.



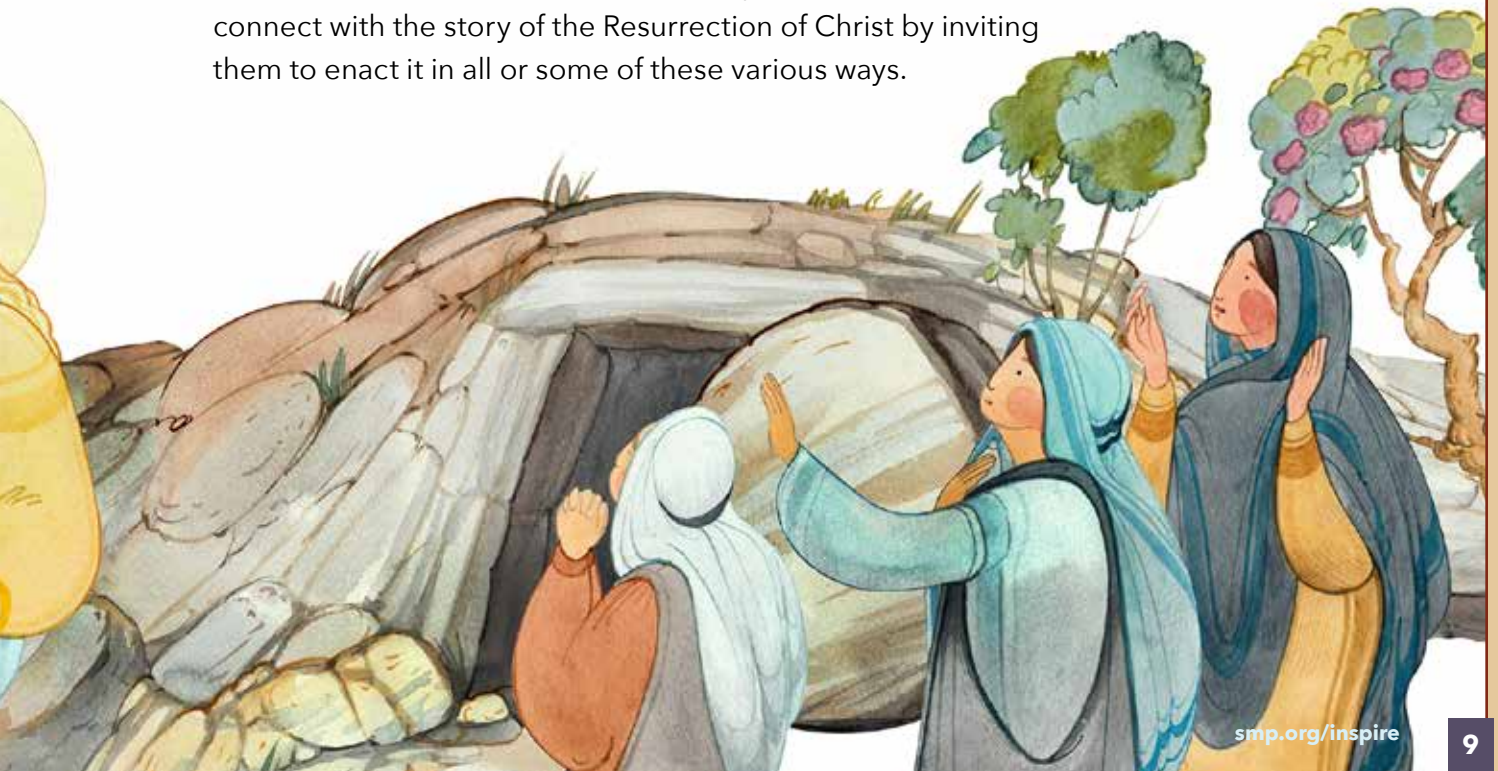




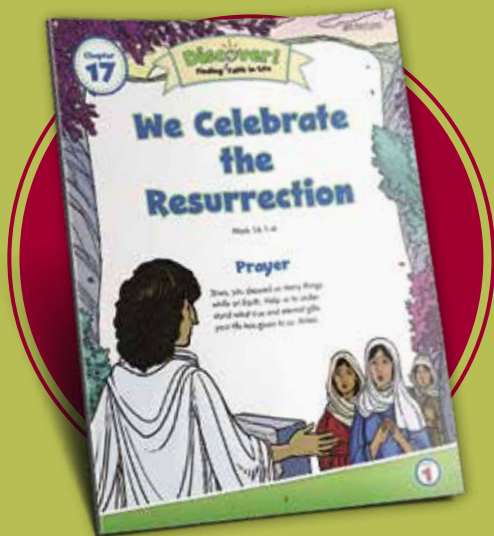
**Draw It:** Help the children draw the Easter story. Ask some questions to help establish a visual image: Who is in the story? How did each person get to the tomb? How do you think each person was feeling? Where does the story take place? What did Mary Magdalene see? What did an ancient tomb look like? Invite the children to incorporate their answers to draw a picture of the first Easter that includes the details you discussed. Hang the images around the room when all are complete, and reference them frequently throughout the Easter season.

**Show It and Stage It:** Help the children stage the Easter story. Show Easter picture books and talk about the pictures. It's okay if a book is on the younger side in favor of memorable pictures. Books such as *The Easter Story*, by Juliet David, or *The Story of Easter*, by Patricia A. Pingry, have strong visuals. After talking about each picture, invite the children to create a tableau recreation of the image you just discussed. Continue through the book, having the children create a tableau for each picture in the book.

Easter is the high point of the Church year and celebrates the most important moment for our community of faith. Help the children embrace Easter and connect with the story of the Resurrection of Christ by inviting them to enact it in all or some of these various ways.



# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from chapter 17 of the Grade 1 Activity Booklet in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

ARE YOU AT A PARISH?  
[SMP.ORG/DISCOVERPARISH](http://SMP.ORG/DISCOVERPARISH)


ARE YOU AT A SCHOOL?  
[SMP.ORG/DISCOVERSCHOOL](http://SMP.ORG/DISCOVERSCHOOL)

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Color the picture below using the correct color for each number listed.


1 = 

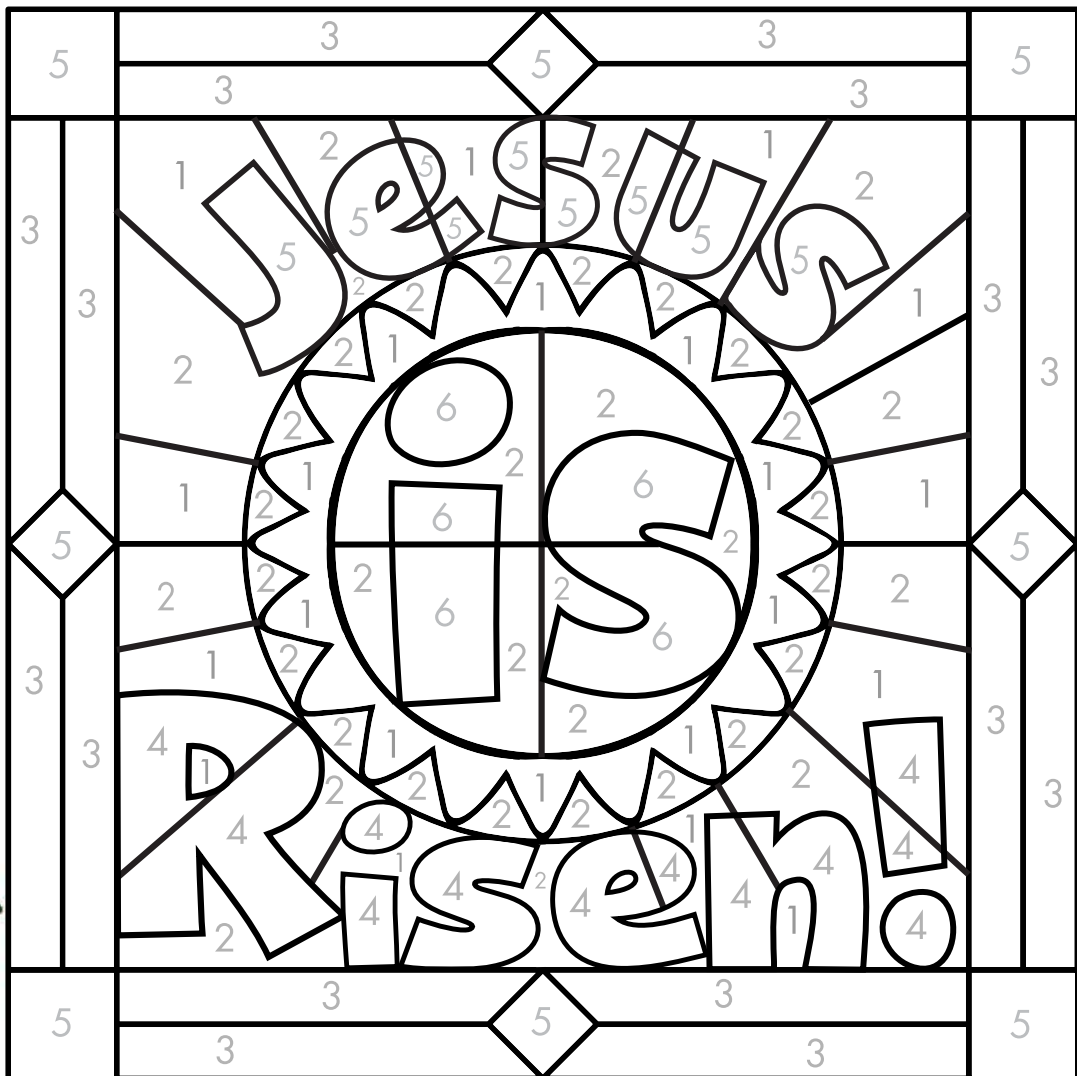
3 = 

5 = 

2 = 

4 = 

6 = 



# The Bible Says

## Group Activity

1. Read John 20:11-18 with the children.
2. Invite the children to gather in a circle, if there is space, or to stand at their places with their hands at their sides.
3. Explain that they will play a game similar to Simon Says.
4. Give directions in these or similar words:

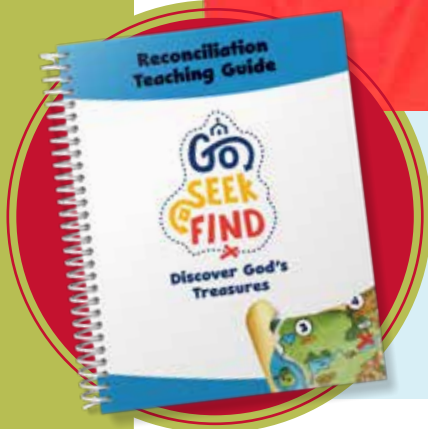
- We will begin by standing with our hands at our sides.
- When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ has died,'" everyone will crouch down, put their hands over their heads, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then everyone will stand up again with hands at sides.
- When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" 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.



**Teacher Note:** As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, 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. It will be helpful to end the game with, "The Bible says, 'Christ has risen,'" to end on a positive note. You may want to arrange the children into teams. The team with the most members still standing at the end of the game (when you call "time!") is the winner.

## Process the Activity

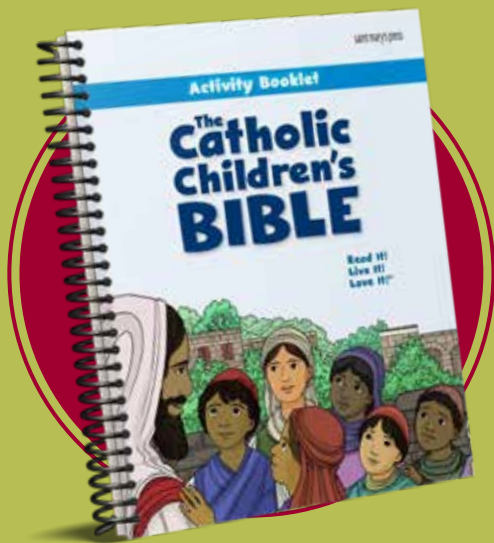
- Remind the children of the Easter Bible story and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Tell the children that Jesus' rising from the dead is Good News that we celebrate each year at Easter. Explain that we rejoice in this and celebrate the fact that Jesus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



This activity is taken from chapter 1 of the *Reconciliation Teaching Guide* in the *Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures* program.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
**GO SEEK FIND** AND ITS COMPONENTS:  
VISIT [smp.org/goseekfind](http://smp.org/goseekfind)

# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is adapted from the *Catholic Children's Bible Activity Booklet*.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S BIBLE AND ITS COMPONENTS:

visit [smp.org/ccb](http://smp.org/ccb)

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

# Jesus Is Alive! Alleluia!

A cinquain (sin-kane) is a five-line poem that has this structure:

1. One word telling the subject of the poem
2. Two words describing the word in the first line
3. Three "ing" action words about the topic
4. Four words that express a feeling or thought
5. A synonym for the first word



## Here is an example:

Christmas  
Joyful, holy  
Praising, singing, laughing  
Earth has a Savior  
Birth

Read Mark 16:1–6, and write a cinquain about the Resurrection of Jesus.

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Level 2 Activity: **The Women Find the Empty Tomb** (*The Catholic Children's Bible*, pages 1568–1569). Permission to reproduce is granted. © 2015 by Saint Mary's Press.

# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from the Grade 2 Easter Activity Booklet in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

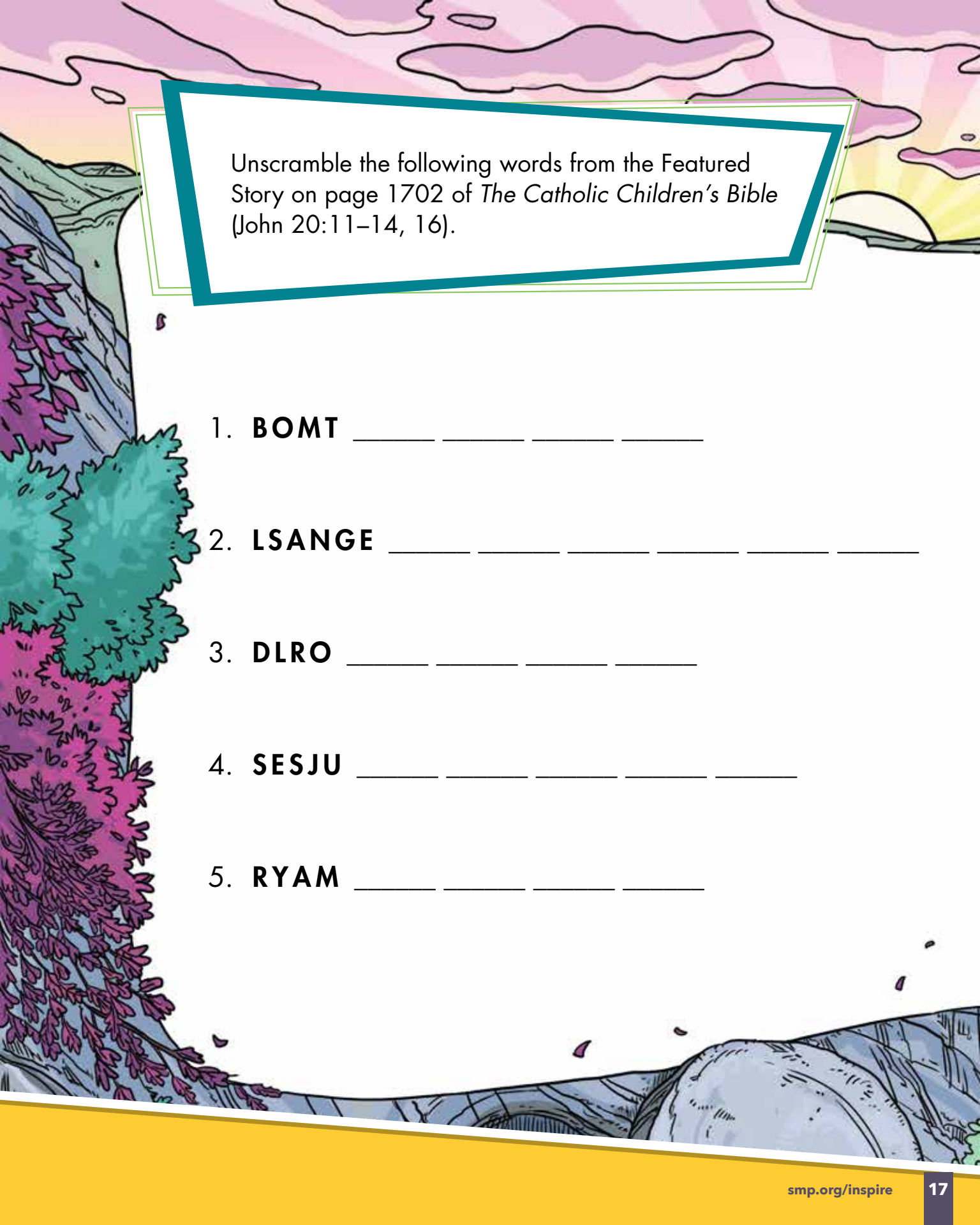
ARE YOU AT A PARISH?  
[SMP.ORG/DISCOVERPARISH](http://SMP.ORG/DISCOVERPARISH)

ARE YOU AT A SCHOOL?  
[SMP.ORG/DISCOVERSCHOOL](http://SMP.ORG/DISCOVERSCHOOL)

**Answers:** 1. tomb, 2. angels, 3. Lord, 4. Jesus, 5. Mary

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE





Unscramble the following words from the Featured Story on page 1702 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (John 20:11–14, 16).

1. **BOMT** \_\_\_\_\_

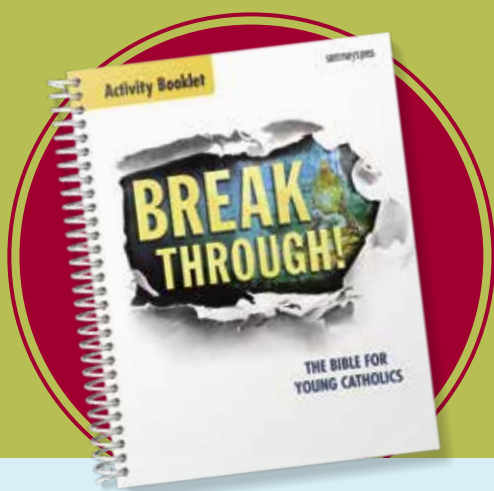
2. **LSANGE** \_\_\_\_\_

3. **DLRO** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **SESJU** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **RYAM** \_\_\_\_\_

# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from the Activity Booklet for *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*.

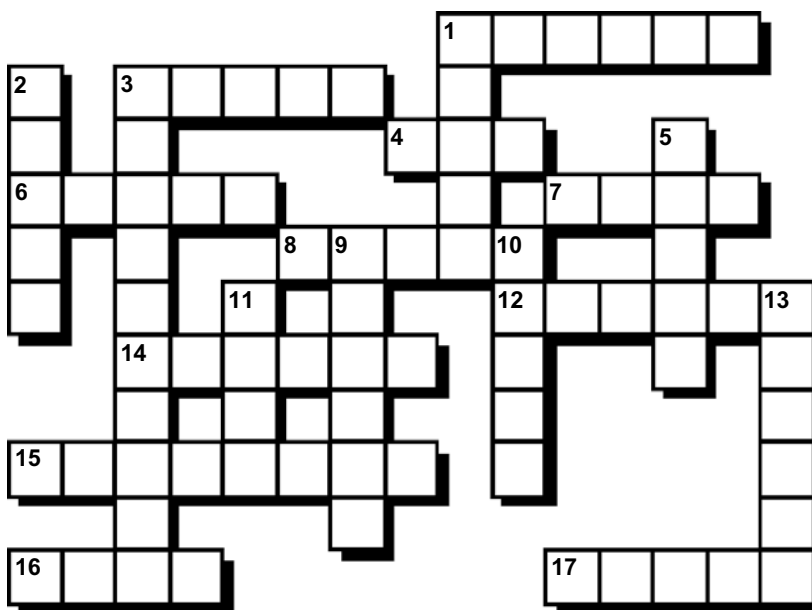
visit [smp.org/breakthrough](http://smp.org/breakthrough)

The answer key can be found on page 32.

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

# THE RISEN JESUS

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is one of the most important Christian teachings. The story of the Resurrection is found in Matthew, chapter 28, Mark, chapter 16, Luke, chapter 24, and John, chapters 20–21. Using your Bible, complete the crossword puzzle below. To help you, specific passages are given in parentheses after each clue.



## ACROSS

- 1 The women brought these to the tomb. (Mark 16:1)
- 3 The chief priests and elders told the soldiers who had guarded the tomb to say that the disciples \_\_\_\_ Jesus' body. (Matthew 28:11–13)
- 4 When Thomas realized that he was seeing the risen Jesus, he said, "My Lord and my \_\_\_\_." (John 20:26–28)
- 6 The men at the tomb reminded the women that Jesus had said he would rise in \_\_\_\_ days. (Luke 24:4–7)
- 7 The mother of James and \_\_\_\_ Magdalene were some of the women who went to Jesus' tomb. (Luke 24:10)
- 8 Jesus told Peter to take care of "my \_\_\_\_." (John 21:16)
- 12 Two disciples were traveling to this village when Jesus appeared to them. (Luke 24:13–16)
- 14 This disciple said he would not believe Jesus was raised unless he could touch Jesus' wounds. (John 20:24–25)
- 15 Mary Magdalene mistook the risen Jesus for a \_\_\_\_\_. (John 20:14–16)

- 16 During one of his appearances after his Resurrection, Jesus made a meal of \_\_\_\_ and bread for the disciples. (John 21:8–14)
- 17 Jesus said that the Messiah had to suffer and then enter his \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 24:25–26)

## DOWN

- 1 This was rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. (Luke 24:2)
- 2 He ran to the tomb when he heard that Jesus had risen. (Luke 24:10–12)
- 3 The risen Jesus explained what was said about him in all the \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 24:27)
- 5 Some disciples recognized Jesus when he blessed and broke \_\_\_\_ with them. (Luke 24:30–31)
- 9 As Jesus blessed his disciples, he was taken up into \_\_\_\_\_. (Luke 24:50–52)
- 10 When Jesus appeared to his disciples, he said, "\_\_\_\_ be with you." (Luke 24:36)
- 11 Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you \_\_\_\_ me?" (John 21:17)
- 13 The first day of the week, the day on which Jesus rose (Matthew 28:1)

# Love IN

*T*he Eucharist, a tremendous mystery of faith, is one in which I have lived, moved, and had my being—both failing and triumphant—in my journey of discipleship. It is a mystery into which I have grown and from which I have been sent, time and time again. The Eucharist is a calling, a longing. It is nourishment and sustenance. It is sacrament. The Eucharist is living, dying, and rising. It is relationship. It is God and neighbor. The Eucharist is who we become, through Jesus, for one another and all the world. It is love in action.

The most profound experience of the Eucharist, for me, is the action of unconditional, divine love that takes place during the Mass. When the simple gifts of bread and wine are taken, blessed, broken, given, and become the Body of Christ, we are invited to place our lives on the altar, to participate in the action of a love that transforms. Like a seed buried deep in the darkness of fertile ground, growth occurs only if I trust and release control. I must be open to a dying to myself to allow my seed to crack open and become more. As I am open to God's grace, I become love in action.

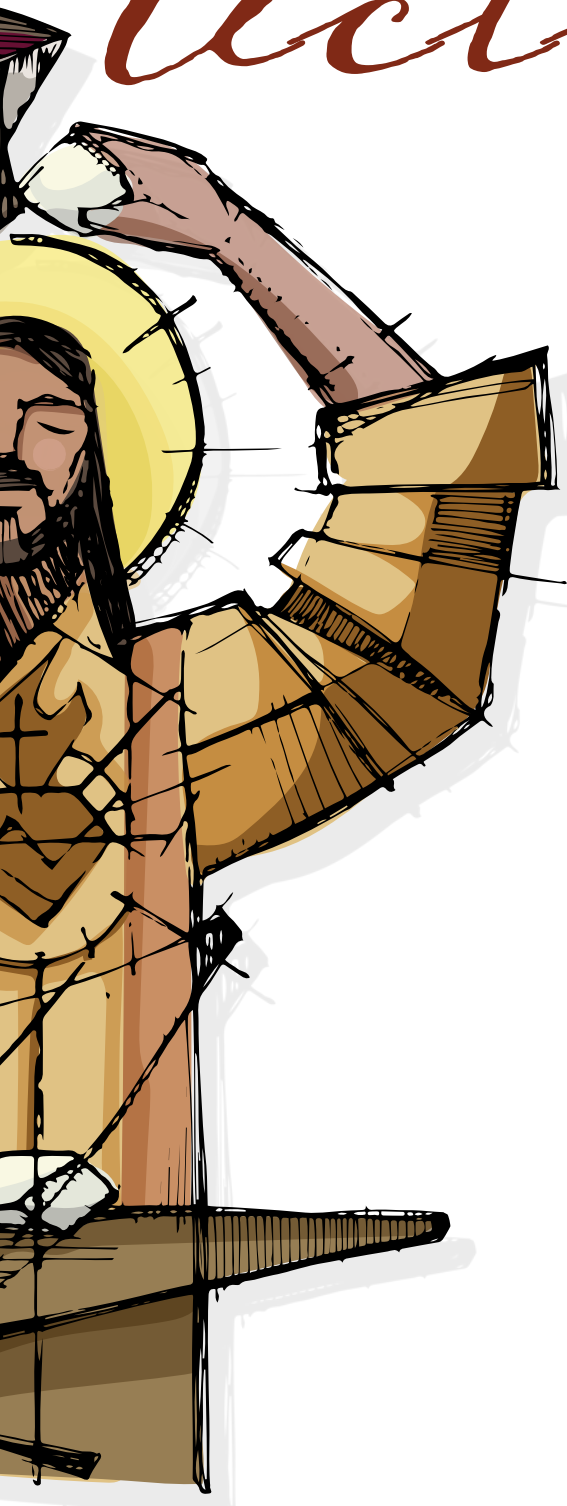


# Action

BY MAUREEN P. PROVENCHER

Just as a growing seed needs the nourishment of the soil, the warmth of the sun, and the quench of the rain, the being and work of discipleship cannot happen on my own. I need community. I need the Body of Christ to receive, to become, to share. We support one another in getting through tough times by talking it through. We share joy in celebrating with others. We are helpful to others who are discerning an important life decision by offering advice and perspective. When we look beyond the bread we share, we encounter the Lord who leads us to one another. We live this Sacrament of the Eucharist by receiving and offering support, prayer, challenge, generosity, and love. We're made this way—to need one another in healthy, interdependent ways. The Eucharist is community. Through it, we become love in action.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis has announced a Eucharistic Revival, beginning in the summer of 2022 and culminating in a National Eucharistic Congress in 2024. The goal is to “renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.” (For more information, see the flyer found [here](#), and the Strategic Plan found [here](#).)



With a focus on Eucharistic Revival over the next three years, this movement provides an opportunity to reflect on Eucharistic action seen and experienced in daily life—to trust and let go, to embrace love in action.

Take time each day to engage in a simple reflection on the Eucharist as love in action. Although the reflection is designed for personal prayer, it can also be used at the beginning of meetings or parish events. Children can also be led through the reflection at the beginning of each gathering (perhaps with some adaptation for younger children).

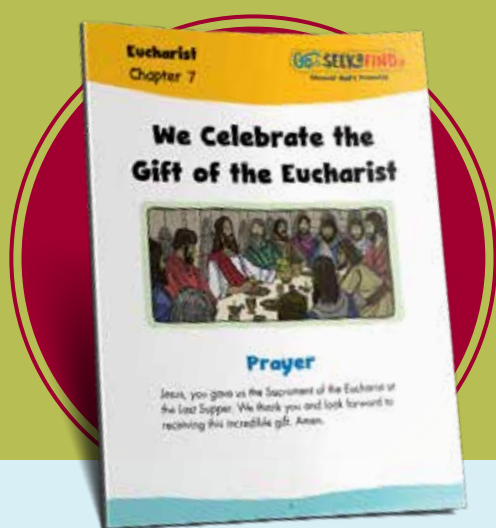


## A Daily Reflection on Eucharistic Love in Action

1. **Pray** a simple prayer to welcome the Spirit. Ask for clarity and direction. Seek a deeper union with God and others.
2. **Read** the foundational Scripture passage for the institution of the Eucharist: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." (Matthew 26:26)
3. **Reflect** on the following questions:
  - How has God **taken** me today? Picked me up? Gotten my attention? Comforted or consoled me? Loved me? Called me?
  - How has God **blessed** me today? What grace have I received? What opportunity presented itself? Who walked into my day as a blessing?
  - How has God allowed me to be **broken** for others today? What within me needs healing? How can my obstacles become opportunities to deepen my relationship with God, to love myself better, to better respond to the needs of others? What within me needs healing?
  - How has God **given** me for others today? How did I respond in love?
4. **Pray** a simple prayer of thanksgiving. By reflecting daily on the presence of the Eucharist in our lives, we can be even more aware of the reality of Eucharist as love in action for us and for the world.

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# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from the chapter 7 Eucharist Activity Booklet in the Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures program.

visit [smp.org/goseekfind](http://smp.org/goseekfind)

The answer key can be found on page 32.

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE





Find and circle the following words:

bread

wine

Body

consecration

Mass

Blood

disciples

Communion

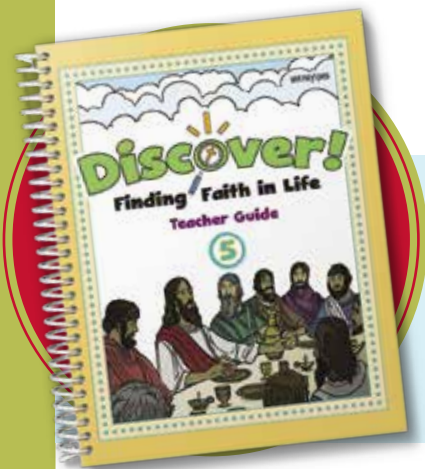
R A H S S C C D B R U W  
T I V Z E O O E O H V R  
D M F W L N M S H O D C  
F M T A P S M K I M L J  
Z C B U I E U V N U Z B  
Q H O C C C N I Y R O O  
R N D B S R I J T B L L  
F W Y O I A O M Y D D M  
E N I W D T N S M A E W  
M A S S K I A C E U V T  
B L J P H O S R Z V T H  
S G U Q T N B N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

# Eucharist 101

## Materials Needed



- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector



This activity is taken from chapter 3 of the Grade 5 Teacher Guide in the *Discover! Finding Faith in Life* program.

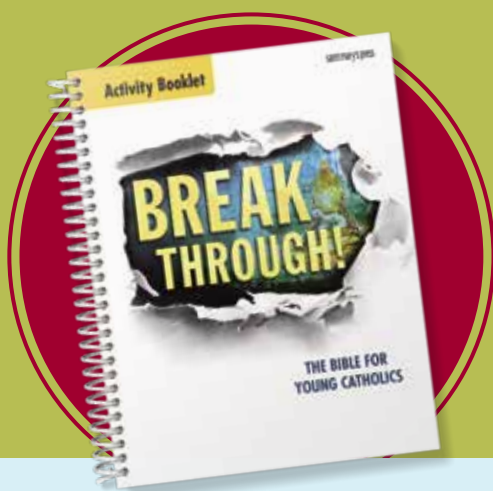
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Provide an introduction or review of how to receive the Eucharist, and why we receive the Eucharist the way we do.

- 1. Show the video “Sacraments 101: Eucharist (how we receive)”** (YouTube, 4:45).
- 2. Ask the young people** to recall what Father Dwyer called the short exchange of words between the priest and the person receiving the Eucharist (*dialogue of prayer*). Ask what the words in this dialogue are. (*“The Body/Blood of Christ. Amen.”*)
- 3. Remind the young people** that “Amen” is a way of saying “truly,” “yes,” “indeed,” or “I believe.”
- 4. Explain that we should say yes** to God like we mean it—from the bottom of our hearts.
- 5. Remind the group** that the Eucharist is considered a central sacrament and is treated with special reverence.



# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from the Activity Booklet for *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*.

visit [smp.org/breakthrough](http://smp.org/breakthrough)

The answer key can be found on page 33.

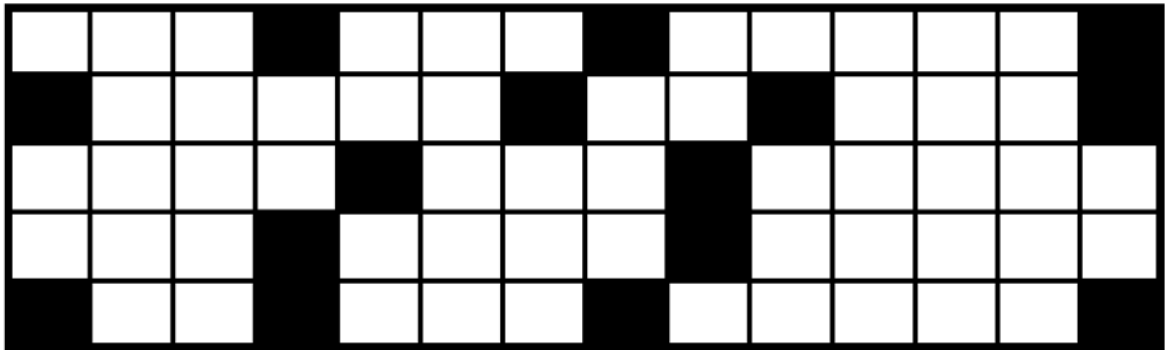
PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

# JESUS GIVES HIMSELF

Read Mark 14:22–26. Then, using the letters below the puzzle, fill in the white boxes to complete a phrase that is based on the Bible passage. The letters appear in columns under the boxes in which they go, but the letters are scrambled.

*Hint:* Start with the shortest words first and cross out the letters as you use them.

Jesus shared with his Apostles bread and wine, which he had blessed, and told them to . . .



O E I E I C  
 I D H H N W O I D  
 B A S T I S I S R R O N  
 E H T I C A N E B L H I S H  
 T W H Y W H E D B D H A D K

# SOMETHING FUN FOR YOU!



The activity on the following page is taken from the chapter 9 Eucharist Activity Booklet in the *Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures* program.

visit [smp.org/goseekfind](http://smp.org/goseekfind)

**Answers:** Amen, Host, Prayer, Peace, Holy, Body, Blood

PRINT COPIES OF THE ACTIVITY ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE



Unscramble the letters to spell words that are important in receiving Holy Communion. The first letter of each word is done for you.

ANME:            A \_\_\_\_\_

SOHT:            H \_\_\_\_\_

PYERAR:        P \_\_\_\_\_

PCAEE:          P \_\_\_\_\_

HYLO:            H \_\_\_\_\_

BYDO:            B \_\_\_\_\_

BDOLO:          B \_\_\_\_\_

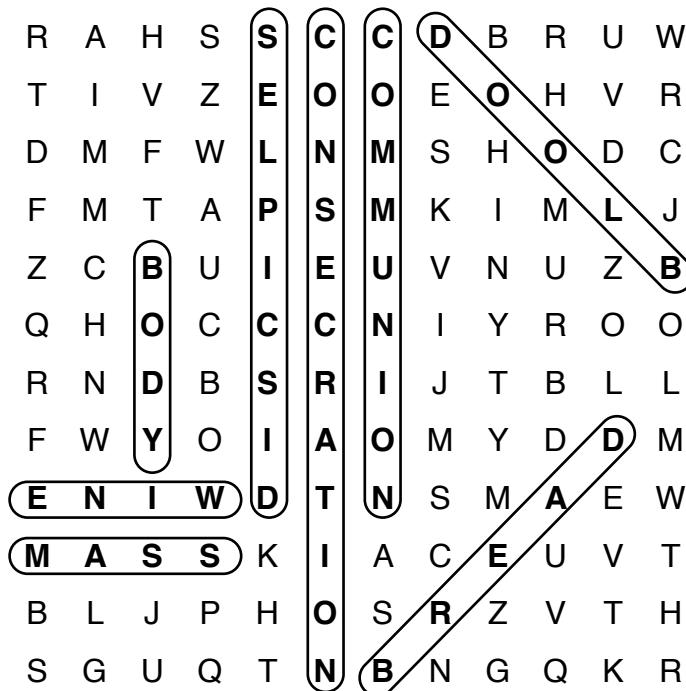
# ANSWER KEYS

## FROM PAGE 19: THE RISEN JESUS



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## FROM PAGE 25: EUCHARIST WORD SEARCH





## FROM PAGE 29: JESUS GIVES HIMSELF WORD PUZZLE

In Mark 14:22–26, Jesus shared with his Apostles bread and wine, which he had blessed, and told them to . . .



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