

Reconciliation Home Guide



**Discover God's
Treasures**

saint mary's press



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Welcome

Welcome to *Go Seek Find: Discover God's Treasures!*

We at Saint Mary's Press are excited to partner with you in the important ministry of preparing your child for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Through this new and unique program, your child will be led on an adventure of discovery as they explore the rich and beautiful significance of this sacrament in their life. *Go Seek Find* will engage and inspire your child, creating a spirit of excitement and joy around their journey toward encountering Jesus through the treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This program was developed with the real needs of your child at its center. The core text of this program is the Saint Mary's Press® *Catholic Children's Bible*. By using a Bible designed specifically for children and engaging with the Featured Stories within it, your child will explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation through the biblical lens of Jesus' life and works and learn more about their faith in language they can understand. Your child will also experience interactive core activities that bring the chapter lessons to life in a fun and memorable way. And your child will learn important information about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and reinforce this new knowledge through a variety of activities and family learning opportunities offered in the activity booklets that accompany each lesson.

Together, you and your child will *Go Seek Find* the incredible treasure that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. May an ever-expanding awareness of Christ's presence in our lives be the source of faith, hope, and love for all of us!

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

**"Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened to you."**

(Matthew 7:7)

Program Overview

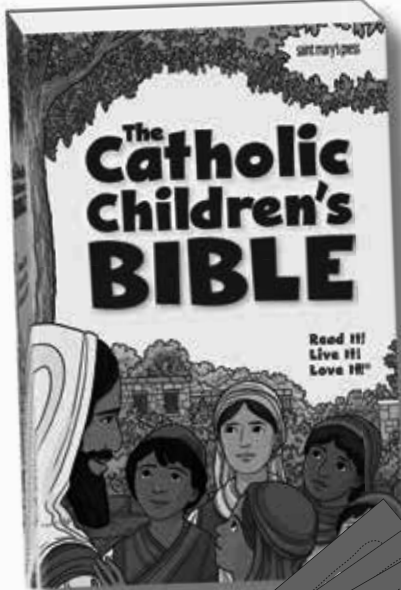
Program Outline

Chapter Number	Chapter Title	Lesson Goals	Featured Story	Key Words
1	Jesus Is Always with Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)	sacraments, grace, sin, Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confession, conversion
2	We Trust in God's Mercy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that God is a loving Father to identify that God always forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins to explain that God's mercy comes to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation 	The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11–32)	mercy
3	We Follow Jesus' Message of Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that we follow Jesus by loving God and others to recognize that we can learn about love in Sacred Scripture to explain that we can ask for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when we fail to love fully 	Love Is the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12:28–34)	Greatest Commandment, Sacred Scripture
4	We Follow the Ten Commandments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to express that God gave us rules to keep his people safe and happy to recognize that the Ten Commandments are rooted in God's love for us to explain the difference between a sin and an accident 	God Gives His People the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19:16–20:17)	Ten Commandments, accident

Chapter Number	Chapter Title	Lesson Goals	Featured Story	Key Words
5	We Ask for Forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that our sins can be forgiven if we are truly sorry to identify that we have more room for love when we are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain the difference between mortal sin and venial sin 	Jesus Forgives a Woman's Sins (Luke 7:36–50)	mortal sin, venial sin
6	Jesus Loves and Cares for Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus loves and cares for us as a good shepherd cares for his sheep to recall that Jesus seeks us out when we stray, and we can return through the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that in the Act of Contrition, we express our sorrow for having sinned 	Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–18)	penance, Act of Contrition, contrition
7	Jesus Helps Us Always	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution 	Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27)	disciple, absolution, conscience
8	The Holy Spirit Teaches Us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that the Holy Spirit is our helper and guide to identify that the Holy Spirit helps us in an examination of conscience as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to review the key words and important concepts of these chapters in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation 	Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit to Help Us (John 14:15–31)	examination of conscience

Program Components

The Catholic Children's Bible



Home Guide

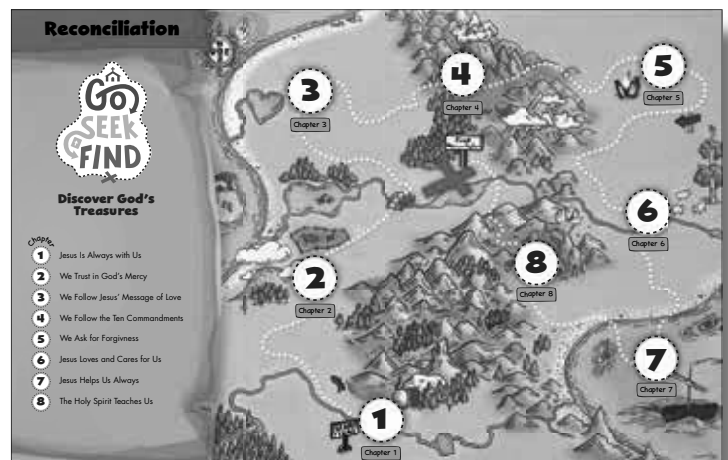


Activity Booklets

Stickers



Treasure Map



Understanding the Components

Home Guide

Background Focus provides quick, easy-to-read insights about the theme of the chapter.

Lesson Goals shows the key desired outcomes of the chapter.

A list of **Materials Needed** helps you adequately prepare for the lesson.


16

Chapter 1

1

Chapter 1
Featured Story
 The Risen Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)


Jesus Is Always with Us





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

Lesson at a Glance

 **Go** (10 minutes)
Opening Prayer
Engage Activity

 **Seek** (30 minutes)
Featured Story
Core Learning Activity

 **Find** (20 minutes)
God's Treasure of Forgiveness
Lesson Wrap-Up
Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and chapter 1 activity booklet

Music Suggestions


- "I Believe in Jesus," by Invitation Music (Invitation Publishing)
- "With Us" (Acoustic) [Live], by Hillsong Live (Hillsong Music)

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" (*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, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice, "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (*Rite of Penance*).



Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 1 activity booklet and locate the prayer on that page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God." Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet. Invite your child to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

The **Go** part of the lesson begins with an opening prayer that is found in the activity booklets.

Two **Music Suggestions** are offered for possible incorporation into the lesson.

After the opening prayer, an **Engage Activity** will spark interest and create excitement for the lesson ahead.

Engage Activity

- Invite your child to recall everything they know about Jesus and record their answers on the board. Give them some examples if they need help. (Answers 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 your child 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 your child 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 your child to find John 20:11–18 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1701).
- Direct them to turn to page 1702 and place an "I found it!" sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1702 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous page.
- Ask your child 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 them to read the title on the page, and ask your child 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 your child 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 Featured Story. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension such as these:
 - Why was Mary Magdalene crying? (She did not know where Jesus was.)

The **Seek** part of the lesson invites direct interaction with the Bible and the learning of key sacrament-related themes through important Bible stories.

Jesus Is Always with Us 17

- What did the angels ask her? ("Woman, why are you crying?")
- 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 your child that this Bible story is the story of the very first **Easter Sunday**, when Jesus rose from the dead.

Understand

- Read Understand
- Invite your child to read the story, asking them to read aloud and to listen to the story.
- Review these:
 - Mary Magdalene died. She was buried.
 - When she found his body, she was very sad.
 - Then she turned around and she didn't know who she was talking to.
 - Jesus was with her. She ran to him.
 - Jesus said to her, "Do not be afraid. I am not here to die, but to live with you. Go and tell your brothers and sisters that I am alive."

Live It!

- Read Live It!
- Ask your child to share what the words "Risen Jesus" mean in their diary.
- What would you feel like if you were Mary Magdalene?
 - What would you be feeling as she ran to Jesus?
 - How did she feel when she spoke to him?
- Explain that the story of the dead being raised back to life is a very special part of the Bible.
- Pray this short prayer with your child: Jesus, thank you for being with us always. Amen.

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Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1703.
- Invite your child to use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Bible Says

- Invite your child to stand 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,'" you will crunch down, put your hands over your head, and repeat, "Christ has died." Then you will stand up again with hands at sides.
 - When I say, "The Bible says, 'Christ is risen,'" you will lift your arms into the air and say, "Christ is risen. Alleluia!" *Alleluia* means, "Praise God!" Then you will put your hands at your 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 given one strike. If you get three strikes, we will declare "Game over."

Note: As in the game Simon Says, vary your directions, sometimes saying, "The Bible says," and sometimes omitting it. Remind your child 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.

- Remind your child of the Bible story for the day and how happy Mary Magdalene was when she realized that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The **Find** part of the lesson relays key information about the sacrament.

Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain 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 your child that the sacraments give us **grace**, the gift of God's life in us, which makes us God's children and helps us to stay away from **sin** and to 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 a piece of paper, and give a brief description of each. Explain how the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist begin our life in the Church. Ask your child if they know that they have been baptized.
- Continue by explaining that in Baptism, we become children of God and all of our sins are washed away. Tell your child that the sins we commit after Baptism are forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Circle this sacrament on your paper.
- Remind your child 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 to convert, or change, for the better.

Each lesson is anchored by a **Core Learning Activity**. This activity presents an aspect of the chapter theme in a fun, engaging, and memorable way.

- Help your child 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 that after we confess our sins and are forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will be filled with new life again.
- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. Forgive, 2. conversion, 3. Baptism, 4. confession, 5. better. Word at bottom: grace*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite your child to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite them to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from your child, and write their answers on a piece of paper.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the paper, 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 your child to place the chapter 1 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Make the Sign of the Cross on your 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, if you have time, 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 1992 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions


For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.

The **Lesson Wrap-Up** encourages recall and invites your child to mark their progress on the interactive treasure map.

Reconciliation

Chapter 1

Jesus Is Always with Us



Prayer

Thank you, God, for this time we have together to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Help us learn more about this sacrament and how it can help us be good followers of Jesus. Amen.

1

Use the Bible passage on page 1702 of *The Catholic Children's Bible* (John 20:11-14,16) to find the answers. Write the number of the correct word or phrase on the line.

1. Mary Magdalene

3. Jesus

2. tomb

4. two angels

_____ She stood crying outside the tomb.

_____ The place where the body of Jesus had been

_____ They stood where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

_____ They asked her why she was crying.

_____ She answered, "They have taken away my Lord."

_____ She turned around and saw Jesus.

_____ He said, "Mary!"

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 became 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!

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

Family Page



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 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” (*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, and the presence of Christ, in his love and forgiveness, is mediated by a hand extended in blessing and the comforting sound of a human voice offering absolution and forgiveness of sins, 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. Present and enforce these rules and procedures as a source of family pride and identity. For example: In our family, we do not use electronics during meals; in our family, we do not call names; in our family, we serve guests first. You may soon hear a child explaining proudly to friends, “In our family . . .”

(The quotation on page 4 of this activity booklet is from the English translation of *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation [ICEL] [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011], page 529. Copyright © 2011, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved. Used with permission of the ICEL. [Texts contained in this work derived whole or in part from liturgical texts copyrighted by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) have been published here with the confirmation of the Committee on Divine Worship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. No other texts in this work have been formally reviewed or approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops].)



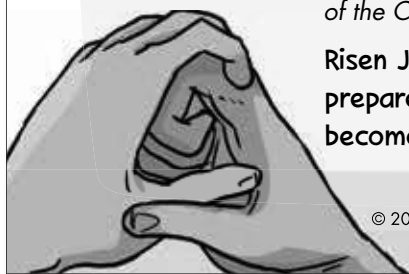
Family Activities

- Congratulate your child on beginning to prepare for Reconciliation. Talk about the sacrament together, and present the sacrament as an opportunity to experience God’s love and forgiveness and a chance to start over.
- Read the Scripture passage from this lesson together, either the shorter version (John 20:11–14,16) or the longer one (John 20:11–29). Remind your child that the Risen Jesus will be present at the Sacrament of Reconciliation but will not be seen.
- Watch the YouTube video “In Good Hands (Baby Dedication Song),” by Ben Chilcote (5:04), which expresses a parental 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 It!

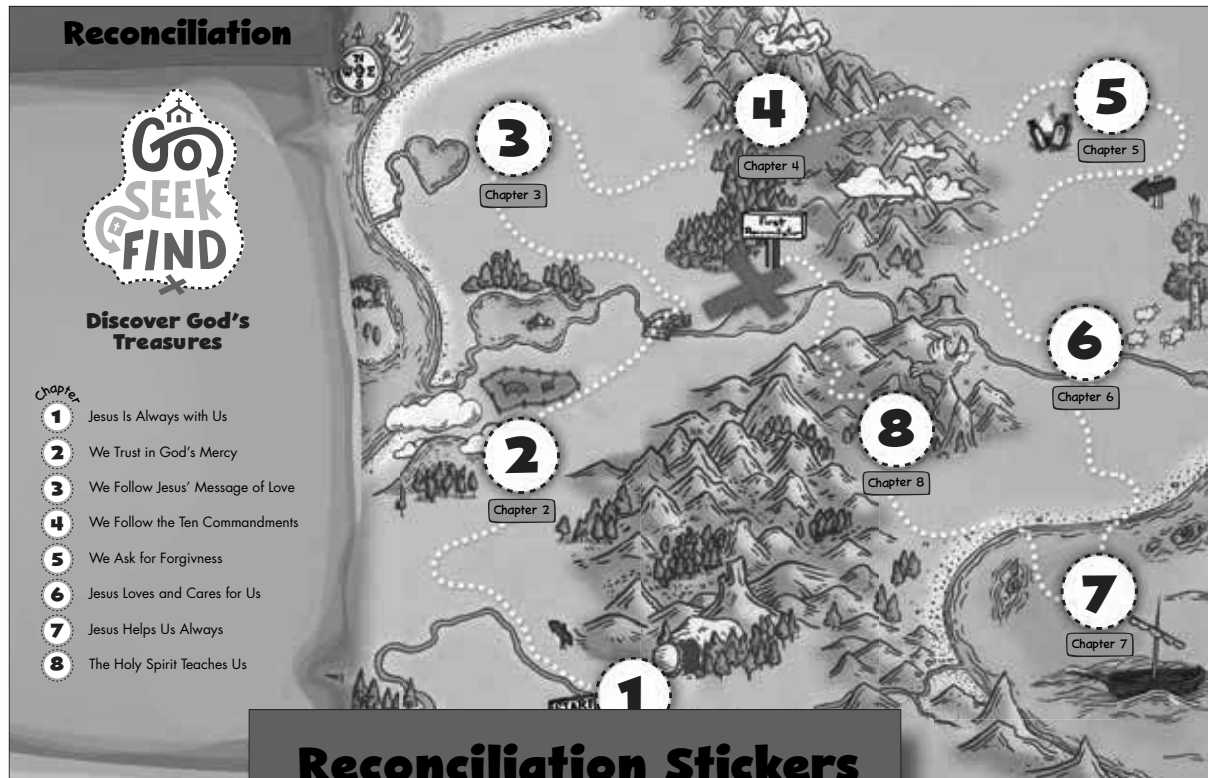
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

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.

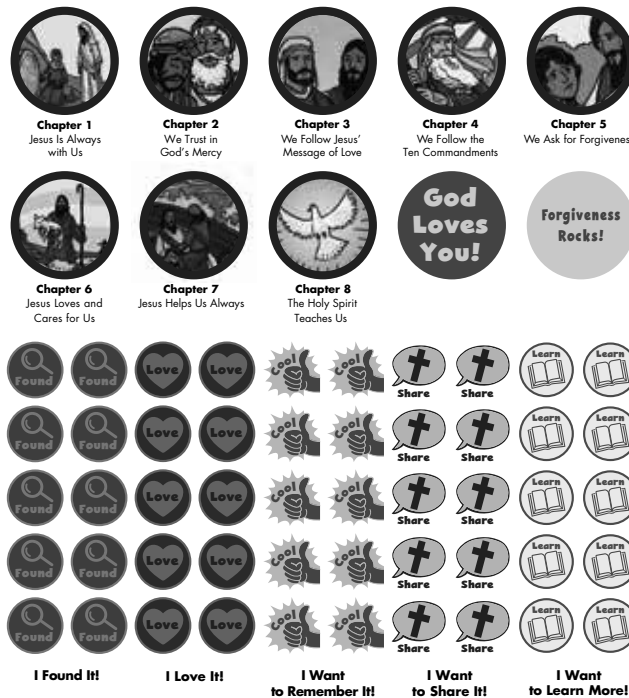


Treasure Map and Stickers

A **Treasure Map** helps track progress through the chapters in a fun and engaging way that also reinforces what was learned.



Reconciliation Stickers



Stickers are provided that contain key images from the different chapters. These stickers will be used to track progress on the treasure map.

Stickers are also provided to encourage engagement with the Bible and a way to mark verses and other meaningful content.

Key Elements of the Program

Home Guide

The home guide divides each chapter into three main parts: “Go,” “Seek,” and “Find.” The “Go” section begins with an opening prayer and continues with a short activity to engage your child in the topic of the day. The “Seek” section involves exploring Scripture related to the sacrament of focus and a core learning activity centered on the chapter theme. The “Find” section provides a deeper look into the meaning of the sacrament and concludes the lesson with a summary and a closing prayer.

Activity Booklets

A fun and colorful activity booklet is provided for each chapter. These booklets include the opening prayer used for each lesson, two activity pages that support the learning of the chapter, and a family page that offers background on the chapter topic, strategies to integrate the values of Christian life into family life, and suggested activities related to the lesson to be done at home.

Additional Booklet

The Sacrament of Reconciliation resources include an additional booklet that contains all of the key words used in the program, an outline of the Rite, and an examination of conscience.

Treasure Map

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has its own treasure map. This unique and colorful resource is designed to build excitement as your child journeys through the various chapters on the way to their first celebration of the sacrament. Using stickers with key images from the Bible stories to be read in each chapter, your child will track their progress on a fun, engaging treasure map as they recall the key themes and lessons offered throughout the program.

Stickers

A sticker sheet is included in the resources for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to the stickers that allow the tracking of progress on the treasure map, there are stickers that allow your child to mark Featured Stories or key verses in the Bible that have special significance to them. This immerses your child in the Bible and helps them retain key lessons and messages throughout.

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 online. For a complete list of all of the songs for the program, please visit the online resources for this program at www.smp.org/resourcenter/books. Of course, you may also wish to add your own favorite hymns or songs such as those that are popular in your parish community.

How to Use All These Elements at Home

The Home Guide contains everything you need to bring all the elements of *Go Seek Find* together for successful use at home. Although you may have to make some adjustments for this program to fit your time frame or the individual gifts and interests of your child, you will find a complete easy-to-use structure from which to start. The current lesson is designed to take 60 minutes from start to finish; however, this can vary depending on the unique pace at which you and your child move through the lesson.

Quickly reviewing the content and flow of a chapter before working with it will be especially helpful in making decisions about how best to tailor it for your child. Once you cover the first chapter, you will begin to find your own unique rhythm and will be able to make quick adjustments to further refine the program for a perfect fit.

If you need additional ideas to supplement the content of the lesson, you can easily add some of the activities and ideas from the Family Page in each lesson's activity booklet. If you find the lessons are running longer than the time you have, you might consider skipping the Engage Activity and saving the activities in the booklets to be done at a different time.

You can involve the entire family in these lessons by gathering and preparing materials so that everyone can participate in the Core Learning Activity. This can make learning more fun, and it encourages learning across different ages. You will likely find that you enjoy these activities as well!