

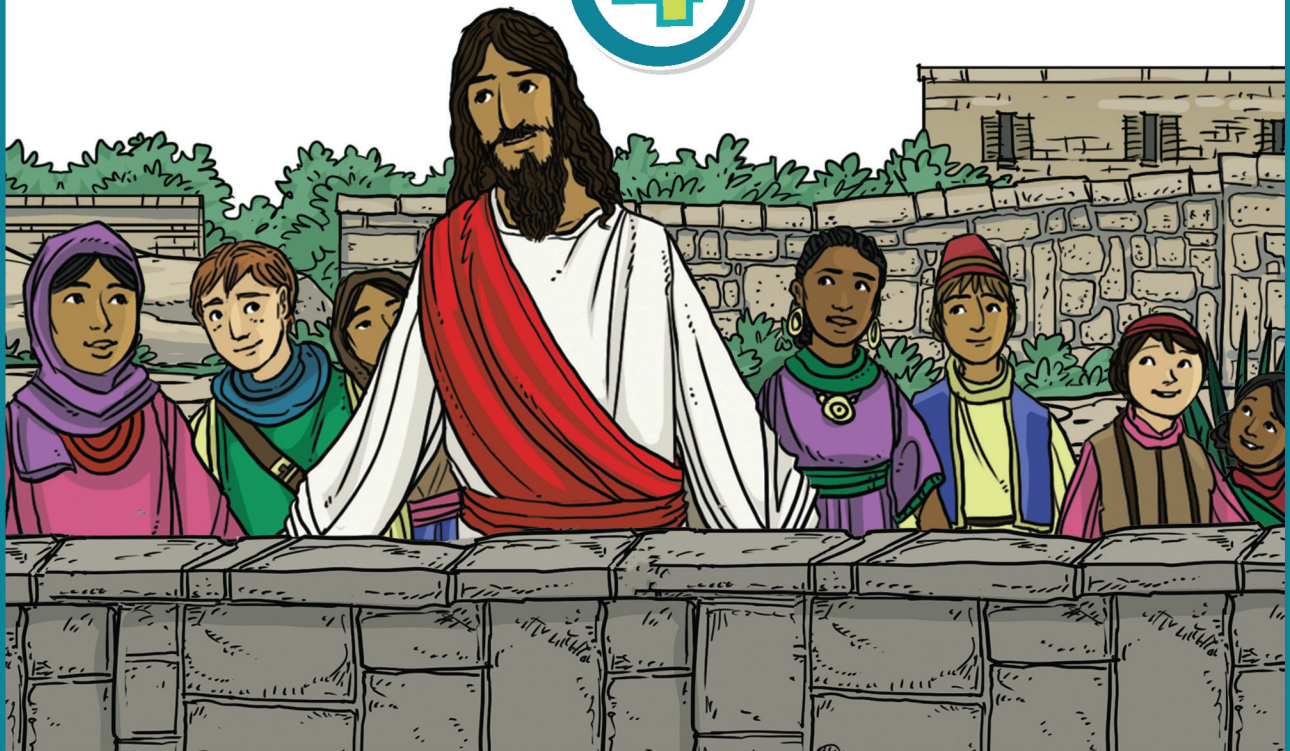
saint mary's press

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Catechist Guide

4



Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 4

We Live the Covenant

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The Way to Happiness




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Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 5:6–9

Lesson Goals

- to identify that Jesus shows us the way to God’s Kingdom
- to define three ways to be happy as taught by Jesus
- to describe how we can follow the ways to happiness today

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

1716–1729

Key Words

merciful, pure in heart, Beatitudes

Music Suggestions

- “The Beatitudes Song,” by The Church at Brook Hills (Brook Hills Music)
- “Build Your Kingdom Here,” by Rend Collective (Rend Collective Experiment)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and the chapter 16 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

Sometimes we confuse happiness with everyday feelings, but that is not what Jesus taught us. In the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches us a path to happiness that seems to contradict our modern understanding of happiness. We might read his teachings and think, How can I be persecuted or insulted and still be happy?

The happiness Jesus describes is a deeper happiness often referred to as joy. We are joyful because we know that we are sons and daughters of God. We are joyful because we belong to God’s family, the Church. We are joyful when we actively participate in God’s plan for us, even if we don’t understand his plan. We are joyful because God promised us true happiness.

During our earthly life, we are working toward eternal happiness with God by living our faith. Jesus gave us the Beatitudes to teach us the way to true happiness by showing us how to imitate him. We no longer worry about what the world thinks of us—we focus only on how God sees us and our world. We are free to make God’s priorities our own. In the Beatitudes, we find the perfect way to find happiness in living the New Covenant.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 16 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 the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say "Amen," and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Write the word *happiness* on the board. Create a mind map by inviting the children to brainstorm things that make them happy and then to write them on lines connecting to the word *happiness* on the board.
- Invite volunteers to describe a time when they were happy doing something that seemed difficult, such as giving something they really wanted to someone in need, or doing something for others that they didn't really feel like doing. Affirm all reasonable examples and write them on the board.
- Tell the children that today's lesson will focus on the **Beatitudes**, Jesus' teachings on true happiness, and how we find happiness by following him and living the New Covenant.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Matthew 5:1–12 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (pages 1454–1455). Point out the green leaf at the beginning and end of the passage.
- Have the children turn to the Featured Story on page 1456. Explain that the green leaves on this page mark that this is a shortened version of the same Scripture passage found on the previous pages.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1456–1457. Invite volunteers to describe what they see.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Whom did Jesus say God will "satisfy fully"? (*Jesus said that God will satisfy those who want to do what God requires.*)
 - To whom will God be merciful? (*God will be merciful to those who are merciful to others.*)

- Who will see God? (*Jesus says the pure of heart will see God.*)
- Whom will God call his children? (*God will call his children those who work for peace.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. heart, 2. peace, 3. requires, 4. merciful. The unscrambled word is Heaven.*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1457, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - God made us to be happy, so we care for others by wanting them to be happy also.
 - Jesus gave us the secrets to happiness. Three of the ways he taught were to have mercy, be pure of heart, and work for peace.
 - Jesus did not just teach us these secrets—he lived them.
 - Living the way that Jesus taught is the only way we will find true happiness.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1457, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to brainstorm ways they can follow Jesus' teaching to have mercy, be pure of heart, and work for peace. Affirm all reasonable answers, and write them on the board.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in the Tell It! on page 1457.
- Invite volunteers to share what each image shows and how each image relates to the Scripture story. (*Image 1 shows a child showing mercy by offering bread to a hungry man. Image 2 shows a child praying, being pure in heart. Image 3 shows a child being a peacemaker.*)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Learning Activity

Happiness Skits

- Divide the children into four groups, and assign each group one of the Beatitudes from the Featured Story (Matthew 5:6–9).
- Tell the groups that they must work together to develop a 1-minute skit illustrating the beatitude they have been assigned.
- Explain that their skits should focus on small problems we encounter every day, or small tasks we can do every day, such as forgiving someone who wronged us, saying a prayer every morning, finding a peaceful solution to a fight with a sibling, and so on.

- Emphasize that the skits should be about 1 minute long. Allow the group 5 minutes to develop their skits.
- Invite each group to perform its skit for the other children.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children what they learned from watching one another's skits.
- Invite the children to share observations of how the skits portrayed following Jesus.
- Conclude by thanking them for sharing examples of the Beatitudes being lived out.

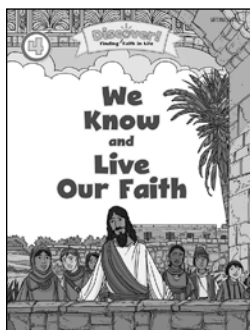
Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 177 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain that in today's Scripture reading, Jesus is showing us again how to love as God loves. Remind the children that Jesus tells us to love everyone and to do the right thing, even when it is difficult.
- Share that today's reading tells three ways that we can be happy: we should be merciful, be pure in heart, and work for peace.
- Write "Beatitudes = Happiness" on the board. Make the following points:
 - The word *beatitude* means "happiness" or "blessedness."
 - The Beatitudes show us the way of happiness by teaching us to act toward others as Jesus does.
 - Remember how Jesus wasn't always treated nicely? It did not matter how others treated him. He always responded with love. He did God's will here on Earth, and he asks us to do the same.
 - We know that God wants us to be happy and safe. We keep our part of the New Covenant by doing what he asks.
- Ask the children to recall the discussion about happiness at the beginning of the lesson. Invite them to compare their discussion of happiness with Jesus' teachings about happiness. Lead them to the following points:
 - Happiness is not just a feeling in a moment. True happiness is a lasting sense of peace and joy that comes from doing the right thing, even when it is hard.
 - God wants us to be happy. Our final goal is Heaven, God's Kingdom. In Heaven, we will be truly happy. Here on Earth, true happiness is knowing Jesus and following his way by living by the Beatitudes.
 - Jesus shows us the way to God's Kingdom through the Beatitudes. When we follow the Beatitudes, we follow Jesus' example of how to act.

- Have the children turn to the list of the Beatitudes on page 1988 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*.
- Write the word *attitude* on the board. Explain that living the New Covenant doesn't mean just believing something in our minds. Emphasize that it requires us to act on our belief every day. Tell the group that just like our attitude reflects how we are feeling, our attitude should also reflect our beliefs through our actions toward others.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - According to today's Featured Story, what are three ways to follow Jesus? (*We can follow Jesus by being merciful, being pure of heart, and working for peace.*)
 - What are these ways to happiness called? (*the Beatitudes*)
 - What do we have to do to live the New Covenant? (*We must act on our beliefs through our actions toward others every day. We can live the covenant by following the Beatitudes.*)
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers: 1. happiness, 2. Jesus, 3. joy, 4. merciful, pure in heart, peace.* Encourage the children to sign the Beatitudes Pledge. You may want to have them stand and take the pledge together, and then sign together.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Josephine Bakhita, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Josephine, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

The following article and activity in the *We Know and Live Our Faith* resource correspond to concepts introduced in this lesson:

- "The Beatitudes" + activity, pages 67–68

Read the selection aloud, or invite a volunteer to read, as time allows. Check for understanding by asking several questions. Then invite the children to begin the activity, or have them complete it with their families at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all 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:
 - Jesus shows us the way to God's Kingdom.
 - In today's Featured Story, Jesus gives us three ways to be happy.
 - We can follow these ways to happiness today.
- Invite the children to place sticker 16 in the appropriate space on their folder.

Chapter 16



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Ask the children to respond to each petition with "Lord, hear our prayer." Read each of the following petitions.
 - That we will always do what God requires, even when it is difficult, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - That we will always show mercy, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - That we will always work for peace, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - That we will always be pure in heart, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - That we will always work for what is right and good, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - That we will always work for happiness by following Jesus' example, we pray to the Lord . . .
 - We ask all of this in Jesus' name.
- Invite the children to respond with "Amen," and then close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

When We Are Happy, We Show It! (15 minutes)

- Invite all the children to stand in one large circle, with enough space between each child for movement.
- Ask the children to recall the song “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” Explain that you will sing “If you’re happy and you know it” followed by an action you want the group to perform (such as clapping hands, twirling around, and so on). Tell the children to pick up the rest of the verse and sing with you while performing the actions.
- Sing the first verse and invite the group’s participation. Then invite volunteers to take turns leading the class with actions that show happiness.
- Conclude by reminding the children that when we are happy, we show it. Our actions show that we are happy. Remind the children that God wants us to always be happy and to spread happiness to others.

Materials Needed

- blank paper
- markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Illustrating Happiness (15 minutes)

- Distribute the blank paper and drawing materials to the children. Have the children reread the Live It! on page 1457 of *The Catholic Children’s Bible*. Invite them to draw a picture of themselves living out one of the ways of happiness listed. Allow a few moments for the children to work.
- Invite each child to share and explain his or her drawing with the group.
- Ask the children how applying Jesus’ teaching to our lives can help us find happiness. Affirm all reasonable answers.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Following Happiness (15 minutes)

- Show the video “BEGINNER MOTIONS (The Beatitudes)” (YouTube, 2:35) to the group. Encourage the children to follow along with the motions. Consider playing the video two or three times to help the children learn it.
- Ask the children to name some of the actions and promises listed in the video.
- Invite the children to brainstorm ways they can live out being peaceful, merciful, or pure in heart. Affirm all reasonable answers, and write them on the board.
- Remind the children that only by following what Jesus taught can we be truly happy.

The Way to Happiness

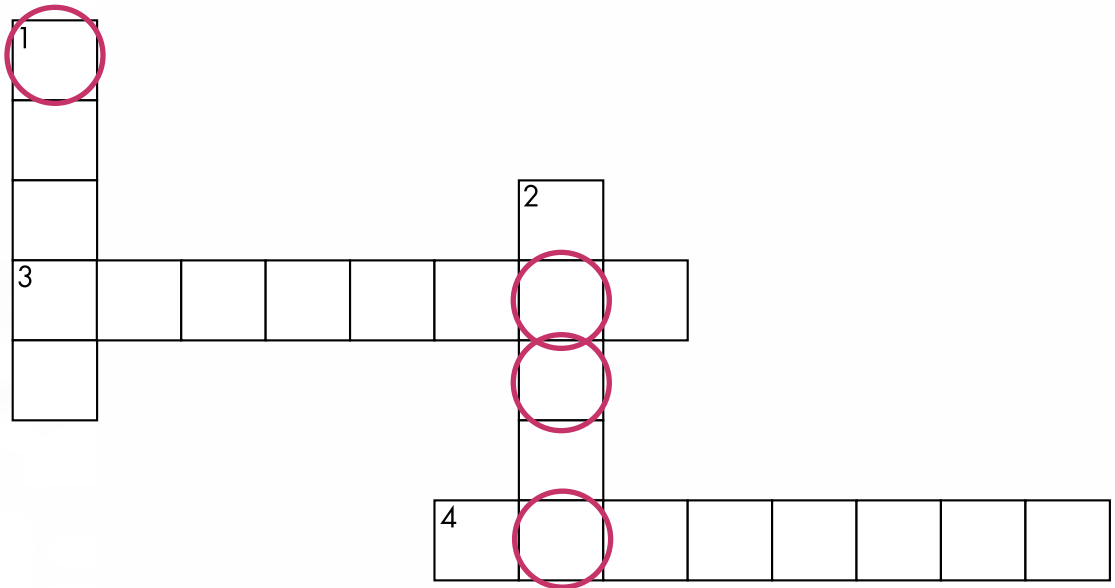
Matthew 5:6–9

Prayer

Dear Jesus, you gave us our life and want us to be happy. Help us to always remember to live our lives for you. Strengthen us to follow you always. Amen.



Use the Featured Story on page 1456 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Matthew 5:6–9) to complete the crossword puzzle below. Then unscramble the circled letters in the puzzle to complete the sentence at the bottom.



Down:

1. "Happy are the pure in _____; / they will see God!"
2. "Happy are those who work for _____; / God will call them his children!"

Across:

3. "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God _____; / God will satisfy them fully!"
4. "Happy are those who are _____ to others; / God will be merciful to them!"

"Be happy and glad, for a great reward is kept for you in

_____ **V** _____ **N**"

(Matthew 5:12).

Use the words or phrases in the box to fill in the blanks in the following statements.

happiness
merciful

Jesus
pure in heart

joy
peace

1 The word *beatitude* means "blessedness" or _____.

2 The Beatitudes show us how to act as _____ does.

3 True happiness is peace and _____ that come from doing what is right.

4 In the Scripture passage for this chapter, Jesus teaches us to be _____, to be _____, and to work for _____.

Beatitudes Pledge

Dear Jesus,

I will be merciful (kind and forgiving).

I will be pure in heart (seeking God and God's way with all my heart).

I will work for peace (seeking the good of others and good solutions in conflicts).

(Sign your name here)

Family Page

Background Reflection

Sometimes we confuse happiness with everyday feelings, but that is not what Jesus taught us. In the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches us a path to happiness that seems to contradict our modern understanding of happiness. We might read his teachings and think, How can I be persecuted or insulted and still be happy?

The happiness Jesus describes is a deeper happiness often referred to as joy. We are joyful because we know that we are sons and daughters of God. We are joyful because we belong to God's family, the Church. We are joyful when we actively participate in God's plan for us, even if we don't understand his plan. We are joyful because God promised us true happiness.

During our earthly life, we are working toward eternal happiness with God by living our faith. Jesus gave us the Beatitudes to teach us the way to true happiness by showing us how to imitate him. We no longer worry about what the world thinks of us—we only focus on how God sees us and our world. We are free to make God's priorities our own. In the Beatitudes, we find the perfect way to find happiness in living the New Covenant.

Family Activities

- Read the Featured Story on page 1456 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Matthew 5:6–9). Ask your child to tell you what she or he remembers from today's lesson. Discuss how Jesus' message is just as important for us today.
- Brainstorm ways that you can follow the Beatitudes as a family. Make a goal this week to find a way to be more merciful (kind and forgiving), be pure of heart (seek God and God's ways with all your hearts), or work for peace (the good of others and solutions to conflict) as a family.
- Watch the video "BEGINNER MOTIONS (The Beatitudes)" (YouTube, 2:35) together. Discuss how our actions show our beliefs. Remind your child that by following Christ, she or he will find true happiness.

People of Faith

Saint Josephine Bakhita (1868–1947)

Saint Josephine was born in Sudan, where her uncle was a tribal chief. She was kidnapped and sold as a slave. Owner after owner subjected her to severe mistreatment. She was taken to Italy, where she learned about God while staying at a convent of the Canossian Daughters of Charity. The sisters helped her gain her freedom. She asked to be baptized and soon joined the sisters, where she prepared other sisters to be missionaries to Africa. Her feast day is February 8.

Prayer

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

Lord, help our family grow in happiness. Show us how we can be merciful, and pure of heart, and how we can work for peace here on Earth, so that one day we may celebrate with you in Heaven. Amen.

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A King of Peace

Isaiah 11:6-9

Prayer

Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with joy as we prepare and wait for you to come at Christmas. And so we pray: Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.



Reread the Featured Story on page 1106 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Isaiah 11:6-9) and match the "animal partners."

wolves

bear cubs

leopards

young goats

calves

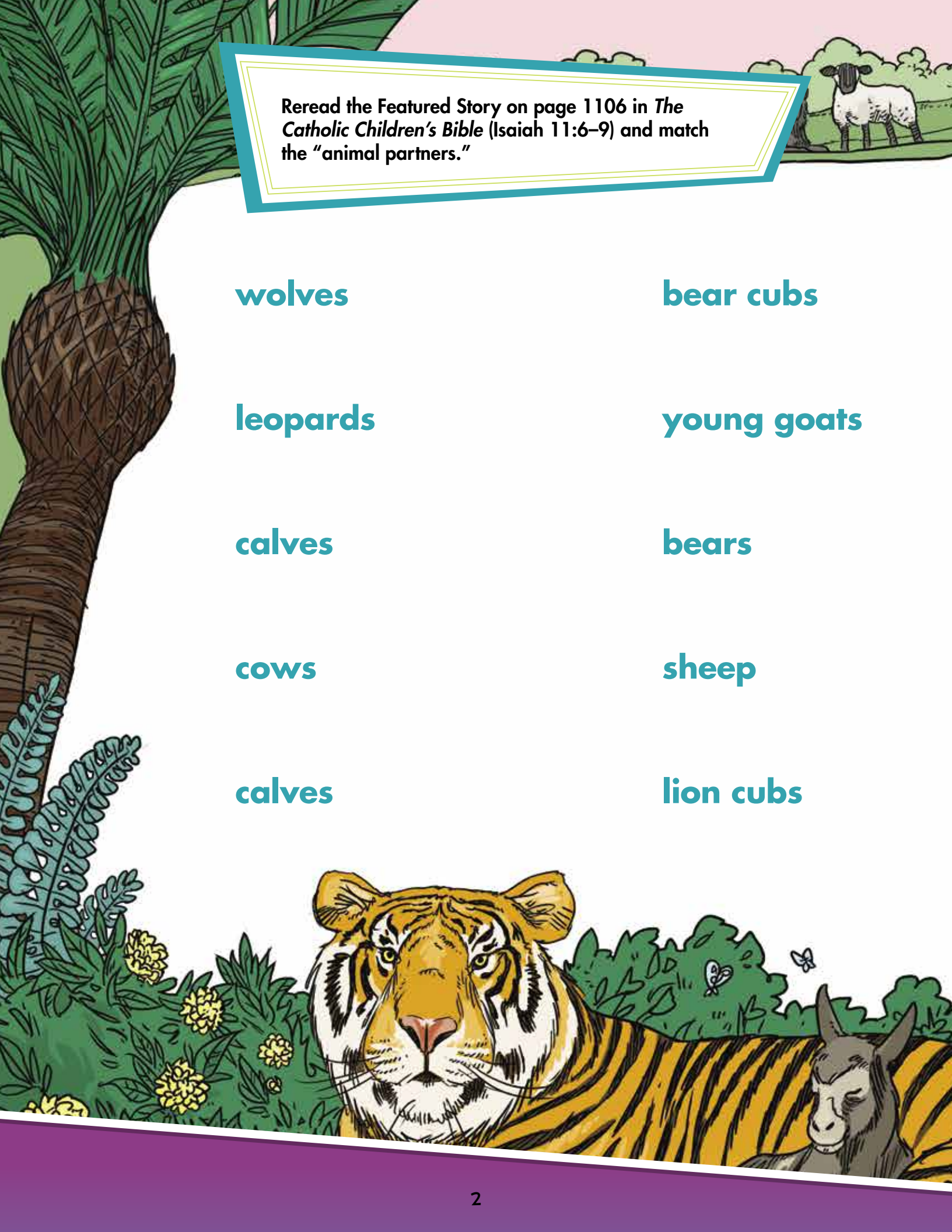
bears

cows

sheep

calves

lion cubs





Advent Light

Leader: Let us begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross. . . . Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we remember your birth in Bethlehem. Let us think of your willingness to be born as a helpless baby. May we trust in you when we feel unsure and weak.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we invite you to enter our hearts and lives with your peace and joy. May we trust in you when we feel alone and distracted.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Jesus, during this season of Advent, we know you will come again at the end of time. May we trust in you when we feel anxious and afraid.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us be part of your Kingdom of Peace by bringing peace and joy to others.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus, during this season of Advent, help us prepare to receive you into our hearts at Christmas, especially when we receive you in Holy Communion.

All: Come into our hearts, Lord.

Leader: We ask all of this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Family Page

Background Reflection

The liturgical season of Advent is often a hurried precursor to the celebration of Christmas. We find it easy to focus on the birth of Jesus, but it's important to remember that the Church takes four weeks before Christmas to slow down and prepare.

The word *advent* comes from the Latin word for *coming*. In Advent, we prepare for Christ's coming in the historical event of Christmas, we prepare for his coming at the end of time, and we prepare for his coming into our hearts at Christmas, especially by receiving Holy Communion on that great feast.

This lesson focuses on pausing in prayer as we prepare for Christmas. You may invite your child to participate in traditional Advent customs like lighting an Advent wreath and serving others as Jesus came to serve us. And you can also remind her or him of Isaiah's promise of Jesus and his peaceful kingdom in the Old Testament. In these ways, your child can learn that Advent is a special season all its own.

Family Activities

- Pray the "Prayer of Saint Francis" found on page 1107 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*. Talk as a family about ways you can be instruments of God's peace this Advent.
- Go for a family drive to look at the Christmas lights in your neighborhood. Talk about the beauty and joy that Christmas lights bring, and then compare the lights to Jesus, the light of the world. Discuss how your family can be a light for others this season.
- Watch the video "Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)" (YouTube, 2:09) together. Pause the video as needed to process the different points it makes. Then talk about the ways Advent is different from Christmas. Finally, name some ways your child can use Advent to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

People of Faith

Saint John the Baptist (first century)

Saint John announced Jesus' coming. He is called a prophet because he spoke God's Word. John baptized people who wanted to change their hearts, and he encouraged them to follow Jesus, not himself. John was Jesus' cousin, and he was born six months before Jesus. The Church celebrates the birthday of John the Baptist on June 24, six months before Christmas Eve.

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, during Advent, may your words remain in our hearts so that we may fill our lives with generosity and compassion. We pray: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

