

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Catechist Guide



Don't Miss This!

Handouts and other teaching resources
are available online at
www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p.



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Welcome

Welcome to *Discover! Finding Faith in Life*. This exciting program is designed to help children fully engage in the process of discovering and growing in the richness of their Catholic faith, making deep faith a central part of their everyday lives.

The lessons within are designed to foster a clear understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. This method brings lessons to life in a fun and memorable way through experiential and interactive processes. Core principles of faith are introduced in a manner that allows children to discover meaning and develop understanding while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and in the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

Scripture stories are at the center of this program, rooting the key concepts of each chapter throughout the series to important Scripture passages. This promotes biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity and knowledge of key Scripture stories throughout the Old and New Testaments, as well as their meaning for us today.

Discover! Finding Faith in Life is a program like no other. We are confident that by using this program, you will experience faith coming to life for children in an exciting way. May we all continue to discover more deeply the riches of our Catholic faith and so help others find the saving message of the Good News at the center of their lives.

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press

Program Highlights

Scripture Stories Are Central

Discover! Finding Faith in Life immerses the children in Scripture by anchoring each lesson to a particular Scripture story. This unique feature promotes biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity with and knowledge of key Scripture stories.

Based on Principles of Engaged, Active Learning

The lessons are designed to foster a deep understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. Experiential and interactive processes create energy and excitement for both the catechist and the children, and activities and activity options throughout the program help catechists build a meaningful lesson in a creative and fun way.

Child-Centered Design

Information and activities are presented using the language and experiences of the child to create an environment for real, engaged learning. The program relays core information through activities and discussions that will make sense to the learners in their everyday lives, thus conveying deep meaning and touching their hearts and minds in a significant way.

Rooted in a “Discover” Approach

The name of this program speaks to an energy and excitement that are infused in the learning process designed for this guide. The content helps the children make connections with previous experiences and knowledge and invites them to deepen both as they discover new concepts and practices in the Catholic Tradition. Core concepts are structured in such a way that the children can discover meaning for themselves while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and exposed to the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

Clear and Practical Structure

Each grade level is structured in the same manner: four units with five chapters in each unit. Each grade has twenty core chapters plus eight liturgical season lessons, which can be incorporated into the flow of the year according to each particular program’s schedule and needs.

Of the five chapters in each unit, four of them focus on the four pillars of the *Catechism*. A fifth chapter introduces a foundational concept related to one of the seven Catholic social teaching principles.

The unit structure for all grades is as follows:

First chapter	Believe (First <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Second chapter	Celebrate (Second <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Third chapter	Live (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Fourth chapter	Live: Catholic Social Teaching (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar / Catholic social teaching)
Fifth chapter	Pray (Fourth <i>Catechism</i> pillar)

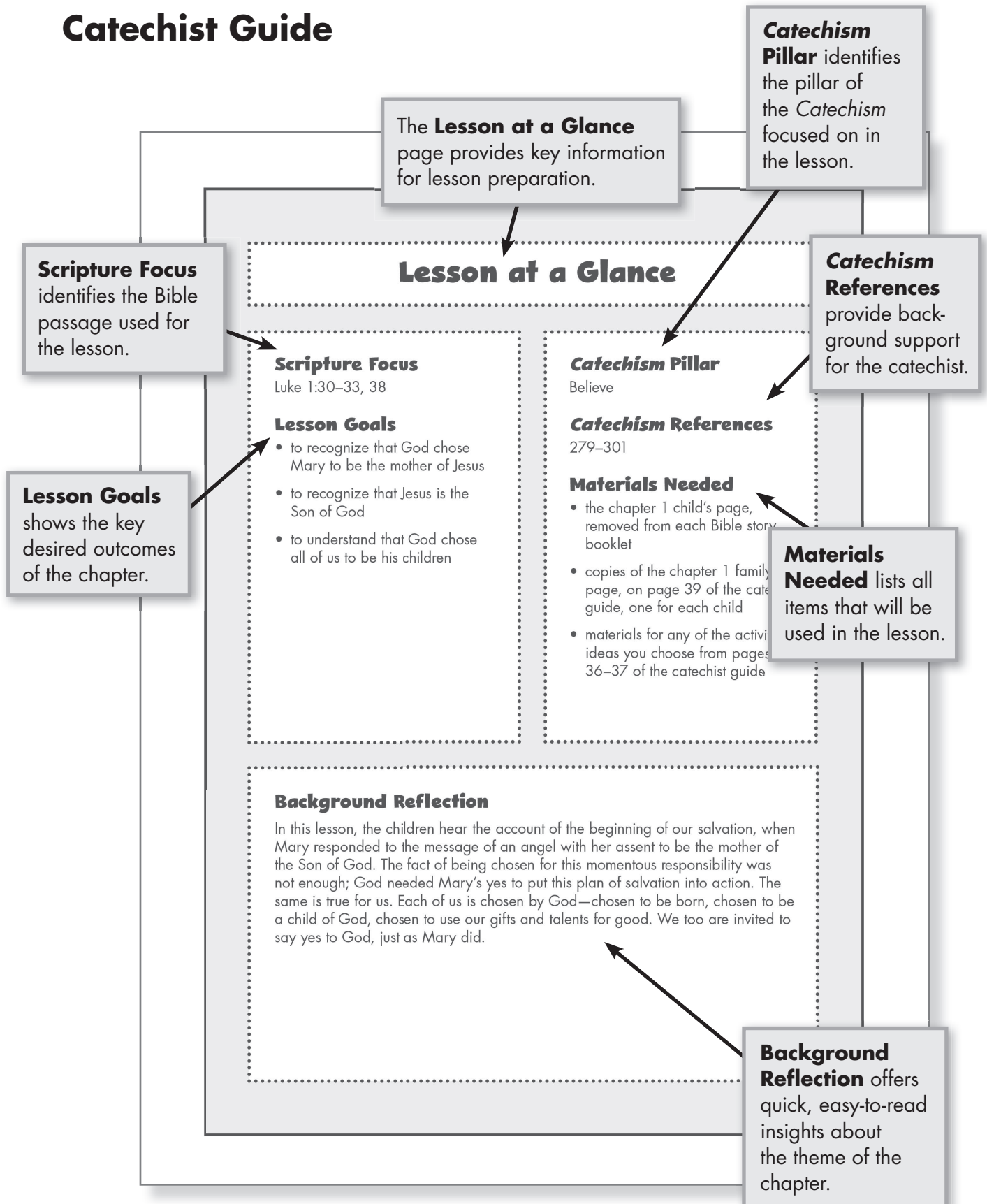
Family Support

The program is designed to extend beyond the classroom and into the home. Each lesson includes a family page that helps families follow along with the Scripture story and the core concepts presented in the current lesson.*

*Spanish versions of all family pages are available online at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p.

Understanding the Components

Catechist Guide



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, and then demonstrate the hand gesture that goes with each phrase.
- Accept their efforts at this point. Refinements will come later, after you reinforce this during each session.

Engage

- Introduce the Bible story by asking if anyone in the group has ever been chosen to do something special or received a special invitation. Perhaps someone has been asked to join a team, attend a party, or be part of a wedding.
- Explain that today the children will hear a Bible story about something special Mary was chosen to do.

Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - > In the picture, we can see someone's hands and someone with a white robe. Who do you think this might be? (The angel and the angel.)
 - > We also see a young woman in the picture. How do you think she is feeling? Happy? (No, questioning?) (Yes.)
 - > Can you look like you're wondering? "Hmm?" and put your finger on your chin.
 - > Let's look at the bottom of the picture. What do you see? (The windows.) (What do you think they are for?) (responses.)
 - > Mary and the angel are having a conversation. Why is it so important to talk. But what else is important?
- Explain that you will read the Bible story. Ask the children to listen out what the angel said to Mary and how she responded.

The **Get Ready!** part of the lesson begins with an opening prayer and a question or two that will spark interest and curiosity in the children.

The **Dive In!** part of the lesson invites the children to learn important concepts by engaging with the Bible story for the lesson.

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)

Today's Bible Story repeats the Scripture passage that appears on the child's page.

Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by reminding the children that the angel and Mary were having a conversation. Ask the children to share what it means to have a conversation with someone. (*We talk and we listen to another or others.*)
- Invite the children to recall what the angel said to Mary in the conversation in today's Bible story. Emphasize that the angel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus.
- Ask the children to recall what Mary said in the conversation with the angel. Point out that she said yes and said she was a servant of the Lord. Explain that this means she wanted to do what God wanted her to do.

The **Discover!** part of the lesson presents key content through core teaching points and learning activities.

The **Go!** part of the lesson invites the children to recall everything they have learned, and ends with a closing prayer.

Go! (10 minutes)



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did God choose to be the mother of Jesus? (*Mary*)
 - Who is the Son of God? (*Jesus*)
 - Who chose us to be God's children? (*God chose us to be his children.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Conversation: Talking and Listening

- Introduce this activity as a game of talking and listening.
- Explain that you will call on several children and ask them a question.
- Encourage the group to listen carefully to the answers.
- Announce a simple question to the group, like, "What will you do after our session today?"
- Call on someone to answer the question. Remind the group to listen carefully to their answer.
- Try this format:
 - Johnny, what will you do after our session today? (*My mom is taking me to the park.*)
 - Johnny is going to the park after our session today!
 - Sally, what will you do after our session today? (*I will go home and eat lunch.*)
 - Did everyone listen to Johnny and Sally? What will Johnny do after our session today? (*He will go to the park.*) What will Sally do after our session today? (*She will go home and eat lunch.*)
- Continue in this way until several children have answered a question.
- Repeat as time permits, announcing another simple question. Here are a few sample questions:
 - What do you do after you get up in the morning?
 - What is your favorite thing to do on Saturdays?
 - What is your favorite food?
- Review each question and answer briefly to help the children remember the answers.
- Congratulate the children on being good talkers and good listeners!

The **Activity Ideas** are options for the learning activity that is part of the lesson. These may also be used to extend or supplement the lessons as needed.

The **Family Page** for each lesson in the program offers ideas for bringing the lesson to life at home. Full-color versions and Spanish versions of all family pages are available online at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p.

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Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mary Says Yes to God." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The next time you are in church, take extra time to visit the Mary altar. You may want to pray a "Hail Mary" aloud and take a minute of quiet time together. You may also want to make a quick tour of the church to find other images of Mary in the windows or in other statues.
- Search online for images of "Mary, Mother of Jesus." Enjoy looking at the results with your child. Find one or two pictures that are appealing. If possible, print them and hang them in your child's room.

Your Growing Child

In conversations, both talking and listening are important. It is important to talk with your child to share information and ideas with them. It is also important to listen to your child, to help them share their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes you may feel that your child is not listening. It is important for your child to know when they must take special care to listen. Use a statement like, "This is really important and you need to listen." Then have them repeat back what you just said. Thank your child for listening, and underline your request by repeating, "This is really important."

Prayer

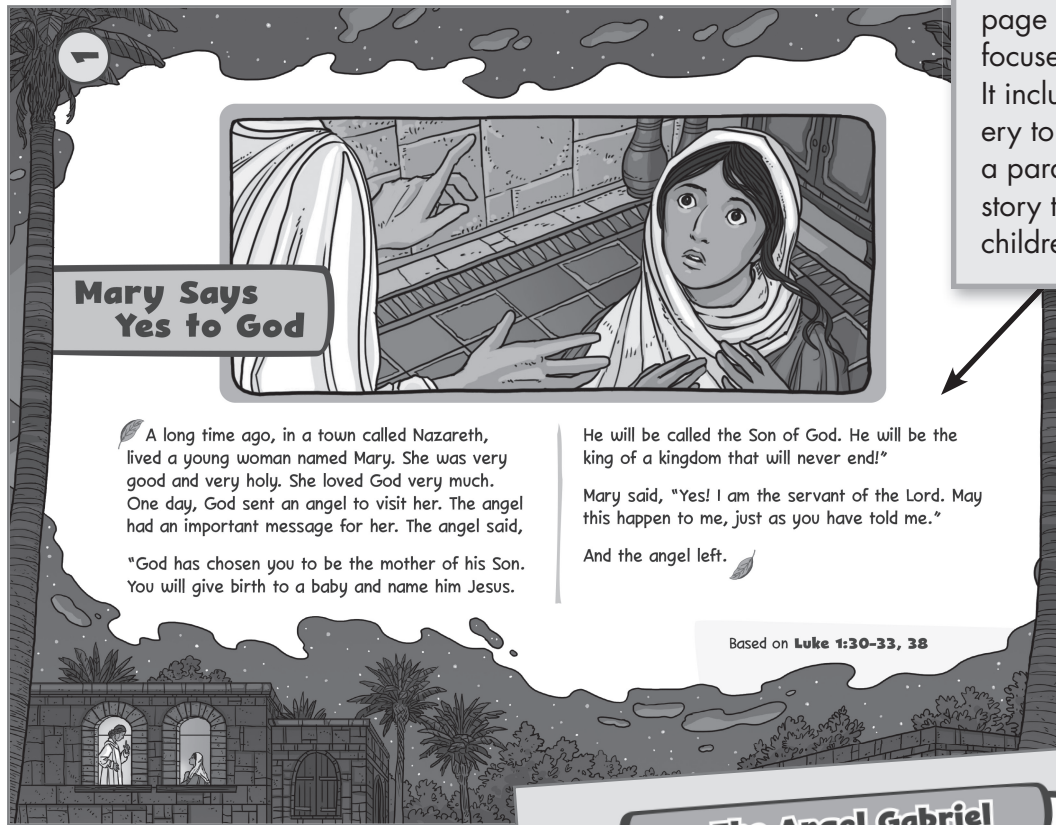
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Loving God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Help us become who you want us to be as we say yes to you in faith and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.

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Discover! Finding Faith in Life

Chapter 1: Mary Says Yes to God
Kindergarten

Child's Page from the Bible Story Booklet



Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said, "God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus.

He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

Based on **Luke 1:30-33, 38**

On one side of the child's page is the Bible story focused on in the lesson. It includes beautiful imagery to create interest and a paraphrase of the Bible story that can be read to children.

The Angel Gabriel

Color this picture of the angel Gabriel.

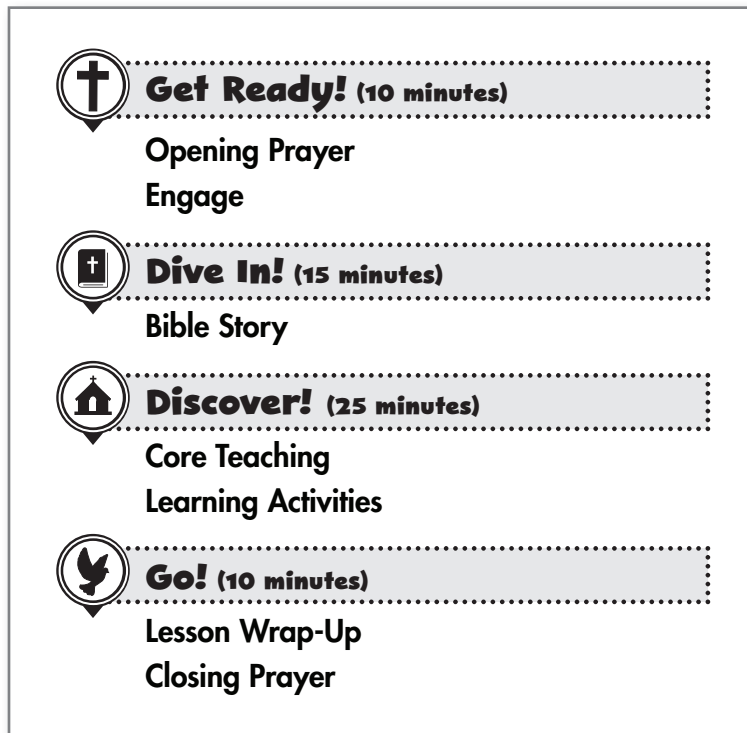


The other side of the child's page is an activity related to the Bible story and lesson. This activity can be completed in class or at home.

Key Elements of the Program

Catechist Guide

Each lesson follows the same overall structure and timing. It will be important to assess the time frames according to your unique group makeup and time parameters. Some activities may take longer for some groups than others. Reading through each lesson before the session will guide you in making necessary adjustments to ensure success in your particular setting. The 60-minute timing structure is presented as follows:



Get Ready!

This first part of the lesson starts with prayer and an engage question that lays the foundation for the lesson by accessing the children's prior knowledge and experience. This engages the children by providing them with an early opportunity for success as it prompts simple discussion around concepts the children will be familiar with and connects those concepts with content the children will be learning in the lesson.

Dive In!

This part of the lesson immerses the children in a Bible story, using the child's page from the Bible story booklet. It encourages the children to look at images related to the Bible story to make some predictions about what it might be about. Then it involves reading the Bible story to the children. All Bible stories have been paraphrased using language that is friendly to kindergarten-age children.

Discover!

This part of the lesson begins with some core teaching points to relay to the children regarding the Bible story. Then the children are invited to participate in a learning activity, chosen by the catechist from several options. These activities provide creative ways to reinforce concepts with the children. If additional time is available, the children will begin the activity that appears on the child's page. They can always complete this at home if there is not enough time in the session.

Go!

This part of the lesson wraps up the session through a final check and recall of the core lesson goals and preparation for taking materials home. The lesson then ends with a closing prayer.

Bible Story Booklets

The Bible story booklets contain the child's pages for each of the 28 lessons in *Discover! Finding Faith in Life*. One side of the page presents the Bible story for the lesson with inviting illustrations. The Bible story text is included on the page so it can be read by catechists, caregivers, and children who can read. The other side of the page includes an activity related to the Bible story and lesson. This can be completed together during the session or at home, depending on time availability. Each page is perforated for easy removal and use in the session and at home.

Handouts

Some chapters include additional handouts for the lesson. These handouts can be accessed in two different ways:

1. They can be found at the end of the chapter in the catechist guide.
2. They can be accessed as part of the online teaching resources for this grade at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p.

Kindergarten

Scope and Sequence

Unit 1: We Meet Jesus					
Chapter Number and Title	1. Mary Says Yes to God	2. Jesus Is Born	3. The Wise Men Visit Jesus	4. Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary	5. Jesus Is Lost and Found
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	279–301	456–460 477–478 527–530	528	1905–1912	2738–2745
Chapter Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God to understand that God chose all of us to be his children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that angels told the shepherds about Jesus to recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were poor to know that Jesus loves us and shows us God's love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Wise Men visited Jesus after his birth to understand that the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus to realize that we can give gifts to Jesus through sharing kindness and love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that Joseph took care of Jesus and Mary to know that Joseph is holy because he listened to God to recognize that we can pray for those who must leave their homes in times of emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that Jesus was lost but was found with the teachers to realize that Jesus obeyed Joseph and Mary after he was found to recognize that we can pray anywhere
Scripture	Luke 1:30–33, 38	Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16	Matthew 2:9–12	Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23	Luke 2:41–52

Unit 2: Jesus Grows Up					
Chapter Number and Title	6. John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus	7. Jesus Is Baptized	8. Jesus Is a Great Leader	9. Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us	10. Jesus Welcomes Children
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	522–524	535–537 694 1131 1210–1216 1224	858–860 2600	546 1163–1171	544 561 699
Chapter Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to learn that John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus to understand that John the Baptist baptized in a river, but we are baptized in a church to describe ways we can get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that Jesus was baptized to obey God and to show his love for God to know that when we are baptized, we are welcomed into God’s family, the Church to recognize that Baptism is a reason for celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to discover that John the Baptist’s followers were looking for a great leader to understand that we are followers of Jesus to learn that curiosity is a gift that helps us as followers of Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus told stories to teach us to understand that stories can help us learn important things to recall that the story of the helpful stranger teaches us to love and care for one another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify that Jesus welcomed little children and made them feel important to learn that Jesus blessed, or prayed for, the children to understand that we can pray to Jesus because he loves us
Scripture	Mark 1:4–8	Matthew 3:13–17	John 1:35–41	Luke 10:29–30, 33–35	Matthew 19:13–15

Unit 3: Jesus Teaches Us					
Chapter Number and Title	11. Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts	12. Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives	13. Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy	14. Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others	15. Jesus Teaches Us to Pray
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	74–141 1100–1101	976–987	1026–1029 2012–2016	2055 2083 2196	2564–2565 2664 2792–2793
Chapter Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that people’s hearts can be like different kinds of soil to recognize that the “seed” is God’s Word or God’s message to realize that our hearts can be “good soil” for God’s seed, the Word of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall key elements of the story of the son and the father to realize that the boy’s father forgave him to understand that God is our Father and forgives us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to realize that Jesus wants us to be happy to understand that we can be happy by showing kindness, being full of love, and making peace to recognize that we will be fully happy in Heaven with God one day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to know that the first important commandment is to love God to know that the second important commandment is to love others as yourself to give examples of keeping each of these commandments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that prayer is talking and listening to God to recognize that Jesus talked to and listened to God, his Father and ours to pray with Jesus, that we may all be one in God
Scripture	Mark 4:16–20	Luke 15:11, 20–24	Matthew 5:6–9	Mark 12:28–31	John 17:11, 20–21, 23

Unit 4: Jesus Dies and Rises for Us					
Chapter Number and Title	16. Jesus Dies for Us	17. Jesus Rises for Us	18. Jesus Is Our Shepherd	19. We Care for Jesus through People in Need	20. We Become Close to Jesus at Mass
Catechism Pillar	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
Catechism References	595–623	638–658 1136–1199 1322–1419	754	786 2447	1322–1419
Chapter Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to identify the cross as an important symbol for Christians to recognize that Jesus died on the cross out of love for us to express different feelings about Jesus' death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus rose from the dead to state that Jesus' rising to new life is a reason to celebrate to name some symbols of Jesus' rising to new life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to learn that Jesus is the Good Shepherd to understand that Jesus loves and protects us to recognize that we follow Jesus because he is the Good Shepherd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that we should care for people in need to understand that when we care for those in need, we are caring for Jesus to state different ways we can show kindness to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize that Jesus gave us himself at the Last Supper to know that when we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our hearts to understand that we can become close to Jesus at Mass through Holy Communion and prayer
Scripture	Matthew 27:1–2, 29, 31, 50–54	Mark 16:1–6	John 10:11–15	Matthew 25:34, 37–40	Mark 14:22–24

Liturgical Season Lessons				
Liturgical Season	All Saints' Day	Advent	Christmas	Lent
Chapter Title	Living a Life of Love	Preparing for Christmas	Celebrating the Birth of Jesus	Growing Closer to Jesus
Catechism References	946–962	522–524	456–460 477–478 527–530	976–987 1846–1851
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that the saints followed Jesus to realize that the saints lived lives of love to know that we can imitate Jesus and the saints in living lives of love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize the meaning of the word <i>advent</i> to understand Advent as a season of preparation for Christmas to describe what we can do to get ready for the coming of Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recognize the story of Christmas to understand that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus to identify Jesus as the Son of God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter to recognize that Lent is a time of turning back to God to name “little things for Jesus” we can do during Lent
Scripture	1 John 3:11, 16–18	Mark 1:4–8	Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16	Luke 15:11, 20–24

Liturgical Season Lessons				
Liturgical Season	Easter	Pentecost	Ordinary Time	Mary
Chapter Title	Jesus Is Risen	Filled with the Holy Spirit	We Are Loved	Mother of Jesus
Catechism References	638–658	683–747	218–220	279–301
Lesson Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to recall that Jesus rose from the dead to new life to recognize that we celebrate Jesus' rising to new life during Easter to understand that Easter is a special season in the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to explain that the Holy Spirit is a special helper that Jesus sent at Pentecost to teach the children that the Holy Spirit can bring us comfort and peace to recognize wind and fire as symbols of the Holy Spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that nothing can separate us from God's love to explain that Ordinary Time is a season for learning about Jesus' life and teachings to recognize that the liturgical color green is associated with Ordinary Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to understand that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus to learn that we celebrate Mary all year long through special feast days to recognize and identify symbols associated with Mary
Scripture	John 20:11–14, 16	John 14:16–17, 26–27	Romans 8:35, 37–39	Luke 1:30–33, 38

Support Articles

Characteristics of Kindergartners

Kindergartners are energetic, curious, and eager to learn about the world around them. With typical ages ranging from 5 to 6 years old, kindergartners exhibit a wide range of developmental levels. Some may still display preschool-like behaviors, while others seem ready for first grade. Children who have attended a preschool program may be more accustomed to group interactions and routines than children without that experience. However, every kindergartner will look to their teachers for guidance and approval, often needing positive reinforcement, especially when asked to work independently. All kindergartners thrive with hands-on experiences, nurturing guidance, and opportunities to explore their interests and creativity.

Physical Characteristics

Kindergartners grow at different rates and can exhibit a wide range of heights, weights, and body proportions. They are constantly in motion and have difficulty remaining sedentary for long periods. Their gross motor skills are quite developed, but fine motor abilities like cutting, writing, and coloring are still emerging. Kindergartners may appear physically clumsy, bumping into objects or people as they move about. They require frequent breaks and chances to expend energy through movement and physical play. Kindergartners are also highly sensory, using all five senses to explore their environment. In general, they are active and physically engaged while exploring and interacting with their environment.

Intellectual Characteristics

Kindergartners are in a period of rapid cognitive development, which is demonstrated by curiosity, creativity, and imagination. They frequently ask “why” about everything they encounter. They are concrete thinkers who learn best through direct sensory experiences and hands-on manipulation. While their attention spans are gradually increasing, kindergartners still need varied, interactive learning approaches to remain engaged. They enjoy repetition and familiarity but also thrive when offered new, imaginative experiences. A balance of experiences will provide kindergartners the security of knowing something that has become familiar, as well as the excitement of learning something new. A need for security sometimes means that kindergartners are reticent to change activities when required. An advance alert often helps them prepare for putting things away and getting ready for the next activity. Kindergartners’ language skills are developing, so short and clear directions and explanations are best.

Social-Emotional Characteristics

Kindergartners have a strong desire to please their teachers and follow rules and routines. However, they are still learning to manage big emotions, which can sometimes lead to impulsive outbursts. Kindergartners are developing independence but still seek frequent reassurance, approval, and guidance from adults. While learning to cooperate with peers, kindergartners may struggle with sharing, taking turns, and resolving conflicts. Relationships with peers may depend on their age. Younger kindergartners will be more comfortable playing alongside one another, while older kindergartners enjoy talking and playing with others. They benefit from clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and nurturing classroom environments.

Summary

These are all general characteristics of kindergartners. Although these characteristics might not describe every child, an awareness of these qualities will help you plan developmentally appropriate learning activities for your group. The more you learn about the spectrum of child development, the more you will understand where the children you teach have “come from” and where they are headed in their next phase of development. Each child develops at their own pace, and it is likely an uneven pace at that! One child may be far ahead intellectually but a little behind in social development. Another child’s social development may be right on target, but they may face challenges in thinking skills. The activities in this guide are so varied that you will find some to meet almost every child’s need to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

One way to give every child a chance to grow and develop in your classroom, even if a group meets only once a week, is to give each child a job. Line leader, paper passer, prayer leader, movement leader—whatever small job is available should be assigned for one session (or one week) and then reassigned for the next one. Keep a running list of assignments so that each child gets a turn doing each job. Write the assignments for each session on the board. Children love to help and appreciate feeling appreciated, and you will be rewarded with a smooth-running group of proud and happy children.

Using Bible Stories with Young Children

According to the Gospels, Jesus clearly wants children to come to him. We can fulfill his desire by leading them to Scripture. Jesus, the Word, is present in the words of Sacred Scripture. Through them, he speaks to children's hearts just as he speaks to ours. You can facilitate this encounter for his young disciples.

Creating a Christian Environment

As you begin working with Bible stories, impress on the children the holiness of what you are doing. Explain that you and they are the Church in miniature. You are gathered to hear the Good News about Jesus that Scripture contains, to think about what he is saying to you, and to grow in your friendship with him. Remind the children of these facts periodically.

The room where you meet is holy space. As such, it should be neat, attractive, quiet, and free from distractions. Religious pictures and statues help set the tone, and a Christian song playing softly before the session helps the children focus on God. Praying before and after the sessions sends the message that this is special time.

Creating a Loving Atmosphere

Christians are one with Jesus and with one another. Our classrooms should be characterized by love, the hallmark of Christians. As teachers, our bearing, our tone of voice, the way we move, and even how we dress convey our love for Jesus and the children as much as the words we speak. As soon as possible, learn the children's names and something about each child. Play icebreaker games to help the children get to know one another. Be quick to praise the children as a group and individually. Point out the gifts of each child and show appreciation for them.

Create a Loving and Respectful Community

To build a loving and respectful community, plan opportunities for each child to contribute. Arrange for the children to work together on some projects. Make kindness a classroom rule, and encourage the children to help one another. Above all, treat the children equally, fairly, and with respect. When the children know you care about them, and when they care about one another, they are less likely to misbehave. They will not want to disappoint you! To help prevent discipline problems, prepare lessons that keep the children active and engaged. (If you sense restlessness in the group, interrupt your lesson by having the children listen to or sing a song. You may want to add movements and ask the group to follow you in prayerful song and dance.) If a child does disrupt the class, speak to them privately. If necessary, enlist the aid of parents.

Shaping Attitudes toward the Bible

Teach the children that the Bible is the Word of God. Because God is its author, the Bible is holy. It should not be placed on the floor. To instill awe for the Bible, create a Bible corner by keeping a large, beautiful Bible on a table or shelf covered with a lovely cloth. Set a candle near it (if fire code allows, or use a battery-operated one) and sometimes light it when the Bible story is being read. Add, or let the children add, flowers, a plant, or colored leaves to the display.

Consider holding a prayer service honoring the Bible. Process with the Bible held high. Sing a song about God's Word, and read Scripture verses about it (see Psalm 119, Matthew 7:24–29, Matthew 13:1–9, Hebrews 4:12). Conclude by setting the Bible in its special place and having everyone bow to it one by one.

Telling a Bible Story

You may wish to tell a Bible story in a creative way for the children. Check the list below for a few storytelling techniques that will delight the group and make the story more memorable.

What You Can Do to Tell the Story

1. Use gestures, movements, and expressions. Vary the speed and volume of your voice. You might even dress like a Bible character.
2. Ask questions as you tell the story to maintain interest and stimulate thinking. But keep the questions simple so they do not distract.
3. Add sensory words to bring the story to life. Let the children see, hear, smell, taste, and feel the story as if they were there.
4. Make comments that link the story to the children's world. Refer to current news, famous people, and what the children know and experience.
5. Use flannel board figures, dolls, stuffed animals, puppets, or pipe-cleaner figures.
6. Do a chalk talk, preferably with colored chalk—even if you aren't a good artist.
7. Tear or fold paper to form a shape as you talk—for example, a whale for Jonah, a star for the Nativity, and a lily for the Resurrection. Craft books can provide ideas for these shapes.
8. Tell the story by interviewing someone posing as a person in the story or as a witness to it.
9. Think of colors that match parts of the story. Show construction paper of those colors at the appropriate times.
10. Post or project a picture of the story. Or reveal several of them as you tell the story. These might be glued to the sides of a box.

What the Children Can Do as the Story Is Told

1. Distribute pictures of people and objects from the story. When the person or object is mentioned, the child holding it stands and raises it high or posts it to a sheet of newsprint.
2. Have the children draw on paper or work with clay as the Spirit moves them.
3. Direct the children to respond with a sound or action when they hear a certain word. For example, in the story of the Fall, they could hiss at the word *snake*.
4. Do an action as you read each sentence, and have the children repeat the sentence and the action.

Reinforcing the Bible Stories

Children are usually eager to tell and retell familiar stories. In their spontaneous play, they “act out” stories they see on television and roles they experience in their families. Acting out Bible stories, as well as learning related poems and songs, are ways children can use their natural gifts of role-play, music, and rhyme.

Plays

Help the children act out the story using symbols, headbands or signs, costumes, props, scenery drawn on the board, and sound effects. The children can present the play to another class or their families.

Songs and Movement

Teach Scripture-related songs. Some hymns sung in church are based on Scripture. Many collections of Bible songs geared to children can be found online. As appropriate, invite the children to follow your example as you move prayerfully to these songs, or lead the children around the room in a march, procession, or dance. If singing is “praying twice,” as Saint Augustine says, perhaps those who move and dance as they sing are praying three times!

Poems

A favorite of teachers and children for decades is the Arch book series (Concordia Publishing House). Each book tells a Bible story in rhyme.

A Legacy of Love for Scripture

The key factor in teaching children Scripture is your love for it. When you treasure God’s Word, it will show, and the children will catch your attitude. Then the time spent reading and studying the Bible will be a joy for you and the children. You will be handing on a legacy of love for Scripture that will stay with the children for the rest of their lives.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 1

We Meet Jesus

Chapter 1

Mary Says Yes to God 30

Chapter 2

Jesus Is Born 40

Chapter 3

The Wise Men Visit Jesus 50

Chapter 4

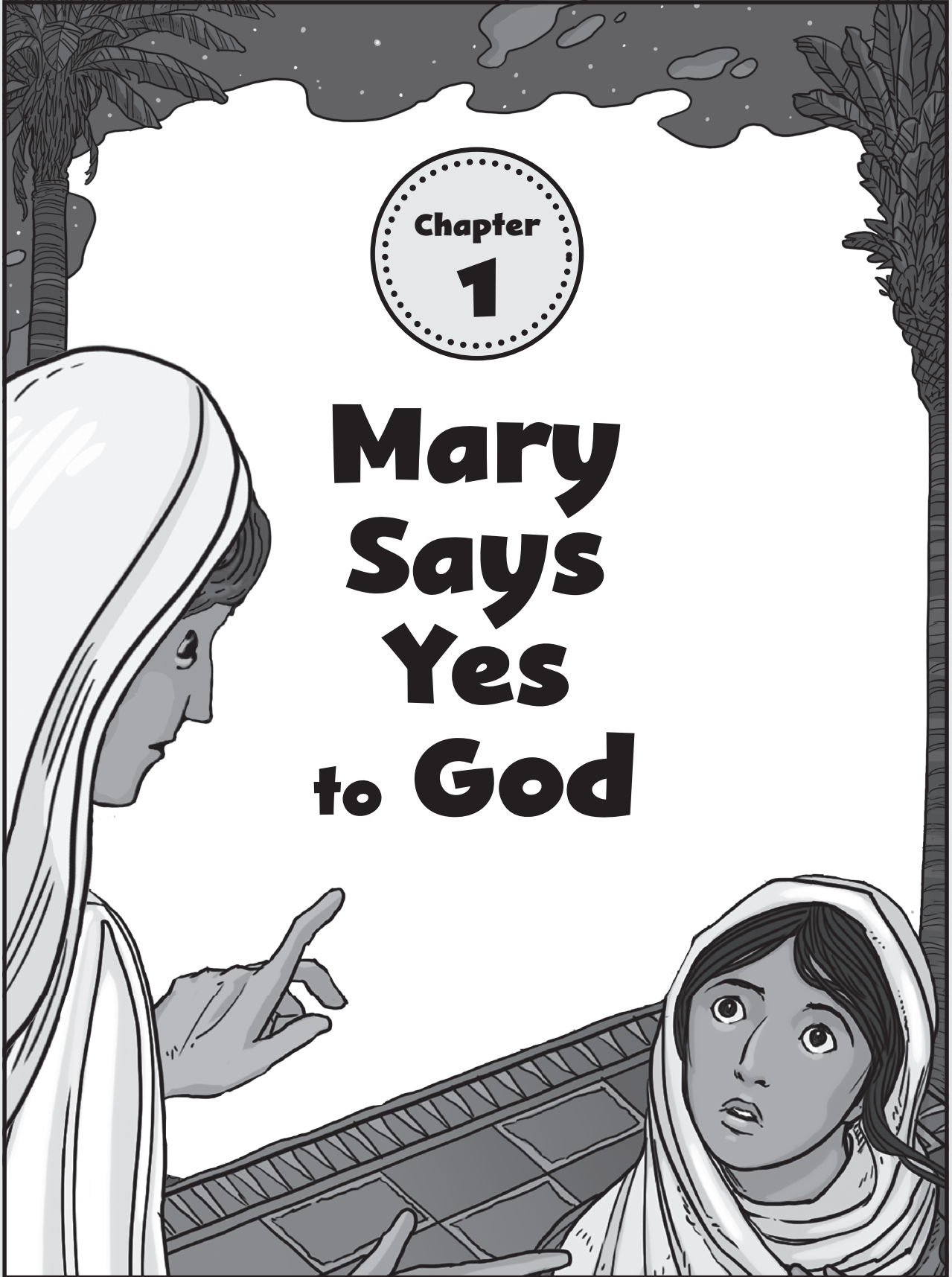
Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary 58

Chapter 5

Jesus Is Lost and Found 68

Chapter
1

**Mary
Says
Yes
to God**



**Chapter
1****Lesson at a Glance****Chapter 1****Scripture Focus**

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God
- to understand that God chose all of us to be his children

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

279–301

Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 1 family page, on page 39 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 36–37 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this lesson, the children hear the account of the beginning of our salvation, when Mary responded to the message of an angel with her assent to be the mother of the Son of God. The fact of being chosen for this momentous responsibility was not enough; God needed *Mary's* yes to put this plan of salvation into action. The same is true for us. Each of us is chosen by God—chosen to be born, chosen to be a child of God, chosen to use our gifts and talents for good. We too are invited to say yes to God, just as *Mary* did.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, and then demonstrate the hand gesture that goes with each phrase.
- Accept their efforts at this point. Refinements will come later, after you reinforce this during each session.

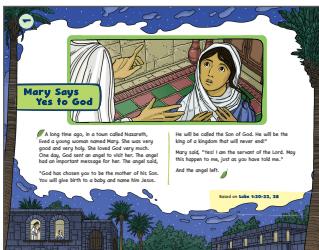
Engage

- Introduce the Bible story by asking if anyone in the group has ever been chosen to do something special or received a special invitation. Perhaps someone has been asked to join a team, attend a party, or be part of a wedding.
- Explain that today the children will hear a Bible story about something special Mary was chosen to do.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In the picture, we can see someone's hands and someone with a white robe. Who do you think this might be? (*Accept responses.*) Those are the hands of the angel and the angel's white robe.
 - We also see a young woman in the picture. That is Mary. How do you think she is feeling? Happy? (*No.*) Sad? (*No.*) Kind of wondering and questioning? (*Yes.*)
 - Can you look like you're wondering and questioning? Can you say, "Hmm?" and put your finger on your chin? (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Let's look at the bottom of the page. We can see the angel and Mary through the windows. What do you think they are doing? (*Accept responses.*)
 - Mary and the angel are having a conversation! In a conversation, it is important to talk. But what else is important in a conversation? (*listening*)
- Explain that you will read the Bible story. Tell the children that they will find out what the angel said to Mary and what Mary said to the angel, after she had listened carefully.

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)



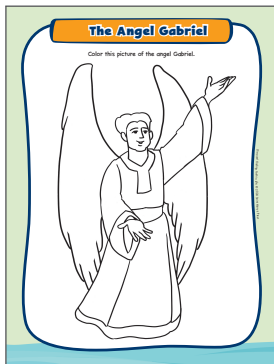
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by reminding the children that the angel and Mary were having a conversation. Ask the children to share what it means to have a conversation with someone. (*We talk and we listen to the other person.*)
- Invite the children to recall what the angel said to Mary in the conversation in today's Bible story. Emphasize that the angel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus.
- Ask the children to recall what Mary said in the conversation with the angel. Point out that she said yes and said she was a servant of the Lord. Explain that this means she wanted to do what God wanted her to do.

- Expand the discussion with the following questions:
 - Who was talking in this conversation? (*the angel and Mary*)
 - Who was listening in this conversation? (*At first, Mary was listening. Then Mary started talking too.*)
 - How do we know that Mary was listening to the angel? (*She said yes to the message of the angel.*)
 - How do we know that the angel was listening to Mary? (*Mary gave her answer, and then the angel left.*)
 - Where do you think the angel went? (*back to God, to deliver the message*)
 - What do you think the angel said to God? (*The angel told God that Mary said yes!*)
- Explain to the children that each of us is chosen by God. Tell them that God chose us to be born and that God chose us to have certain good qualities like loving others, telling jokes, drawing pictures, and other good gifts.
- Invite the children to share some of the good gifts they have from God. Help them name some of the things they are good at.
- Point out to the children that when God asks us to do something, he usually doesn't send an angel. Tell them that their parents or teachers often ask them to do things. Invite them to share some examples.
- Explain that when we listen to our parents or teachers, we can say yes to God, just like Mary.
- Tell the children that you will all say yes to God right now. Explain that you will all make an exploding yes!
- Ask the children to follow your actions. Crouch down and put your hands on your knees. Slowly come up, moving your hands up your legs and making a "ya, ya, ya, ya" sound. Then "explode" by placing your feet and legs wide, raising your arms up wide, and exclaiming, "YES!"

Learning Activities



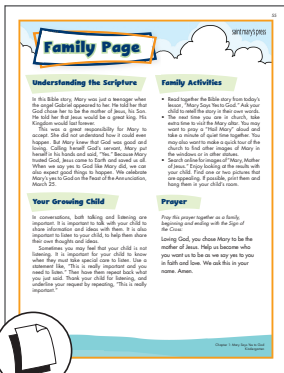
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 36–37 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did God choose to be the mother of Jesus? (*Mary*)
 - Who is the Son of God? (*Jesus*)
 - Who chose us to be God's children? (*God chose us to be his children.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Conversation: Talking and Listening

- Introduce this activity as a game of talking and listening.
- Explain that you will call on several children and ask them a question.
- Encourage the group to listen carefully to the answers.
- Announce a simple question to the group, like, "What will you do after our session today?"
- Call on someone to answer the question. Remind the group to listen carefully to their answer.
- Try this format:
 - Johnny, what will you do after our session today? (*My mom is taking me to the park.*)
 - Johnny is going to the park after our session today!
 - Sally, what will you do after our session today? (*I will go home and eat lunch.*)
 - Did everyone listen to Johnny and Sally? What will Johnny do after our session today? (*He will go to the park.*) What will Sally do after our session today? (*She will go home and eat lunch.*)
- Continue in this way until several children have answered a question.
- Repeat as time permits, announcing another simple question. Here are a few sample questions:
 - What do you do after you get up in the morning?
 - What is your favorite thing to do on Saturdays?
 - What is your favorite food?
- Review each question and answer briefly to help the children remember the answers.
- Congratulate the children on being good talkers and good listeners!

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Mary Says Yes,” on page 38 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child

Mary and the Angel

- Distribute the handout and invite the children to cut along the dashed lines.
- Provide assistance for those who need help cutting the handout.
- Ask the children to color in the pictures of the windowpane, the angel, and Mary.
- Show the children the solid fold lines on the handout, and demonstrate how to fold the handout so that it will stand.
- Help the children fold their handout, even if they have not finished coloring.
- Assure the children that they can finish coloring their handout when they get home.
- Remind the children to stand the picture on their dresser or in another place in their home.
- Explain that the picture will remind them to ask Mary to bless them and their family.

Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (*optional*)
- coaching ahead of time for two volunteers

Mary Says Yes: A Short Play

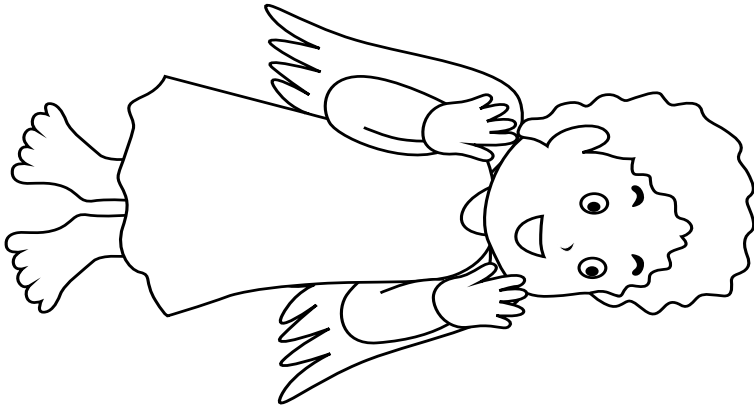
- Introduce this activity by explaining that two children will act out the story of the angel’s visit to Mary.
- Choose volunteers to be the angel and Mary. (*Choose children who have loud voices and who do not mind being the center of attention.*)
- Take the volunteers aside to give them their lines. Ask them to repeat their lines a few times. Use the following, or similar, script:

Angel: God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son! Do you agree?

Mary: I agree. I say yes to God.

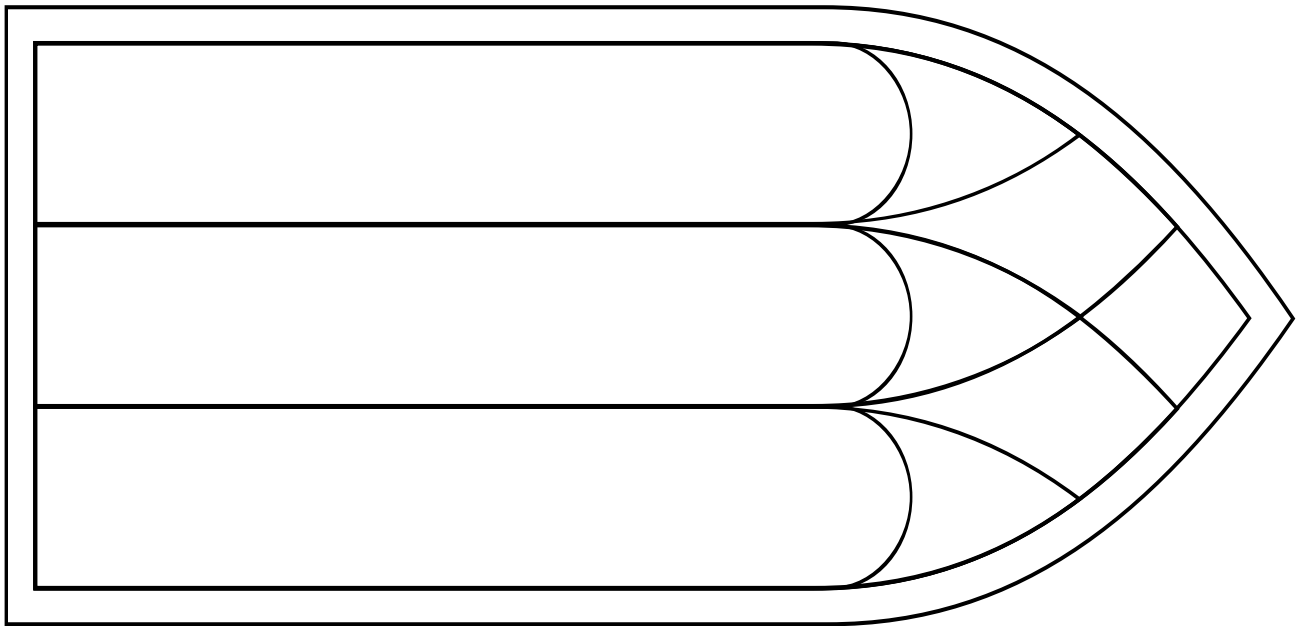
- Arrange an area as a stage, and have the rest of the children gather as the audience.
- Introduce the play as follows:
 - Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to watch an important story. It is the story of Mary saying yes to God. Please enjoy the show!
- Bring the child playing Mary to the center of the stage, directing them to kneel with their side facing the audience.
- Signal to the child playing the angel to “fly in” with open arms and land in front of Mary, standing sideways to the audience.
- Help the child playing the angel say their lines, repeating after you if necessary. Direct the child playing Mary to look up at the angel and say their lines, again assisting as needed.
- Invite the actors to stand up, turn to the other children, and say, “The End.”
- Conclude the play with the following words:
 - Thank you, angel and Mary (*or name the children*), for a wonderful performance. Take a bow!
- Ask for two more volunteers to act out the play again, as time permits.

Cut off the top and bottom of the page, following the dashed lines. Color the windowpane, Mary, and the angel. Then fold on the solid lines. Stand the paper up. You now have a picture of the angel's visit to Mary.

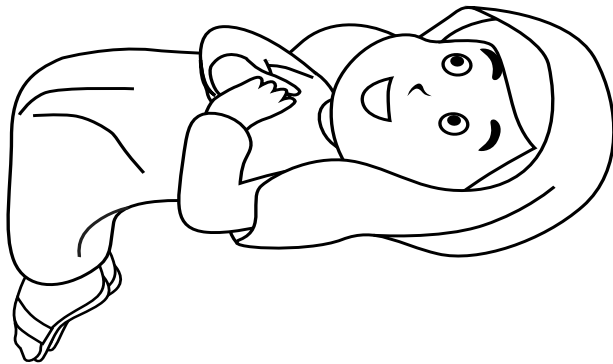


fold

Mary Says Yes



fold



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

Your Growing Child

In conversations, both talking and listening are important. It is important to talk with your child to share information and ideas with them. It is also important to listen to your child, to help them share their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes you may feel that your child is not listening. It is important for your child to know when they must take special care to listen. Use a statement like, "This is really important and you need to listen." Then have them repeat back what you just said. Thank your child for listening, and underline your request by repeating, "This is really important."

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mary Says Yes to God." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The next time you are in church, take extra time to visit the Mary altar. You may want to pray a "Hail Mary" aloud and take a minute of quiet time together. You may also want to make a quick tour of the church to find other images of Mary in the windows or in other statues.
- Search online for images of "Mary, Mother of Jesus." Enjoy looking at the results with your child. Find one or two pictures that are appealing. If possible, print them and hang them in your child's room.

Prayer

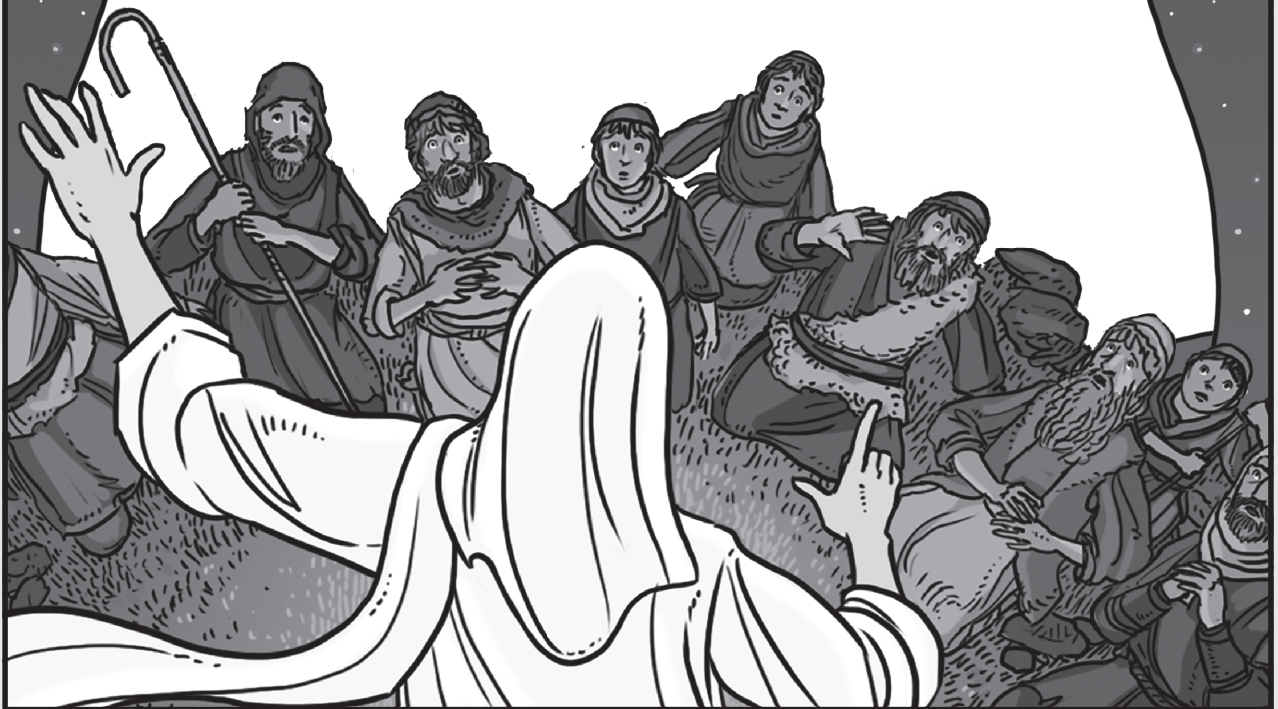
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Loving God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Help us become who you want us to be as we say yes to you in faith and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Chapter

2

Jesus Is Born



Chapter

2

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16

Lesson Goals

- to understand that angels told the shepherds about Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were poor
- to know that Jesus loves us and shows us God's love

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

456–460, 477–478, 527–530

Materials Needed

- the chapter 2 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 2 family page, on page 49 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- a manger scene displayed in the prayer corner or another convenient space
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 46–47 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

This lesson is a balancing act! In teaching about the birth of Jesus, we retell the beautiful story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the story of the journey of Mary and Joseph, the stable, the innkeeper, the shepherds, and the angels. But we also must emphasize that this Jesus, who was born as an infant in Bethlehem, is alive and with us today. He came to us out of love and loves us still. Subsequent lessons follow Jesus as he grows up, accepts his mission, and begins to teach. The story of the Word of God becoming a human being begins at the Annunciation, continues at Bethlehem, and becomes part of our story today as we proclaim, "Jesus loves us!"

✝ Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

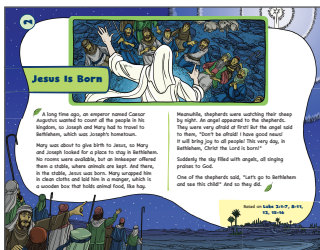
Engage

- Introduce the story by asking if anyone in the group has ever seen a baby. As volunteers respond, ask if the baby was born into their family or was a relative's or neighbor's baby, etc.
- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a baby at Christmas, but any time of year is a good time to celebrate that Jesus was born like us, as a baby. Continue by sharing that he was born like us to show us God's love.
- Tell the children that all of us were born as babies, and our parents and teachers help us grow up.

✝ Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story.
- Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In the picture, we can see someone in white. Who is this, and what are they doing? (*This is an angel. The angel is announcing something to the shepherds.*)
 - Let's look at the shepherds. Look at their mouths. Are their mouths open or closed? (*open*)
 - Their mouths are open because they are surprised. Can you open your mouth and look surprised? (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Can you look surprised and say, "Oh!" or "Ah!" or "Wow!"? (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Now look at the bottom of the page. What are the shepherds doing there? (*pointing*)
 - Maybe they are saying, "Look, look!" Let's point at the sky like the shepherds! Let's say, "Look, look!" (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Let's find out why the shepherds were so surprised. Let's find out why they were pointing to the sky!



- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!"

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this child!" And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)

- Continue with the following questions:
 - Why were the shepherds so surprised? What did they see? *(an angel)*
 - What did the angels announce to the shepherds? *(that Christ the Lord is born)*
 - Who is Christ the Lord? *(Jesus)*
 - What did the angels do after this big announcement? *(They sang praises to God.)*
 - Let's sing praises to God right now, just like the angels! *(To the tune of "Amazing Grace," sing the words "Praise God" over and over. Ask the children to repeat each line after you.)*
 - That sounded so great! Just like the angels! What did the shepherds do after they heard the angels singing? *(They went to see Jesus.)*
 - We can go to see Jesus too. We can look for him in the manger in our prayer corner. The Jesus in our prayer corner is a statue, not a real baby, but it reminds us of Jesus and his birth. *(Lead the group to the manger scene in the prayer corner.)*

- Where else can we find Jesus? *(in church)*
- Yes, Jesus is in church with us, especially when we receive him in Holy Communion. Someday you will be able to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. That will be a wonderful day!



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by sharing these or similar words:
 - We just heard about the birth of Jesus. Can anyone tell me where people usually put babies so they can sleep? *(in a crib or in a big baby basket or a cradle)*
 - Where did Mary lay Jesus to sleep? *(in a manger, a food box for animals)* Yes, and it was probably full of clean, soft hay, so it was a good bed for Jesus.
 - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? *(the angels)*
 - Where did the shepherds go to see Jesus? *(to the stable in Bethlehem)*
 - Where was Jesus? *(in the manger in the stable)*
 - Why were Joseph and Mary and Jesus in the stable? *(No rooms were available in the inn. Joseph and Mary were poor. They did not have any other place to stay.)*
- Expand the discussion with the following remarks:
 - There are people today who also have no place to stay. What do we call those people? *(poor people or homeless people)*
 - Yes, we call them poor people or homeless people because they do not have much money and have no place to stay. Mary and Joseph had a home, but they were traveling and had no place to stay.
 - They were also poor. They did not have much money. Even if a nice room had been available, they might not have been able to afford it. Jesus did not come to us as a rich king, but as a poor child.
 - Jesus became poor to show us that God loves us and all people, even the very poorest, and that we should all love one another.
- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus because Jesus shows us that God loves us! Tell the children that Jesus shows us that God loves everybody, even the very poorest people. Continue by sharing that Jesus shows us God's love by being born and becoming like us.
- Continue with the following:
 - Let's celebrate that Jesus loves us. *(Gather the children in a big circle, holding hands. Lead the following hand gestures while asking the group to repeat your words after you.)*
 - Jesus loves us! *(Hold hands up high.)*
 - Jesus wants us to love one another! *(Bring hands down and crouch down near the floor.)*

- God loves us! (*Bring hands up.*)
- We love God! (*Bring hands down.*)
- Thank you, God, for sending Jesus! (*Bring hands waist high and sway back and forth. Repeat several times.*)
- Amen! (*Bring hands up.*) Amen! (*Bring hands down.*) Amen! Amen! Amen! (*Hold hands up and end.*)

Learning Activities

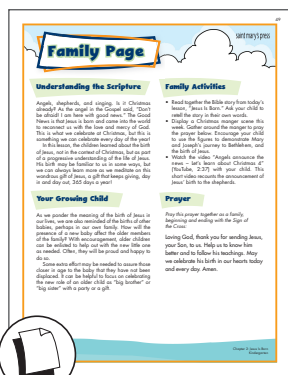
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 46–47 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? (*the angels*)
 - Were Jesus, Mary, and Joseph rich, with lots of money? (*No, they were poor.*)
 - Who loves us and shows us God’s love? (*Jesus*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain to the children that today’s prayer recalls the Bible story of Jesus being born. Invite them to repeat the words and actions after you:
 - Baby Jesus, very small (*make self small*)
 - Sleeping in the manger stall (*head to the side on hands as if sleeping*)
 - Many angels in the sky (*look up*)
 - Singing praise to God on high. (*raise hands in air*)
 - Thank you, God, for Jesus! (*wave hands and cheer*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a figure of the baby Jesus from a manger scene

Seeking the Baby Jesus

- Introduce this activity by explaining that this is a game of hide and seek with the baby Jesus.
- Explain that you will choose a volunteer to stand by the door with their eyes closed. Tell them that you will then hide the baby Jesus somewhere in the room.
- Share that the volunteer will try to find the baby Jesus, and the rest of the children will help by saying “hot” or “cold” as the volunteer comes closer or moves farther away from the baby Jesus.
- Play the game again, as time allows, by selecting a new volunteer and hiding the baby Jesus in another location.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Jesus Is Born,” on page 48 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons or markers
- scissors, one pair for each child
- envelopes, one for each child

Jesus Is Born Puzzle

- Distribute the handout along with crayons or markers and scissors.
- Point out the image, and ask the children what the picture shows.
- Tell them that they are going to create their own puzzle, but that the first step is to color the picture on the handout.
- Allow time for the children to color the image, and then explain that they can cut the handout on the dashed lines, creating four different strips of paper.
- Provide assistance to those who need help cutting the handout.
- Encourage them to mix up the strips of paper, and tell them that you want to see how quickly they can put the pieces together in the right order to complete the puzzle. You can count aloud to create more excitement.
- Congratulate the children when they have completed the puzzle. If there is more time, you might consider having them swap their strips of paper to complete another child’s puzzle.
- Distribute the envelopes, and invite the children to place their strips of paper in an envelope for safekeeping. Mention that they may need to fold the strips.
- Tell the children to take their puzzle home and see how quickly their family members can complete it. Also, you might suggest that their family can help them tape the pieces together or glue them onto cardboard to display their artwork at home.

Materials Needed

- a song sheet for a Christmas carol
- a recording of the Christmas carol and appropriate equipment for playing it (*optional*)
- a computer with internet access (*optional*)
- a computer projector (*optional*)

Let's Sing Christmas Carols!

- Explain that we usually celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and we celebrate by singing Christmas carols. Tell the children that today is a good day to sing Christmas carols too, because today they learned more about the birth of Jesus.
- Using the song sheet, teach the carol you have chosen, line by line, asking the children to repeat each line after you. Then help the children sing two lines at a time, and then the entire verse. If you have a recording of the Christmas carol, you may wish to play it and have the children sing along for practice. (Suggested carols: "Silent Night," "Away in a Manger," "O Come Little Children.")
- *Optional:* Show the video "The Rainbow Collections - Little Donkey (Official Lyric Video)" (YouTube, 2:20), which is a song about the donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem. Then invite the children to get down on all fours and be "little donkeys" like the one in the video. Play the "Little Donkey" song again as you lead the children around the room while they pretend to be little donkeys carrying Mary to Bethlehem.

Jesus Is Born

Color the picture below, and then cut on the dashed lines to create four different strips. See how quickly you can put the strips together to complete the puzzle.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Angels, shepherds, and singing. Is it Christmas already? As the angel in the Gospel said, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news." The Good News is that Jesus is born and came into the world to reconnect us with the love and mercy of God. This is what we celebrate at Christmas, but this is something we can celebrate every day of the year!

In this lesson, the children learned about the birth of Jesus, not in the context of Christmas, but as part of a progressive understanding of the life of Jesus. His birth may be familiar to us in some ways, but we can always learn more as we meditate on this wondrous gift of Jesus, a gift that keeps giving, day in and day out, 365 days a year!

Your Growing Child

As we ponder the meaning of the birth of Jesus in our lives, we are also reminded of the births of other babies, perhaps in our own family. How will the presence of a new baby affect the older members of the family? With encouragement, older children can be enlisted to help out with the new little one as needed. Often, they will be proud and happy to do so.

Some extra effort may be needed to assure those closer in age to the baby that they have not been displaced. It can be helpful to focus on celebrating the new role of an older child as "big brother" or "big sister" with a party or a gift.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Born." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Display a Christmas manger scene this week. Gather around the manger to pray the prayer below. Encourage your child to use the figures to demonstrate Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, and the birth of Jesus.
- Watch the video "Angels announce the news – Let's learn about Christmas 4" (YouTube, 2:37) with your child. This short video recounts the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

Prayer

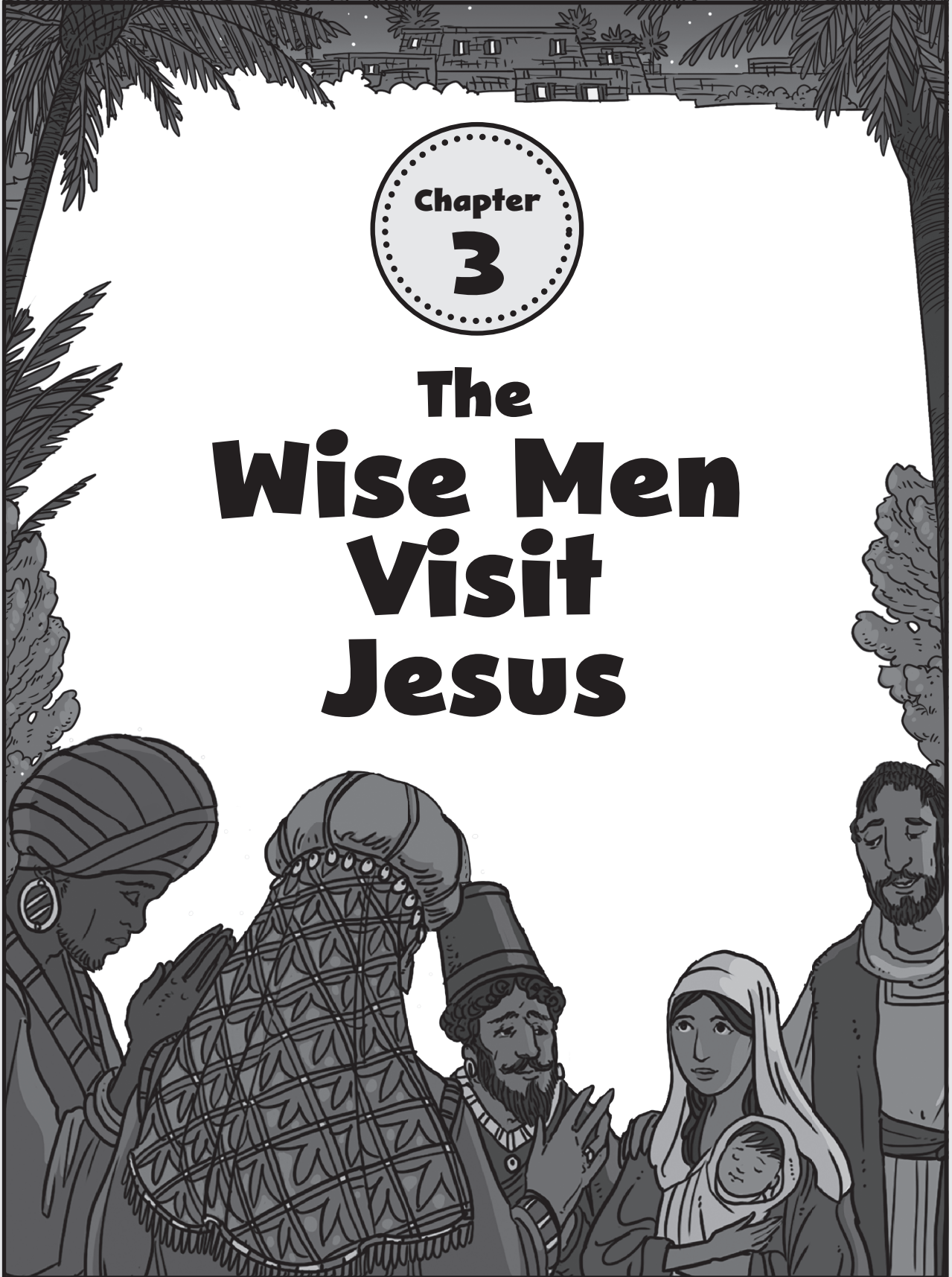
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Loving God, thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to us. Help us to know him better and to follow his teachings. May we celebrate his birth in our hearts today and every day. Amen.

Chapter

3

The Wise Men Visit Jesus



Chapter

3

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 2:9–12

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Wise Men visited Jesus after his birth
- to understand that the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus
- to realize that we can give gifts to Jesus through sharing kindness and love

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

528

Materials Needed

- the chapter 3 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 3 family page, on page 57 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 55–56 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

This lesson recounts the episode in Matthew's Gospel where the Wise Men follow a star to find Jesus. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to "the Wise Men" rather than "the Magi" or "the Three Kings." Of course, if the children know the Wise Men by these other titles, it would be fine to use them. We also do not give the traditional names of the Wise Men or the meaning that tradition has given to each of the gifts. Instead, we concentrate on the concept of giving and receiving the gift of self. The lesson emphasizes that the best gift we can give Jesus and one another is our love and kindness.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer, sung to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:
 - Thank you, God, for giving gifts,
giving gifts, giving gifts.
Thank you, God, for giving gifts.
We thank you every day.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

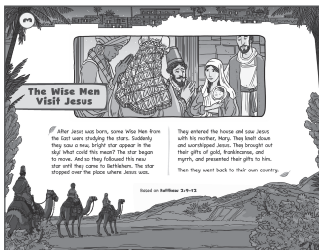
Engage

- Invite the children to think about gifts for a moment. Encourage them to name some occasions that we give gifts to others. Also ask them to share how they feel when they give a gift. (*excited, happy*)
- Remind them that sometimes we also get gifts. Invite them to share how it feels to receive a gift. (*happy, like they’re special, that someone cares about them*)
- Explain that Jesus received some gifts when he was born, and that the children will find out more about this in today’s Bible story.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story.
- Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In the picture, we see a lot of people! This picture is crowded! Who do you see in this picture? (*Mary, Jesus, Joseph, and three men*) Let’s point to each one of them now: Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and one, two, three men!
 - Let’s look at the bottom of the page. What do we see there? (*three men riding camels*)
 - Can you see the ground around the bottom? What does it look like? Does it have a lot of trees and flowers? (*No, it is bare.*)
 - This kind of ground is called a desert. It is hard to travel through the desert because it has very little water. So these three men made a hard journey!
 - Those must be the same three men in the picture at the top of the page. What are those three men doing? (*visiting Jesus*)
 - The story will tell us what gifts the three men brought to Jesus when they visited him. So let’s read the story!

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

The Wise Men Visit Jesus

After Jesus was born, some Wise Men from the East were studying the stars. Suddenly they saw a new, bright star appear in the sky! What could this mean? The star began to move. And so they followed this new star until they came to Bethlehem. The star stopped over the place where Jesus was. They entered the house and saw Jesus with his mother, Mary. They knelt down and worshipped Jesus. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented their gifts to him.

Then they went back to their own country.

(Based on Matthew 2:9–12)



Discover! (25 minutes)

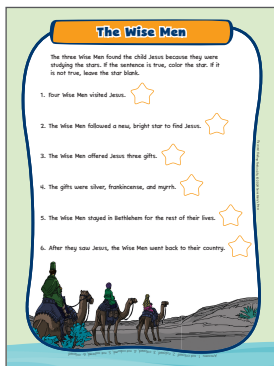
Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by reminding the children that they just heard about some visitors that came to see Jesus. Ask them if they can recall what these visitors were called. (*Wise Men*)
- Explain that *wise* means “very smart.” Tell the children that it also means knowing what is important in life, and what are some good things to do.
- Invite the children to name what the Wise Men saw in the sky and what was so special and important about it. (*It was a special star that moved and showed the Wise Men where Jesus was.*)
- Tell the children that the Wise Men knew the star was special and important, and they knew it must be leading them to a special person—a king—so they brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Explain these gifts with the following words:
 - We know what gold is. Gold is a very precious metal. Some coins used to be made of gold.
 - Frankincense and myrrh are spices that smell very good, and they are also very precious. These were wonderful gifts to give Jesus!
- Explain that when we were born, people gave us gifts too. Ask the children if they know who gave them gifts at their birth and what some of the gifts might have been. (*Gifts likely came from relatives and friends of the family and included things such as blankets, clothing, diapers, toys, etc.*)

- Continue to focus on the gifts that God has given us, using the following as a guide:
 - People give us wonderful gifts. But God gives us gifts too! Think about some gifts God has given you. For example, God gave you arms and legs. He gave you your eyes. What else? (*teeth, tongue, feet, etc.*)
 - What did God give you that helps you to think? (*a brain*)
 - God gave you some other gifts. Let's think about these gifts. Do you have the gift of kindness? (*Yes!*) Do you have the gift of laughter? (*Yes!*) Do you have the gift of love? (*Yes!*) All these are gifts from God.
 - We can also give gifts to God! When we act kindly, we are giving a gift to God. When we laugh and make another person happy, we are giving a gift to God. When we show love to someone, we are giving a gift to God.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 55–56 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



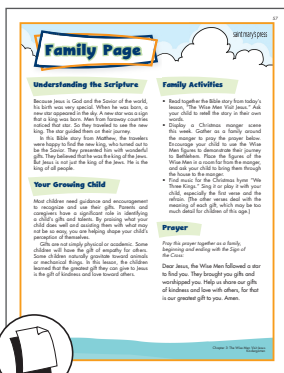
Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who visited Jesus after he was born? (*the Wise Men*)
 - What did the Wise Men bring to Jesus? (*gifts*)
 - What can we bring to Jesus? (*gifts of kindness and love*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear Jesus, thank you for sending the Wise Men to give gifts to your Son, Jesus. Help us share our gifts of kindness and love with others. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a manger set, including the figures of the Wise Men
- a recording of “We Three Kings” and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*

The Journey

- Introduce this activity by explaining that the children will help the Wise Men make their journey to Jesus.
- Choose a volunteer to hold each Wise Man figure. You may also choose volunteers to hold the camels or other figures that are in the manger set.
- Invite the volunteers to carry the figures to a far corner of the room.
- Have the volunteers make their journey across the room to the manger scene. They may carry the figures or have them “walk” across the floor and furniture to reach the manger. You might wish to play some music for the journey, such as a recording of “We Three Kings.”
- Congratulate the Wise Men and others for completing the journey. Invite the children to think about how happy the Wise Men probably were to reach Jesus.
- Direct the children to gather around the manger scene. Explain that you will now do a chant to remember the story of the Wise Men. Invite the children to clap two times after each sentence:
 - We are the Wise Men! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - We made the journey! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - The journey through the desert! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - We found Jesus! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - We gave him presents! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - We are so happy! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - Why are we so happy? *(Clap, clap!)*
 - Because Jesus loves everyone! *(Clap, clap!)*
 - Jesus loves everyone! *(Clap, clap!)*
- Conclude by encouraging the children to clap freely for the Wise Men and the baby Jesus.

Materials Needed

- a baby doll for Mary to hold
- items needed for costumes *(optional)*

The Wise Men: A Short Play

- Introduce this activity by explaining that the children will act out the story of the journey of the Wise Men.
- Choose volunteers to be Joseph, Mary, and the three Wise Men. *(Choose children who have loud voices and who do not mind being the center of attention. The Wise “Men” can be boys or girls.)*

- Take the volunteers aside to give them their lines. Ask them to repeat their lines a few times.

Wise Man 1: I have brought the gift of gold.

Wine Man 2: I have brought the gift of frankincense.

Wise Man 3: I have brought the gift of myrrh.

Mary: Thank you very much for your gifts.

- Arrange an area as a stage, and have the rest of the children gather as the audience.
- Introduce the play as follows:
 - Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to watch an important story. It is the story of the journey of the Wise Men and how they found Jesus.
- Bring Mary and Joseph to the center of the stage.
- Invite the Wise Men to enter. Prompt the first Wise Man to say their line with the others following. You may want to say the lines first and have the actors repeat them after you if they don't recall the words.
- Conclude the play with the following words:
 - Thank you, Mary, Joseph, and the Wise Men *(or name the children)* for a wonderful performance. Take a bow!
- Ask for more volunteers to act out the play again, as time permits.

Materials Needed

- none

Wise Men Song

- Teach the following song to the children, line by line, to the tune of "Three Blind Mice."
- Sing the song several times so that the children will become familiar with the words.
- Add the motions for each line after the words become more familiar, singing slowly at first so the children can follow along.
 - Three wise men, three wise men! *(Hold up three fingers and wave them.)*
 - What did they do? What did they do? *(Hold both hands up in a questioning gesture.)*
 - They followed a star to Bethlehem. *(Point index finger up and wave it slowly.)*
 - They found the family with Jesus then. *(Rock arms as in holding a baby.)*
 - They gave him gifts and they worshipped him. *(Hold arms and hands up in a forward giving gesture and bow heads.)*
 - Three wise men, three wise men! *(Hold up three fingers and wave them.)*

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Because Jesus is God and the Savior of the world, his birth was very special. When he was born, a new star appeared in the sky. A new star was a sign that a king was born. Men from faraway countries noticed that star. So they traveled to see the new king. The star guided them on their journey.

In this Bible story from Matthew, the travelers were happy to find the new king, who turned out to be the Savior. They presented him with wonderful gifts. They believed that he was the king of the Jews. But Jesus is not just the king of the Jews. He is the king of all people.

Your Growing Child

Most children need guidance and encouragement to recognize and use their gifts. Parents and caregivers have a significant role in identifying a child's gifts and talents. By praising what your child does well and assisting them with what may not be so easy, you are helping shape your child's perception of themselves.

Gifts are not simply physical or academic. Some children will have the gift of empathy for others. Some children naturally gravitate toward animals or mechanical things. In this lesson, the children learned that the greatest gift they can give to Jesus is the gift of kindness and love toward others.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "The Wise Men Visit Jesus." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Display a Christmas manger scene this week. Gather as a family around the manger to pray the prayer below. Encourage your child to use the Wise Men figures to demonstrate their journey to Bethlehem. Place the figures of the Wise Men in a room far from the manger, and ask your child to bring them through the house to the manger.
- Find music for the Christmas hymn "We Three Kings." Sing it or play it with your child, especially the first verse and the refrain. (The other verses deal with the meaning of each gift, which may be too much detail for children of this age.)

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, the Wise Men followed a star to find you. They brought you gifts and worshipped you. Help us share our gifts of kindness and love with others, for that is our greatest gift to you. Amen.

Chapter

4

Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary



Chapter

4

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23

Lesson Goals

- to understand that Joseph took care of Jesus and Mary
- to know that Joseph is holy because he listened to God
- to recognize that we can pray for those who must leave their homes in times of emergency

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catechism References

1905–1912

Materials Needed

- the chapter 4 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 4 family page, on page 67 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 65–66 of the catechist guide
- a computer with internet access (*optional*)
- a computer projector (*optional*)

Background Reflection

This lesson is twofold. First, it emphasizes the care and protection that Joseph shows toward Mary and Jesus. In this care and protection, he is fulfilling the vocation to which he was called. Joseph, strong and silent, shows his love in his actions. He listens to the angel (who voices the will of God for him) and obeys. In this obedience, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus join the throng of human families through the centuries who are forced, for various reasons, to become migrants—to move from one area of the world to another—in search of safety, economic stability, or a better life free from war or violence. This chapter introduces Catholic social teaching with these families in mind, as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which states that the common good calls for “alleviating the miseries of refugees . . . and assisting migrants and their families” (1911).



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer:
 - Dear God, today we honor Saint Joseph, who took care of Jesus and Mary. Help us to listen to you, as he did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

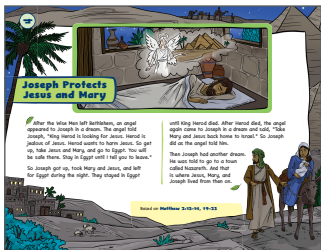
- Ask the group if anyone has ever had to leave their home because of an emergency, like a flood, storm, or because the electricity went out.
- Encourage the children to consider how it feels to leave one's home suddenly. Explain that in an emergency, we sometimes have to leave quickly and without all our belongings. Invite them to share how that would make them feel.
- Share that in today's Bible story, they will learn that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had to leave their home suddenly.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story.
- Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - What do you see at the top of the page? (*A man is sleeping.*) Who else is in the picture? (*an angel*) Explain that the man is Joseph, and he is having a dream.
 - What do you see at the bottom of the page? (*Joseph is leading a donkey. Mary is riding the donkey, and she is holding the baby Jesus.*)
 - Let's look again at the bottom of the page. What more do you see there? (*There is a road and a little village in the distance. There are lights in the windows because people are lighting candles and lanterns inside their houses.*)
 - It looks like Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are going somewhere! They are leaving Bethlehem! But where are they going? Let's read the story and find out!



- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary

After the Wise Men left Bethlehem, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel told Joseph, "King Herod is looking for Jesus. Herod is jealous of Jesus. Herod wants to harm Jesus. So get up, take Jesus and Mary, and go to Egypt. You will be safe there. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to leave."

So Joseph got up, took Mary and Jesus, and left for Egypt during the night. They stayed in Egypt until King Herod died. After Herod died, the angel again came to Joseph in a dream and said, "Take Mary and Jesus back home to Israel." So Joseph did as the angel told him.

Then Joseph had another dream. He was told to go to a town called Nazareth. And that is where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived from then on.

(Based on Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23)



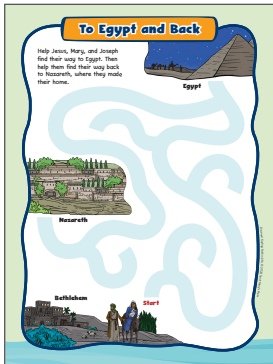
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by asking the following questions:
 - Let's think together about this story. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are leaving Bethlehem and going somewhere. Where are they going first? (*Egypt*)
 - Who told Joseph to take his family to Egypt? (*an angel*)
 - Did Joseph listen to the angel? (*Yes.*) Joseph listened and did the right thing immediately! Joseph cared for Mary and Jesus and did not waste time when God asked him to do something!
 - After some time in Egypt, Joseph had another dream. Where did God ask him to go this time? (*Nazareth*)

- Continue to clarify the details of the story with the children, emphasizing the role of Joseph’s dreams in the decisions he made.
- Explain that we call Joseph “Saint Joseph” because a saint is a holy person, and Joseph was certainly holy. Ask the children if they know what made him a holy person? (*He listened to God and did what God asked him to do.*)
- Tell the children that we can be holy people too. Ask them if they know what we can do to be holy people. (*We can listen to God and do what God asks us to do!*)
- Help the children understand that even today a lot of families have to move to other places because of emergencies and that these people are called migrants.
- Share that a migrant is someone who moves to another place. Explain that migrants often have families, and they travel together as a family. Tell the children that these families are sometimes hungry and thirsty and have often traveled long distances, sometimes entirely on foot.
- Invite the children to stand up, and explain that you will say a prayer now for all people who have had to leave their homes because of an emergency. Continue with the following:
 - We will be praying for all people—people in the north, the south, the east, and the west. So we will face those directions when we pray. Follow my actions and repeat this line after me: “Help them on their journey.”
 - (*Have the children face the north with their hands outstretched.*) “Dear God, we pray for all people who must leave their homes in the north. Help them on their journey.” (*The children repeat this line and then face the south with their hands outstretched.*)
 - “Dear God, we pray for all people who must leave their homes in the south. Help them on their journey.” (*The children repeat this line and then face the east with their hands outstretched.*)
 - “Dear God, we pray for all people who must leave their homes in the east. Help them on their journey.” (*The children repeat this line and then face the west with their hands outstretched.*)
 - “Dear God, we pray for all people who must leave their homes in the west. Help them on their journey.” (*The children repeat this line and then face the front of the room.*)
 - We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Learning Activities



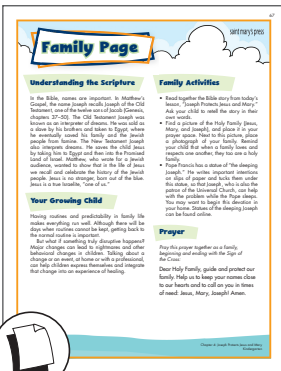
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 65–66 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who took care of Jesus and Mary after Jesus was born? (*Joseph*)
 - In what way was Joseph holy? (*He listened to God and did what God asked him to do.*)
 - How can we help families who must leave their homes in times of emergency? (*We can pray for them.*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Teach the following song line by line, and ask the children to repeat the lyrics after you. If you are unfamiliar with the tune, you can find versions on YouTube, such as “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus | Action Song | Christian Children Song” (1:54).
- Ask the children to sing the entire song from the beginning, once they have memorized the words. Use the gestures if possible:
 - I have decided (*right hand on heart*) to follow Jesus. (*Swing arm to right and look in that direction.*)
 - I have decided to follow Jesus. (*same motions*)
 - I have decided to follow Jesus. (*same motions*)
 - No turning back, no turning back. (*Wag pointer finger of right hand back and forth in a “no, no” gesture.*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- blank paper, one sheet for each child
- crayons
- a picture of the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph together)
- a table, bulletin board, or other display space

Holy Families

- Introduce this activity by explaining that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are called the Holy Family. Tell the children that when we call someone “holy” we mean that they listen to God and do what God asks of them. Share that this is what Jesus, Mary, and Joseph did.
- Point out the picture of the Holy Family in the display space. Explain that this is the most Holy Family.
- Explain that every family can be holy by listening to God and doing what God asks. Tell them that every family does this every day, by going to work or school and helping out at home.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons, and tell the children to draw their family on this paper. Explain that their family is usually everyone who lives in their house.
- Tell them that some family members may not live with them, but they can draw them too. (*Be sensitive to children who may visit a parent on weekends or who spend time after school with grandparents, etc.*)
- Circulate among the children as they work, and label their pictures as “Sam’s Family,” etc. If time permits, you may want to help them label each individual in their drawing (Mom, Dad, etc.).
- Display the pictures in the display space, alongside the picture of the Holy Family. You may want to label the entire display space “Holy Families.”
- Conclude this activity with the following song, sung to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down.” Add verses, “Mary, bless our family” and “Joseph, bless our family,” as time permits.
 - Jesus, bless our family, family, family.
Jesus, bless our family, now and always.
We’re a holy family, family, family.
We’re a holy family, now and always.

Materials Needed

- half-sheets of blank paper, one for each child
- crayons

Traveling Needs

- Introduce this activity by reminding the children that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had to travel in a time of emergency.
- Ask the children what they might need to take with them if they had to travel in a time of emergency. Keep a list on the board or on paper. Elicit “traveling needs,” such as a toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, a washcloth and hand towel, pajamas, a small stuffed toy, shampoo, a comb or hairbrush, a favorite book to read.

- Explain that you will write a letter or email to their parents or caregivers, asking that some of these travel items be brought to your next gathering. Tell the children that these items will be given to a local homeless shelter, family shelter, or migrant center.
- Congratulate the children for thinking of so many good things a traveling family might need. Distribute the half-sheets of paper and the crayons. Show the children how to fold the paper in half to make a card.
- Explain that they will each make a card for the traveling families who will receive their gifts.
- Tell the children to draw anything they want on the front of the card. (*You might suggest flowers, trees, a lake, etc.*) On the inside of the card, ask the children to write: "From" and write their first name. (*If this is not possible for them, you may help them with this.*)
- Gather the cards and save them. In the next session, collect the donations and bring them along with the cards to an appropriate destination.

Materials Needed

- large balloons or balls

The Path of the Holy Family

- Arrange the children in pairs on one side of the gathering space. Give each pair a ball or an inflated balloon.
- Designate one wall to be Egypt and another wall to be Nazareth. Show the children which wall is Egypt and which wall is Nazareth.
- Explain to them that they are going to pretend that they are also journeying to Egypt and Nazareth, just like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph did. Tell them that they will take a small child, which is what the balloon or ball represents.
- Create a simple obstacle course, placing chairs in the path or other obstacles on the floor that the children should not step on.
- Invite the pairs to link arms and for one child to hold the balloon or ball. To make it more difficult, have the children face each other and embrace in a hug while holding the balloon or ball between them.
- Explain that their task is to get to the wall designated Egypt without dropping the balloon or ball and without touching any of the obstacles on the way. Assure them that this isn't a race, so they should walk slowly and carefully to protect the "child." Share that once they reach "Egypt," they should then move on to "Nazareth," which will be the end of their journey.
- Choose a pair to begin. Determine if your space allows only one pair to travel the path at a time or if you can pace the pairs one after another so that multiple pairs travel different parts of the path simultaneously.
- Congratulate the children on completing the journey. Remind them that the Holy Family was moving to avoid danger and that Joseph was protecting Jesus and Mary.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In the Bible, names are important. In Matthew's Gospel, the name Joseph recalls Joseph of the Old Testament, one of the twelve sons of Jacob (Genesis, chapters 37–50). The Old Testament Joseph was known as an interpreter of dreams. He was sold as a slave by his brothers and taken to Egypt, where he eventually saved his family and the Jewish people from famine. The New Testament Joseph also interprets dreams. He saves the child Jesus by taking him to Egypt and then into the Promised Land of Israel. Matthew, who wrote for a Jewish audience, wanted to show that in the life of Jesus we recall and celebrate the history of the Jewish people. Jesus is no stranger, born out of the blue. Jesus is a true Israelite, "one of us."

Your Growing Child

Having routines and predictability in family life makes everything run well. Although there will be days when routines cannot be kept, getting back to the normal routine is important.

But what if something truly disruptive happens? Major changes can lead to nightmares and other behavioral changes in children. Talking about a change or an event, at home or with a professional, can help children express themselves and integrate that change into an experience of healing.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Find a picture of the Holy Family (Jesus, Mary, and Joseph), and place it in your prayer space. Next to this picture, place a photograph of your family. Remind your child that when a family loves and respects one another, they too are a holy family.
- Pope Francis has a statue of "the sleeping Joseph." He writes important intentions on slips of paper and tucks them under this statue, so that Joseph, who is also the patron of the Universal Church, can help with the problem while the Pope sleeps. You may want to begin this devotion in your home. Statues of the sleeping Joseph can be found online.

Prayer

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

Dear Holy Family, guide and protect our family. Help us to keep your names close to our hearts and to call on you in times of need: Jesus, Mary, Joseph! Amen.

Chapter

5

Jesus Is Lost and Found




 Chapter
5

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 2:41–52

Lesson Goals

- to understand that Jesus was lost but was found with the teachers
- to realize that Jesus obeyed Joseph and Mary after he was found
- to recognize that we can pray anywhere

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

2738–2745

Materials Needed

- the chapter 5 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 5 family page, on page 76 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 74–75 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Prayer is our way of listening to God and being helped and strengthened to obediently follow his will in our lives. This lesson introduces the Temple as a place of prayer, so the importance of prayer—at church and at home—is noted. The Bible story concludes with the obedience of Jesus toward Mary and Joseph, so obedience to parents and other caregivers is also discussed. The children are reminded that although it is not always easy to listen and obey, it is necessary because parents are looking out for the good of their children.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in singing this prayer to the tune of "Happy Birthday":
 - We gather to pray.
We gather to pray.
We thank you and praise you.
We gather to pray.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

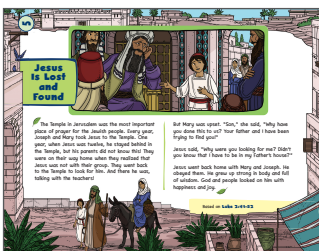
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever lost something that belonged to them. Invite them to share examples. Give examples of things you lose every so often, such as keys, glasses, etc.
- Invite them to share how they feel when they find something they have lost.
- Ask the children if they have ever been lost before and how it felt when they were found.
- Explain that in today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph lost Jesus, but they found him again.
- Invite the group to listen to the story to find out what happened.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Can you find Jesus in this picture? Put your finger on Jesus.
 - What is Jesus doing? (*talking to the men*)
 - How many men are talking with Jesus? (*five*)
 - The fifth man is the one we see on the right side, in the front. We see only his hat!
 - Where are Mary and Joseph? (*in the doorway*)
 - Now look at the bottom of the page. Where are Mary and Joseph? (*Mary is riding the donkey. Joseph and Jesus are walking together.*)
 - This bottom picture shows the end of the story. It looks like everything turned out well.

- Let's read the story to find out how Jesus was lost and found again!
- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the pictures as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Lost and Found

The Temple in Jerusalem was the most important place of prayer for the Jewish people. Every year, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Temple. One year, when Jesus was twelve, he stayed behind in the Temple, but his parents did not know this! They were on their way home when they realized that Jesus was not with their group. They went back to the Temple to look for him. And there he was, talking with the teachers!

But Mary was upset. "Son," she said, "Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been trying to find you!"

Jesus said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I have to be in my Father's house?"

Jesus went back home with Mary and Joseph. He obeyed them. He grew up strong in body and full of wisdom. God and people looked on him with happiness and joy.

(Based on Luke 2:41–52)



Discover! (25 minutes)

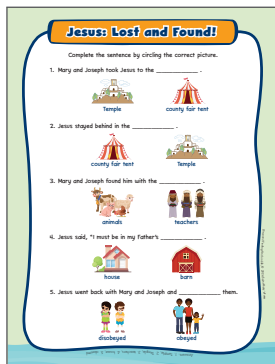
Core Teaching

- Ask the children to recall some of the points of the Bible story, such as these:
 - where Jesus got lost (*in the Temple*)
 - why he was in the Temple (*Mary and Joseph brought him there.*)
 - who he was talking to in the Temple (*the teachers*)
- Explain that the Temple was a place of prayer and study. Tell the children that Jesus was talking to the teachers who studied God's Word.
- Invite the children to share what they think praying is. (*Accept responses.*) Explain that praying is talking and listening to God.

- Continue with some of the following discussion points:
 - Where do we pray? (*in church, in school, at home*)
 - We can pray in any of those places. We can talk and listen to God any time and anywhere! When we ask for God's help, God will help us do what is right and good.
 - Jesus was doing something good in the Temple. He was talking with the teachers about God's Word. But he did not tell Mary and Joseph that he wanted to stay longer in the Temple!
 - What did Jesus tell Mary and Joseph when they found him? (*He said he had to be in his Father's house.*)
 - When he said "his Father's house," what was Jesus talking about? (*God's house, the Temple*)
 - What happened when Mary and Joseph took Jesus home? (*He obeyed them from then on.*)
 - Why is it important to do what our parents and other caregivers ask? (*Accept responses.*)
 - Is it always easy to do what our parents and caregivers ask? (*No, it is not always easy!*)
- Remind the children that parents and caregivers want what is best for children. Explain that they want to make sure their children are safe and understand right from wrong, so it is important for children to do what their parents and caregivers ask.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 74–75 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

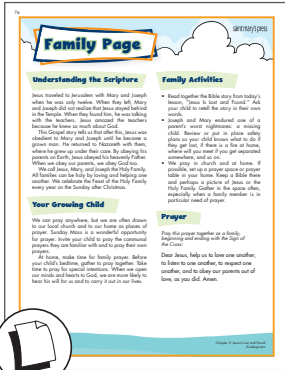




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus? (*in the Temple, with the teachers*)
 - What did Jesus do after he was found in the Temple? (*obeyed Mary and Joseph from then on*)
 - Where do we pray to God? (*anywhere*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Teach and then lead the children in singing, line by line, the first verse of "Amazing Grace." (*Note the change of wording in the second line.*)
 - Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a child like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Visiting the Church

- Make plans ahead of time to visit your parish church.
- Explain to the children as you are entering the church that it is God's house on Earth and that we bless ourselves with holy water when we enter. Demonstrate this, and help each child bless themselves with holy water.
- Remind them that we are quiet in church so that we and others can pray.
- Take the children to significant statues or icons, particularly those of Mary and Joseph. You may also want to point out the patron of your parish, if that patron has a statue or a dedicated window.
- Point out architectural details that might interest the children (arches, pillars, chandeliers, rose window, etc.). Some church floors have mosaics or other patterns. Some churches have murals on the walls or ceiling.
- Finish your visit by showing the children how to genuflect. Then invite them to genuflect and enter a pew to kneel and pray quietly for a few moments. Suggest a simple prayer, such as, "Hello, dear God. I am happy to be in your house." Remind them to genuflect as they leave the pew.
- Conclude the activity in your classroom by asking the children what they remember about their visit to the church.

Materials Needed

- none

Gospel Chant

- Use this method to chant today's Gospel or any other Scripture passage or Bible story.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, with enthusiasm. You may want to arrange the children into two groups and turn from one group to another as you say the phrase so that the groups take turns repeating the phrase.
 - Mary and Joseph / went to the Temple! / They took Jesus / along with them!
 - Mary and Joseph / left the Temple. / But Jesus was / left behind!
 - Mary said to Joseph, / "Where is Jesus?" / Joseph said, / "Let's go back!"
 - They found Jesus / talking to the teachers. / Mary and Joseph / were amazed!
 - Mary said, / "Jesus, where were you? / Your father and I / were very upset!"
 - So Jesus went / back with his parents/ and listened to them / from that day on.
 - We will listen / to our parents / and teachers too / from this day on!
 - Amen, Amen!

Materials Needed

- a small picture of Jesus

Where Is Jesus?

- Gather the children in a circle and choose one child to be “it.”
- Ask the child selected to be “it” to stand in the center of the circle and close their eyes.
- Show the children the picture of Jesus, and have them pass the picture behind their backs, one to another, until you say “Stop.” The picture will then stay with the child who has it at that point.
- Ask the child who is “it” to open their eyes. Tell the child to guess who has the picture of Jesus by guessing names (e.g., “Does Billy have Jesus?”)
- When the picture of Jesus is found, that person becomes “it” and goes to the center of the circle. Play as many rounds as time allows.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Jesus traveled to Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph when he was only twelve. When they left, Mary and Joseph did not realize that Jesus stayed behind in the Temple. When they found him, he was talking with the teachers. Jesus amazed the teachers because he knew so much about God.

This Gospel story tells us that after this, Jesus was obedient to Mary and Joseph until he became a grown man. He returned to Nazareth with them, where he grew up under their care. By obeying his parents on Earth, Jesus obeyed his heavenly Father. When we obey our parents, we obey God too.

We call Jesus, Mary, and Joseph the Holy Family. All families can be holy by loving and helping one another. We celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family every year on the Sunday after Christmas.

Your Growing Child

We can pray anywhere, but we are often drawn to our local church and to our home as places of prayer. Sunday Mass is a wonderful opportunity for prayer. Invite your child to pray the communal prayers they are familiar with and to pray their own prayers.

At home, make time for family prayer. Before your child's bedtime, gather to pray together. Take time to pray for special intentions. When we open our minds and hearts to God, we are more likely to hear his will for us and to carry it out in our lives.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Lost and Found." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Joseph and Mary endured one of a parent's worst nightmares: a missing child. Review or put in place safety plans so your child knows what to do if they get lost, if there is a fire at home, where will you meet if you get separated somewhere, and so on.
- We pray in church and at home. If possible, set up a prayer space or prayer table in your home. Keep a Bible there and perhaps a picture of Jesus or the Holy Family. Gather in the space often, especially when a family member is in particular need of prayer.

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, help us to love one another, to listen to one another, to respect one another, and to obey our parents out of love, as you did. Amen.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 2

Jesus Grows Up

Chapter 6

John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus 78

Chapter 7

Jesus Is Baptized 88

Chapter 8

Jesus Is a Great Leader 96

Chapter 9

Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us 106

Chapter 10

Jesus Welcomes Children 116

Chapter

6

John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus



Chapter

6

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 1:4–8

Lesson Goals

- to learn that John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus
- to understand that John the Baptist baptized in a river, but we are baptized in a church
- to describe ways we can get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

522–524

Materials Needed

- the chapter 6 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 6 family page, on page 87 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 84–85 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this lesson, the children hear how John the Baptist began preaching about Jesus and his mission and baptizing those who committed to turn away from sin. John's appearance was curious, and his message bold and new. He told people to confess their sins and be baptized, promising God's forgiveness. He emphasized that he was baptizing with water, but that the one to come after him would baptize with the Holy Spirit. We can prepare our hearts and minds for Jesus every day through our choice of thoughts, words, and actions, and we can seek forgiveness when we fail to live up to our baptismal promises.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Share that today's opening prayer will start with a song about how much we love Jesus. Teach the following words to the children to the tune of "Thank You, Lord (for Giving Us Life)." If you are unfamiliar with this song, you can find it online, make up your own tune, or use it as a chant.
 - We love you, Jesus, yes we do.
We love you, Jesus, yes we do.
We love you, Jesus, yes we do.
We love you every day.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Thank you, God, for the gift of your Son, Jesus. We love learning more and more about him. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

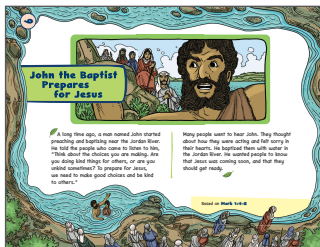
- Introduce the story by asking the children if they have ever had guests come to their house.
- Invite them to share what their family did to get ready for the guests to arrive, such as clean the house, prepare food, and put on special clothes.
- Tell the children that in the last few Bible stories, they learned about Jesus as a child. Explain that today they will start to learn more about the grown-up Jesus.
- Share that today they will hear a story about a person who helped others get ready for Jesus.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Let's look at the picture of the man in the river. That is John the Baptist. What do you think he is doing? (*scooping water over the head of the woman standing next to him; baptizing the woman*)
 - Now look at the bottom of the page. Trace the river all the way around the page.



- John is baptizing people with water. Did you know that many of you were baptized as babies? You were probably so small that you don't remember. But you were likely baptized in a church and not in a river.
- Baptism is a special moment that prepares our hearts and makes us members of the Church.
- What do you think all the other people on the bottom of the page are doing? (*watching, listening, waiting their turn*)
- Explain that you will now read the story, and they will find out what John the Baptist said about getting their hearts and minds ready for Jesus.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus

A long time ago, a man named John started preaching and baptizing near the Jordan River. He told the people who came to listen to him, "Think about the choices you are making. Are you doing kind things for others, or are you unkind sometimes? To prepare for Jesus, we need to make good choices and be kind to others."

Many people went to hear John. They thought about how they were acting and felt sorry in their hearts. He baptized them with water in the Jordan River. He wanted people to know that Jesus was coming soon, and they should get ready.

(Based on Mark 1:4–8)



Discover! (25 minutes)

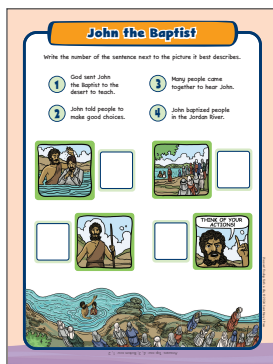
Core Teaching

- Ask the children to share who was talking in this story and what he was saying about Jesus. (*John the Baptist was speaking. He was telling people that they should get ready because Jesus was coming.*)
- Remind the children that John the Baptist told people that in order to prepare for Jesus, they should make good choices, be kind to others, and say they're sorry if they have made bad choices.

- Tell the children that we can get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus every day by doing these things as well. Share that we can try our best to make good choices, be kind to others, and say we're sorry when we make bad choices.
- Explain that you will ask some questions and that the children should exclaim, "I'm ready!" Invite them to practice saying, "I'm ready!"
- Ask the following questions, prompting the children to respond after each one:
 - Are you ready to make good choices? (*I'm ready!*)
 - Are you ready to be kind to others? (*I'm ready!*)
 - Are you ready to say you're sorry when you make bad choices? (*I'm ready!*)
 - Are you ready for Jesus? (*I'm ready!*)
- Tell the children that they will now learn a song to help them remember today's Bible story. Sing the following words to the tune of "Three Blind Mice," taking time and going slowly so the children can learn:
 - Prepare the way. Prepare the way.
What do we do? What do we do?
We make good choices and know we're blessed.
We show our kindness to all the rest.
We say we're sorry when not our best.
Prepare the way.
- Congratulate the children for doing a good job. Affirm that now they know the best ways to get their hearts and minds ready for Jesus.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 84–85 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

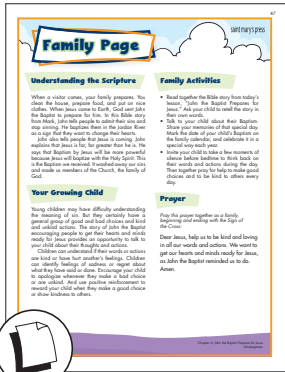




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did John the Baptist say was coming? (*Jesus*)
 - John baptized in a river, but where are we baptized today? (*in a church*)
 - What are some ways we can we get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus? (*make good choices, be kind to others, say we're sorry if we make bad choices*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer, inviting the children to repeat each line after you:
 - Dear God,
Help us to be kind and helpful.
Help us to be loving people.
Help us to get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- plastic eggs, one for each child
- slips of paper, one for each child
- affirmation stickers or star stickers, one for each child

Egg Hunt

- Prepare for this activity by writing the following questions on slips of paper. Place one slip of paper into each plastic egg along with a sticker. Hide the eggs around the classroom, keeping track of where they are. You may need to add or subtract questions according to the number of children in your group:
 - Have I prayed every day?
 - Have I been a good listener to my parents?
 - Have I followed the directions of my teacher?
 - Have I used kind words?
 - Have I helped someone this week?
 - Have I told the truth?
 - Have I returned things I borrowed?
 - Have I been kind to my friends?
 - Have I been kind to my family?
 - Have I been helpful?
 - Have I done my schoolwork?
 - Have I avoided complaining?
 - Have I been honest?
- Explain to the children that they will go on an egg hunt today, looking for eggs hidden around the room. Tell them that in this egg hunt, as soon as they find one egg, they should come to the front of the room, sit in a circle, and wait for the other children to find an egg before opening their egg.
- Ask them how many eggs they are supposed to find, and invite them to hold up that number of fingers. (*Make sure they hold up one finger.*)
- Start the hunt by counting down, and move around the room, helping the children find eggs. Encourage those who have found an egg to go to the front of the room and form a circle.
- Invite the children to open their eggs once everyone is sitting in the circle, and to notice the slip of paper and the sticker.
- Instruct them to come to you one at a time so you can read their slip of paper to them. (*Encourage the children to read their slip of paper themselves if they are able.*)
- Tell them that the questions on the slips of paper give us something to think about to help us get ready for Jesus.
- Read aloud all the questions on the slips of paper, and then remind the children that thinking about the answers to these questions can help us to be the best person we can be and to get ready for Jesus by being more like him.
- Invite the children to put their stickers on their shirts to show their families that they are living like Jesus wants them to. Encourage them to keep their question and to think about it each night before they go to bed. Tell them that when they pray, they can ask for help to be like Jesus.

Materials Needed

- toilet paper tubes or paper towel tubes, one for each child
 - wax paper cut into squares, one for each child
 - rubber bands, one for each child
 - markers, stickers, and other decorating materials
 - a sample of the craft for the class to view
- Remind the children of the Bible story about John the Baptist and how he told the people gathered at the Jordan River that Jesus was coming. Explain that he was trying to get people's attention so they could get ready for Jesus.
 - Show the children your sample kazoo, and make a sound in it like a trumpet. Tell them that John the Baptist didn't get people's attention this way, but that they will make a kazoo today to remind themselves to pay attention and to prepare for Jesus.
 - Hand out the cardboard tubes, markers, stickers, and anything else the children can use for decoration. Tell them that they can decorate their kazoo in any way they want, but that they have to be careful not to flatten it so it will work.
 - Distribute a square of wax paper and a rubber band to each child and demonstrate how to attach the rubber band over the wax paper on one end of the tube to keep it from slipping off. Help the children as needed.
 - When the children have finished, make the following comments:
 - Let's see if we can use our kazoos! Go ahead and talk into the open end of the kazoo. You also might want to hum or make a sound like a trumpet.
 - Now we're all going to make noise together and then say, "Let's get ready for Jesus."
 - Count down from three to one and encourage the children to make a noise with their kazoo and then say together, "Let's get ready for Jesus!"

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout "John the Baptist Lacing Card," on page 86 of the catechist guide, one for each child
 - a pair of scissors
 - glue
 - cardstock or thin cardboard, one sheet for each child
 - a sample of the craft for the class to view
 - hole punches, one for each child or enough to be shared
 - pieces of ribbon, yarn, or shoelaces (at least 31" long), one for each child
- Prepare for this activity by cutting out the pictures of John the Baptist from the handout and gluing them to cardstock or thin sheets of cardboard.
 - Introduce the activity by telling the children that you will give each of them a picture of John the Baptist and a hole punch. Explain that they will use their hole punch where they see the circles around the edges of the picture. (*Model punching holes all around the picture on the sample.*)
 - Distribute the pictures of John the Baptist and hole punches. Give the children a few minutes to try to hole punch around their pictures. You may need to walk around and help them if they are struggling to use the hole punches.
 - Give each child a piece of ribbon, yarn, or a shoelace. Invite them to start anywhere on the picture, and lace the ribbon through the holes, around the entire picture.
 - Tie a knot at one end of the ribbon, yarn, or shoelace for each child so it doesn't pull out of the holes.
 - Encourage the children to take the picture home and to put it somewhere they will see it every day.
 - Tell them that when they see it, they can think about how John the Baptist told the people to be kind and loving and to get ready for Jesus. Explain that they can think of a way to be kind or loving each day.

Jesus Is Coming!

Who Is John the Baptist?

John the Baptist Lacing Card

Cut out the picture below. Use a hole punch to make holes around the picture. Then lace a ribbon, string, or shoelace through the holes.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

When a visitor comes, your family prepares. You clean the house, prepare food, and put on nice clothes. When Jesus came to Earth, God sent John the Baptist to prepare for him. In this Bible story from Mark, John tells people to admit their sins and stop sinning. He baptizes them in the Jordan River as a sign that they want to change their hearts.

John also tells people that Jesus is coming. John explains that Jesus is far, far greater than he is. He says that Baptism by Jesus will be more powerful because Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. This is the Baptism we received. It washed away our sins and made us members of the Church, the family of God.

Your Growing Child

Young children may have difficulty understanding the meaning of sin. But they certainly have a general grasp of good and bad choices and kind and unkind actions. The story of John the Baptist encouraging people to get their hearts and minds ready for Jesus provides an opportunity to talk to your child about their thoughts and actions.

Children can understand if their words or actions are kind or have hurt another's feelings. Children can identify feelings of sadness or regret about what they have said or done. Encourage your child to apologize whenever they make a bad choice or are unkind. And use positive reinforcement to reward your child when they make a good choice or show kindness to others.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Talk to your child about their Baptism. Share your memories of that special day. Mark the date of your child's Baptism on the family calendar, and celebrate it in a special way each year.
- Invite your child to take a few moments of silence before bedtime to think back on their words and actions during the day. Then together pray for help to make good choices and to be kind to others every day.

Prayer

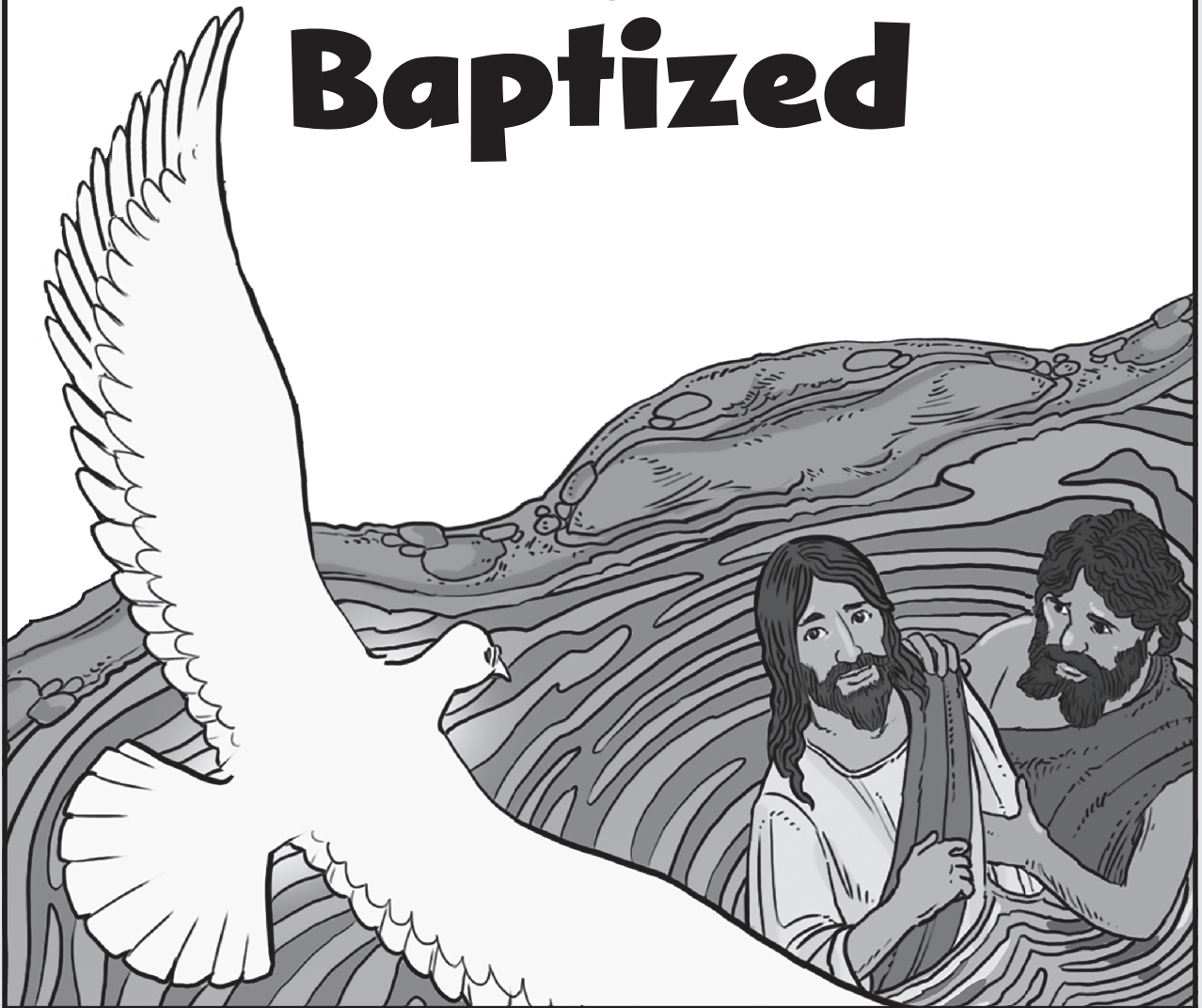
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Dear Jesus, help us to be kind and loving in all our words and actions. We want to get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus, as John the Baptist reminded us to do. Amen.

Chapter

7

Jesus Is Baptized



Chapter

7

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 3:13–17

Lesson Goals

- to understand that Jesus was baptized to obey God and to show his love for God
- to know that when we are baptized, we are welcomed into God's family, the Church
- to recognize that Baptism is a reason for celebration

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

535–537, 694, 1131, 1210–1216, 1224

Materials Needed

- the chapter 7 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 7 family page, on page 95 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 93–94 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this lesson, the children learn about Jesus asking John the Baptist to baptize him. Jesus was free of all sin, so he didn't need to show sorrow for sin. By being baptized, Jesus shows us that he is with us, even though we are sinners. Young children may not yet understand concepts such as sin or the appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove. But they can understand the difference between right and wrong. Focus on the essentials of this Bible story—Jesus asked to be baptized and was following what God wanted him to do. Baptism is a reason to celebrate.

✠ Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

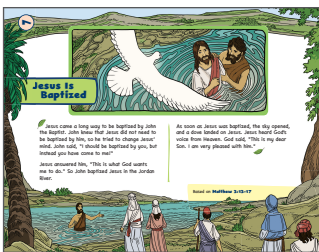
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the following short prayer:
 - God our Father, thank you for the gift of our Church family. We are so happy to be surrounded by others who want to live as you want us to. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever seen a Baptism. Invite them to share what they've seen.
- Explain that usually when a baby is baptized, the celebration occurs during a Mass in front of all the people gathered. Tell them that everyone present takes part in the Baptism by welcoming the child into the Church. Explain that adults can be baptized as well.
- Mention that when we are baptized, we are welcomed into the Church, which is God's family.
- Tell the children that in today's Bible story, they will hear about Jesus' Baptism!

✠ Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Why do you think John and Jesus are in the Jordan River? (*John is going to baptize Jesus.*)
 - What else do you see in the picture? (*a bird; a dove*)
- Invite the children to look at the image at the bottom of the page. Encourage them to share what they see there. (*John the Baptist in the water, people standing by the edge of the water, a palm tree, rocks*)
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Baptized

Jesus came a long way to be baptized by John the Baptist. John knew that Jesus did not need to be baptized by him, so he tried to change Jesus' mind. John said, "I should be baptized by you, but instead you have come to me!"

Jesus answered him, "This is what God wants me to do." So John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, the sky opened, and a dove landed on Jesus. Jesus heard God's voice from Heaven. God said, "This is my dear Son. I am very pleased with him."

(Based on Matthew 3:13–17)



Discover! (25 minutes)

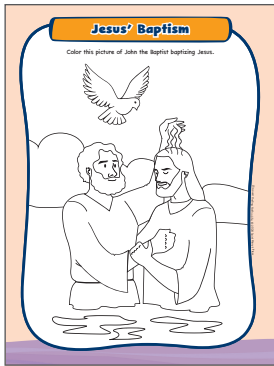
Core Teaching

- Invite the children to recall the Bible story to the best of their ability. Make sure they mention the following key points:
 - Jesus came to John the Baptist looking to be baptized.
 - John thought that he should be the one being baptized by Jesus.
 - Jesus said he was doing what God wanted him to do.
 - After Jesus was baptized, a dove landed on him.
 - God said, "This is my dear Son. I am very pleased with him."
- Remind the children that in the Bible story from last time, John the Baptist was telling people that Jesus would be coming soon and to prepare themselves. Emphasize that today we heard that Jesus did come, and he wanted to be baptized by John.
- Tell them that Jesus came a long way to find John the Baptist, and that by being baptized, Jesus showed that he was obeying God and being a loving son.
- Share that we are called to be obedient and loving as well. Ask them to share who we should be obedient to. (*God, parents, teachers, adults, and so on*)
- Explain that when a person is baptized in our Church today, the priest or deacon says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father [pours water], and of the Son [pours water], and of the Holy Spirit [pours water]" (*The Order of Baptism of Children, 60*).

- Tell the children that everyone in the Church celebrates by welcoming their newest member. Emphasize that Baptism is a celebration.
- Continue with the following comments, focusing on celebration:
 - I want each of you to think of something you do when you celebrate.
 - We're going to do a little chant, and I will call out one of your names.
 - When I call your name, you can share one thing you do to celebrate.
- Encourage the children to clap along and join in the following chant together as they learn the words:
 - Hey! Hey! Let's celebrate. Let's celebrate together!
 - Hey! Hey! Let's celebrate. Let's celebrate with [name]!
- Invite the child whose name you called to share one thing they do to celebrate. Help them with an answer if they can't think of something. Continue by using the chant again and calling out a different name. Repeat as time allows.
- Affirm the children for all the different ways they celebrate, and remind them that Baptism is a good reason to celebrate.

Learning Activities

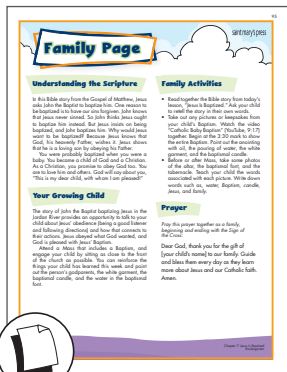
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 93–94 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Why was Jesus baptized? (*to show that he listened to, obeyed, and loved God*)
 - What are we welcomed into when we are baptized? (*God's family, the Church*)
 - Is Baptism a reason to celebrate? (*yes*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer, inviting the children to repeat each line after you:
 - Water, water, clear and bright,
washes clean and makes things right.
Water poured to set us free,
makes us one, God's family.
- Then pray this short prayer:
 - Thank you, God, for the gift of Baptism. We pray for all those in the Church and all those yet to become part of the Church. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a board or sheet of newsprint
- cardstock, one sheet for each child
- finger paint
- small paper plates, one for each child
- crayons
- cleansing wipes
- a sample of the craft for the children to view

Thanking Godparents

- Introduce the activity by telling the children that at Baptism, godparents are chosen to help us learn more about Jesus and how to live as a Catholic.
- Tell them that today they will make a card for someone who helps them learn more about Jesus. Explain that this could be one of their godparents or, if they have not yet been baptized, one of their family members.
- Write this short note on the board or on newsprint where the children can easily see it to copy from: Dear [leave a blank], Thank you for helping me learn about Jesus!
- Distribute a sheet of cardstock, a paper plate with a small amount of finger paint on it, and a crayon to each child, and show them your example. Tell them to fold the cardstock in half. Then invite them to use a crayon to copy the message on their paper. Encourage them to do their best, and explain that you will be walking around to help them.
- Explain that they will then paint a heart with their fingers. Tell them that they can dip a finger into the paint and then press their finger on the paper to make the shape of a heart. (Demonstrate this for the children.)
- When they are done painting, distribute wipes for the children to wipe the paint off their hands.
- Congratulate the children for their work. Explain that they can take their cards home and ask a family member to help them write in a godparent's name or another person's name and then deliver the note to the person.
- Tell the children that they can make another card at home if they want to thank another godparent or family member.

Materials Needed

- an easel with a large sheet of paper
- markers
- sticky dots or stickers

We Need Water

- Set up an easel with a large sheet of paper. Invite the children to help you think of some ways that we use water. Give the example of brushing our teeth, and then encourage other responses. (*drinking water, bathing or showering, swimming, washing dishes, washing hands, watering plants, and more*)
- Write their responses on the paper. Hand out multiple sticky dots or stickers to each child when they are done brainstorming.
- Explain that when you call each child's name, they will come up and put a sticky dot or sticker beside some of the ways they have used water this past week.
- Read aloud the list of ways to use water. Speak slowly and clearly, pointing to the words on the paper as you read them. Then call the children up one at a time to put their sticky dots next to any way they have used water this past week. (*You may need to reread the list each time a child comes forward to help them.*)
- Tell the children that you will now count together the number of sticky dots next to each use of water. Write the numeral next to the sticky dots, or if you have time, invite volunteers to come up and write the numerals.
- Conclude by sharing that water is necessary for life. It helps plants, animals, and humans live.
- Explain that just like water is needed for living, the water of Baptism is needed to help us belong to the Church, God's family. Tell them that the water of Baptism gives us life as followers of Jesus.
- Encourage the children to have someone in their family take them to see the baptismal font in their church.

Materials Needed

- a snack (check for any allergies the children may have)
- plates and napkins as needed
- celebration music and appropriate equipment for playing it (*optional*)

A Baptismal Celebration

- Emphasize to the children that Baptism is an event worth celebrating.
- Ask the children to share what kinds of food their family typically has at celebrations and who is usually invited to these celebrations.
- Invite them to share about any music played or decorations used at family celebrations. Affirm the children for sharing, and tell them that these celebrations sound like fun.
- Explain that today they will have a quick snack to celebrate everyone who has been baptized and everyone who is going to be baptized.
- Distribute the snack, and invite the children to enjoy it, playing celebration music if available. Encourage them to think of everyone around the world who has been baptized and those yet to be baptized. Explain that Baptism is a wonderful reason to celebrate.
- Encourage the children to ask about their Baptism when they go home. Explain that if they know their baptismal date and the baptismal date of other family members, they can celebrate these dates each year.
- Be mindful that some children might not be baptized. Assure them they can still celebrate the Baptism of others and may look forward to celebrating their own one day.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus asks John the Baptist to baptize him. One reason to be baptized is to have our sins forgiven. John knows that Jesus never sinned. So John thinks Jesus ought to baptize him instead. But Jesus insists on being baptized, and John baptizes him. Why would Jesus want to be baptized? Because Jesus knows that God, his heavenly Father, wishes it. Jesus shows that he is a loving son by obeying his Father.

You were probably baptized when you were a baby. You became a child of God and a Christian. As a Christian, you promise to obey God too. You are to love him and others. God will say about you, "This is my dear child, with whom I am pleased!"

Your Growing Child

The story of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River provides an opportunity to talk to your child about Jesus' obedience (being a good listener and following directions) and how that connects to their actions. Jesus obeyed what God wanted, and God is pleased with Jesus' Baptism.

Attend a Mass that includes a Baptism, and engage your child by sitting as close to the front of the church as possible. You can reinforce the things your child has learned this week and point out the person's godparents, the white garment, the baptismal candle, and the water in the baptismal font.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Baptized." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Take out any pictures or keepsakes from your child's Baptism. Watch the video "Catholic Baby Baptism" (YouTube, 9:17) together. Begin at the 3:30 mark to show the entire Baptism. Point out the anointing with oil, the pouring of water, the white garment, and the baptismal candle.
- Before or after Mass, take some photos of the altar, the baptismal font, and the tabernacle. Teach your child the words associated with each picture. Write down words such as, *water, Baptism, candle, Jesus, and family.*

Prayer

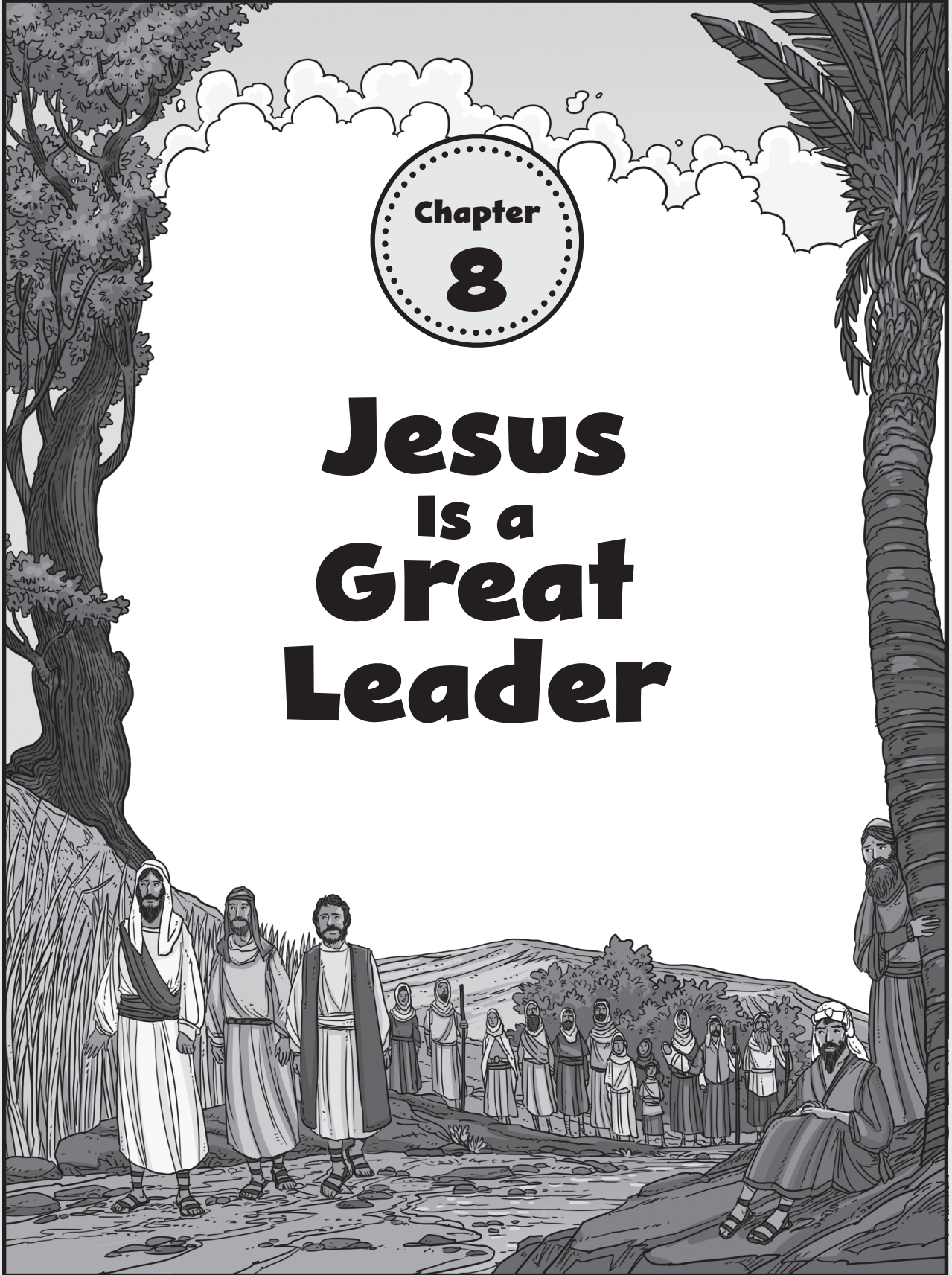
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Dear God, thank you for the gift of [your child's name] to our family. Guide and bless them every day as they learn more about Jesus and our Catholic faith. Amen.

Chapter

8

Jesus Is a Great Leader



Chapter

8

Lesson at a Glance

Chapter 8

Scripture Focus

John 1:35–41

Lesson Goals

- to discover that John the Baptist's followers were looking for a great leader
- to understand that we are followers of Jesus
- to learn that curiosity is a gift that helps us as followers of Jesus

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

858–860, 2600

Materials Needed

- the chapter 8 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 8 family page, on page 105 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- a Bible and a cross, displayed somewhere in the room
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 102–103 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this Bible story, John the Baptist was with two of his disciples when Jesus passed by. The disciples knew Jesus was a teacher, but John called him the Lamb of God. John's two disciples were curious. They left John and started walking after Jesus. He invited them to come to his house. After talking to Jesus, the two men became his followers. They tried to be like him and to do his work. These disciples of John the Baptist were seeking, searching, and looking for the Messiah. They were open to John's message, and they were ready to open their hearts and believe that Jesus was the Holy One. This Bible story can be a springboard for getting in touch with the searching, seeking, and curiosity of young children.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer, inviting the children to repeat after you until they learn the whole prayer:
 - Skip and hop, skip and hop, following the way,
we want to follow Jesus, who brightens up our day.
Help us be kind and use our hearts of love.
We want to follow Jesus, with help from God above.
Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

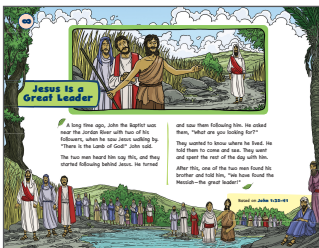
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever played follow the leader. Remind them that in that game, everyone follows the leader and does whatever the leader does.
- Explain that in today's Bible story, they'll learn that people followed Jesus and wanted to be just like him. Remind them that Jesus is the greatest leader ever!



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by with the following remarks:
 - When you find John the Baptist, raise your hand. Remember, John wore simple clothes and lived in the wilderness. *(If the children are struggling to pick out John the Baptist, tell them to look at the big picture where John is standing with the two men. At the bottom of the page, John is shown baptizing the woman in the river.)*
 - Let's look at the three men at the bottom left of the page *(point to show the children)*. One of those men is Jesus. Can you guess which one? *(Invite volunteers to point out Jesus.)* How many other men are with Jesus? *(two)* Hold up two fingers once you find the two men walking with Jesus.
 - In the main picture, the two men are standing with John the Baptist. In the picture below, we see two men following Jesus. I wonder what Jesus said to the men that made them want to follow him. Let's find out.

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is a Great Leader

A long time ago, John the Baptist was near the Jordan River with two of his followers, when he saw Jesus walking by. "There is the Lamb of God!" John said.

The two men heard him say this, and they started following behind Jesus. He turned and saw them following him. He asked them, "What are you looking for?"

They wanted to know where he lived. He told them to come and see. They went and spent the rest of the day with him.

After this, one of the two men found his brother and told him, "We have found the Messiah—the great leader!"

(Based on John 1:35–41)



Discover! (25 minutes)

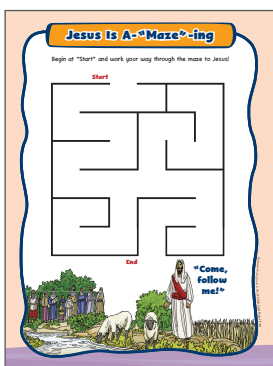
Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by recalling some points from the Bible story. Remind the children that John the Baptist was talking to two of his followers. John recognized Jesus as a great leader. Tell the children that Jesus asked the two men what they were looking for, and then invited them to follow him.
- Explain that John the Baptist called Jesus the Lamb of God. Share that this title might be strange to us, but it shows how special Jesus is, and it made the two men very curious to know more about Jesus.
- Share that being curious is a good quality. Tell the children that curiosity is a feeling inside of us that makes us want to learn something new or figure something out. Give examples, such as curiosity makes people want to learn how boats float, how planes fly in the air, or how your body uses food to give it energy to jump, run, or work on a puzzle.
- Invite volunteers to raise their hands and share something they are curious about.

- Lead the group in a song about curiosity that can be sung to the tune of “Rock-a-Bye Baby,” teaching the song line by line by having the children repeat after you:
 - When I am curious, I wonder why.
Where does the sun go when dark is the sky?
So many answers that I want to know.
It’s good to be curious, that’s how I grow.
- Ask the children if they are curious about Jesus. Remind them that the two men in today’s Bible story were. Explain that the men were so curious that they decided to become followers of Jesus.
- Tell the children that they will now go on a quick mission of curiosity. Explain that you will call out some items that are in the room, and the children must try to spot them. Invite the children to make pretend binoculars by forming their hands into circles and holding them up to their eyes. (*Model this for the children.*) Continue with the following directions:
 - Let’s begin by looking for a cross. Let’s look around the room! Hold up your binoculars and look all around the room. When you find a cross, stop right where you are and point to it. You can help others find a cross.
 - Let’s look for someone wearing white (*or any other specific color*) shoes. Hold up your binoculars and look down low. Did you find someone wearing white shoes? If you did, stop right where you are and point to the shoes. Good job!
 - Now let’s look for a Bible. Hold up your binoculars and look for a Bible. When you find it, stop right where you are and point to the Bible.
 - Great job! When we are curious about something, we can ask for help and start looking, just like the two men in today’s Bible story did.
- Explain that John the Baptist sparked the two men’s curiosity about Jesus, so they started looking and ended up being followers of Jesus. Tell the children that the number of Jesus’ followers grew and grew, and that there are many, many followers of Jesus today!
- Remind the children that they too are called to be followers of Jesus because he is the greatest leader of all!

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 102–103 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

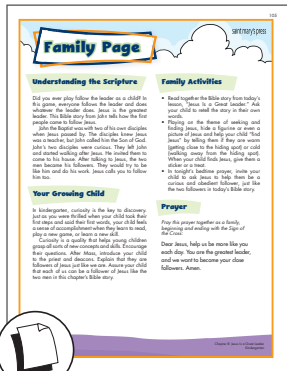




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who is the great leader John the Baptist’s followers were looking for? (*Jesus*)
 - Who are we called to follow? (*Jesus*)
 - What gift can help us as followers of Jesus? (*curiosity*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for the gift of curiosity. Help us use this gift to know you better and to follow you more closely. You are the greatest leader. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- blank paper, one sheet for each child
- a black marker
- crayons
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Follow My Feet to Jesus

- Prepare for this activity by creating a sample of two footprints. Write “Follow” on the left footprint and “Jesus” on the right footprint. Display your sample where the children can see it. They will use your sample to copy the words *Follow* and *Jesus*.
- Distribute the blank paper and crayons.
- Remind the children that the two followers of John the Baptist were curious about Jesus, and they recognized him as a great leader, so they followed him.
- Tell the children that Jesus wants us to follow him too, just like the two men from the Bible story. Explain that just as they were curious about Jesus and his teachings, we can be curious about Jesus as we learn more about him and his teachings.
- Invite the children to line up, and tell them that you will trace their feet onto their sheet of paper. Share that after their feet are traced and they are back at their seat, they should write the word *Follow* on the left foot and *Jesus* on the right foot. Show your sample, and review which footprint is the left and which is the right.
- Begin the process of tracing their footprints with a marker, and then help the children write the words on their footprints as needed. Invite them to color the footprints in or decorate them after they have added the words.
- Remind the children that the two men in today’s Bible story found who they were looking for—Jesus! Encourage them to take their footprints home and hang them up where they can see them in the morning and at night. Tell them that they can use the footprints as a reminder to “Follow Jesus!” every day.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Come, Follow Me,” on page 104 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons

Come, Follow Me

- Distribute the handout and crayons to the children.
- Tell the children that just like the two men in today’s Bible story, they can also follow Jesus. Invite them to color in the sets of footprints, starting at the top of the page, using a different color for each set of footprints.
- Explain that after they color in the footprints, they should color in the picture of Jesus.
- Share that the title of the handout says, “Come, Follow Me.” Point to the words on the handout so the children can see each word as you say it.
- Tell the children that the footprints remind us to follow Jesus.

Materials Needed

- none

Follow the Leader

- Explain that this activity is a game where everyone does what the leader tells them to do. Explain to the children that they should continue doing exactly what the leader does until the leader stops.
- Share that you will be the leader first, and then others can have a turn.
- Tell the children that another rule for this game is that the leader can't talk, and the only way for them to know what to do is to watch the leader and do exactly what the leader is doing.
- Model actions that the children can copy, such as those below, and wait for them to catch on and follow your lead. Once they are all doing the same action, stop and switch to another action.
- Invite another child to be the leader after several rounds. You can give them an action or let them choose their own. Repeat this process until several children have had a turn being the leader. Here are some suggestions:
 - Hop on one foot.
 - Flap your arms and walk like a duck.
 - Scratch your head.
 - Clap your hands.
 - Stomp your feet.
 - Wave to your neighbor.
 - Spin around in place.
 - Tie your shoe.
 - Tug on your earlobe.
 - Clasp your hands together for prayer.
 - Pretend to drive a car.
- Tell the children that they are fantastic leaders and followers. Remind them that Jesus is the greatest leader, so we should follow him, just like the two men in today's Bible story.

Come, Follow Me

Color in each set of footprints a different color. Then color in the picture of Jesus.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Did you ever play follow the leader as a child? In this game, everyone follows the leader and does whatever the leader does. Jesus is the greatest leader. This Bible story from John tells how the first people came to follow Jesus.

John the Baptist was with two of his own disciples when Jesus passed by. The disciples knew Jesus was a teacher, but John called him the Son of God. John's two disciples were curious. They left John and started walking after Jesus. He invited them to come to his house. After talking to Jesus, the two men became his followers. They would try to be like him and do his work. Jesus calls you to follow him too.

Your Growing Child

In kindergarten, curiosity is the key to discovery. Just as you were thrilled when your child took their first steps and said their first words, your child feels a sense of accomplishment when they learn to read, play a new game, or learn a new skill.

Curiosity is a quality that helps young children grasp all sorts of new concepts and skills. Encourage their questions. After Mass, introduce your child to the priest and deacons. Explain that they are followers of Jesus just like we are. Assure your child that each of us can be a follower of Jesus like the two men in this chapter's Bible story.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is a Great Leader." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Playing on the theme of seeking and finding Jesus, hide a figurine or even a picture of Jesus and help your child "find Jesus" by telling them if they are warm (getting close to the hiding spot) or cold (walking away from the hiding spot). When your child finds Jesus, give them a sticker or a treat.
- In tonight's bedtime prayer, invite your child to ask Jesus to help them be a curious and obedient follower, just like the two followers in today's Bible story.

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, help us be more like you each day. You are the greatest leader, and we want to become your close followers. Amen.

Chapter

9

Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us



Chapter

9

Lesson at a Glance**Scripture Focus**

Luke 10:29–30, 33–35

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus told stories to teach us
- to understand that stories can help us learn important things
- to recall that the story of the helpful stranger teaches us to love and care for one another

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catechism References

546, 1163–1171

Materials Needed

- the chapter 9 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 9 family page, on page 115 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 112–113 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In the Bible story today, the children will hear the account of the Samaritan who stops to help a man who has been beaten, robbed, and left on the side of the road. The hurt man is not only a stranger but a Jew, an enemy of Samaritans. The Samaritan could have thought, "A Jew is my enemy. Why should I be kind to him?" or "Let someone else help." But the Samaritan knows that all people are God's children. He stops and takes care of the hurt man. He even pays for him to stay at an inn.

Through this story, Jesus teaches us that every person in the world is our neighbor. We are to treat everyone with love and kindness. This is a concept that kindergartners can understand and embrace.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the following short prayer:
 - Dear God, help us treat everyone we meet as our neighbor. With your help, we can be a good example of how to treat others.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Ask the children if they like to hear stories. Invite them to share some of their favorite stories. Tell them that stories often have important lessons for us to learn.
- Explain that Jesus told many stories to help us learn. Share that they will hear one of those stories today and that their job is to see if they can figure out what lesson Jesus is teaching us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Point to the man lying on the ground. What do you think might have happened to him? (*Accept responses.*) What do you think the other man is doing in the picture? (*Accept responses.*)
 - Now look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Do you see the man lying in bed with a blanket and bandages? What do you think is happening there? (*Accept responses.*)
 - What do you think this story might be about? Let's find out!
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us

Jesus told a story to teach a lesson: "There was a man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him. They left him hurt on the side of the road. A stranger saw him, and his heart was full of sadness. He went over to him, poured oil on his wounds, and bandaged them. He put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day, he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper and asked him to take care of the man. 'When I come back this way, I will pay you whatever you spend.'"

(Based on Luke 10:29–30, 33–35)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Ask the children who told this story. (*Jesus*)
- Invite them to recall the different parts of the story to the best of their recollection, focusing on what the helpful stranger (Good Samaritan) did when he found the man who had been robbed on the side of the road. (*He helped him. He put him on his donkey and took him to an inn. He bandaged him up. He paid the innkeeper to take care of him until he came back.*)
- Tell the children that Jesus often told stories to teach his followers something important. Explain that in this story, Jesus was trying to help his followers understand how important it is to love and care for everyone, not just the people in our family or the people we know well.
- Point out that the stranger in this story didn't know the man who was hurt, but he knew that helping the hurt man was important and the right thing to do.
- Invite the children to think about what it means to care for others. Ask them to consider and share what they do when a friend gets hurt in school. (*Get the teacher; pat their friend on the back and say kind words; try to be a good listener if the friend needs to talk about their feelings.*)
- Continue with a general discussion about people who help others:
 - Let's think about all the people we know who are helpers. Can we come up with a list? (*Responses could include crossing guards, officers, teachers, doctors, priests and other religious people.*)
 - All those people help others, even if they are strangers. Let's sing a song about helpers. I'll sing it for you first and then you can join in.

- Lead the children in the following song, sung to the tune of “Do You Know the Muffin Man?” Sing the first two lines in each stanza, and then have the children join in for the lines in italic:

➤ Do you know the crossing guard, the crossing guard, the crossing guard?
 Do you know the crossing guard, who helps us cross the street?
Yes, I know the crossing guard, the crossing guard, the crossing guard.
Yes, I know the crossing guard, who helps us cross the street.

Do you know the officer, the officer, the officer?
 Do you know the officer, who keeps us safe in town?
Yes, I know the officer, the officer, the officer.
Yes, I know the officer, who keeps us safe in town.

Do you know the teacher, the teacher, the teacher?
 Do you know the teacher, who helps us all day long?
Yes, I know the teacher, the teacher, the teacher.
Yes, I know the teacher, who helps us all day long!

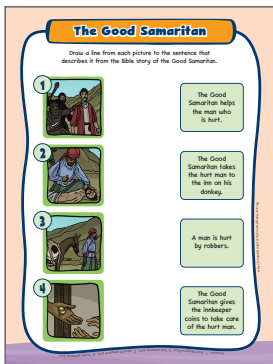
Do you know the doctor, the doctor, the doctor?
 Do you know the doctor, who helps us when we’re sick?
Yes, I know the doctor, the doctor, the doctor.
Yes, I know the doctor, who helps us when we’re sick!

Do you know the priest and nuns, the priest and nuns,
 the priest and nuns?
 Do you know the priests and nuns, who pray for us all day?
Yes, I know the priests and nuns, the priest and nuns, the priest and nuns.
Yes, I know the priests and nuns, who pray for us all day!

- Congratulate the children and emphasize again that taking care of others is important. Tell them that this is the message in today’s Bible story.
- Explain that Jesus shared many other stories to help us learn important lessons. Tell the children that they will learn about more of these stories later.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 112–113 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

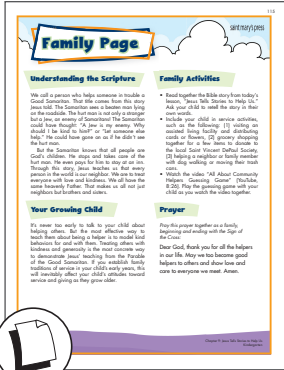




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Why did Jesus tell stories? *(to teach us)*
 - How can stories help us? *(They can help us learn important things.)*
 - What is Jesus trying to teach us in the story of the helpful stranger? *(to love and care for one another)*
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Encourage the children to repeat each line of the following prayer after you:
 - Guide us to show kindness.
Help us see who needs a friend.
Like the stranger who helped the wounded man,
let us help those who are in need.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (optional)

Act It Out!

- Select five children to act out the Bible story, and explain that everyone else will be part of the audience.
 - Choose two children to be the robbers.
 - Choose one child to be the traveler on the side of the road.
 - Choose one child to be the helpful stranger.
 - Choose one child to be the innkeeper.
- Give the actors their lines, and ask them to repeat them a few times. You might also need to prompt them with their lines during the play.

Robbers: This is a robbery!

Traveler: I don't have anything for you.

Helpful Stranger: This person is hurt, and I am going to help them.

Innkeeper: That will be two silver coins.

Traveler: Thank you for helping me!

- Tell the robbers to hide behind some chairs, waiting for the traveler to come walking toward them. Explain that when the traveler gets close to them, they should jump out and shout their line. The traveler should then say their line.
- Invite the actors who are the robbers to pretend to push the traveler. Have the traveler lie on the floor as the robbers run away.
- Direct the traveler who was robbed to moan. Have the helpful stranger walk up and say their line.
- Tell the stranger to help the traveler to their feet and walk them toward the innkeeper. When the traveler meets the innkeeper, the innkeeper can say their line.
- Invite the stranger to pretend to pay the innkeeper. Then the traveler can say their second line.
- Congratulate the children, and ask for new volunteers to act out the play again if time permits.

Materials Needed

- none

Five Fingers Story Retell

- Invite the children to gather in a circle, and tell them that together they are going to identify five important parts of the story about the helpful stranger.
- Have them hold up a hand and show you all five fingers. Encourage them to wave at you.
- **One finger:** Invite the children to hold up one finger if they know who the characters are in the story. Select a volunteer from the children who have one finger up, and ask them to share who the characters in the Bible story are. (*robbers, traveler/hurt man, helpful stranger, innkeeper*)
- **Two fingers:** Ask the children to hold up two fingers if they know where the story takes place. Select a volunteer to share with the class the setting of the story. (*on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, at the inn*)
- **Three fingers:** Now direct the children to hold up three fingers if they know some key parts of the story. (*The traveler is robbed and hurt; the stranger finds the hurt traveler and helps him; the stranger puts the hurt traveler on his donkey and takes him to an inn; the stranger pays the innkeeper to look after the traveler until he comes back.*)
- **Four fingers:** Invite the children to hold up four fingers if they know how the story ends. (*The helpful stranger pays the innkeeper to take care of the hurt traveler; the stranger comes back to take care of the traveler.*)
- **Five fingers:** Have the children raise their hand and show all five fingers if they can share their favorite character or favorite part of the story. (*Invite responses.*)
- Congratulate the children for knowing the story well. Encourage them to share the story with their families.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Bible Story Counting,” on page 114 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons

Bible Story Counting

- Fold the handouts in half lengthwise in advance of the activity.
- Distribute the crayons and the folded handouts, picture-side up. Encourage the children not to unfold or turn the paper over, or it will reveal the answers too soon.
- Tell the children that each of the pictures shows a part of today’s Bible story. Explain that you will look at the pictures together.
- Move through each of the pictures, first having the children describe what they see. Then ask the question or questions associated with the pictures.
- Invite the children to unfold their handout after all the questions have been answered. Tell them to look at each picture on the left and then trace over the words and numbers on the right to complete the activity.
- Walk around to help any children who might be confused or struggling. Tell the children they can take their handout home and use it to tell the story of the helpful stranger to their families.

Bible Story Counting

Trace over the words and numbers on the right side of the page.



How many robbers?

two 2



How many donkeys?

one 1



How many coins?

two 2



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

We call a person who helps someone in trouble a Good Samaritan. That title comes from this story Jesus told. The Samaritan sees a beaten man lying on the roadside. The hurt man is not only a stranger but a Jew, an enemy of Samaritans! The Samaritan could have thought: "A Jew is my enemy. Why should I be kind to him?" or "Let someone else help." He could have gone on as if he didn't see the hurt man.

But the Samaritan knows that all people are God's children. He stops and takes care of the hurt man. He even pays for him to stay at an inn. Through this story, Jesus teaches us that every person in the world is our neighbor. We are to treat everyone with love and kindness. We all have the same heavenly Father. That makes us all not just neighbors but brothers and sisters.

Your Growing Child

It's never too early to talk to your child about helping others. But the most effective way to teach them about being a helper is to model kind behaviors for and with them. Treating others with kindness and generosity is the most concrete way to demonstrate Jesus' teaching from the Parable of the Good Samaritan. If you establish family traditions of service in your child's early years, this will inevitably affect your child's attitudes toward service and giving as they grow older.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Include your child in service activities, such as the following: (1) visiting an assisted living facility and distributing cards or flowers, (2) grocery shopping together for a few items to donate to the local Saint Vincent DePaul Society, (3) helping a neighbor or family member with dog walking or moving their trash cans.
- Watch the video "All About Community Helpers Guessing Game" (YouTube, 8:26). Play the guessing game with your child as you watch the video together.

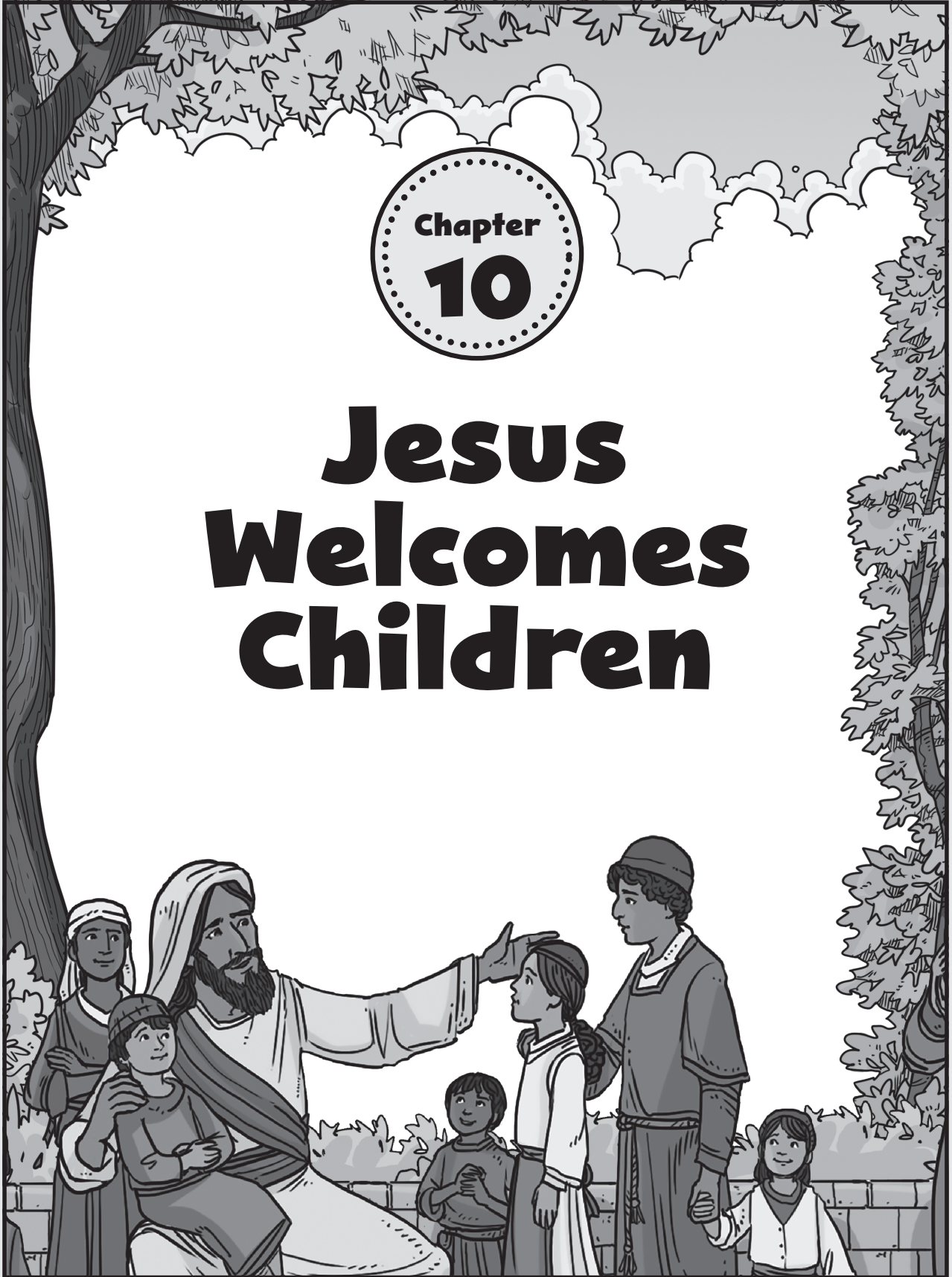
Prayer

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

Dear God, thank you for all the helpers in our life. May we too become good helpers to others and show love and care to everyone we meet. Amen.

Chapter
10

Jesus Welcomes Children




**Chapter
10**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 19:13–15

Lesson Goals

- to identify that Jesus welcomed little children and made them feel important
- to learn that Jesus blessed, or prayed for, the children
- to understand that we can pray to Jesus because he loves us

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

544, 561, 699

Materials Needed

- the chapter 10 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 10 family page, on page 124 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 122–123 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

There is a saying, "Children are our greatest treasure." Jesus would agree with this. He loves children. In this Bible story from the Gospel of Matthew, when people brought children to Jesus, he welcomed them. But Jesus' disciples thought that Jesus shouldn't be bothered with children. They knew he was tired from teaching. When the disciples ordered the people to take the children away, Jesus stopped them. Jesus blessed the children and made them an example for everyone. He said that people who are like children will enter Heaven. Then Jesus prayed over the children as their parents wished. To Jesus, every person is important, especially the smallest, youngest ones.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in singing “Jesus Loves Me”:
 - Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
so I sing this happy song.

Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.
- Include a quick prayer of thanksgiving:
 - We thank you, Jesus, for loving us and hearing our prayers. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

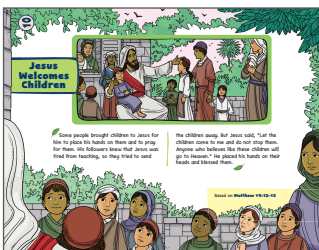
Engage

- Invite the children to share who makes them feel important. Encourage them to describe how they are treated and the actions that make them feel important. Ask them to share some ideas about how we can help others feel important.
- Explain that today’s Bible story is about Jesus making a group of people feel important. Invite the children to listen to learn who Jesus treated as important.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture.
- Encourage the children to share what they see, and have them point to the different children in the picture.
- Invite them to look at the bottom of the page and point to all the children they see looking at Jesus. Point out how they all look like good listeners and are probably curious about what Jesus is telling them.
- Encourage the children to listen closely as you read the story to find out why the children came to see Jesus.

- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Welcomes Children

Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and to pray for them. His followers knew that Jesus was tired from teaching, so they tried to send the children away. But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them. Anyone who believes like these children will go to Heaven." He placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

(Based on Matthew 19:13–15)

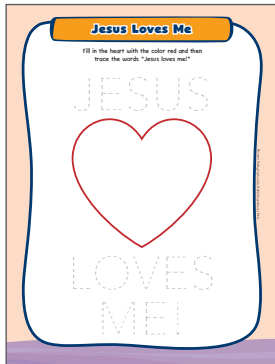


Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Ask the children about who came to see Jesus in the Bible story and how his followers responded. (*People brought their children to Jesus; his followers tried to send the children away.*)
- Invite the children to share Jesus' response to his followers. (*He told them to let the children stay.*)
- Explain that Jesus placed his hands on the children's heads and blessed them. Share that blessing is a way of praying for someone, so Jesus was praying for the children.
- Remind the children that we can pray in a lot of different ways. Explain that we can pray together as a group, or we can pray silently by ourselves. Tell them that we can pray to Jesus because we know that he loves us.
- Point out that Jesus welcomed the children, which likely made them feel important. Continue with the following:
 - Let's think about what it means for us to make others feel welcome and important.
 - One thing that anyone can do to make another person feel welcome and important is to call them by their name.
 - Let's go around the room and say our names aloud so that when we greet one another, we can use our names and make one another feel welcome. (*Take time for each child to say their name aloud.*)

- Now let's shake hands with our neighbor and greet them like this, "Hello, [name]! I'm glad to see you." Go ahead and give it a try.
- Let's greet all our friends here today. Walk around, shaking hands and welcoming your friends.
- Explain that the group will now sing a song to help them remember that Jesus wanted the children to be close to him.
- Sing the following to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down." Sing it by yourself the first time so the children can learn it, and then invite them to join you:
 - Let the children come to me, come to me, come to me.
Let the children come to me, I will bless them.



Learning Activities

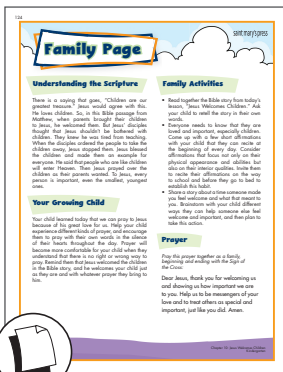
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 122–123 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did Jesus welcome and show they were important? (*children*)
 - What did Jesus do with the children before they left? (*He blessed, or prayed for, them.*)
 - What can we do because Jesus loves us? (*We can pray to him.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain that you are going to have a few moments of silence so the children can pray in the quiet of their hearts. Tell them that they can say (in their minds) whatever they want to Jesus or simply use the phrase, “Jesus, I love you.”
- Allow about 10 seconds, and then continue with the following closing prayer. Have the children repeat each line after you:
 - Dear Jesus,
We love you with all our hearts.
Thank you for showing us
that we are important to you.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a roll of newsprint, enough to trace the outline of each child
- a pair of scissors
- a black marker
- crayons
- tape or adhesive putty

Every “Body” Is Important!

- Prepare for this activity by cutting out sheets of newsprint big enough to outline each child.
- Tell the children that they are going to do a fun activity that will help other people get to know them better. Invite the children to line up and, one by one, have them lie down on the newsprint while you trace their outline.
- Invite the children to write their name above the head of the outline. Help the children as needed.
- Explain that they can use crayons to add their hair, their face, and their clothes.
- Share that they can add the following things to help the other children learn more about them:
 - Next to their face, they can draw a picture of something they like to eat.
 - Next to their hands, they can draw a picture of something they like to do.
- Explain that you will hang the special drawings on the wall. As you do so, invite the child whose picture you’re hanging to come forward. Invite the entire group to clap for that child to make them feel welcome and important.

Materials Needed

- a roll of newsprint
- a pair of scissors
- a marker
- crayons
- tape or adhesive putty

Welcome Banner

- Roll out some of the newsprint, and cut it to make a long banner. Use the marker to write “WELCOME” on the banner in large bubble letters that the children can color.
- Invite the children to recall the Bible story. Emphasize that Jesus told his followers to let the children come to him, and he prayed for them.
- Tell the children that Jesus loves children because of their joyfulness and goodness.
- Explain that they are going to make a banner for the room as a reminder that everyone is important and welcome.
- Roll out the welcome banner on a flat surface and distribute the crayons. Invite the children to work together to color in the letters.
- Hang the banner where the children will see it each time they are in the room.

Materials Needed

- 24-piece puzzles, one for every two or three children

Buddy-Time Puzzles

- Remind the children that Jesus made children feel welcome and important by telling his followers that the children could stay. Share that one way to make people feel important is by working together as a team. Explain that on a team, all members have an important role.
- Arrange the children in pairs or groups of three and encourage them to find a place to sit together in the room.
- Explain that you are going to give each pair or group a puzzle to complete together. Remind them that they should take turns so that everyone helps put the puzzle together. Tell them that every person is an important part of the team.
- Distribute the puzzles to each pair or small group, and invite them to begin. Encourage them to stand up and raise their hands when they have completed the puzzle.
- Walk around to assist if needed, and to ensure that the children are taking turns.
- Process this activity by using the following or similar comments:
 - Good teamwork, everyone! Did you take turns when you were putting the puzzle together? How did it feel to know that you had someone to help you?
 - All of us want to feel like we are helpers. We all want to feel important. That is exactly what Jesus did for the children in the Bible story today. He told his followers not to send the children away. Instead, he told his followers that the children were so important that if anyone wanted to follow him, they should have faith like the children.
 - Jesus thinks you are important, and so do I. Thank your partner or partners for working with you, and then return to your seats.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

There is a saying that goes, "Children are our greatest treasure." Jesus would agree with this. He loves children. So, in this Bible passage from Matthew, when parents brought their children to Jesus, he welcomed them. But Jesus' disciples thought that Jesus shouldn't be bothered with children. They knew he was tired from teaching. When the disciples ordered the people to take the children away, Jesus stopped them. Jesus blessed the children and made them an example for everyone. He said that people who are like children will enter Heaven. Then Jesus prayed over the children as their parents wanted. To Jesus, every person is important, even the smallest, youngest ones.

Your Growing Child

Your child learned today that we can pray to Jesus because of his great love for us. Help your child experience different kinds of prayer, and encourage them to pray with their own words in the silence of their hearts throughout the day. Prayer will become more comfortable for your child when they understand that there is no right or wrong way to pray. Remind them that Jesus welcomed the children in the Bible story, and he welcomes your child just as they are and with whatever prayer they bring to him.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Welcomes Children." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Everyone needs to know that they are loved and important, especially children. Come up with a few short affirmations with your child that they can recite at the beginning of every day. Consider affirmations that focus not only on their physical appearance and abilities but also on their interior qualities. Invite them to recite their affirmations on the way to school and before they go to bed to establish this habit.
- Share a story about a time someone made you feel welcome and what that meant to you. Brainstorm with your child different ways they can help someone else feel welcome and important, and then plan to take this action.

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, thank you for welcoming us and showing us how important we are to you. Help us to be messengers of your love and to treat others as special and important, just like you did. Amen.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 3

Jesus Teaches Us

Chapter 11

Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts 126

Chapter 12

Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives 136

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Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others . . . 154

Chapter 15

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray 164

Chapter

11

Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts




**Chapter
11**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 4:16–20

Lesson Goals

- to understand that people’s hearts can be like different kinds of soil
- to recognize that the “seed” is God’s Word or God’s message
- to realize that our hearts can be “good soil” for God’s seed, the Word of God

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

74–141, 1100–1101

Materials Needed

- the chapter 11 child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 11 family page, on page 135 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 132–133 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Listening to God’s message—the “seed” Jesus talks about—and letting it take root in the good soil of our hearts is the theme of this lesson. The children can begin to understand that rocks, thorns, and good soil are other ways of naming the spiritual condition of our hearts. This story involves metaphor, which is challenging for any kindergartner. But helpful hints within the lesson will help expand the children’s understanding of the literal meaning of *seed* and *soil* to the more spiritual relationship between the Word of God and our hearts. And then we learn that if our hearts are “good soil,” we all grow in God’s love—some a good amount, some even more, and some a whole lot!



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following short prayer, inviting the children to repeat it after you:
 - We pray, Lord, that our hearts are ready for your message. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

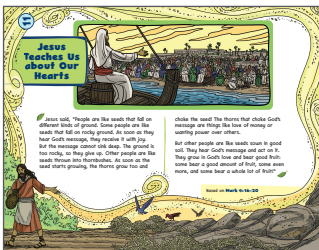
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever planted something or have watched or helped when someone else planted something. Invite them to share.
- Explain that today's lesson is about planting something in a different kind of soil.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - This picture shows a big crowd of people and someone in a boat. Who is in the boat? (*Jesus*)
 - What does Jesus look like he is doing? (*speaking to the people*)
 - Why do you think Jesus got into the boat? (*so people could see and hear him better, so he could stand out from the crowd*)
 - Let's look at the picture at the bottom of the page. What is that man doing? (*throwing seed, sowing seed*)
 - Yes, we call him a sower because he is sowing, or planting, seed. Where is the seed falling? (*everywhere, on all kinds of ground*)
- Explain that Jesus taught people many things, and that the story they are about to hear is just one of his teachings.
- Emphasize the idea that learning from the teachings of Jesus and acting on them is very important. Explain to the children that today's Bible story tells us something important about what kinds of hearts we should have to listen to God's message and to act on it.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts

Jesus said, "People are like seeds that fall on different kinds of ground. Some people are like seeds that fall on rocky ground. As soon as they hear God's message, they receive it with joy. But the message cannot sink deep. The ground is too rocky, so they give up. Other people are like seeds thrown into thornbushes. As soon as the seed starts growing, the thorns grow too and choke the seed! The thorns that choke God's message are things like love of money or wanting power over others.

But other people are like seeds sown in good soil. They hear God's message and act on it. They grow in God's love and bear good fruit: some bear a good amount of fruit, some even more, and some bear a whole lot of fruit!"

(Based on Mark 4:16–20)



Discover! (25 minutes)

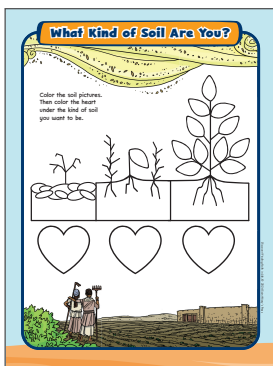
Core Teaching

- Recall with the children that they just heard a teaching from Jesus about seeds. Remind them that the seed in this story is God's Word, or God's message, and the soil is our hearts.
- Ask the children if they remember the three different kinds of soil Jesus talked about. (*rocky soil, soil with thornbushes, and good soil*)
- Continue with the following questions and comments:
 - What kind of heart is like rocky soil? (*A hard heart is like rocky soil; the seed is planted but dies because it cannot make roots.*)
 - Has anyone ever stepped on rocky soil or a rocky beach? What did it feel like? (*Accept responses.*)
 - It hurt because rocks are sharp. People with rocky or stone-like hearts can be hurtful to others.
 - What are rocks and stones used for? (*Accept responses, and ensure that the children conclude that rocks and stones can be used for building walls.*)
 - Most of the time walls are good, but if we build a wall around our hearts, God cannot get in, and people cannot get in either. So we want to keep our hearts open, not closed off by a stone wall!

- What kind of heart is like soil full of thornbushes? *(A thorny heart is sharp and hurts people; the seed starts to grow but gets choked, so it dies.)*
 - Have you ever gotten caught in a thornbush or a spiny, prickly plant? *(Accept responses.)*
 - Thornbushes choke the good plants and keep them out. In our story, what made people's hearts like thornbushes? *(love of money or power)*
 - If we love money or power, what gets crowded out of our hearts? *(love of God and love of other people)*
- Take a moment to summarize the characteristics of stony and thorny hearts by stating that thorny hearts are sharp and hurt people. Explain that stony hearts are walled off from God and other people.
 - Share that thorny hearts are full of love for money and power, and they choke out love for God and people.
 - Introduce the kind of heart that is good soil by asking the following questions:
 - Who has seen nice, soft, black, good soil? *(Accept responses.)*
 - Maybe you have good soil in your garden or in your flowerpots at home. Good soil has everything a plant needs to grow.
 - What kind of heart is made of good soil? *(A heart made of good soil is full of love for God and for others. It gives the seed, which is the Word of God, everything it needs to grow.)*
 - What kind of soil do we want our hearts to be made of? *(good soil!)*
 - What is God going to plant in our hearts? *(the Word of God, God's message)*

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 132–133 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

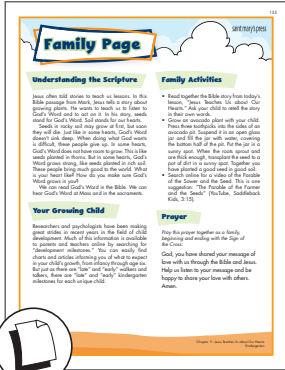




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What did Jesus say that people’s hearts are like? (*different kinds of soils*)
 - What is the “seed” in this Bible story? (*God’s Word, or God’s message*)
 - What kind of soil do we want our hearts to be for God’s Word? (*good soil*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Sing the following song, to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.” As the children learn the words, invite them to incorporate the motions as noted:
 - This is the way God plants the seed, plants the seed, plants the seed. (*Make scattering motions with one hand, as if throwing seed.*)
This is the way God plants the seed; God plants the seed of his Word.

 - This is the way we hear the Word, hear the Word, hear the Word. (*Put hand behind ear, one hand on one ear, then the other hand behind the other ear.*)
This is the way we hear the Word; we hear the Word of God.

 - This is the way we grow in love, grow in love, grow in love. (*Place both palms flat over heart.*)
This is the way we grow in love; we grow in love in our hearts. (*Fling both arms up and stand on tiptoes.*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Act It Out!

- Help the children act out the sower and the seed story by first asking the group to sit in a circle.
- Choose a volunteer to be the sower. Explain to the rest of the group that they are the ground and will act out the rocks, the thorns, and the good soil.
- Ask the children to scrunch up like rocks by sitting, pulling their legs in, and putting their heads on their knees.
- Invite the sower to skip around behind the “rocks” and pretend to plant or throw seeds. Ask the children, “Does the seed grow well on the rocks?” *(No! Their roots shrivel!)*
- Tell the children that they will now become spiky and thorny bushes. Invite them to sit up, with their arms over their heads. Encourage them to put their hands together, creating a spike.
- Invite the sower to go around the back of the group as before, pretending to plant or throw seeds. Ask, “Does the seed grow well among the thornbushes?” *(No, the seed is choked!)*
- Instruct the children to sway their hands and arms back and forth in an S-pattern to imitate the thorns choking the seeds.
- Explain that it is time to become good soil for the seed. Invite the children to sit up and hold their arms out in front of them like they’re holding a big flowerpot. Tell them that this is a pot of good soil.
- Invite the sower to go around the group, this time putting a “seed” into every “pot.” Ask the group, “Does the seed grow well in good soil?” *(Yes! The seed bears fruit—some a good amount, some even more, and some a whole lot!)*
- Close the activity by reinforcing that the seed is the Word of God, or God’s message. Affirm that we can be good soil by praying, helping others, listening to our parents and teachers, reading the Bible and other good books about Jesus, etc.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “My Heart Is Like Good Soil,” on page 134 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons

Good-Soil Hearts

- Distribute the handout, and explain that the large heart represents each child’s good-soil heart. Brainstorm ways that our hearts can be good-soil hearts. *(helping others, listening to parents and teachers, reading the Bible and books about Jesus and Mary, praying at school or at home, etc.)*
- Ask the children to pause and think about one way they can be a good-soil heart. They might think of something they did recently that was helpful and loving, or they might think of something they would like to do that would be helpful and loving.
- Ask the children to draw themselves in the heart doing one or two good-soil heart actions.
- Conclude the activity by assuring the children that they may finish their pictures at home. Send the pictures home so that parents and caregivers can talk about them with their child.

Materials Needed

- none

The Seed Is the Word of God

- Sing the following song, using the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” As the children learn the words, invite them to incorporate the motions as noted:

➤ We thank you, God, for sowing seeds, sowing seeds, sowing seeds.
 We thank you, God, for sowing seeds, sowing in our hearts.
(Extend arm back and forth as if scattering seed.)

The seed here is the Word of God, Word of God, Word of God.
 The seed here is the Word of God, we keep it in our hearts.
(Put both hands flat on heart.)

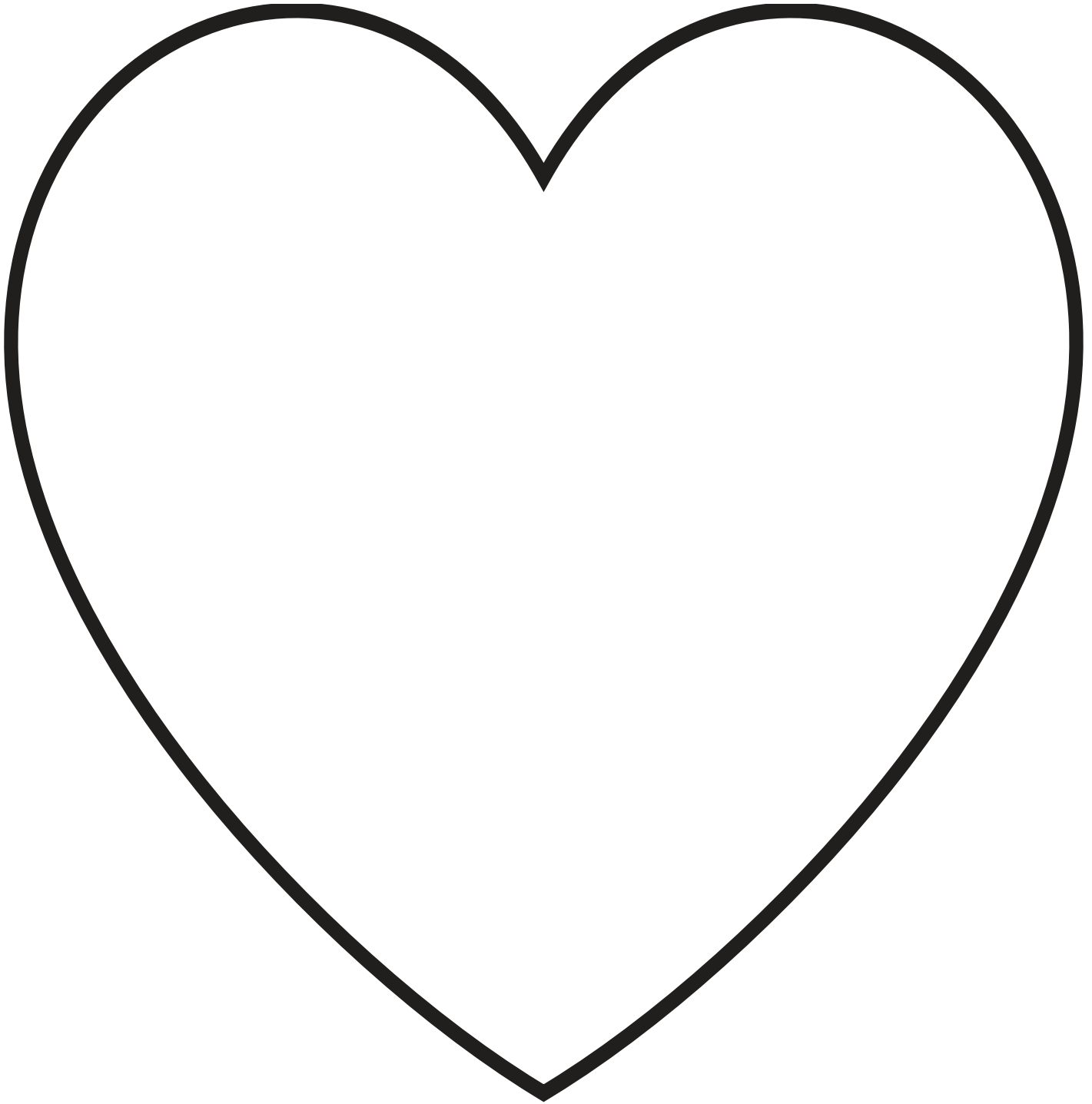
It cannot grow in hearts of stone, hearts of stone, hearts of stone.
 It cannot grow in hearts of stone; it shrivels up and dies.
(Make a fist and shake it.)

It cannot grow in thorny hearts, thorny hearts, thorny hearts.
 It cannot grow in thorny hearts; the bushes choke it out.
(Fold palms together and hold overhead to make a pointed thorn.)

It grows the best in loving hearts, loving hearts, loving hearts.
 It grows the best in loving hearts, in loving hearts like ours.
(With two index fingers, draw a heart over your own heart, and then point to your heart.)

My Heart Is Like Good Soil

What good things do you do? Draw one or two of them in the heart on this page. You have a good-soil heart!



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Jesus often told stories to teach us lessons. In this Bible passage from Mark, Jesus tells a story about growing plants. He wants to teach us to listen to God's Word and to act on it. In his story, seeds stand for God's Word. Soil stands for our hearts.

Seeds in rocky soil may grow at first, but soon they will die. Just like in some hearts, God's Word doesn't sink deep. When doing what God wants is difficult, these people give up. In some hearts, God's Word does not have room to grow. This is like seeds planted in thorns. But in some hearts, God's Word grows strong, like seeds planted in rich soil. These people bring much good to the world. What is your heart like? How do you make sure God's Word grows in you?

We can read God's Word in the Bible. We can hear God's Word at Mass and in the sacraments.

Your Growing Child

Researchers and psychologists have been making great strides in recent years in the field of child development. Much of this information is available to parents and teachers online by searching for "development milestones." You can easily find charts and articles informing you of what to expect in your child's growth, from infancy through age six. But just as there are "late" and "early" walkers and talkers, there are "late" and "early" kindergarten milestones for each unique child.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Grow an avocado plant with your child. Press three toothpicks into the sides of an avocado pit. Suspend it in an open glass jar and fill the jar with water, covering the bottom half of the pit. Put the jar in a sunny spot. When the roots sprout and are thick enough, transplant the seed to a pot of dirt in a sunny spot. Together you have planted a good seed in good soil.
- Search online for a video of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. This is one suggestion: "The Parable of the Farmer and the Seeds" (YouTube, Saddleback Kids, 3:15).

Prayer

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

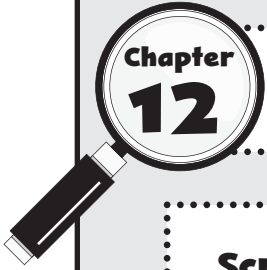
God, you have shared your message of love with us through the Bible and Jesus. Help us listen to your message and be happy to share your love with others. Amen.

Chapter

12

Jesus Teaches US That God Forgives





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

Lesson Goals

- to recall key elements of the story of the son and the father
- to realize that the boy’s father forgave him
- to understand that God is our Father and forgives us

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

976–987

Materials Needed

- the chapter 12 child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 12 family page, on page 145 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 142–143 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this lesson, the children hear one of the most famous parables of Jesus, that of the prodigal, or lost, son. In the most basic sense, the father in the parable represents God, and the son represents us. The father represents God’s merciful and persistent love, despite our many failures to return or even acknowledge that love. Being sorry and being forgiven should be part of every child’s experience. Welcoming one another back into a loving relationship after a conflict is one way we share God’s love!



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer:
 - Dear Jesus, help us listen well to our story today so we will learn something wonderful about God! Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

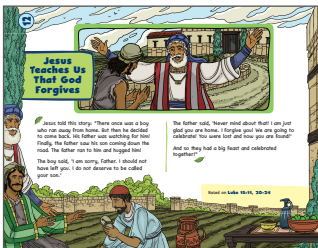
- Ask the children if they have ever done something and then felt sorry afterward. Allow responses.
- Explain that sometimes we do things by accident and are sorry afterward. Tell the children that sometimes we do things on purpose and are sorry afterward.
- Introduce the word *forgive* by explaining that when we say, "I'm sorry," we hope that the other person will forgive us and say, "That is okay. I know you are sorry and that you will try not to let it happen again."
- Create interest by telling the children that in today's Bible story, they will learn about something one boy did and how his father forgave him.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In this picture, the older man is the father. He has his arms wide open. When someone has their arms wide open, what does that usually mean? (*Hello! Welcome! I am so glad to see you!*)
 - Let's all open our arms and say, "Welcome back!"
 - The younger man has his hands almost folded. When someone has their hands folded, what does that usually mean? (*Please forgive me! or I'm sorry!*)
 - Let's all fold our hands and say, "I'm sorry!"
 - Let's begin to read and find out why this young man was sorry.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.



Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives

Jesus told this story: "There once was a boy who ran away from home. But then he decided to come back. His father was watching for him! Finally, the father saw his son coming down the road. The father ran to him and hugged him!

The boy said, 'I am sorry, Father. I should not have left you. I do not deserve to be called your son.'

The father said, 'Never mind about that! I am just glad you are home. I forgive you! We are going to celebrate! You were lost and now you are found!'

And so they had a big feast and celebrated together!"

(Based on Luke 15:11, 20–24)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Direct the children to the picture on the bottom of the child's page, and explain that the picture of the young man in the green coat is the same son after he was all cleaned up and given new clothes by his father. Tell the children that the man on the right with the brown cap is a servant putting shoes on the son's feet.
- Explain that when Jesus was talking about the father in the story, he was not talking about any father. Tell the children he was talking about his father, God the Father.
- Share that when Jesus was talking about the son in the story, he was not talking just about the son in the story. Explain that he was talking about all the sons and daughters of God! Tell the children that Jesus was talking about each of us because we are all sons and daughters of God.
- Help the children understand that sometimes sons and daughters of God make bad choices. Explain that sometimes they even run away from God, but God always wants them to come back because he loves us so much.
- Continue with the following questions about the end of the story:
 - What happened at the end of this story? (*The son came back. The father forgave him and welcomed him.*)
 - Do we sometimes make bad choices, things we are sorry for? (*Yes.*)

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the children to sing the first verse of “Amazing Grace” with you. Remind them of the words, or review the lines quickly before they are sung. Note the change of wording in the second line.
 - Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a child like me.
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Lost Son Hide and Seek

- Introduce this activity as a game of hide and seek. Explain that one child will be the lost son and another will be the father trying to find the son.
- Choose one child to be the son and another to be the father. Invite the father to close their eyes while the son hides somewhere in the room.
- Ask the father to open their eyes and try to find the son.
- Explain that as the father gets closer to the lost son, the children may call out, "Warmer!" or "Hot!" If the father gets farther away, the children may say, "Colder!" or "Freezing!"
- Invite everyone to clap and cheer when the son is found. You may want to have the children repeat after you: "Hurray! My son was lost and now he is found!"
- Repeat as time permits, asking different volunteers to be the lost son and the father.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout "Home to the Father," on page 144 of the catechist guide, one for each child

Home to the Father

- Invite the children to recall the key elements of the story of the son and the father.
- Distribute the handout, and read the directions aloud to the children. If necessary, show the children how to complete a maze by drawing a line with their pencil or crayon.
- Encourage them to go back and choose another path if they get stuck.
- Circulate among the children, helping them as needed.
- Celebrate as the children finish. If some are stuck, invite volunteers who have finished to help those who are struggling.
- Display the finished mazes in the room if possible, or in a place where the entire parish can view them.
- Congratulate the children for bringing the son and the father back together. Share how wonderful it is when we ask for forgiveness and come back together with God after making a bad choice.

Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (optional)

The Son and the Father Play

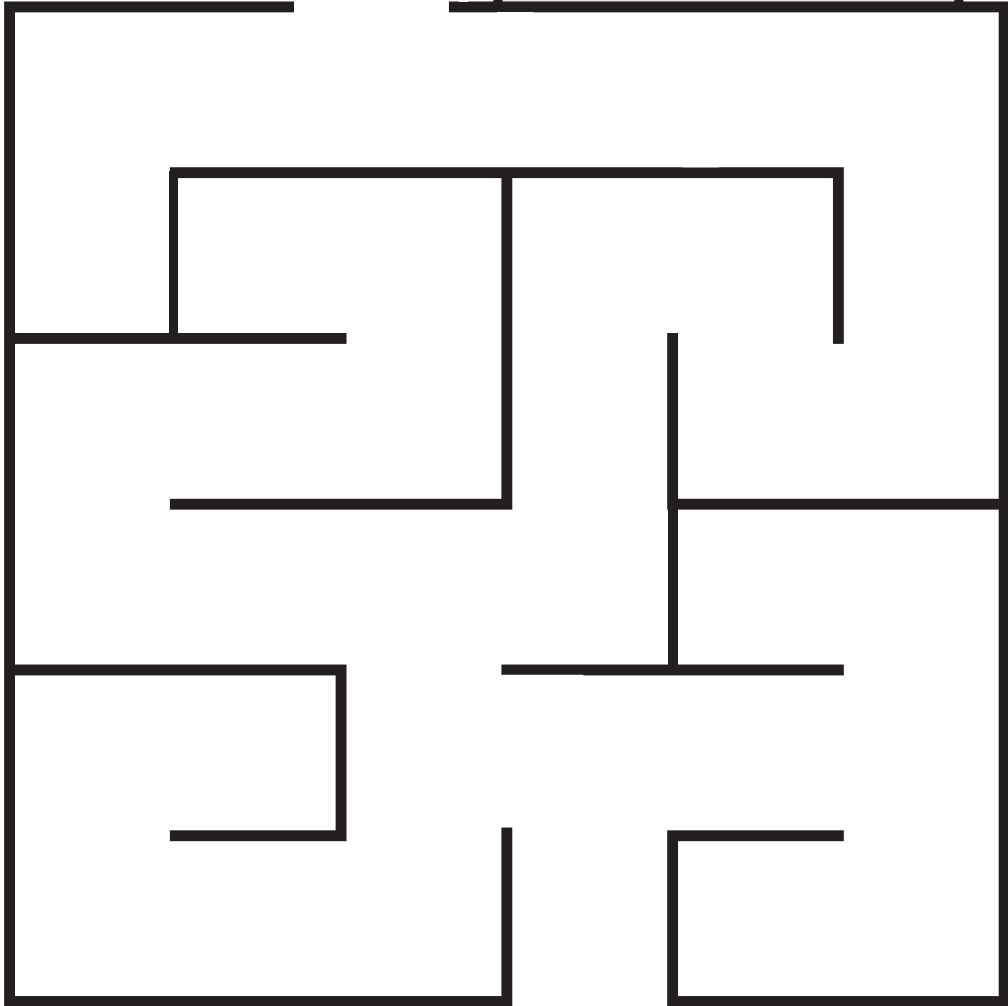
- Introduce this activity by explaining that we will act out the story of the son and the father.
- Choose volunteers to be the father and the son. Select children who have loud voices and who do not mind being the center of attention.
- Take the volunteers aside to give them their lines. Ask them to repeat their lines a few times. Use the following or similar script:
 - Father:** My son ran away, and I am watching for him. There he is!
 - Son:** I am so sorry. I am so happy to be home!
 - Father:** I forgive you!
- Arrange an area as a stage. Introduce the play by telling the children they are about to watch a story that Jesus told about God. Remind them that God is our loving Father who always forgives us and welcomes us home.
- Direct the actors with some basic actions, and help them with their lines as needed. Instruct them to hug each other at the end and then turn to the audience and say, "The end!"
- Thank the two children who played the father and the son for a wonderful performance. Encourage them to take a bow.
- Ask for two more volunteers to act out the play again, as time permits.

Home to the Father

Bring the son home to the father by completing the maze.



Start



End



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

This story that 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. The son wasted every penny. When he was starving because he had no money left, he wanted to come 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.

Your Growing Child

Pope Francis advised families to remember and use these three phrases in their family life: "Sorry," "Excuse me," and "Thank you." We learn the role of forgiveness in our lives by saying sorry to others, and by others saying sorry to us. Forgiveness begins in the family, among both children and adults. Saying sorry does not make all hurt go away. But it is an important first step toward mending a temporarily broken relationship.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Using two round sheets of paper, make a sad face for "I am sorry" and a happy face for "I forgive you." Keep these on the refrigerator or in another central place. When there is conflict, give the "I am sorry" face to one person and the "I forgive you" face to the other. Help them talk over their difficulty and resolve their conflict with both sorrow and forgiveness.
- Today's Bible story is only part of the story Jesus told. Search online for the longer version of this story, which includes the father dealing with the resentment of the elder son. One suggestion might be the video "The Prodigal Son" (Saddleback Kids, YouTube, 4:42).

Prayer

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

Lord Jesus, help us know that God is our loving Father who forgives us again and again. Help us say, "I'm sorry." Help us offer forgiveness even before it is asked. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

Chapter

13

Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy



**Chapter
13**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 5:6–9

Lesson Goals

- to realize that Jesus wants us to be happy
- to understand that we can be happy by showing kindness, being full of love, and making peace
- to recognize that we will be fully happy in Heaven with God one day

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

1026–1029, 2012–2016

Materials Needed

- the chapter 13 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 13 family page, on page 153 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 151–152 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

A famous commercial on New York television in the 1950s showed a young girl opening and closing a sofa bed. It ended with the line, "So simple, even a child can do it!" The same might be said of the Beatitudes (or blessings) in which Jesus describes the characteristics that lead to happiness: doing what God wants, showing mercy (kindness), having purity of heart (love), and working for peace. So simple, even children can do it! (Today's Bible story includes only the first four Beatitudes.) Early childhood educators know that the early years, from birth through age eight, are when the brain expands most rapidly, and attitudes toward others (i.e., socialization) are formed. What a great time to introduce these "happy attitudes" to children!



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Sing the following prayer to the tune of “Happy Birthday”:
 - We love you, dear God!
 - We love you, dear God!
 - We thank you and praise you!
 - We love you, dear God!
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

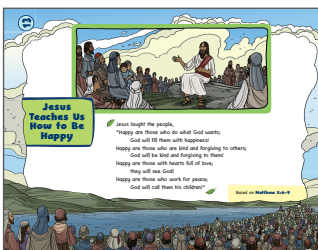
- Ask the children to share what makes them happy.
- Explain that happiness means that we are sometimes excited, sometimes joyful, and sometimes quiet and at peace. Ask the children to offer examples of when they might feel these emotions.
- Tell the children that today they will learn a few of the ways to live and act that Jesus said would bring us happiness here on Earth and with God in Heaven.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Put your finger on Jesus. What does it look like Jesus is doing? (*talking to the people, teaching the people*)
 - Yes, Jesus is our teacher, and we have his words in our story today.
 - Let’s look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Look at all the people! How many are there? Can you guess? Let’s just say there are lots and lots of people!
 - Now let’s pretend we are sitting near Jesus and listening to his words. He is going to teach us something we need to know about how to be happy! Are you ready to listen?
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.



Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy

Jesus taught the people,

"Happy are those who do what God wants;

God will fill them with happiness!

Happy are those who are kind and forgiving to others;

God will be kind and forgiving to them!

Happy are those with hearts full of love;

they will see God!

Happy are those who work for peace;

God will call them his children!"

(Based on Matthew 5:6–9)



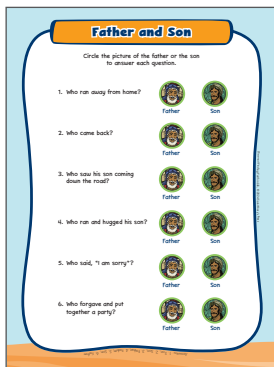
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Tell the children that Jesus shared four important things about being happy. Invite them to raise a finger for each thing as you mention it.
- Ask the children to share how we know what God wants. Explain that we do what God wants when we do good things, when we help others, when we listen to our parents and other caregivers.
- Invite the children to share how we can be kind to others. Mention that we can be kind when we help others, play nicely with others, take turns, and don't tease or hurt others.
- Ask the children how we can be full of love. Tell them that we can be full of love in our hearts when we pray for others in church and at home, when we help out, and when we invite others to be with us.
- Encourage the children to offer ideas for how we can make peace. Explain that peace is calmness and joy, and that we make peace when we don't start arguments or fights. Tell them that we make peace when we share with others and make them feel happy.
- Explain that Jesus wants everyone to be happy, but that sometimes people on Earth are not happy all the time. Tell the children that in Heaven, we will be happy all the time, and if we try to follow the way of Jesus on Earth, we will be happy in Heaven with God one day.

- Invite the children to join you in this chant that recalls the four instructions of Jesus in this story. Ask them if they remember that Jesus told us four important things about happiness. Then continue with the following:
 - Let's start clapping 1, 2, 3, 4, and then repeat the words after me. *(Clap as you say each syllable below and as the children repeat.)*
 - Do what God wants! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Be kind to all! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Be full of love! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Bring peace and joy! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Thank you, Je-sus! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Al-le-lu-ia! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Al-le-lu-ia! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Al-le-lu-ia! *(Children repeat.)*
 - Amen, Amen! *(Children repeat.)*

Learning Activities



- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 151–152 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



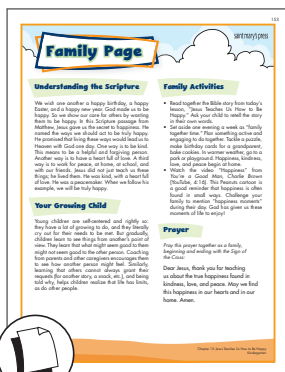
Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What does Jesus want? *(Jesus wants us to be happy.)*
 - How can we be happy? *(by doing what God wants, showing kindness, being full of love, and making peace)*
 - Where will we be fully happy one day with God? *(Heaven)*
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray in these or similar words:
 - Dear Lord Jesus, today we learned from you how to be happy. Help us remember that the best way to be happy is to make others happy. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

If You're Happy and You Know It

- Ask the children how they know when someone is happy. Invite them to share what people look like, what they might do, and what they might say when they're happy.
- Explain that everyone wants to be happy, and that Jesus gave us some clues as to how we can be happy. Remind them of the four ways Jesus shared:
 - Do what God wants.
 - Be kind to others.
 - Be full of love.
 - Be peacemakers.
- Emphasize that we can become happy by making others happy through our words and actions.
- Invite the children to name a few things that make them happy. Responses might include a favorite food, a bedtime story, a special song, a special time of day, etc.
- Have them share how others can know when they are happy. Encourage them to describe what they look like, what they might do, and what they might say when they're happy.
- Lead the children in singing "If You're Happy and You Know It":
 - If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (*Clap twice.*)
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (*Clap twice.*)
If you're happy and you know, then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (*Clap twice.*)
 - If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (*Stomp twice.*)
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (*Stomp twice.*)
If you're happy and you know, then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (*Stomp twice.*)
- Continue with other verses as time allows, such as:
 - If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" . . .
 - If you're happy and you know it, tap your head . . .
 - If you're happy and you know it, touch your toes . . .
 - If you're happy and you know it, say "Amen!" . . .

Materials Needed

- blank paper, one sheet for each child
- crayons

A Happy Picture

- Distribute blank paper and crayons.
- Explain that the children will be drawing a picture of something or someone that makes them happy.
- Remind them that these happy times and loving people are gifts of God to us.
- Ask the children to share some ideas of what their picture might be. Responses might include a sunny day, a playground, a sunset, a special spot in their yard, their mom or dad, a grandparent, a special stuffed animal, etc.
- Circulate among the children, suggesting details they could add to their pictures or encouraging them to fully color a section (like a roof or a tree trunk), rather than leaving a lot of white space.
- Remind the children to write their name on the back of their picture.
- Prepare a space in the classroom for displaying the pictures. You might like to title the display "Happiness Is . . ."

Materials Needed

- an open space, such as a playground or gym
- five sheets of sturdy paper or cardboard, with one of the letters of the word *HAPPY* on each

A Happy Relay Race

- Introduce this activity by explaining that the group will spell the word *HAPPY* together in a relay race.
- Show the children the five sheets of cardboard and how they spell the word *HAPPY*.
- Begin the race by arranging the children into five even lines. If your group is uneven, make one child your assistant and have them hand out the *HAPPY* cards, say "1, 2, 3, Go!" etc.
- Give one letter to each of the five line leaders. Keep the letters in the correct order so that they spell *HAPPY* from left to right at the end of the game.
- Explain that when you say "Go," the first person in each line will carry the letter to a designated spot on the other side of the space and then turn around and run back to the line, hand the letter to the next person in line, and go to the end of the line.
- Share that the new person holding the letter will then run to the designated spot, run back to the line, hand the letter to the next person, and go to the end of the line.
- Explain that this will continue until the person who was originally at the front of the line arrives at the front of the line again. Tell them that the first person will take the letter, run to the other side of the space, and stay there with the letter, holding it up.
- Encourage the children to run the relay, assisting them with instructions as they go along. Help them read the final word, *HAPPY*, at the end when the first person in each line is holding up their letter.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

We wish one another a happy birthday, a happy Easter, and a happy new year. God made us to be happy. So we show our care for others by wanting them to be happy. In this Scripture passage from Matthew, Jesus gave us the secret to happiness. He named the ways we should act to be truly happy. He promised that living these ways would lead us to Heaven with God one day. One way is to be kind. This means to be a helpful and forgiving person. Another way is to have a heart full of love. A third way is to work for peace, at home, at school, and with our friends. Jesus did not just teach us these things; he lived them. He was kind, with a heart full of love. He was a peacemaker. When we follow his example, we will be truly happy.

Your Growing Child

Young children are self-centered and rightly so: they have a lot of growing to do, and they literally cry out for their needs to be met. But gradually, children learn to see things from another's point of view. They learn that what might seem good to them might not seem good to the other person. Coaching from parents and other caregivers encourages them to see how another person might feel. Similarly, learning that others cannot always grant their requests (for another story, a snack, etc.), and being told why, helps children realize that life has limits, as do other people.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Set aside one evening a week as "family together time." Plan something active and engaging to do together. Tackle a puzzle, make birthday cards for a grandparent, bake cookies. In warmer weather, go to a park or playground. Happiness, kindness, love, and peace begin at home.
- Watch the video "Happiness" from *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (YouTube, 4:16). This Peanuts cartoon is a good reminder that happiness is often found in small ways. Challenge your family to mention "happiness moments" during their day. God has given us these moments of life to enjoy!

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, thank you for teaching us about the true happiness found in kindness, love, and peace. May we find this happiness in our hearts and in our home. Amen.

Chapter

14

Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others




 Chapter
14

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 12:28–31

Lesson Goals

- to know that the first important commandment is to love God
- to know that the second important commandment is to love others as yourself
- to give examples of keeping each of these commandments

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catechism References

2055, 2083, 2196

Materials Needed

- the chapter 14 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 14 family page, on page 163 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 160–161 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

"All you need is love," sang the Beatles so many years ago. Jesus seems to concur! But how we interpret the word *love* depends on what kind of love we are talking about. In today's lesson, it is important to emphasize that love is not a feeling. Love is an action. We do not need to *feel* loving to *be* loving. Loving God and loving others as ourselves (even when we don't feel like it) is an important lesson at any age, from kindergarten on up.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Lord Jesus, you are our teacher. Help us learn to love as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

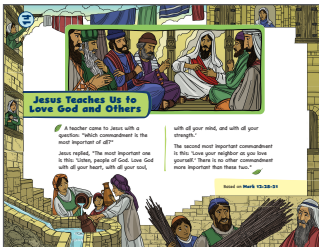
Engage

- Ask the children to share who they love.
- Invite them to share whether they ever say, “I love pizza” or “I love swimming.” Elicit other examples. Explain that the word *love* has many meanings.
- Tell the children that the word *love* has two big meanings for Jesus. Encourage them to listen well to today’s Bible story to find out what Jesus thinks is important about love.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Let’s look at the picture. How many men are in this picture? (*seven, including Jesus*)
 - Put your finger on the picture of Jesus. He is the one in the white robe. What is Jesus doing? (*He is talking with the men.*)
 - Look at the picture at the bottom of the page. What are the women doing? (*They are at a well, filling their pitchers with water.*)
 - The little girl is helping too. What is she doing? (*She is holding a pitcher.*)
 - What about the men and the boy? What might they be doing? (*Accept responses; maybe delivering sticks to the older man.*)
 - Look at the women on the left side of the page. What are they doing? (*One is holding a baby, and the other is hanging clothes on a clothes-line.*)
- Tell the children that you will now read the Bible story so they can learn what is happening in these pictures.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others

A teacher came to Jesus with a question: "Which commandment is the most important of all?"

Jesus replied, "The most important one is this: 'Listen, people of God. Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment more important than these two."

(Based on Mark 12:28–31)



Discover! (25 minutes)

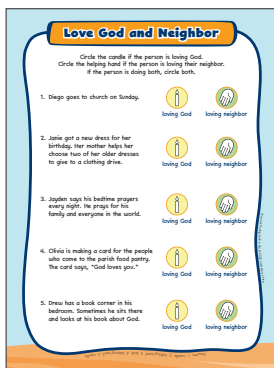
Core Teaching

- Ask the children what Jesus told the men about love and who they should love. (*Love God, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.*)
- Invite the children to raise one finger and say, "Love God," and then raise another finger and say, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." Repeat this several times so they can remember the two commandments of love. Continue with the following:
 - The main image shows the teacher asking a question and Jesus teaching him and the others about love.
 - So how might the people on the bottom of the page be showing love for others?
 - Maybe the women at the well are getting water for the woman who is taking care of the baby. And maybe they are getting water for the woman who is hanging clothes. Or perhaps they are getting water for their families and their neighbors. So what commandment are they following? (*Love your neighbor as you love yourself.*)
 - Maybe the man and boy are father and son collecting sticks for their older neighbor, or maybe for their grandfather who can't do it himself because of his age. What commandment are they following? (*Love your neighbor as you love yourself.*)
 - Now we know why this page has these pictures on it.

- Explain that the first important commandment, loving God, means we put God first in everything because he created us and is our Father. Share that the second important commandment means we love our neighbor just as much as we love ourselves.
- Tell the children that God is first, our neighbor is second, and we are even with our neighbor. Explain that Jesus also says we must love ourselves and take care of ourselves so we can love God and others.
- Ask the children to share some ways we can take care of ourselves. *(Accept responses, such as eating healthy food, getting enough sleep, and getting enough exercise.)*
- Tell the children that God made them and that they have great value to God. Comment that they are God's treasures. Explain that each of us was given gifts from God, like goodness, joy, and special talents. Share that God wants us to use our gifts and talents for good. Ask the children to name some of their gifts and talents. *(caring for others, telling jokes, being kind, singing, dancing, etc.)*
- Ask the children for examples of loving God, of putting God first. *(going to church, saying our prayers, reading books about Jesus, doing what God wants, etc.)*
- Invite the children to share examples of loving our neighbors, those we meet every day, and sometimes those we meet who are in need. *(being nice to them, helping them, inviting them to play with us, playing fairly, talking to children who are alone on the playground, etc.)*
- Comment that we sometimes don't feel loving, but we still have to be loving. Explain that sometimes we don't feel like listening or helping or being kind, but sharing love is what we do.
- Conclude by asking the children if they remember the two commandments of love. Invite them to put one finger up and see if they remember the first one *(love God)* and then another finger up and see if they remember the second one *(love your neighbor as you love yourself)*.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 160–161, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

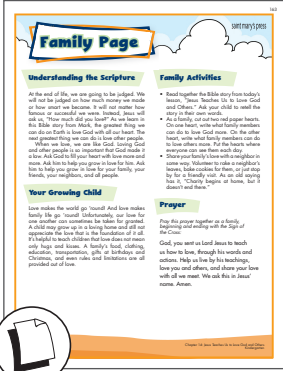




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What is the first important commandment? (*Love God.*)
 - What is the next important commandment? (*Love your neighbor as you love yourself.*)
 - What are some examples of loving God? Of loving your neighbor? Of loving yourself? (*Accept all responses.*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in singing the following prayer to the tune of “Amazing Grace,” practicing several times until the children remember the words:
 - Love God, love God, love God, love God
And love your neighbor too.
For we are one big family
And that’s why I love you!
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “You Are God’s Treasure,” from page 162 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons

You Are God’s Treasure

- Distribute the handout and crayons.
- Explain to the children that each of us is God’s treasure, and God gave us good gifts and treasures that we need to care for. Share that caring for our gifts and treasures is how we love ourselves.
- Direct the children to draw themselves and their gifts and talents around the treasure chest on the handout.
- Help them with suggestions, such as drawing themselves helping someone else or sharing with someone, using one of their talents, getting enough sleep, or brushing their teeth. Explain that these are all ways we treasure ourselves and love ourselves.
- Conclude the activity by reminding the children that both commandments are necessary. Tell them that we are to love God and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Emphasize that we are all treasured by God.

Materials Needed

- white construction paper, one sheet for each child
- crayons
- an empty cardboard box

Loving Others

- Distribute the white construction paper and crayons.
- Instruct the children to fold their paper in half to make a card.
- Explain that Jesus taught us to love our neighbors and that we can begin by loving the neighbors nearest to us.
- Share that our nearest “neighbors” right now are the other children in the group. Explain that everyone will be making a card for someone in the group.
- Tell the children they should decorate the front of their card in any way they want, remembering that these are cards of love.
- Explain that after decorating the front, they should open their card. Point out the two sides—the left and the right. Tell the children to write “I love you” on the right-hand side of the card. Write “I love you” on the board so they can copy it as needed.
- Invite them to turn to the card’s backside and write “From” and their name. Circulate to help the children who need assistance.
- Tell the children you will put all the cards in a box and then give each of them a card. Remind them that all the cards will be from someone in the group who wants to show love to them.
- Collect the cards, put them in a box, and randomly choose one at a time, distributing them to the children. If a child gets their own card, exchange it for a different one.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Loving God through Song

- Explain that singing our praise and thanks is one way we can love God. Share that God gave us our voices, and we can love God by using our voices to praise and thank him.
- Tell the children that God gave us our bodies, and we can love God by using our bodies to praise and thank him.
- Show the video “Every Move I Make | Dance-A-Long with Lyrics | Kids Worship” (YouTube, 3:18). Encourage the children to learn the words, and then have them try to imitate the movements.
- Conclude the activity with a short prayer, thanking God for giving the group this time to offer praise and thanksgiving for all they have been given. End by saying, “We love you, God.”

You Are God's Treasure

The treasure chest is bursting! Draw yourself! Draw your gifts and talents. Or draw yourself doing good things. When we treasure and use the gifts God gave us, we are loving God, ourselves, and others.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

At the end of life, we are going to be judged. We will not be judged on how much money we made or how smart we became. It will not matter how famous or successful we were. Instead, Jesus will ask us, "How much did you love?" As we learn in this Bible story from Mark, the greatest thing we can do on Earth is love God with all our heart. The next greatest thing we can do is love other people.

When we love, we are like God. Loving God and other people is so important that God made it a law. Ask God to fill your heart with love more and more. Ask him to help you grow in love for him. Ask him to help you grow in love for your family, your friends, your neighbors, and all people.

Your Growing Child

Love makes the world go 'round! And love makes family life go 'round! Unfortunately, our love for one another can sometimes be taken for granted. A child may grow up in a loving home and still not appreciate the love that is the foundation of it all. It's helpful to teach children that love does not mean only hugs and kisses. A family's food, clothing, education, transportation, gifts at birthdays and Christmas, and even rules and limitations are all provided out of love.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- As a family, cut out two red paper hearts. On one heart, write what family members can do to love God more. On the other heart, write what family members can do to love others more. Put the hearts where everyone can see them each day.
- Share your family's love with a neighbor in some way. Volunteer to rake a neighbor's leaves, bake cookies for them, or just stop by for a friendly visit. As an old saying has it, "Charity begins at home, but it doesn't end there."

Prayer

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

God, you sent us Lord Jesus to teach us how to love, through his words and actions. Help us live by his teachings, love you and others, and share your love with all we meet. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter

15

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray




**Chapter
15**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 17:11, 20–21, 23

Lesson Goals

- to understand that prayer is talking and listening to God
- to recognize that Jesus talked and listened to God, his Father and ours
- to pray with Jesus, that we may all be one in God

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

2564–2565, 2664, 2792–2793

Materials Needed

- the chapter 15 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 15 family page, on page 172 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 170–171 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Jesus' prayer for his disciples is one of the most beautiful in the Scriptures. In this prayer to his Father, Jesus reveals his hopes for his disciples and for those who would come after them. In this prayer, he prays for the unity of all his disciples with himself and his Father—a unity based on the love God has for him, for each disciple, and for us who believe in him today. In this lesson, the children have the opportunity to join with Jesus as they pray for oneness with God and for the unity of all people. Through kindness and love, they can help bring about this oneness in God's love.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Jesus, you gave us many examples of how to pray. Remind us to pray for ourselves and others in church, at home, and in our hearts. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

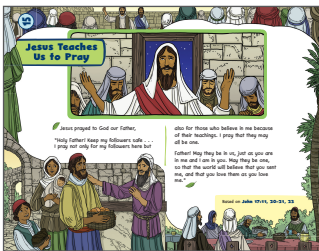
Engage

- Invite the children to hold up two fingers: their pointer finger and their middle finger. Have them notice that the two fingers are side by side.
- Encourage the children to place their pointer finger over their middle finger, so that the two fingers are on top of each other. Help them as needed. Explain that this can be a sign of closeness or unity—the two fingers are sticking together as one.
- Tell the children that they will hear about unity in today's Bible story.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture.
- Invite them to look at Jesus and to notice that his eyes are looking up and he is raising his hands.
- Encourage them to share what they think Jesus is doing. (*He is praying.*)
- Explain that raising our hands is something we can do when we are praying. Tell the children that even today they will see some people raising their hands like this in church. Inform the children that they will raise their hands like this for prayer later in the lesson.
- Ask the children what they think Jesus is saying in his prayer. Accept responses, and tell the children they will find out in today's Bible story.
- Direct their attention to the bottom of the page, and continue with the following:
 - What do you think the man in the purple robe is saying to the family? It looks like he is saying, "Welcome! So glad you could be with us!"
 - What is the man carrying in the basket? (*It looks like food.*)
 - It looks like the people are having a meal and everyone is sharing their food.

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

Jesus prayed to God our Father,

"Holy Father! Keep my followers safe . . . I pray not only for my followers here but also for those who believe in me because of their teachings. I pray that they may all be one.

Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me, and that you love them as you love me."

(Based on John 17:11, 20–21, 23)



Discover! (25 minutes)

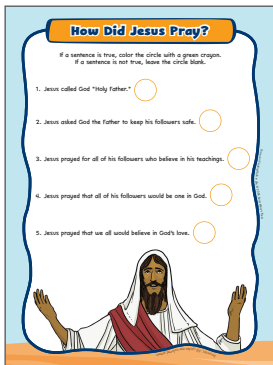
Core Teaching

- Ask the children if they know what prayer is. Accept their responses, and emphasize that prayer is a way to talk and listen to God.
- Remind the children that Jesus is praying to God in the Bible story, and he is praying that everyone may be one with God and with one another.
- Explain that being one with God and one another means being one in God's love. Remind the children that God's love includes everyone.
- Draw a big circle on the board. Explain that it is the circle of God's love. Inside the circle, write, "ALL." Explain that *all* means everyone.
- Tell the children that Jesus wants everyone to be in the circle of God's love by being kind and loving to everyone else. Explain that the picture at the bottom of the page shows people being kind to one another and sharing with one another.
- Invite the children to share how they can be kind and loving to others.

- Explain that they will now do a little dance about God's circle of love. Ask the children to stand in a circle, facing the center. Sing the following song to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush":
 - Here we go 'round the circle of love, the circle of love, the circle of love.
Here we go 'round the circle of love, the circle of God's loving.
- Invite the children to turn to the right and walk in a circle while singing the song again. Then have them turn to the left, walk, and repeat the song again. Repeat the verse and the circling as appropriate. Then ask the children to sit down.
- Explain that in our world, people speak different languages. Not everyone speaks English. Ask them if they know someone who speaks another language.
- Tell them that when Jesus was on Earth, he did not speak English. He spoke a language called Aramaic. Explain that when Jesus prayed to God, he did not call God "Father." He called God "Abba." Explain that *Abba* means "Father" or "Daddy" in the language of Jesus.
- Conclude by inviting the children to stand up and raise their hands as you pray:
 - Abba, Father, we belong to you.
Make us one with Jesus, one with others, and one with you.
Amen.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 170–171 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

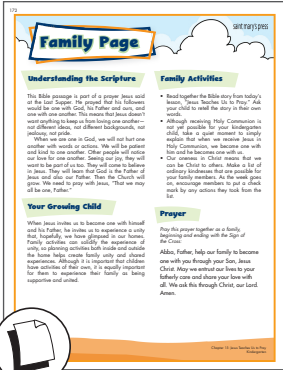




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What is prayer? (*talking and listening to God*)
 - Who did Jesus talk and listen to in today's Bible story? (*God, his Father and ours*)
 - What do we pray with Jesus? (*that all of us may be one in God*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to stand up and raise their hands in prayer.
- Pray this prayer:
 - Abba, Father, make us one with you and one with one another. Circle us with your love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a large piece of cardboard cut into a circle
- a pair of scissors
- a large table or floor space

Materials Needed

- a large floor space
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

We Are One

- Prepare by cutting the cardboard circle into as many pieces as there are children in the group, creating a puzzle.
- Explain to the children that this activity will show them something about being one in God's love and one with one another.
- Distribute one puzzle piece to each child, and invite them to write their name on their piece.
- Direct the children to gather in the designated space to work together to complete the puzzle.
- Conclude, when the puzzle is together, that the puzzle is like the circle of God's love.
- Explain that the puzzle is like our oneness with Jesus and with one another. Comment that we are each a different part of the puzzle, but we all fit together as one in God's love.

A Circle Dance

- Explain to the children that they will all connect in a circle in this activity. Comment that this will show them something about being connected to one another in God's love.
- Show the video "Make A Circle/Preschool Song/Super Simple Songs" (YouTube, 1:16), inviting the children to watch the motions. Tell them they will do the motions together in a few moments.
- Invite the children to stand in a circle. Play the video again, leading the children in the motions.
- Note that the children are lying flat at the end of the video, with their legs spread apart and their toes touching. Challenge your group to do the same thing.
- Remind the children that Jesus prayed that we would all be one, like one big circle. Explain that we are made one and connected to God's love, and that we can strengthen our connections by being kind and loving to one another.

Materials Needed

- a large floor space

Loving Others

- Ask the children to sit in a circle, and explain that this will be a prayer circle.
- Share that in this circle they can pray for anyone they want. They can pray that God's love will circle around that person and pour down upon that person.
- Explain that they will have some time to think about who they want to pray for. Give the children a few moments to think.
- Tell the children that if they want to pray for someone, they can just say the name of that person aloud when it is time. Explain that after a name is said, everyone will say, "Abba, Father, hear our prayer."
- Invite the children to take turns, saying only one name at a time. Share that if they have more than one person they want to pray for, they will have another turn.
- Start by mentioning a person you would like to pray for, and then lead the children in the response. Encourage them to share names of people they would like to pray for, and lead them in the response each time. Continue until all prayers have been lifted up.
- Conclude by asking the children to stand and hold hands. Pray in these or similar words:
 - Abba, Father, we have prayed for those we love and for those in need.
Pour out your love and blessings upon all those we have prayed for.
We ask of you: Abba, Father, hear our prayer.
(Lead the children in repeating, "Abba, Father, hear our prayer.")

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

This Bible passage is part of a prayer Jesus said at the Last Supper. He prayed that his followers would be one with God, his Father and ours, and one with one another. This means that Jesus doesn't want anything to keep us from loving one another—not different ideas, not different backgrounds, not jealousy, not pride.

When we are one in God, we will not hurt one another with words or actions. We will be patient and kind to one another. Other people will notice our love for one another. Seeing our joy, they will want to be part of us too. They will come to believe in Jesus. They will learn that God is the Father of Jesus and also our Father. Then the Church will grow. We need to pray with Jesus, "That we may all be one, Father."

Your Growing Child

When Jesus invites us to become one with himself and his Father, he invites us to experience a unity that, hopefully, we have glimpsed in our homes. Family activities can solidify the experience of unity, so planning activities both inside and outside the home helps create family unity and shared experiences. Although it is important that children have activities of their own, it is equally important for them to experience their family as being supportive and united.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us to Pray." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Although receiving Holy Communion is not yet possible for your kindergarten child, take a quiet moment to simply explain that when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we become one with him and he becomes one with us.
- Our oneness in Christ means that we can be Christ to others. Make a list of ordinary kindnesses that are possible for your family members. As the week goes on, encourage members to put a check mark by any actions they took from the list.

Prayer

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

Abba, Father, help our family to become one with you through your Son, Jesus Christ. May we entrust our lives to your fatherly care and share your love with all. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Unit 4

Jesus Dies and Rises for Us

Chapter 16

Jesus Dies for Us 174

Chapter 17

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Chapter 18

Jesus Is Our Shepherd 194

Chapter 19

We Care for Jesus through People in Need ... 204

Chapter 20

We Become Close to Jesus at Mass 212

Chapter
16

Jesus Dies for Us




 Chapter
16

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 27:1–2, 29, 31, 50–54

Lesson Goals

- to identify the cross as an important symbol for Christians
- to recognize that Jesus died on the cross out of love for us
- to express different feelings about Jesus' death

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

595–623

Materials Needed

- the chapter 16 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 16 family page, on page 183 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 181–182 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this lesson, we hear how Jesus died on the cross out of his love for us. The passage ends with the death of Jesus. The account of Jesus' suffering and death can be challenging to process with young children, so it can be helpful to discuss their feelings about this event.

We can process feelings about Jesus' suffering and death by relating them to events in our own lives and imagining how Jesus' friends and mother felt when he died. Focusing on the cross as a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice and love provides us with a touchstone to draw us to the heart of the Bible story—Jesus was willing to suffer and die because of his unwavering love for us.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Sing together this adaptation of the song “Jesus Loves Me.” If the children do not know the words, ask them to listen to you first, and then sing it together:
 - Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
so I sing this happy song.

Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

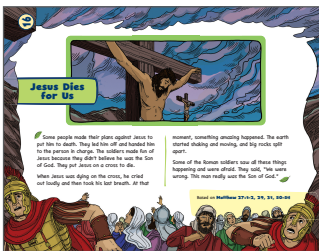
Engage

- Ask the children if they know what a cross is. Invite them to respond, encouraging them to share what a cross looks like. Consider inviting a volunteer to draw one on the board, or draw one yourself for the children to see.
- Invite the children to share all the places they might find a cross. (*inside or outside a church, in a classroom, as part of the Sign of the Cross prayer, on a necklace or other jewelry, and so on*)
- Explain that in today’s Bible story, they will learn why the cross is such an important symbol for Christians.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Who is the person on the cross? (*Jesus*)
 - What do you think happened? (*Jesus died on the cross.*)
- Explain that some people wanted to punish Jesus, so they had him arrested and sentenced to death on a cross. Tell the children that these people were jealous of Jesus, and they didn’t believe he was God’s Son.

- Invite the children to look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Point out that there are some Roman soldiers in this picture. Ask the children how they can tell they are soldiers. (*They have helmets on; they are wearing a uniform.*)
- Explain to the children that we can guess how a person is feeling by looking at their face. Make a face that shows you are happy, and invite the children to guess what you are feeling. Then make a face that shows you are sad, and again invite the children to guess what you are feeling.
- Ask the children to look at the bottom of the page again. Point out the Roman soldiers' faces. Invite the children to share what they think the soldiers are feeling. (*They are afraid/scared.*)
- Share that the Bible story will help the children understand what happened to Jesus and why the soldiers look frightened in the picture.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Dies for Us

Some people made their plans against Jesus to put him to death. They led him off and handed him to the person in charge. The soldiers made fun of Jesus because they didn't believe he was the Son of God. They put Jesus on a cross to die.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, he cried out loudly and then took his last breath. At that moment, something amazing happened. The earth started shaking and moving, and big rocks split apart.

Some of the Roman soldiers saw all these things happening and were afraid. They said, "We were wrong. This man really was the Son of God."

(Based on Matthew 27:1–2, 29, 31, 50–54)



Discover! (25 minutes)

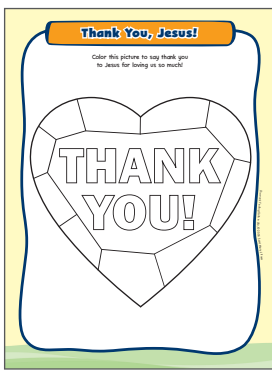
Core Teaching

- Recall some points of the Bible story, and remind the children that Jesus was willing to die on the cross because he loves us so much. Explain that it is hard to understand, but Jesus died so that we can one day live forever with God in Heaven.
- Tell the children that the Roman soldiers did not believe Jesus was special, but after they saw what happened, they recognized him as the Son of God. They were frightened because they realized they were wrong.
- Remind the children that we know that Jesus was the Son of God, and that everything he did when he was teaching was to help us be close to God. Explain that he lived his life as an example for us to follow so we can also be with God in Heaven one day.
- Share that Jesus obeyed God and showed us how much he loves God and loves us.
- Ask the children the following questions:
 - How do you feel when you see the picture of Jesus on the cross and you understand that he died? *(Accept all responses.)*
 - Death can be a sad thing. We are especially sad because Jesus was so good and kind and taught us many important lessons. But we also know that Jesus went to be with God. This can bring us some comfort.
 - Has anyone you knew or cared about died? How did you feel? *(Encourage the children to share, even if they talk about a relative who passed away before they were born or if they share about a pet.)*
 - You can imagine that Jesus' friends and his mother were very sad when he died.
 - Hearing about Jesus' death can make us feel many different feelings.
- Explain to the children that they are going to spend some time thinking about feelings by using their imagination and memory:
 - Let's begin by thinking of a happy memory. Can you think back to a time when you felt happy? Were you smiling or laughing? Who was with you when you were feeling happy?
 - Now can you think about a time when you were nervous? How did you know you were nervous? Did your hands get sweaty? Did you get a stomachache? How did that feeling go away?
 - Now think about a time when you were sad. Did you let anyone know how you were feeling? What made you feel better? Talking about our feelings can help because we know we're not feeling sad all by ourselves.

- Let's talk about one more feeling. Think of a time when you felt hopeful. This feeling means you have something to look forward to. Hope can help us through tough times because we can think about what comes next.
- Congratulate the children for using their imagination and memory. Remind them that Jesus' friends and followers were sad when he died, but they were hopeful because Jesus told them he would rise from the dead. Tell the children that they will hear more about this in the Bible story for next time.
- Explain that when we see the cross, we can remember that Jesus loves us so much that he wants us to live forever with God in Heaven.

Learning Activities

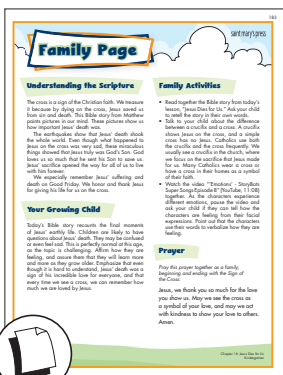
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 181–182 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What is an important symbol for Christians that we see in different places? (*the cross*)
 - Why did Jesus die on the cross? (*He loved us so much.*)
 - How might we feel about Jesus' death? (*sad, frightened, etc.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer after you:
 - Dear God, thank you for the gift of our feelings.
When we are happy or sad, we know you will always be there.
We are grateful for how much you love us.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- craft sticks, two for each child
- tape, glue, or glue sticks
- crayons or markers
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Cross Craft

- Distribute the craft sticks and tape, glue, or glue sticks. Explain that today the children will be making a cross. Remind them that the cross is a special and important symbol for us as Christians.
- Tell the children that the cross has two wooden beams, one going across and the other up and down. Share that a cross represents the cross that Jesus died on and symbolizes Jesus' love for us.
- Distribute the crayons or markers and invite the children to color one side of each craft stick, letting them choose what color or colors they would like to use. Then show them how to tape or glue the two sticks together.
- Walk around and help any children who may need assistance.
- Remind the children that they will see crosses in Christian churches, that we often make the Sign of the Cross as part of prayer, and that many people wear a cross as jewelry, like a necklace. Explain that every time we see a cross, we are reminded of how loved we are.
- Encourage the children to put their crosses down and stretch their arms open wide. Invite them to wrap their arms around themselves and give themselves a great, big hug.
- Tell them that Jesus wants us to feel like we are wrapped in his loving arms, and he will always be there for us.
- Explain that when we are feeling sad, we can wrap our arms around ourselves and imagine that Jesus is giving us a big hug.

Materials Needed

- a large sheet of newsprint or poster paper
- crayons or markers

Jesus Loves Everyone

- Draw a large yellow sun with rays in the middle of the paper, leaving enough room around it for the children to draw.
- Remind the children that although death is a sad thing, Jesus' death shows us how much Jesus loves us. Tell them that thinking about the love that Jesus has for everyone is a wonderful thing.
- Explain that the sun represents Jesus' love, and just like the sun, Jesus' love reaches everyone in the world.
- Invite the children to draw pictures around the sun of people or things they love. Help them with ideas if necessary. When they are finished, encourage them to each write their first name somewhere around the sun.

- Explain that Jesus' love shines on each of us. You may wish to read the names of the children in your group. Remind them that Jesus loves everyone!
- End by singing "Jesus Loves Me":
 - Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
so I sing this happy song.
 - Yes, Jesus loves me!
 - Yes, Jesus loves me!
 - Yes, Jesus loves me!
 - The Bible tells me so.
- Invite the children to end the song by cheering because of how much they are loved by Jesus.

Materials Needed

- none

Faces and Feelings

- Remind the children of the earlier discussion about feelings and how our faces often show how we're feeling.
- Explain that you are going to call out some feelings, and that the goal is for the children to show those feelings by using their faces. Slowly go through the list and point out and congratulate any children who are making an especially accurate face that shows a particular feeling (add others as time permits):

◦ happy	◦ sad	◦ hopeful
◦ scared	◦ bored	◦ nervous
◦ tired	◦ mad	◦ excited
- Tell the children that we might have feelings of sadness (*invite them to make a sad face*) or maybe even some fear (*invite them to make a scared face*) when we hear the story of Jesus' death on the cross.
- Remind them that it can be helpful to focus on the deep love Jesus has for us. (*Invite them to make a happy face.*) Explain that Jesus loves us so much that he did what God wanted.
- Tell them that it's difficult to understand, but because of Jesus' death, we can one day live forever with God in Heaven. Share that this is Good News!

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

The cross is a sign of the Christian faith. We treasure it because by dying on the cross, Jesus saved us from sin and death. This Bible story from Matthew paints pictures in our mind. These pictures show us how important Jesus' death was.

The earthquakes show that Jesus' death shook the whole world. Even though what happened to Jesus on the cross was very sad, these miraculous things showed that Jesus truly was God's Son. God loves us so much that he sent his Son to save us. Jesus' sacrifice opened the way for all of us to live with him forever.

We especially remember Jesus' suffering and death on Good Friday. We honor and thank Jesus for giving his life for us on the cross.

Your Growing Child

Today's Bible story recounts the final moments of Jesus' earthly life. Children are likely to have questions about Jesus' death. They may be confused or even feel sad. This is perfectly normal at this age, as the topic is challenging. Affirm how they are feeling, and assure them that they will learn more and more as they grow older. Emphasize that even though it is hard to understand, Jesus' death was a sign of his incredible love for everyone, and that every time we see a cross, we can remember how much we are loved by Jesus.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Dies for Us." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Talk to your child about the difference between a crucifix and a cross. A crucifix shows Jesus on the cross, and a simple cross has no Jesus. Catholics use both the crucifix and the cross frequently. We usually see a crucifix in the church, where we focus on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Many Catholics wear a cross or have a cross in their homes as a symbol of their faith.
- Watch the video "'Emotions' - StoryBots Super Songs Episode 8" (YouTube, 11:08) together. As the characters experience different emotions, pause the video and ask your child if they can tell how the characters are feeling from their facial expressions. Point out that the characters use their words to verbalize how they are feeling.

Prayer

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

Jesus, we thank you so much for the love you show us. May we see the cross as a symbol of your love, and may we act with kindness to show your love to others. Amen.

Chapter
17

Jesus Rises for Us




**Chapter
17**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 16:1–6

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus rose from the dead
- to state that Jesus' rising to new life is a reason to celebrate
- to name some symbols of Jesus' rising to new life

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

638–658, 1136–1199, 1322–1419

Materials Needed

- the chapter 17 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 17 family page, on page 193 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 191–192 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Imagine the moment when the women at the tomb discovered that Jesus was no longer dead. This changed the whole world and gave all people a new understanding of God's promise of eternal life. Jesus' rising from the dead meant that we shouldn't fear death. It is a passage to living forever.

In this moment, it was revealed to the women, and to us, that Jesus is truly the Son of God. Jesus went through agony because of his great love for humanity, so that he could fulfill this promise of eternal life. In the previous lesson, we learned about Jesus' death and the feelings of sadness that this can bring. The focus of today's lesson shifts to celebration as we hear of the empty tomb. We realize that Jesus has risen and in so doing has conquered sin and death.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Dear God,
We celebrate new life.
We are excited when we see flowers beginning to bloom,
when we see chicks hatching from their shells,
and when we learn of the birth of a new baby.
Help us look for signs of new life all around us
and celebrate these gifts you have given!
Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

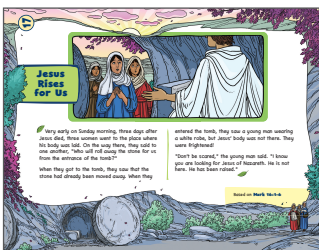
- Invite the children to share how they like to celebrate something, such as a birthday. Ask them what kinds of things mark it as a celebration.
- Encourage them to show different expressions of celebration with their faces or bodies, such as putting their arms in the air, shouting hooray, clapping, singing, and so on.
- Tell the children that in today's Bible story they are going to learn about a sad event that turned into a surprising event and then became a reason we celebrate. Remind them that in the last lesson, they learned that Jesus died. Invite them to listen for a surprise in today's Bible story.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - How many women are in the picture? (*three*)
 - Who do you think the person in white is, talking to the women from inside? (*Accept all responses.*)
 - Last week we practiced looking at a person's face to see if we could figure out how they were feeling. Look at the faces of the women. How do you think they feel? (*Accept all responses.*)



- Invite the children to look at the bottom of the page and find the same three women. Encourage the children to point when they have located the women. Ask them what else they see and if they can guess what the Bible story might be about.
- Encourage the children to listen closely to today's Bible story to find out who the person in white is and what the women were feeling.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Rises for Us

Very early on Sunday morning, three days after Jesus died, three women went to the place where his body was laid. On the way there, they said to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

When they got to the tomb, they saw the stone had already been moved away. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man wearing a white robe, but Jesus' body was not there. They were frightened!

"Don't be scared," the young man said. "I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. He is not here. He has been raised."

(Based on Mark 16:1-6)



Discover! (25 minutes)

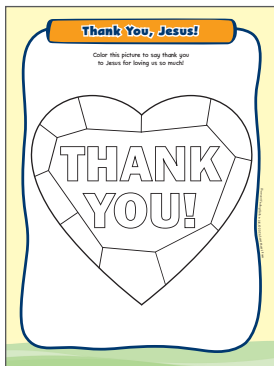
Core Teaching

- Invite the children to retell the Bible story in their own words, prompting them to note key points. You may want to point to the tomb in the pictures and explain to the children that this is where people in Jesus' time were placed when they died.
- Ask the following questions:
 - Who came to Jesus' tomb? (*three women*)
 - When they got to the tomb, the stone covering the opening was moved away and Jesus' body was gone. Who was inside the tomb? (*a young man, an angel*)
 - What did the young man tell the women? (*Don't be scared. I know you are looking for Jesus. He is not here. He has risen.*)
- Invite the children to share if they can imagine how the women were feeling. Remind them that the women were just told that Jesus, who had died on the cross three days earlier, was raised from the dead. Share that they didn't know what to think and were frightened at first.
- Explain to the children that Jesus' rising to new life is a reason to celebrate. Tell them that we celebrate Jesus' rising to new life every Sunday at Mass, and we call Sunday the Lord's Day because this is the day Jesus rose from the dead. Affirm that we can celebrate Jesus' rising to new life every day because it is such Good News.
- Share that we also celebrate Jesus' rising to new life at Easter time and that this is an important celebration in the Church.
- Remind the children that they probably remember seeing eggs, baby chicks, bunnies, and flowers as part of celebrations around Easter. Tell them that these are all wonderful reminders of Jesus' rising to new life because they are all symbols of new life:
 - Eggs remind us of new life because they hatch. What comes out of an egg? (*a baby chick*)
 - The eggshell can also remind us of the tomb out of which Jesus rose to new life, just like a baby chick comes out of the shell to new life.

- Baby chicks and baby bunnies can remind us of new life, and flowers that bloom in the spring also remind us that the darkness of winter is over and that spring and new life have arrived.
- We often get sweets around Easter too. Candy can remind us of the sweet, Good News that Jesus was risen!
- All these things—eggs, baby chicks, bunnies, flowers, and sweets—can remind us that Jesus died but rose again to new life! What Good News!

Learning Activities

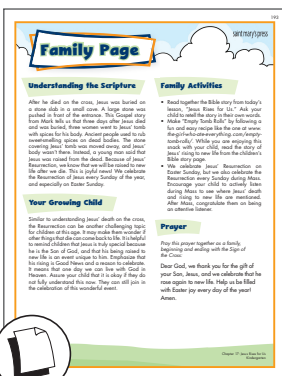
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 191–192 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who rose from the dead? (*Jesus*)
 - Is Jesus’ rising to new life a reason to celebrate? (*Yes!*)
 - What are some things that remind us of Jesus’ new life? (*eggs, baby chicks, bunnies, flowers, sweets*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Sing the following words to the tune of “This Little Light of Mine”:
 - Jesus rose to life.
I’m going to celebrate!
Jesus rose to life.
I’m going to celebrate!
Jesus rose to life.
I’m going to celebrate!
To new life, to new life, to new life!
- Pray the following short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for Jesus, your Son. He died and then rose again, which is a reason to celebrate! Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- plastic eggs, enough for each child to collect several
- a basket or bucket for the collected eggs
- candy, stickers, and other small treats that will fit in the eggs

New-Life Eggs

- Prepare for this activity by filling the eggs with candy, stickers, and other small treats. Hide the eggs around the room.
- Ask the children if they remember that eggs are a symbol of Jesus' rising to new life. Share that a hollow egg is also a symbol of the empty tomb out of which Jesus came.
- Tell the children that you have hidden some new-life eggs around the room. Explain that you would like them to hunt for the eggs, but that they shouldn't open any when they find them.
- Explain that they should bring the eggs up to the front of the room and put them in the basket.
- Count down to begin the hunt, and make sure that everyone finds at least one egg and that all the eggs are placed in the basket unopened.
- Congratulate the children after everyone has found at least one egg, and invite them to stand in a circle. Tell them that you are going to whisper a message to the person on your left. Explain that this person will pass the message along by whispering to the person on their left, and so on.
- Whisper, "Jesus is risen!" to the person on your left, and help the children continue to whisper the message around the circle.
- Ask the child on your right to share the message when it gets to them. Repeat the message "Jesus is risen!" and tell the children to raise their hands if they think this is a message to celebrate. Affirm that this is, indeed, a reason to celebrate.
- Distribute the eggs evenly, and invite the children to open them to get their treats.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Materials Needed

- small cups, one for each child
- potting soil
- scoops or spoons
- seeds (beans, peas, basil, or parsley), several for each child
- water in a spray bottle
- wipes or other items for cleanup

Jesus Is Alive!

- Explain to the children that today they will learn a fun song with movements that celebrates that Jesus rose from the dead.
- Play the video “Jesus Is Alive (Freeze Dance) | Preschool Worship Song” (YouTube, 2:08) for the children one time while they are sitting. Invite them to listen to the words and watch the motions.
- Have them stand arms-length apart. Play the video again, encouraging them to follow the movements and sing along as they are able.
- Play the video several times so the children can learn the lyrics and the movements.
- Explain that we celebrate Jesus’ rising to new life on Easter, but we also celebrate this every Sunday at Mass.
- Tell the children that we can, in fact, celebrate this Good News any day we want, just like today!

New-Life Plants

- Give each child a small cup and have them take turns scooping some soil into their cup until it is about three-quarters full.
- Distribute several seeds to each child, have them use a pencil or their pinkie to make a small hole in the soil, and then encourage them to put the seeds in the hole and cover them gently with more soil.
- Give them a spray bottle to wet the soil.
- Place the cups in a warm, sunny location, and water them occasionally to keep the soil moist. Alternatively, you might wish to send the cups home with the children so they can watch them more closely.
- Explain to the children that even though the seeds seem dead and lifeless, they will sprout. Tell the children that this reminds us that Jesus came to new life after death.
- Remind them that we celebrate Jesus’ rising to new life with flowers and plants.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

After he died on the cross, Jesus was buried on a stone slab in a small cave. A large stone was pushed in front of the entrance. This Gospel story from Mark tells us that three days after Jesus died and was buried, three women went to Jesus' tomb with spices for his body. Ancient people used to rub sweet-smelling spices on dead bodies. The stone covering Jesus' tomb was moved away, and Jesus' body wasn't there. Instead, a young man said that Jesus was raised from the dead. Because of Jesus' Resurrection, we know that we will be raised to new life after we die. This is joyful news! We celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus every Sunday of the year, and especially on Easter Sunday.

Your Growing Child

Similar to understanding Jesus' death on the cross, the Resurrection can be another challenging topic for children at this age. It may make them wonder if other things that die can come back to life. It is helpful to remind children that Jesus is truly special because he is the Son of God, and that his being raised to new life is an event unique to him. Emphasize that his rising is Good News and a reason to celebrate. It means that one day we can live with God in Heaven. Assure your child that it is okay if they do not fully understand this now. They can still join in the celebration of this wonderful event.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Rises for Us." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Make "Empty Tomb Rolls" by following a fun and easy recipe like the one at www.the-girl-who-ate-everything.com/empty-tomb-rolls/. While you are enjoying this snack with your child, read the story of Jesus' rising to new life from the children's Bible story page.
- We celebrate Jesus' Resurrection on Easter Sunday, but we also celebrate the Resurrection every Sunday during Mass. Encourage your child to actively listen during Mass to see where Jesus' death and rising to new life are mentioned. After Mass, congratulate them on being an attentive listener.

Prayer

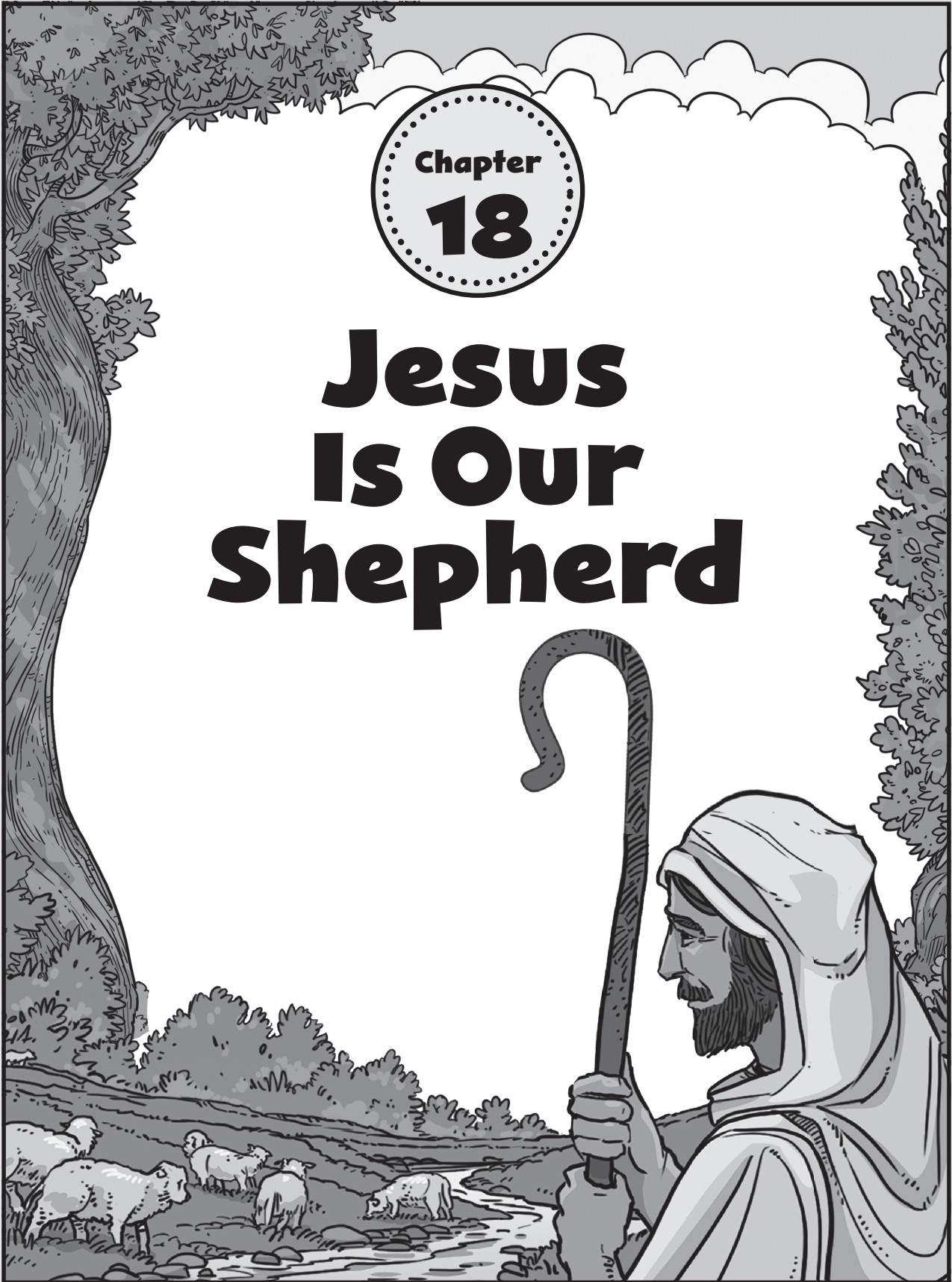
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Dear God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus, and we celebrate that he rose again to new life. Help us be filled with Easter joy every day of the year!
Amen.

Chapter

18

Jesus Is Our Shepherd




**Chapter
18**

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 10:11–15

Lesson Goals

- to learn that Jesus is the Good Shepherd
- to understand that Jesus loves and protects us
- to recognize that we follow Jesus because he is the Good Shepherd

Catechism Pillar

Live

Catechism References

754

Materials Needed

- the chapter 18 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 18 family page, on page 203 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 200–201 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Jesus describes himself as a good shepherd and compares a good shepherd with a "hired man." Jesus uses this analogy to explain that he cares for, watches over, and knows every one of his sheep, but a person who is paid to watch someone's sheep might not care about them as much. The hired man might even run away and leave the sheep all alone if he sees a wolf coming.

In this story, we are the sheep, who rely on the love and care of our Good Shepherd, Jesus—a shepherd who was, indeed, willing to die for his sheep to save us from sin and death. That's how much Jesus loves us. This chapter encourages us to continue to focus on Jesus' deep love for us, knowing that he is a shepherd worth following forever.

† Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

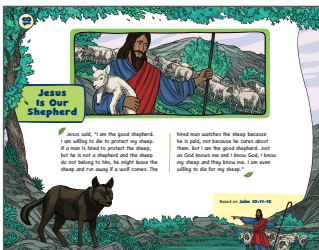
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Dear Jesus, we are so thankful for all we are learning about you. Be with us as we continue to learn about your great love for us. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Ask the children if they know what a shepherd is. Accept their responses, and point out that a shepherd leads sheep, watches over them, protects them, and cares for them.
- Explain to the children that some people act like shepherds in our lives, leading us, watching over us, protecting us, and caring for us. Invite the children to describe who in their life is like a shepherd. Encourage them to share how this makes them feel.
- Tell the children that today they will hear a Bible story about the best shepherd of all. Encourage them to guess who it might be, but tell them they will find out in today's Bible story.

† Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - What animal is Jesus holding in his arms? (*a sheep, a lamb*)
 - Jesus is with a herd of sheep. Can you guess what he is doing? (*taking care of the sheep, looking after the sheep*)
 - Now look at the picture below. What animal do you see there? (*a wolf*)
 - Put your finger on the wolf, and draw an imaginary line to Jesus standing in front of the sheep.
 - What do you think Jesus is doing? (*protecting the sheep, telling the wolf to go away*)
 - Let's read the Bible story to discover why Jesus is looking out for the sheep.

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Our Shepherd

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I am willing to die to protect my sheep. If a man is hired to protect the sheep, but he is not a shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, he might leave the sheep and run away if a wolf comes. The hired man watches the sheep because he is paid, not because he cares about them. But I am the good shepherd. Just as God knows me and I know God, I know my sheep and they know me. I am even willing to die for my sheep."

(Based on John 10:11–15)



Discover! (25 minutes)

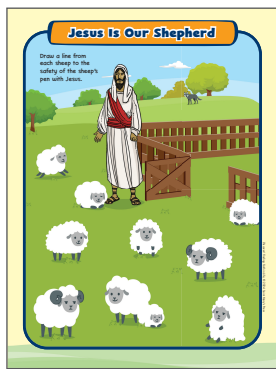
Core Teaching

- Invite the children to see if they can retell the Bible story, sharing what they think are the key points.
- Explain that this Bible story tells us a lot about how much Jesus loves us. Share that by calling himself a good shepherd, Jesus is saying that we are his sheep. Tell the children that just like a good shepherd watches over and protects their flock, Jesus watches over us, guides us, and protects us.
- Share with the children that shepherds watch over their sheep in a few different ways. Explain that many shepherds sleep at the opening of the pen to protect the sheep from any wild animals that might try to sneak in at night and take the sheep.
- Invite the children to name some wild animals they can think of. Consider encouraging them to make the sounds of the wild animals they are naming.
- Explain that if one of the sheep gets lost, the shepherd will look high and low until they find it. Tell the children that the shepherd knows each sheep by name.
- Point out that Jesus tells us that a good shepherd is even willing to die for their sheep. Remind the children that in an earlier lesson, they learned that Jesus died for us so that we might live one day with God in Heaven. Emphasize how much Jesus loves us—he is the best shepherd ever.
- Tell the children that we can be good sheep, or followers of Jesus, by trusting Jesus and following his teachings.

- Explain that you will now teach the children a chant to help them remember that Jesus loves us and is a good shepherd. Invite the children to repeat each line after you:
 - What does the shepherd say?
He says he'll never run away.
Jesus loves us. Yes, it's true!
He looks out for me and you.
 - What does the shepherd say?
He says with us he'll always stay.
Jesus loves us. Yes, it's true!
He looks out for me and you.

Learning Activities

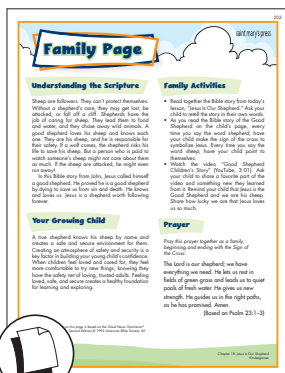
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 200–201 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who is the Good Shepherd? (*Jesus*)
 - What does Jesus, the Good Shepherd, do for us, his sheep? (*He loves and protects us.*)
 - What should the sheep do if they have a good shepherd? (*They should follow him.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the following prayer:
 - Like a good shepherd, you keep us close and protect us.
Like a good shepherd, you call us each by name.
Like a good shepherd, you love all of us equally.
Like good sheep, we will follow wherever you lead.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Follow the Good Shepherd

- Prepare for this activity by explaining to the children that you will be the shepherd in this game, and the children will be the sheep. Stand at the front of the room and invite the sheep (the children) to stand at the back.
- Explain that you will give them—the sheep—directions to move across the room toward you. Tell the children that after every direction you give, they must ask, “Shepherd, may I?” before moving.
- Share that after they ask, “Shepherd, may I?” they can move only if the shepherd says yes. If the shepherd says no, they shouldn’t move at all.
- Tell them that if they move when they’re not supposed to, or if they don’t follow the directions for how to move, they will have to return to the back of the room and start over.
- Play the game, giving directions such as the following, until all the children have reached you:
 - Take four big steps forward.
 - Hop three times forward.
 - Take two tiny steps back.
 - Squat down like a frog and jump forward once.
 - Skip three steps back.
 - Skip four steps forward.
- Affirm the children for doing such a good job following the shepherd. Emphasize that this is what Jesus wants us to do. Tell the children that sometimes we make bad choices, and it seems like we have moved backward, but we always have a chance to get back on the right path and follow Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

Materials Needed

- cotton balls

Find the Fluffy Sheep

- Prepare for this activity by hiding several cotton balls around the room. Create a “pen” for the children to bring their sheep (cotton balls) back to. It can be as simple as a sheet of construction paper placed at the front of the room.
- Remind the children that in today’s Bible story, Jesus tells us that he is the Good Shepherd who loves and cares for his sheep. We are his sheep. Tell the children that Jesus knows every single one of his sheep.
- Explain that in this activity, the children will pretend to be good shepherds. Invite them to imagine that their sheep have wandered away and they need to find them before they get hurt.
- Hold up a cotton ball, and tell the children that they will pretend the cotton balls are the sheep. Explain that when you say, “Go,” they are to look for all the wandering sheep.

- Share that the sheep are hiding around the room and that when someone finds one, they should bring it up to the sheep pen. (*Show the children the area where they should bring the cotton balls.*)
- Once all the cotton balls have been gathered in the sheep pen, process the activity by affirming what good shepherds the children were. Congratulate them for finding all the sheep and guiding them safely to the pen.
- Count how many sheep are in the pen, inviting the children to count along.
- Tell the children that just as Jesus cares for and protects his sheep, they followed his example by caring for and protecting their sheep.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Jesus Is the Good Shepherd,” on page 202 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- several pairs of scissors
- glue sticks or tape
- construction paper, one sheet for each child

Good Shepherd Story Board

- Distribute the handout, scissors, glue sticks or tape, and construction paper.
- Explain that the handout contains pictures from some of the Bible stories the children have learned about. Tell them they must find the four pictures that tell the Bible story of the Good Shepherd.
- Share that you will give them some clues to help them find the correct pictures:
 - Find a picture where the only thing in the picture is Jesus holding a sheep and a shepherd’s staff in his hand. Trace along the dotted lines that make a square around that picture.
 - Now find the picture of the wolf and the hired man who didn’t care for the sheep and was afraid and ran away. Trace along the dotted lines that make a square around that picture.
 - Let’s find another picture, where Jesus is with the sheep, but the hired man is running away in the background. When you find it, trace along the dotted lines that make a square around the picture.
 - Finally, find the picture where Jesus tells the wolf to go away. Jesus is pointing, and the wolf looks like he is running away. Trace along the dotted lines that make a square around that picture.
- Invite the children to use their scissors to cut out the four pictures they traced around. Assist the children with cutting as needed.
- Explain that the next step is to put the four pictures in the order they happened in the story. Invite them to arrange the pictures and to raise their hands when they have all four pictures in order.
- Share that you will come around to make sure the pictures are in the right order. Tell the children that after you check, they can glue their pictures onto the construction paper.
- Circulate around the room to be sure the children have the correct pictures cut out and that they have them lined up in the right order. Help any children who may be struggling.
- Invite the children to copy “Jesus Is the Good Shepherd” from the top of the handout onto their sheet of construction paper if there is time. Explain that they can use this page to tell the story of the Good Shepherd to their friends and family.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

Find the picture in each row that shows the Bible story of the Good Shepherd. Then cut out the four correct pictures, put them in order, and glue them onto another paper.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Sheep are followers. They can't protect themselves. Without a shepherd's care, they may get lost, be attacked, or fall off a cliff. Shepherds have the job of caring for sheep. They lead them to food and water, and they chase away wild animals. A good shepherd loves his sheep and knows each one. They are his sheep, and he is responsible for their safety. If a wolf comes, the shepherd risks his life to save his sheep. But a person who is paid to watch someone's sheep might not care about them as much. If the sheep are attacked, he might even run away!

In this Bible story from John, Jesus called himself a good shepherd. He proved he is a good shepherd by dying to save us from sin and death. He knows and loves us. Jesus is a shepherd worth following forever.

Your Growing Child

A true shepherd knows his sheep by name and creates a safe and secure environment for them. Creating an atmosphere of safety and security is a key factor in building your young child's confidence. When children feel loved and cared for, they feel more comfortable to try new things, knowing they have the safety net of loving, trusted adults. Feeling loved, safe, and secure creates a healthy foundation for learning and exploring.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Our Shepherd." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- As you read the Bible story of the Good Shepherd on the child's page, every time you say the word *shepherd*, have your child make the sign of the cross to symbolize Jesus. Every time you say the word *sheep*, have your child point to themselves.
- Watch the video "Good Shepherd Children's Story" (YouTube, 3:01). Ask your child to share a favorite part of the video and something new they learned from it. Remind your child that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are his sheep. Share how lucky we are that Jesus loves us so much.

Prayer

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

The Lord is our shepherd; we have everything we need. He lets us rest in fields of green grass and leads us to quiet pools of fresh water. He gives us new strength. He guides us in the right paths, as he has promised. Amen.

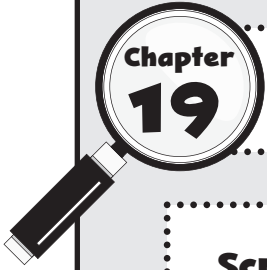
(Based on Psalm 23:1–3)

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Chapter
19

**We Care
for Jesus
through
People
in Need**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Matthew 25:34, 37–40

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that we should care for people in need
- to understand that when we care for those in need, we are caring for Jesus
- to state different ways we can show kindness to others

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catechism References

786, 2447

Materials Needed

- the chapter 19 child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 19 family page, on page 211 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 209–210 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this Bible story, Jesus tells us something amazing. When we are kind to people in need, it is like being kind to Jesus. Jesus has a special love for people who are poor and in need, and so should we. Young children are naturally kind and compassionate. They exude an innocence that allows them to interact with others with curiosity rather than judgment.

Foster compassion and empathy by providing the children with various ways to explore being a helper. Those who are poor are not the only people who need help. Some older people are lonely. Some children have a hard time learning in school. People who look or act differently may be teased. A good reminder for the children, and for us as well, is to look for the face of Jesus when we see those who need our help.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in singing the following song to the tune of “Happy Birthday”:
 > We love you, dear God!
 We love you, dear God!
 We thank you and praise you!
 We love you, dear God!
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

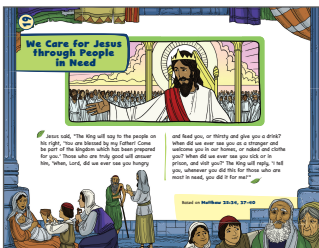
- Ask the children if they have ever received help when they had a problem or needed help. Encourage them to share how they were treated that made them feel important.
- Explain that in today’s Bible story Jesus talked about ways we are to care for others, especially those who are in need. Invite the children to prepare to learn how Jesus said we should treat others.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 > Jesus is pictured as a king in this image. What things make him look like a king? *(He is wearing a crown; he is sitting on a throne.)*
 > Look at the bottom of the page. What is happening in these different images? *(People are feeding the hungry, taking care of the sick, and visiting the elderly.)*
 > What is one way you like to help people? *(Accept all responses.)*
- Encourage the children to listen closely as you read the Bible story to figure out why Jesus says we should care for others.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.



Today's Bible Story

We Care for Jesus through People in Need

Jesus said, "The King will say to the people on his right, 'You are blessed by my Father! Come be part of the kingdom which has been prepared for you.' Those who are truly good will answer him, 'When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we ever see you as a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you, whenever you did this for those who are most in need, you did it for me!'"

(Based on Matthew 25:34, 37–40)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Ask the children what actions Jesus gives as examples of ways we can show care for others. (*feed people, give them shelter, clothe them, visit them*)
- Explain that Jesus is showing us that we should care for all those in need. Jesus tells us that when we treat others with love and kindness, it is the same as treating him that way.
- Remind the children that in this Bible story, Jesus tells us about a king. Invite them to share who the king was in the story. (*Jesus is talking about himself.*)
- Tell the children that Jesus isn't a king like kings that rule countries. Share that he doesn't have a crown or a throne, like most other kings. Explain that this is just a way of showing that Jesus watches over and cares for all people.
- Continue with the following points:
 - Jesus wants us to look around carefully to see who needs help. When we care for others and are kind to others, we are living like Jesus wants us to.
 - You don't need to be an adult or have a lot of money to treat others with kindness. What are some ways you can think of to help others? (*Encourage the children to brainstorm and call out their ideas.*)
 - Good thinking! We can share our toys, give a hug, invite someone new to sit at our table, help around the house, and say hello to a person sitting alone in church. These simple acts of kindness will make Jesus happy.
 - Jesus notices our acts of service and kindness. When we are thoughtful and kind to others, it's just like helping Jesus.
- Encourage the children to practice kindness every day. Invite them to look around at home, school, church, the grocery store, and anywhere they are to see how they can treat others with kindness and care.
- Share that if there is nothing they can say or do, they can always pray for others. Explain that this is also a way to show kindness and care.

Learning Activities



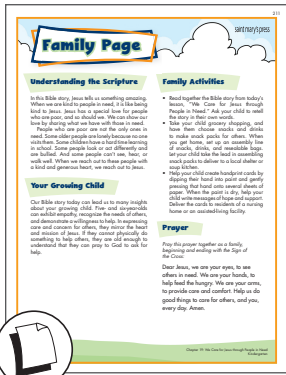
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 209–210 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - How should we treat others, especially those in need? (*Show them kindness and care.*)
 - When we care for those in need, who are we also showing care for? (*Jesus*)
 - What are some ways we can show kindness to others? (*Accept all responses.*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Tell the children that today’s prayer will include a song about caring for others, sung to the tune of “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes.” Explain that you’ll sing the song first, and then everyone will sing it together.
- Demonstrate the motions that go with the song, after the children learn the words, pointing to your head, lips, and heart when those words are sung. Show the children that they will clap their hands together each time they sing the word *hands*.
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Take your time and go slowly at first, as this can be challenging:
 - Head and lips and heart and hands; heart and hands.
Head and lips and heart and hands; heart and hands.
Show your care and kindness in all lands.
Head and lips and heart and hands; heart and hands.
- Say the following prayer:
 - Thank you, God, for helping us learn about taking care of one another. Let us show kindness and care every day, knowing that we are showing the same kindness and care to Jesus.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

You Did It for Me

- Prepare for this activity by assigning the following parts to five different children:
 - a person who is hungry and thirsty
 - a person who is homeless
 - a person who needs new clothes and shoes
 - a person who is sick
 - Jesus
- Explain to the rest of the group that they will be playing the parts of Jesus' followers and should come and stand in the front of the room.
- Tell them that when someone comes to the front asking for help, they should offer to help in whatever way they can think of. For example, if someone comes up and says they are hungry, they can pretend to offer them something to eat.
- Line up the five children playing people in need at the back of the room. As they each walk to the front, help them with what they are supposed to ask for. For example, the person who needs new clothes and shoes should walk to the front of the room and tell Jesus' followers, "I need new clothes and shoes, please."
- Give the children playing Jesus' followers the opportunity to answer the request and take care of the person in need.
- The child playing Jesus should go last. Tell them to walk to the front of the room and say, "Many blessings on you for taking care of me!"
- Remind the children of the end of the Bible story when Jesus said, "Whenever you helped those who are most in need, you did it for me." Explain that Jesus was trying to teach us an important lesson.
- Tell the children that our words and actions toward others matter. Jesus tells us that when we are kind and loving to others, especially people in need, we are being kind and loving to him.
- Congratulate the children for doing a wonderful job caring for others and caring for Jesus at the same time in this activity.

Materials Needed

- none

Caring for Others Charades

- Prepare for this activity by making a list of simple acts of kindness and care, or use the list below.
- Explain that this activity is a game of charades, and that each child will come to you and you will whisper an action to them that is something a person can do to help others.
- Tell them that they will then act out the whispered action for the rest of the children in the group, without using words.

- Share that once someone guesses the action, you will mark a point on the board. Encourage them to see how many points they can earn together.
- Ask for volunteers, or choose students who are comfortable in front of a group. Whisper to them the action they need to model for the class. Here is a sample list:
 - give a hug
 - share food
 - offer a drink
 - invite a person inside
 - donate clothes and shoes
 - be a good listener
 - cheer for someone
 - visit a sick person
 - hold the door open
 - thank a person
 - read a book to a person
 - send a card or letter
 - invite someone to play
 - invite someone to sit with you
- Help the children if they get stuck, suggesting possible actions that might help others guess what they are doing.
- Consider supplying a reward for all the children when the activity is over.

Materials Needed

- blank paper, one sheet for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child
- crayons
- a large sheet of newsprint
- glue or tape

Helping Hands

- Before you begin this activity, decide if the children will be able to successfully cut around their traced handprints. If you think this will be too challenging for them, prepare by precutting generic handprints to distribute to each child.
- Introduce the activity by recalling with the children the actions Jesus' followers took in the Bible story. Remind them that Jesus told his followers that any time they helped someone in need, they helped him.
- Invite the children to think about how peaceful the world would be if we treated everyone as if they were Jesus. Encourage them to consider how we would be more understanding, patient, and kind.
- Explain that today they will put their thinking caps on and their helping hands to work.
- Distribute the blank paper, scissors, and crayons. Tell the children that they will first put their hand on their sheet of paper and spread their fingers apart. They will then trace around their hand. Note that if they are having trouble, they can raise their hand and you or a friend can help.
- Invite the children to cut around the outline of their hand, helping them as needed.
- Collect all the handprints and use them to create a wreath on a large sheet of newsprint by gluing or taping them in a circle. In the middle of the wreath, write "My Hands Are Here to Help."
- Invite the children to share ideas of ways they can help or care for others. Write these words or phrases all around the wreath.
- Congratulate the children for coming up with many ways to help others. Tell them that you are going to display this wreath in the classroom. Explain that they can look at it the next time you meet and share whether they have tried any of the ideas.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Jesus tells us something amazing. When we are kind to people in need, it is like being kind to Jesus. Jesus has a special love for people who are poor, and so should we. We can show our love by sharing what we have with those in need.

People who are poor are not the only ones in need. Some older people are lonely because no one visits them. Some children have a hard time learning in school. Some people look or act differently and are bullied. And some people can't see, hear, or walk well. When we reach out to these people with a kind and generous heart, we reach out to Jesus.

Your Growing Child

Our Bible story today can lead us to many insights about your growing child. Five- and six-year-olds can exhibit empathy, recognize the needs of others, and demonstrate a willingness to help. In expressing care and concern for others, they mirror the heart and mission of Jesus. If they cannot physically do something to help others, they are old enough to understand that they can pray to God to ask for help.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "We Care for Jesus through People in Need." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Take your child grocery shopping, and have them choose snacks and drinks to make snack packs for others. When you get home, set up an assembly line of snacks, drinks, and resealable bags. Let your child take the lead in assembling snack packs to deliver to a local shelter or soup kitchen.
- Help your child create handprint cards by dipping their hand into paint and gently pressing that hand onto several sheets of paper. When the paint is dry, help your child write messages of hope and support. Deliver the cards to residents of a nursing home or an assisted-living facility.

Prayer

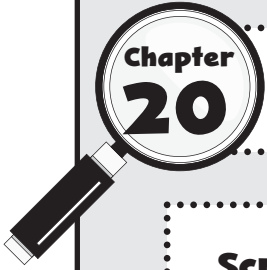
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Dear Jesus, we are your eyes, to see others in need. We are your hands, to help feed the hungry. We are your arms, to provide care and comfort. Help us do good things to care for others, and you, every day. Amen.

Chapter
20

**We
Become
Close to Jesus
at Mass**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 14:22–24

Lesson Goals

- to recognize that Jesus gave us himself at the Last Supper
- to know that when we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our hearts
- to understand that we can become close to Jesus at Mass through Holy Communion and prayer

Catechism Pillar

Pray

Catechism References

1322–1419

Materials Needed

- the chapter 20 child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the chapter 20 family page, on page 220 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 217–218 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Today’s Bible story is a simplified account of the Last Supper, presented through the lens of sharing a meal with friends. Children can begin to make connections between the Last Supper and the Eucharist during Mass. We can help them understand that the bread and wine they see people receiving is truly Jesus, made so through the words and actions of the priest and the action of the Holy Spirit. For young children, it can be helpful to focus on Mass as a time of prayer for becoming closer to Jesus. Because they cannot yet receive Holy Communion, they can focus on learning the prayers of the Mass and saying special prayers in their heart.

† Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer, inviting the children to repeat each line after you:
 - Dear Jesus,
we come together
to remember all that you taught us
and all that you did for us.
Be with us today and always.
Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

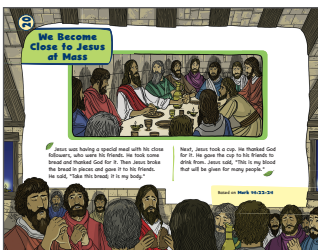
Engage

- Ask the children what meals they like to share with their family or friends. Encourage them to share a memory of a family dinner, birthday party, or holiday where sharing food was an important part of the celebration.
- Tell the children that we often come together with others to celebrate, to share a meal, sometimes to sing and dance, and to pray. Note that these meals are often special and memorable.
- Explain that today's Bible story is about a special meal Jesus shared with his friends. Invite the children to prepare to learn about what made this meal so special.

† Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In this picture, Jesus is breaking bread and sharing it with his friends. Put your finger on the bread. What other things do you see on the table? *(Accept all responses, such as candles, cups, a jug or bottle, plates.)*
 - Look at the bottom of the page. This shows a close-up view of the faces of Jesus' friends. How can you tell they are praying? *(Their eyes are closed and their hands are folded.)*
 - After looking at the pictures, what do you think this story is about? *(Accept responses.) Let's find out!*
- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.



Today's Bible Story

We Become Close to Jesus at Mass

Jesus was having a special meal with his close followers, who were his friends. He took some bread and thanked God for it. Then Jesus broke the bread in pieces and gave it to his friends. He said, "Take this bread; it is my body."

Next, Jesus took a cup. He thanked God for it. He gave the cup to his friends to drink from. Jesus said, "This is my blood that will be given for many people."

(Based on Mark 14:22–24)



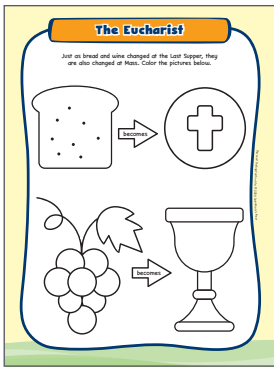
Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Explain to the children that the event in today's Bible story is sometimes called the Last Supper. Explain that it is called this because it is the last meal Jesus shared with his close followers before he died.
- Invite volunteers to share if they know what Mass is. *(Accept all responses.)*
- Ask them to share what day of the week Jesus' followers come together at Mass. *(any day of the week, but especially on Sunday)*
- Invite the children to share if they have seen people receiving Holy Communion during Mass. Encourage them to explain what they see and what they think is happening. Ask them if they know what Holy Communion is. *(Holy Communion is the bread and wine that becomes Jesus himself, just like in the Bible story today.)*
- Expand the discussion by making the following points:
 - Jesus shared a special meal with his friends. During this meal, Jesus shared bread and wine. He told his friends this was his Body and Blood. In doing this, he was giving his very self.
 - The bread and wine at Mass become Jesus when the priest says a prayer over them, just like Jesus prayed over the bread and wine before he shared them with his friends.
 - At every Mass, we experience Jesus' special meal all over again. The Mass is a celebration of Jesus' love for us and our love for Jesus.
 - We are thankful for everything Jesus has done for us and for Jesus coming to us in a special way at Mass.
 - Sharing a meal brings people together, and sharing Holy Communion helps us see that we are all one family. This is a way Jesus' followers come together in love and thankfulness.
 - When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our hearts. This helps us grow closer to him and to one another, and it gives us strength to follow Jesus more closely.

- Acknowledge that the children are not yet old enough to receive Holy Communion, but they will be in just a few years. Assure them that they can still grow close to Jesus at Mass by praying.
- Encourage them to learn the prayers said at Mass, and tell them that they can also make up their own prayers to Jesus in the silence of their heart.

Learning Activities



- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 217–218 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they have not finished the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

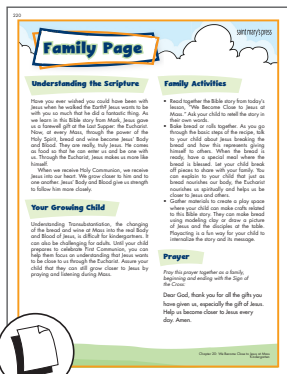
- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What did Jesus give us at the Last Supper? (*himself*)
 - We receive Jesus into our hearts when we receive what at Mass? (*Holy Communion*)
 - What can we do at Mass to become close to Jesus if we cannot yet receive Holy Communion? (*pray*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then continue with the following prayer, using the noted hand motions:
 - Jesus said, “take this bread, (*hands receiving Holy Communion*) take this cup.” (*hands receiving the chalice*)
He gives himself to us (*arms out wide*)
out of love. (*hands over heart*)

Thank you, Jesus, for giving yourself to us at the Last Supper and for helping us become closer to you at Mass through Holy Communion and through prayer.
Amen.

- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- blank 8½-x-14-inch paper, one sheet for each child
- crayons
- copies of the handout “Last Supper Place Mat,” on page 219 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child
- tape or glue sticks

Materials Needed

- none

Last Supper Place Mat

- Introduce this activity by recalling with the children that Jesus had a special meal with his friends. Invite them to think of themselves as friends of Jesus, and explain that today they will make place mats as a reminder of Jesus’ special meal with his friends and of the meal we share in remembrance of this each time we go to Mass.
- Distribute the paper and crayons. Have the children lay their paper flat horizontally, and explain that this long sheet of paper is their place mat.
- Continue by instructing the children to draw a large circle in the middle of the paper where their plate will go, and to draw a fork to the left of the plate.
- Distribute the handout, scissors, and tape or glue sticks. Explain that the handout has pictures that can remind them of Jesus’ special meal. Invite the children to cut out the pictures and tape or glue them to their place mat.
- Tell the children that they can keep their place mat at home—perhaps near the kitchen or dining room—to remind them of the special meal Jesus had with his friends, the meal we have each time we go to Mass to become closer to Jesus, and the meals we have with our families, which are important too.
- Explain that they can use their place mat to remind them of the Bible story, which they can retell to their family while they are sharing a meal.

The Meal That Jesus Shared

- Tell the children they are going to learn a new song about Jesus’ special meal. Explain that each line in the song has a hand motion that goes with it.
- Explain that you will sing each verse first and demonstrate the hand motions, and then the children will repeat after you.
- Invite them to pay close attention so that they can follow along and learn the song. It is sung to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”:
 - The meal that Jesus shared, (*Pretend to set a table.*)
the meal that Jesus shared,
hi-ho, the derry-o,
the meal that Jesus shared.
- Continue with additional verses and motions, following the same chorus of the song as above:
 - Jesus breaks the bread . . . (*Model breaking bread.*)
Jesus shares the cup . . . (*Model offering a cup to others.*)
Jesus thanks our God . . . (*Model praying hands.*)
- Congratulate the children for learning the song, and tell them that it can help them remember what happened at the special meal Jesus had with his friends.

Materials Needed

- construction paper, one sheet for each child
- twelve-count egg cartons, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child
- crayons or markers
- tape or glue
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Interactive Last Supper

- Prepare for this activity by deciding what materials you want to use to make Jesus' friends, the disciples. The directions here call for construction paper, but you can also use character graham crackers, marshmallows, or character toys small enough to fit in the egg carton spaces.
- Explain that the Bible story the children heard today was short and simple, but we celebrate the events of this meal, called the Last Supper, every time we are at Mass.
- Tell the children that they will use egg cartons to make a model of the special meal Jesus had with his close followers.
- Distribute the materials to the children, and invite them to cut out a strip of construction paper that is the length of the egg carton. Tell them it will be the table and needs to be narrow so that there is room for Jesus' friends. Show them how to carefully glue this strip of paper down the middle of the sectioned side of the egg carton.
- Invite the children to use the rest of the sheet of construction paper to make thirteen ovals, about the length of their longest finger. Encourage them to use markers to draw faces for each of the followers of Jesus and for Jesus himself. Explain that there were twelve people plus Jesus at this meal.
- Continue by showing the children how to place a dot of glue or loop of tape in each of the twelve spots where eggs normally would be. Have them press the ovals into these spots to attach them.
- Instruct the children to glue or tape the oval that is Jesus in the middle of the inside lid of the egg carton. Write "The Last Supper" on the board, and invite the children to write this on the inside lid of the egg carton, right above the figure of Jesus.
- Tell the children that when they show their families their projects, they can share what they remember about today's Bible story.

Last Supper Place Mat

Cut out the following pictures, and glue them to your place mat as a reminder of Jesus' special meal with his friends and of Holy Communion, Jesus' gift of himself that we share at Mass.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Have you ever wished you could have been with Jesus when he walked the Earth? Jesus wants to be with you so much that he did a fantastic thing. As we learn in this Bible story from Mark, Jesus gave us a farewell gift at the Last Supper: the Eucharist. Now, at every Mass, through the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood. They are really, truly Jesus. He comes as food so that he can enter us and be one with us. Through the Eucharist, Jesus makes us more like himself.

When we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our heart. We grow closer to him and to one another. Jesus' Body and Blood give us strength to follow him more closely.

Your Growing Child

Understanding Transubstantiation, the changing of the bread and wine at Mass into the real Body and Blood of Jesus, is difficult for kindergartners. It can also be challenging for adults. Until your child prepares to celebrate First Communion, you can help them focus on understanding that Jesus wants to be close to us through the Eucharist. Assure your child that they can still grow closer to Jesus by praying and listening during Mass.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "We Become Close to Jesus at Mass." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Bake bread or rolls together. As you go through the basic steps of the recipe, talk to your child about Jesus breaking the bread and how this represents giving himself to others. When the bread is ready, have a special meal where the bread is blessed. Let your child break off pieces to share with your family. You can explain to your child that just as bread nourishes our body, the Eucharist nourishes us spiritually and helps us be closer to Jesus and others.
- Gather materials to create a play space where your child can make crafts related to this Bible story. They can make bread using modeling clay or draw a picture of Jesus and the disciples at the table. Playacting is a fun way for your child to internalize the story and its message.

Prayer

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

Dear God, thank you for all the gifts you have given us, especially the gift of Jesus. Help us become closer to Jesus every day. Amen.

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Liturgical Season Lessons

All Saints' Day

Living a Life of Love 222

Advent

Preparing for Christmas 232

Christmas

Celebrating the Birth of Jesus 242

Lent

Growing Closer to Jesus 250

Easter

Jesus Is Risen 260

Pentecost

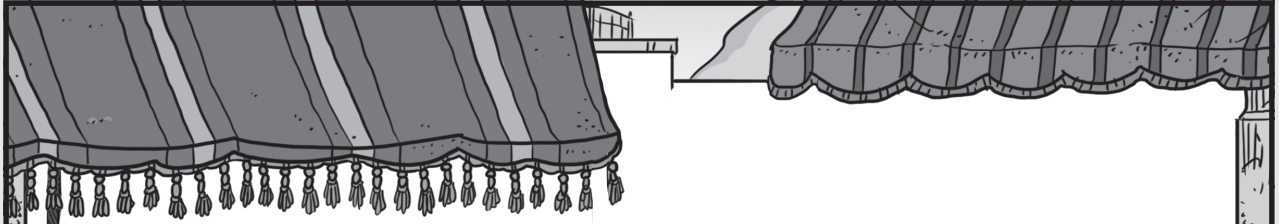
Filled with the Holy Spirit 270

Ordinary Time

We Are Loved 280

Mary

Mother of Jesus 290



All Saints' Day



Living a Life of Love





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

1 John 3:11, 16–18

Lesson Goals

- to understand that the saints followed Jesus
- to realize that the saints lived lives of love
- to know that we can imitate Jesus and the saints in living lives of love

Catechism References

946–962

Materials Needed

- the All Saints' Day child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the All Saints' Day family page, on page 231 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- pictures of the following saints: Saint Mary (Our Lady), Saint Joseph, Saints Joachim and Anne, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and the saints of your parish or area
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 228–229 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

One catechist jokingly refers to Halloween, All Saints' Day, and All Souls' Day as "the October Triduum." Yet these *are* important days in the life of the Church. Halloween is especially memorable for children, and they can learn that we are really celebrating "the eve of All Hallows (All Saints)." All Saints' Day and the following day, All Souls' Day, are our family celebrations in Christ. We remember and celebrate those who have gone before us, who have lived lives of love, and who are encouraging us now in our lives of loving service.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Lord Jesus, today we celebrate those who followed you most closely. Help us become like them by following you and living lives of love. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

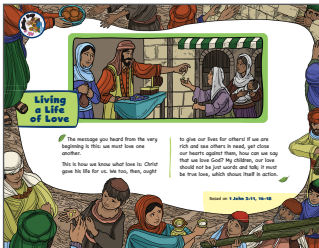
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever heard of a saint. Allow them to name saints familiar to them, like the name of their parish or a favorite patron saint, etc.
- Invite the children to share what they think a saint is. Accept their responses, and tell them they will learn more about a day in the Church when we especially celebrate these people who have gone before us.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - What do you see happening in the picture at the top of the page? (*A man is giving coins to an older woman.*)
 - Who else is in the picture? (*a woman with a baby, and a woman with a bag of money, helping the man at the table*)
 - Let's look at the top left corner of the page. Do you see two arms of the woman holding a basket? What is in the basket? (*loaves of bread*) What is the woman doing? (*She is giving bread to someone reaching for the bread, someone who is hungry.*)
 - Finally, let's look at the bottom of the page. What does the boy have in his hand? (*three coins*) The man in the green hat gave him the coins, maybe to buy food.
 - Two other boys are helping an older man. What are they doing? (*helping carry logs*)

- We can also see a woman offering a drink to a boy who is helping a man carrying wood.
- There are a lot of people in these pictures! Some people are receiving. Other people are giving. Let's read the Bible story to find out what all this giving and receiving is about.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Living a Life of Love

The message you heard from the very beginning is this: we must love one another.

This is how we know what love is: Christ gave his life for us. We too, then, ought to give our lives for others! If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we say that we love God? My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action.

(Based on 1 John 3:11, 16–18)



Discover! (25 minutes)

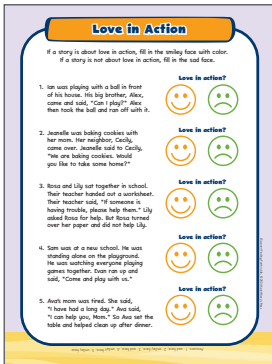
Core Teaching

- Ask the children who the writer of this Bible story is speaking to. (*the followers of Jesus; all Christians, including us today*)
- Begin the discussion by asking what the Bible story is telling us about. (*love*)
- Reread aloud the last sentence of this Bible story: "My children, our love should not be just words and talk; it must be true love, which shows itself in action."
- Invite the children to name some actions of love. Affirm their responses, and tell them we can show love to others in our actions every day. Point out that love is an important quality to show as followers of Jesus.

- Explain that there is a celebration in the Church to remember all of Jesus' followers who took the message of love and put their love into action by helping others. Share that this celebration, or feast, is called All Saints' Day.
- Show pictures of some saints to the children. Explain that Our Lady is the greatest saint, the queen of all saints, because she is the Mother of God. Share that she is also called Saint Mary, and many churches are called Saint Mary's Church after her. Give some examples of other saints, such as the following:
 - Saint Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and foster father of Jesus
 - Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin, and Jesus' grandfather and grandmother
 - Saint Peter, the first leader of the Church and the first pope
 - Saint Paul, a great missionary and teacher, who wrote many letters about Jesus
 - the saints of your parish or area
- Explain that on the Feast of All Saints' Day, we celebrate all the saints. Tell the children that we celebrate the famous saints we know about, and we also celebrate the saints who are in Heaven we do not know about, who also spent their lives showing love for others.
- Conclude by saying that someday we all hope to be in Heaven with God, and we all hope to be saints!

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 228–229 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.





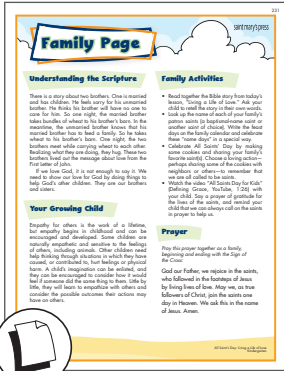
Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who followed Jesus? (*the saints*)
 - Who lived their lives in love? (*the saints*)
 - Who can imitate Jesus and the saints and live lives of love? (*We can!*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Sing the first verse of the song "When the Saints Go Marching In." Ask the children to repeat each line after you. Then sing the entire verse together. You may want to sing it several times as you march around the room.
 - when the saints go marching in,
 - when the saints go marching in,
 - Lord, I want to be in that number,
 - when the saints go marching in.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Future Saint Crown,” on page 230 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- black and yellow crayons
- scissors, one pair for each child
- a stapler
- additional strips of 2-x-8-inch paper to lengthen the band if needed
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Materials Needed

- green construction paper leaves with a hole punched in one end, three for each child
- a tree branch stuck in a pail of sand with the name Jesus written on a small piece of paper and taped to the base of the branch
- clear tape
- a hole punch
- string (*optional*)

Future Saints’ Crowns

- Explain that a crown is a sign of power and victory. Comment that we sometimes think of the saints in Heaven as wearing crowns. Tell the children they will make crowns for themselves, as future saints. Share that the word *future* means “the days to come after today.”
- Tell the children that each one of us can be a saint in the future if we live a life of love today.
- Distribute the handout, crayons, and scissors. Ask the children to write their name on the line on the crown in black crayon. Help them as needed.
- Invite the children to color the crown yellow, and then to cut out the long band and the crown.
- Help the children staple one end of the long band to the crown. Hold the crown to each child’s head and staple the other end of the band to the crown so that the crown encircles each child’s head securely. Use additional 2-x-8-inch strips of paper to further lengthen the band if necessary for some children.
- Play a video or song for “When the Saints Go Marching In.” One suggestion is “When the Saints Go Marching In | Christian Songs for Kids” (YouTube, 2:15). Other arrangements are available on YouTube.
- Ask the children to put on their crowns, and then lead them in a march around the room several times. Encourage them to clap to the music.

A Future Saint Tree

- Distribute the green construction paper leaves. Ask the children to write their name on one leaf.
- Explain that they will be making a future saint tree, and that these leaves will help them become saints.
- Tell them that every time they do something nice for someone else, they may put one of their leaves on the tree by sliding it on a branch. (If the branch is too large, you may need to attach string to each leaf so the leaves can hang.)
- Ask the children to think of one nice thing they did for someone today or yesterday. Direct them each to put the leaf with their name on the tree.
- Collect the extra leaves, and keep them near the tree for future use. Or ask the children to take their extra leaves home as reminders to do good things for others.
- Point out the name of Jesus near the base of the tree. Remind the children that Jesus is our strong tree, and when we do good for others, we are growing strong in him.
- Explain that the leaves also remind us that we are attached to Jesus, and we can become saints if we live with kindness and love.

Materials Needed

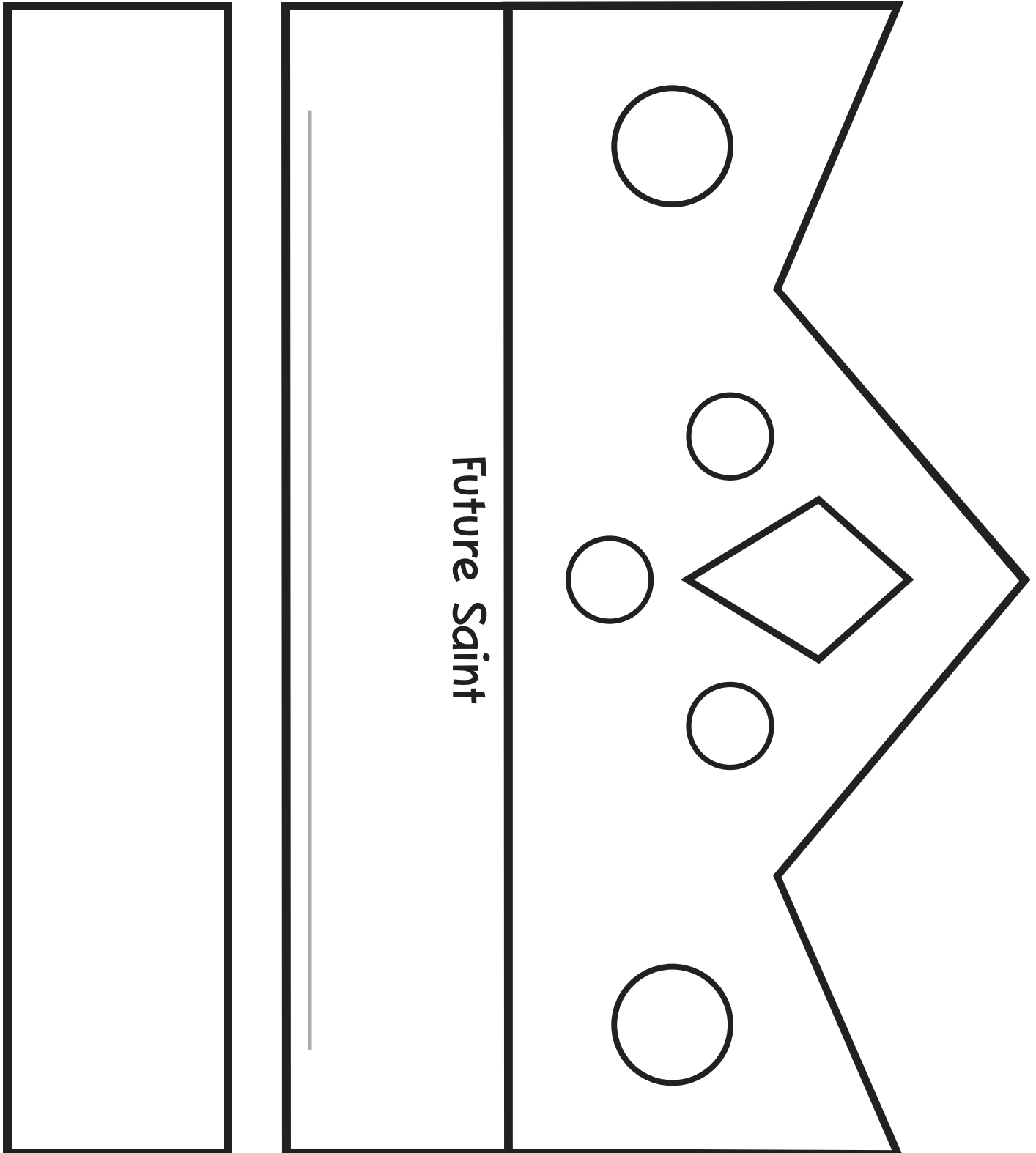
- several small pictures of various saints (holy cards or pictures cut from catalogs, etc.)

All Saints Hide and Seek

- Explain to the children that they will be playing a game with the saints.
- Tell them you will hide a picture of a saint somewhere in the room, and they will look for it. Comment that this game is called "All Saints Hide and Seek."
- Show the children a picture of one of the saints. Ask them to close their eyes while you hide the picture somewhere in the room, at the children's eye level or below.
- Ask the children to open their eyes, and invite them to look for the picture when you say, "Go!" The child who finds it can be asked to sit for the next round to allow others a better chance to find the next picture.
- Continue in this way. Alternatively, you might want to show two or three pictures at once, enabling more children to find a picture and helping the game to move a little faster.
- Allow the children to keep the pictures they find. If any children do not find a picture, keep some in reserve to give to these children at the end of the game.
- Conclude by reminding the children that there are many, many saints, and that today's game involved just a few of them. Invite the children to take their pictures home to remind them that this saint and all saints are in Heaven helping them.

Future Saint Crown

Write your name on the crown. Then color it and cut along the dark lines. Your teacher will help you fit the crown to your head.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

There is a story about two brothers. One is married and has children. He feels sorry for his unmarried brother. He thinks his brother will have no one to care for him. So one night, the married brother takes bundles of wheat to his brother's barn. In the meantime, the unmarried brother knows that his married brother has to feed a family. So he takes wheat to his brother's barn. One night, the two brothers meet while carrying wheat to each other. Realizing what they are doing, they hug. These two brothers lived out the message about love from the First Letter of John.

If we love God, it is not enough to say it. We need to show our love for God by doing things to help God's other children. They are our brothers and sisters.

Your Growing Child

Empathy for others is the work of a lifetime, but empathy begins in childhood and can be encouraged and developed. Some children are naturally empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others, including animals. Other children need help thinking through situations in which they have caused, or contributed to, hurt feelings or physical harm. A child's imagination can be enlisted, and they can be encouraged to consider how it would feel if someone did the same thing to them. Little by little, they will learn to empathize with others and consider the possible outcomes their actions may have on others.

Family Activities

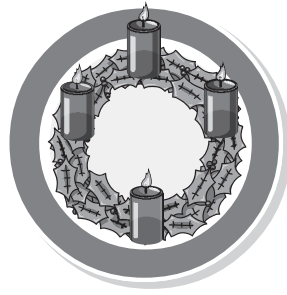
- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Living a Life of Love." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Look up the name of each of your family's patron saints (a baptismal-name saint or another saint of choice). Write the feast days on the family calendar and celebrate these "name days" in a special way.
- Celebrate All Saints' Day by making some cookies and sharing your family's favorite saint(s). Choose a loving action—perhaps sharing some of the cookies with neighbors or others—to remember that we are all called to be saints.
- Watch the video "All Saints Day for Kids" (Defining Grace, YouTube, 1:26) with your child. Say a prayer of gratitude for the lives of the saints, and remind your child that we can always call on the saints in prayer to help us.

Prayer

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

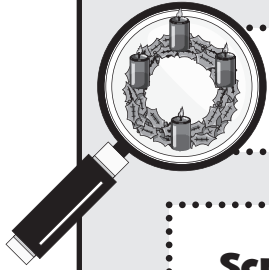
God our Father, we rejoice in the saints, who followed in the footsteps of Jesus by living lives of love. May we, as true followers of Christ, join the saints one day in Heaven. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Advent



**Preparing
for
Christmas**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Mark 1:4–8

Lesson Goals

- to recognize the meaning of the word *advent*
- to understand Advent as a season of preparation for Christmas
- to describe what we can do to get ready for the coming of Jesus

Catechism References

522–524

Materials Needed

- the Advent child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Advent family page, on page 241 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 238–239 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Amid the Christmas rush that begins the day after Thanksgiving, how can we unfold the riches of Advent for children? We can use the colors and symbols of Advent to create a joyful, expectant atmosphere. Use the color purple in classroom decor. The children may be surprised and delighted at purple streamers hanging above their heads. Of course, feature an Advent wreath on a purple cloth in a prominent place. Open a candy-free Advent calendar each week. Emphasize that Advent and Christmas are seasons of caring and sharing. Organize a collection of canned goods, perhaps one can per child. Initiate an Advent prayer pal exchange by having the children draw names from a bowl and promising to pray for that person each day until Christmas.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer:
 - Dear God, we thank you for the seasons in nature: spring, summer, fall, and winter. We also thank you for the special seasons in the Church. Open our ears as we learn about one of the Church seasons today. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

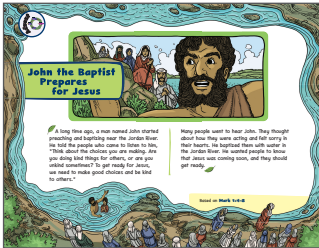
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever waited for somebody or something for a long time. Invite them to share their stories.
- Explain that today's lesson is about a season in the Church in which we wait. Tell them they will find out more about this after reading the Bible story.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - We have read this Bible story before. Does anyone remember this Bible story?
 - Who is the man in the main picture? (*John the Baptist*)
 - Who are the people behind him? (*people watching and listening to him*)
 - At the bottom of the page, who are the people in the water? (*John the Baptist and a woman getting baptized*)
- Tell the children you will read the Bible story again to help them remember and learn some new things about it.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus

A long time ago, a man named John started preaching and baptizing near the Jordan River. He told the people who came to listen to him, "Think about the choices you are making. Are you doing kind things for others, or are you unkind sometimes? To get ready for Jesus, we need to make good choices and be kind to others."

Many people went to hear John. They thought about how they were acting and felt sorry in their hearts. He baptized them with water in the Jordan River. He wanted people to know that Jesus was coming soon, and they should get ready.

(Based on Mark 1:4–8)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

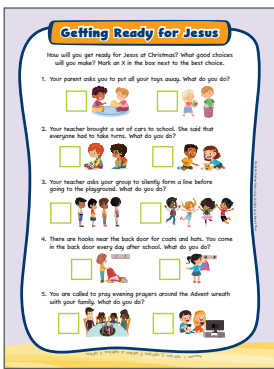
- Begin the discussion by asking the children what John the Baptist wanted everyone to know. (*that Jesus was coming soon, and they should get ready*)
- Ask them to share how John the Baptist said we could get ready for Jesus. (*by being patient, giving to others, praying for others, being kind to others, and making good choices*)
- Explain that John the Baptist and the people in the Bible story were waiting for Jesus. Tell the children that the whole Church celebrates a season of waiting called Advent. Share that the word *advent* means "coming."
- Tell the children that Advent lasts four weeks and is a time of preparation and waiting before Christmas.
- Explain that we wait for Jesus to come into our hearts at Christmas. Comment that while we wait, we can pray, and we can do good things for others. Add that this makes Jesus happy while we get ready to celebrate his birthday at Christmas.
- Tell the children that we use the color purple in Advent because it means "waiting in hope." Share that the priest wears purple at Mass during Advent, and we use purple candles in the Advent wreath. Add that we might see an Advent wreath in our church on Sunday, and that every Sunday another candle is lit to remind us that Jesus is coming.

Advent

- Introduce the following song (to the tune of “Jingle Bells”) to remind the children that Advent is a time of waiting and prayer. Sing it a few times so the children can learn the words and join in:
 - Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
Christ is on the way!
Advent means we wait and pray,
We wait for Christmas Day-ay!
 - Jesus comes! Jesus comes!
Christ is on the way!
Advent means we wait and pray,
We wait for Christmas Day!

Learning Activities

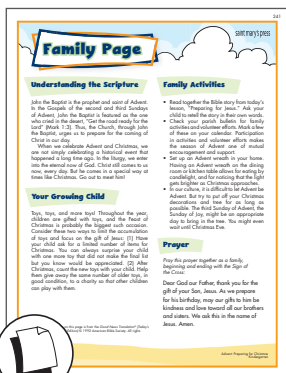
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 238–239 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What does the word *advent* mean? (*coming*)
 - What do we do during Advent? (*wait, prepare for Christmas*)
 - How do we get ready for the coming of Jesus at Christmas? (*be patient, give to others, pray for others, be kind to others*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain that today's prayer is perfect for Advent because it asks Jesus to come to us.
- Invite the children to stand and place their hands at their sides with palms up in prayer.
- Pray the following prayer, asking the children to respond, "Come, Lord Jesus!" to the petitions:
 - Dear God our Father, we ask that you help us wait patiently for Christmas. *(Come, Lord Jesus!)*
 - Help us wait for the coming of Jesus. *(Come, Lord Jesus!)*
 - Help us to be kind and to pray for others during this season of preparation. *(Come, Lord Jesus!)*
 - Send your Son, Jesus, into our lives and into our hearts. *(Come, Lord Jesus!)*
 - Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “An Advent Wreath,” on page 240 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- purple crayons for the candles
- yellow crayons for the flames

An Advent Wreath

- Distribute the handout and crayons. Explain to the children that each of the four candles represents one Sunday of Advent. Mention that they will color the candle for the first Sunday of Advent today, and then they can color the other candles at home. Explain that they may also color in the flame with a yellow crayon.
- Explain that this is a picture of an Advent wreath, and we use the Advent wreath to mark the Sundays of Advent. Remind the children that they may see an Advent wreath in church, or they may have one at home with real candles.
- Explain that the color purple is a sign of waiting, so three of the candles are purple. The third Sunday of Advent is the Sunday of Joy, so that candle is pink.
- Suggest that the children keep this paper Advent wreath in a special place in their home—maybe on the refrigerator or in their room.
- Remind them that while they color the candle, they can say the prayer of Advent, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

Materials Needed

- empty toilet-paper rolls, one for each child
- purple construction paper, precut to fit around the toilet paper rolls, one for each child
- yellow and orange tissue paper, cut into triangles for flames, a few for each child
- clear tape
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

An Advent Prayer Candle

- Explain to the children that they will make an Advent prayer candle to remind them to pray, “Come, Lord Jesus!” often during Advent.
- Distribute the toilet-paper rolls and the precut purple construction paper to fit around the rolls.
- Have the children wrap the purple construction paper around the toilet-paper roll. Help each child tape the ends of the construction paper together around the roll.
- Distribute the precut tissue-paper flames. Have the children stuff them into the top of the candle, points up, to make a flame. The flames may need to be taped inside the candle to keep them visible.
- Remind the children to put their candle in their room at home, and to pray, “Come, Lord Jesus!” whenever they see the candle.

Materials Needed

- an empty manger (can be part of a manger scene)
- a handful of straw
- a recording of "Away in a Manger" and appropriate equipment for playing it
- a figure of the baby Jesus (*optional*)

Straw for the Manger

- Show the children the empty manger. Explain that this is the type of bed the baby Jesus slept in. Explain that our good thoughts and actions make Jesus happy, and we can make a soft bed for Jesus.
- Tell the children that we know Jesus is no longer a baby. Share that he is all grown up and is in Heaven with God our Father.
- Explain that Jesus loves and cares about us, and our good thoughts and actions make him very happy. Tell them they will make a soft "pretend bed" for the baby Jesus by thinking of their good actions during the past few days.
- Share that for every good action they think of, they can put a piece of straw into the manger.
- Allow the children to think about their good actions. Then invite them to come up to the manger and take a piece of straw, one for each good action they thought of, and place the straw in the manger.
- Sing or play the Christmas carol "Away in a Manger."
- Keep the manger in the room, and place the figure of the baby Jesus in the manger just before Christmas.

An Advent Wreath

Candle 1: Color on the first Sunday of Advent.

Candle 2: Color on the second Sunday of Advent.

Candle 3: Color on the third Sunday of Advent,
the Sunday of Joy.

Candle 4: Color on the fourth Sunday of Advent.

Candle Code

1 = purple

2 = purple

3 = pink

4 = purple



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

John the Baptist is the prophet and saint of Advent. In the Gospels of the second and third Sundays of Advent, John the Baptist is featured as the one who cried in the desert, "Get the road ready for the Lord" (Mark 1:3). Thus, the Church, through John the Baptist, urges us to prepare for the coming of Christ in our day.

When we celebrate Advent and Christmas, we are not simply celebrating a historical event that happened a long time ago. In the liturgy, we enter into the eternal now of God. Christ still comes to us now, every day. But he comes in a special way at times like Christmas. Go out to meet him!

Your Growing Child

Toys, toys, and more toys! Throughout the year, children are gifted with toys, and the Feast of Christmas is probably the biggest such occasion. Consider these two ways to limit the accumulation of toys and focus on the gift of Jesus: (1) Have your child ask for a limited number of items for Christmas. You can always surprise your child with one more toy that did not make the final list but you know would be appreciated. (2) After Christmas, count the new toys with your child. Help them give away the same number of older toys, in good condition, to a charity so that other children can play with them.

The Scripture passage on this page is from the *Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition)* © 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Preparing for Jesus." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Check your parish bulletin for family activities and volunteer efforts. Mark a few of these on your calendar. Participation in activities and volunteer efforts makes the season of Advent one of mutual encouragement and support.
- Set up an Advent wreath in your home. Having an Advent wreath on the dining room or kitchen table allows for eating by candlelight, and for noticing that the light gets brighter as Christmas approaches.
- In our culture, it is difficult to let Advent be Advent. But try to put off your Christmas decorations and tree for as long as possible. The third Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Joy, might be an appropriate day to bring in the tree. You might even wait until Christmas Eve.

Prayer

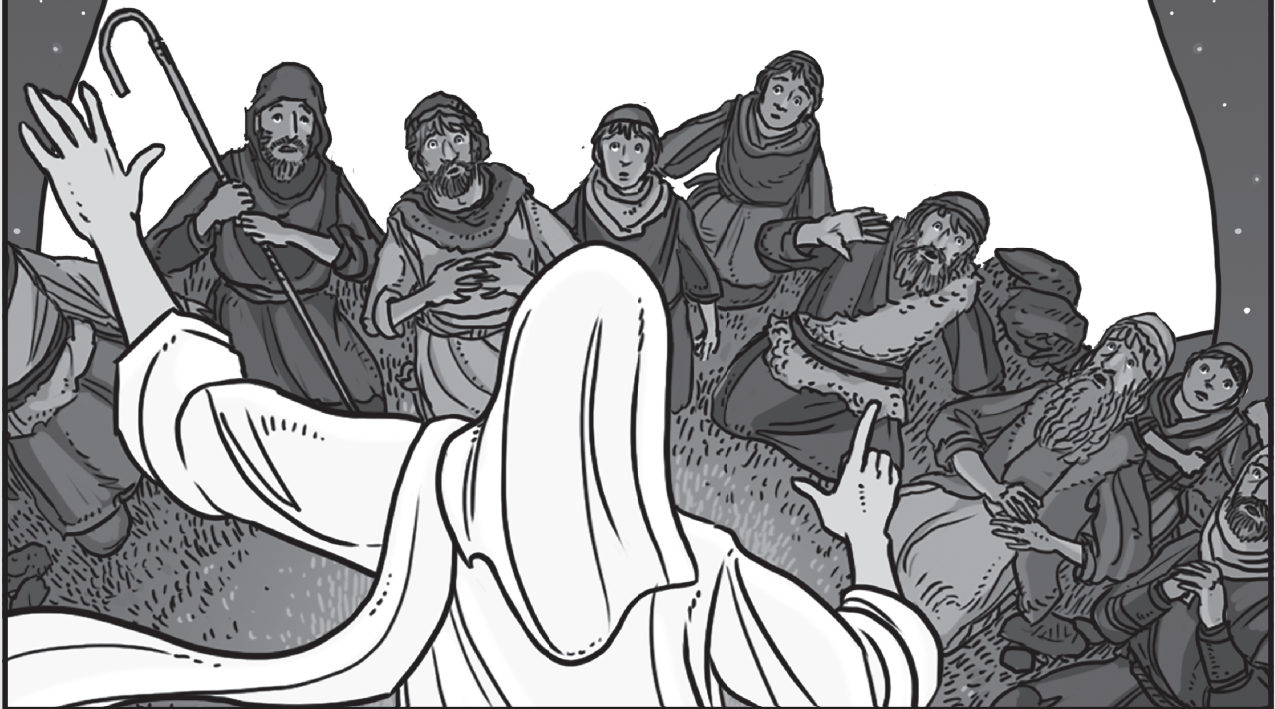
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Dear God our Father, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. As we prepare for his birthday, may our gifts to him be kindness and love toward all our brothers and sisters. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Christmas



Celebrating the Birth of Jesus





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16

Lesson Goals

- to recognize the story of Christmas
- to understand that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus
- to identify Jesus as the Son of God

Catechism References

456–460, 477–478, 527–530

Materials Needed

- the Christmas child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Christmas family page, on page 249 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 247–248 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Christmas excitement is in the air! This lesson builds on that excitement while focusing on the real meaning of Christmas: the birth of Jesus among us. It is sad that some of us, after being inundated with Christmas decor and Christmas music since Halloween, can be tired of Christmas by now. But let us pray to look at this tremendous feast with new eyes, and to share with the children the deep gratitude we feel for the coming in the flesh of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

† Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer:
 - Dear God, we feel excited because Christmas is coming soon. Help us to enjoy that excitement and to learn and remember the real reason we celebrate this season. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

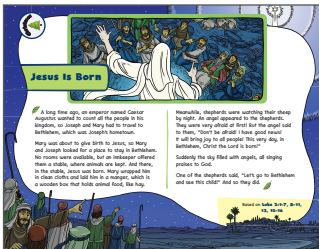
Engage

- Ask the children to share what is exciting to them about celebrating Christmas. (*going to Mass, receiving gifts, having a party, decorating the tree, having relatives visit, etc.*)
- Invite them to share why we celebrate Christmas by doing all these wonderful things. (*We are celebrating Jesus' birthday!*)
- Explain that today's lesson is about the real meaning of Christmas. Tell the children they will learn more about this after hearing this Bible story.

Christmas

† Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - What do we see at the top of the page? (*an angel and many people*)
 - What do we see at the bottom of the page? (*people; shepherds pointing up*)
- Comment that some of the children may remember this picture and the story from an earlier lesson. Remind the children that the people are shepherds, and the angel is appearing to them.
- Invite them to share what they think the angel is saying to the shepherds.
- Ask the children to name what they see on the rest of the page and if they remember what happens in this Bible story. Encourage them to listen to the Bible story to see if they are correct.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!"

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this child!" And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

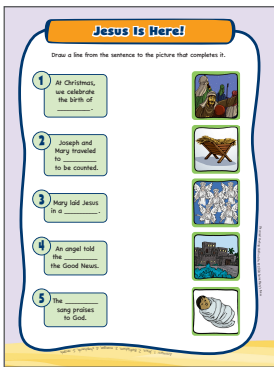
- Ask the children to share how the shepherds felt when the angel first appeared to them. (*afraid*)
- Encourage them to recall the angel's message and what was so important that God sent angels to tell about it. (*Jesus was born!*)
- Remind the children that Jesus wasn't an ordinary baby, which is why Christmas is so special.
- Explain that the angels tell us something about who Jesus is. Read aloud the last sentence of the angel's message: "This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!" Explain that Christ is a special name for Jesus. It means "Anointed One" or "Chosen One." Emphasize that this Chosen One is the Son of God!
- Continue with some points about Jesus as the Son of God:
 - What does it mean to be a son or a daughter? (*It means you were born from someone and belong to the family.*)
 - Have you ever heard someone say, "He looks just like his father" or "She looks just like her mother"? Has anyone ever said something like that about you? (*Accept responses.*)
 - What about Jesus? Who was the father of Jesus? (*God the Father*)

Christmas

- Explain that because Jesus was God’s Son, he is just like his Father! Tell the children that Jesus is just like God but also just like us! Explain that this is why Christmas is so wonderful and important.
- Ask the children if they know why God sent Jesus, his Son, to us. (*because he loves us so much*)
- Explain that people were getting mixed up about God and were forgetting that the way to God was the way of love and forgiveness. Explain that God sent Jesus to us to show us the way back to God by loving and forgiving others.
- Tell the children that they will now sing a thank-you song to God for sending Jesus. Teach them the words, and then sing the song to the tune of “Silent Night,” repeating until the children have learned it:
 - Thank you, God. Thank you, God.
Jesus came down to us,
such a little baby boy
God’s own Son to bring us joy.
Jesus, God’s own Son!
Jesus, God’s own Son!

Learning Activities

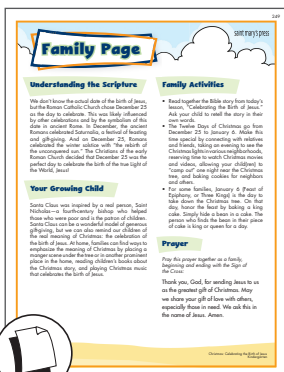
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 247–248 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What happened on the first Christmas? (*Jesus was born, and Mary laid him in a manger.*)
 - What special day do we celebrate on Christmas? (*Jesus’ birthday*)
 - Was Jesus an ordinary baby? (*No, Jesus is the Son of God.*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the children to respond, “Happy Birthday, Jesus!” after each of the statements below:
 - God our Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, into the world. *(Happy Birthday, Jesus!)*
 - Thank you for giving us the feast of Christmas. *(Happy Birthday, Jesus!)*
 - Help us share the love and joy of Jesus with everyone we meet. *(Happy Birthday, Jesus!)*
- Lead the children in singing the “Happy Birthday” song to Jesus.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- old Christmas cards, at least one per child
- white, green, or red construction paper, one sheet for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child
- glue sticks

Christmas Cards for Those in Need

- Begin by explaining that many people send Christmas cards to their friends and relatives to share special good wishes for Christmas and the new year.
- Tell the children that today they will be making Christmas cards for people who are poor, hungry, or homeless, and probably do not get many Christmas cards.
- Distribute a sheet of construction paper and a pair of scissors to each child.
- Place several Christmas cards on a table or desk, and allow each child to choose one.
- Help the children fold the construction paper in half to make a card.
- Direct them to cut out Christmas scenes and pictures from the old cards and glue them onto the front of their new card.
- Write “Merry Christmas!” on the board or somewhere the children can see it. Invite them to copy this greeting on the inside of their card and to write their first name only.
- Collect the cards. Deliver them to a soup kitchen or other facility serving those in need.

Materials Needed

- a recording of “Deck the Halls” and appropriate equipment for playing it

Christmas Dance

- Explain to the children that many of our Christmas carols began as music for dancing, and that “Deck the Halls” was one of these. Share that today the group will be doing a special dance to this song.
- Tell the children that “Deck the halls with boughs of holly” means “decorate the halls or the houses with greenery like holly and evergreens.” Comment that many people still do this today.
- Share that “Don we now our gay apparel” means “put on our best clothing” and that “Troll the ancient Yuletide carol” means “sing the Christmas song or carol.”
- Give these directions for the dance, practicing several times without the music:
 - Gather in a circle and hold hands.
 - At “Deck the halls with boughs of holly” (including the fa-la-las), circle to the left.
 - At “Tis the season to be jolly” (including the fa-la-las), circle to the right.
 - At “Don we now our gay apparel,” hold hands up and come to the center of the circle.
 - At “Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,” step backward into the original circle shape.
- Start the music, and invite the children to gather in a circle and begin the dance.
- Continue with other verses if desired.

Materials Needed

- two or three boxes of unbreakable Christmas decorations (a mixture of sacred and secular items)
- a recording of Christmas carols and appropriate equipment for playing it (*optional*)
- a small Christmas tree (*optional*)

Deck the Room!

- Invite the children to decorate the room for Christmas. Arrange the children into two or three small groups, and give each group a box of simple, unbreakable Christmas decorations.
- Explain that they may carefully take items out of the box and place them anywhere in the room.
- Make suggestions for placement as needed, but allow the children as much freedom as possible as they make their decorative decisions.
- Play Christmas carols while they are decorating if available. Set up a small Christmas tree if possible.
- End the activity by reminding the children that we decorate our homes, schools, and offices to celebrate Jesus’ birthday on Christmas.
- Congratulate them for doing a great job.

Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

We don't know the actual date of the birth of Jesus, but the Roman Catholic Church chose December 25 as the day to celebrate. This was likely influenced by other celebrations and by the symbolism of this date in ancient Rome. In December, the ancient Romans celebrated Saturnalia, a festival of feasting and gift-giving. And on December 25, Romans celebrated the winter solstice with "the rebirth of the unconquered sun." The Christians of the early Roman Church decided that December 25 was the perfect day to celebrate the birth of the true Light of the World, Jesus!

Your Growing Child

Santa Claus was inspired by a real person, Saint Nicholas—a fourth-century bishop who helped those who were poor and is the patron of children. Santa Claus can be a wonderful model of generous gift-giving, but we can also remind our children of the real meaning of Christmas: the celebration of the birth of Jesus. At home, families can find ways to emphasize the meaning of Christmas by placing a manger scene under the tree or in another prominent place in the home, reading children's books about the Christmas story, and playing Christmas music that celebrates the birth of Jesus.

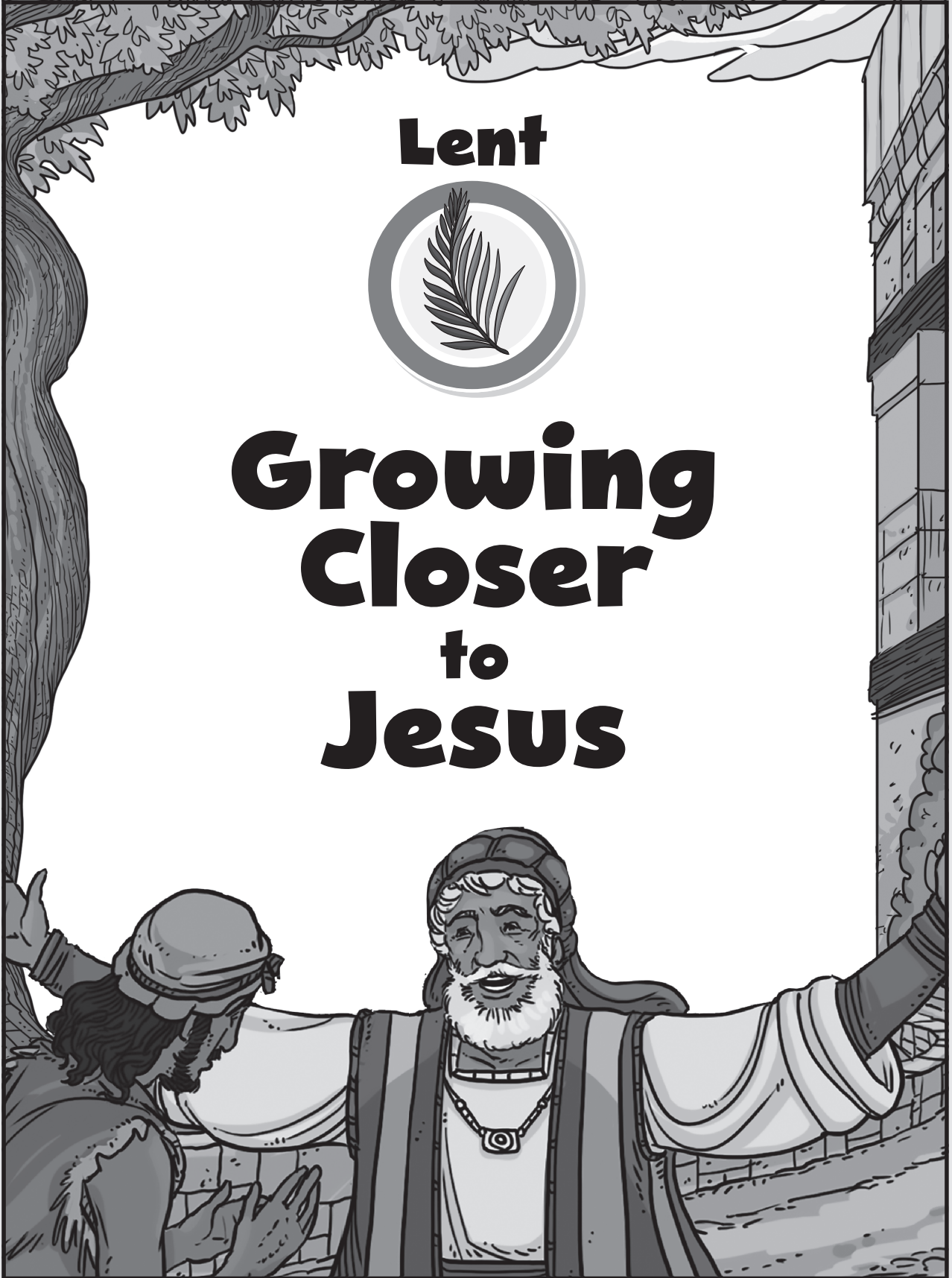
Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Celebrating the Birth of Jesus." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The Twelve Days of Christmas go from December 25 to January 6. Make this time special by connecting with relatives and friends, taking an evening to see the Christmas lights in various neighborhoods, reserving time to watch Christmas movies and videos, allowing your child(ren) to "camp out" one night near the Christmas tree, and baking cookies for neighbors and others.
- For some families, January 6 (Feast of Epiphany, or Three Kings) is the day to take down the Christmas tree. On that day, honor the feast by baking a king cake. Simply hide a bean in a cake. The person who finds the bean in their piece of cake is king or queen for a day.

Prayer

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

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to us as the greatest gift of Christmas. May we share your gift of love with others, especially those in need. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



Lent



**Growing
Closer
to
Jesus**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 15:11, 20–24

Lesson Goals

- to understand that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter
- to recognize that Lent is a time of turning back to God
- to name “little things for Jesus” we can do during Lent

Catechism References

976–987, 1846–1851

Materials Needed

- the Lent child’s page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Lent family page, on page 259 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 256–257 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

The death of Jesus was covered in chapter 16. This event is also covered in this liturgical season lesson, but with a broader focus. It introduces the children to the entire season of Lent and its important elements: preparation for Easter, turning back to God in prayer and service, and our growth in following Jesus from death to life in our personal lives. We know this last element as the Paschal Mystery, but this concept will be simplified for the children: love calls us to do hard things sometimes! But after these little deaths, our new life begins, life in the Risen Christ, now and forever.

† Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue as follows:
 - God our Father, we are beginning another special Church season. In this new season, help us follow Jesus more closely every day. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

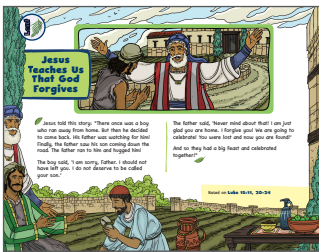
Engage

- Ask the children if they have ever had to do something that was hard for them to do. Invite them to share their stories.
- Explain that today’s lesson is about a season in the Church year called Lent. Tell them that in Lent, we follow Jesus when he goes through a very hard time, when he suffers and dies for us. Share that the whole Church is with Jesus in this season and is turning back to God in a special way.
- Tell the children that Lent is also a season of preparation for Easter, when we celebrate that Jesus is risen and gives new life to us all. Explain that they will learn more about this after reading the Bible story.

Lent

† Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - Who remembers seeing this picture before? Who remembers the son who ran away and came back? Who remembers the father who forgave the son?
 - Who remembers that we are the sons and daughters of God our Father?
 - Let’s look at the main picture again. Look at the father with his arms open wide. How do you think he is feeling? (*happy*)
 - Who is the young man in this picture? (*the son*)
 - Look at the son’s hands. He looks like he is praying or begging. What is he asking for? (*He is asking to come home.*)

- Explain that Lent is a season when we prepare for Easter, and that in Lent we can follow Jesus more closely and, just like the son, come running back to God our Father. Tell the children that during Lent, we all ask to come back to God our Father. Invite the children to listen as you read the story to find out more.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives

Jesus told this story: "There once was a boy who ran away from home. But then he decided to come back. His father was watching for him! Finally, the father saw his son coming down the road. The father ran to him and hugged him!

The boy said, 'I am sorry, Father. I should not have left you. I do not deserve to be called your son.'

The father said, 'Never mind about that! I am just glad you are home. I forgive you! We are going to celebrate! You were lost and now you are found!'

And so they had a big feast and celebrated together!"

(Based on Luke 15:11, 20–24)

Lent



Discover! (25 minutes)

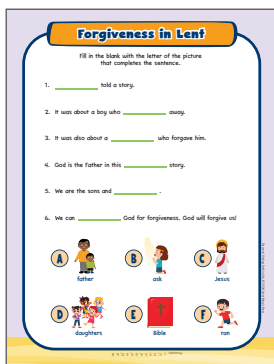
Core Teaching

- Ask the children to think about how the father might have felt when his son ran away. (*sad*)
- Point out that the father wasn't angry when his son returned home. Invite them to share how they can tell the father wasn't angry. (*He told his son he forgave him and threw a big party.*)
- Continue with the following points:
 - When you have hurt someone, and that person is kind to you and says, "That's okay. I know you didn't mean what you said," or whatever it was, what do we call that? (*forgiveness*)

- Being loving and forgiving is a good way to be close to Jesus during Lent. Because Jesus was loving and forgiving, he told this story about the father to show us that God our Father is loving and forgiving.
- Do you know another word for being loving and forgiving? (*Accept responses.*) Being loving and forgiving means being full of mercy. That is what God our Father is like, just as the father in the story was with the son: full of mercy.
- Show the children a calendar. Mark the days of Lent and Holy Week. Draw a circle around the date of Easter Sunday.
- Explain that Lent is a season when we prepare for Easter, when we can follow Jesus more closely and, just like the son, come back to God our Father.
- Invite the children to look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Ask them if they see the ring on the son's finger. Point out the man with the red hat giving the son a new pair of shoes.
- Comment that Lent is our chance to make our lives new so that at Easter we will be ready to live a new life with Jesus. Remind the children that at Easter, we often get something new to wear—a new dress, a new shirt, or new shoes. Explain that new clothes at Easter—being new on the outside—reminds us we are also new on the inside—that we are ready to live a new life with Jesus.
- Share that during Lent, we try to be close to Jesus and to live as he would want us to live, even when it is not easy. Ask the children the following questions:
 - What do you think are good ways to be closer to Jesus in Lent, and how might we follow him even when it is not easy? (*Accept responses, for example, listening to our parents, helping at home, being kind to others, sharing our toys, playing fair, helping our brothers and sisters, etc.*)
 - These are all good ways! And we can offer them all to Jesus in Lent! We can spend Lent doing little things for Jesus. Sometimes these little things will be easy to do. Sometimes they will be harder to do. But every time we do something good, we can say, "That is one more little thing for Jesus!"

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 256–257 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

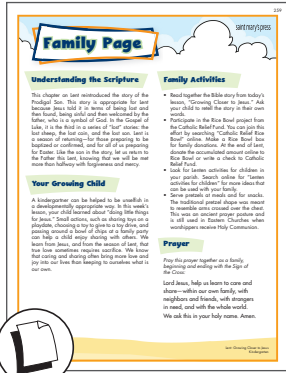




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What is the Church season called in which we prepare for Easter? (*Lent*)
 - Who do we turn back to during Lent? (*God our Father*)
 - What are some little things we can do for Jesus during Lent? (*Accept responses.*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat the response after you each time.
 - Lord Jesus, you told us that your Father was loving and full of mercy. Lord, have mercy. (*Lord, have mercy.*)
 - Lord Jesus, you told us that your Father was full of forgiveness. Christ, have mercy. (*Christ, have mercy.*)
 - Lord Jesus, help us do little things for you this Lent. Lord, have mercy. (*Lord, have mercy.*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Lent

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- white index cards, one for each child
- purple crayons, one for each child
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Lent

Lenten Crosses

- Distribute the index cards and purple crayons to the children.
- Ask them to turn their cards vertically and write the name of Jesus at the top.
- Direct them to draw a simple cross under the name of Jesus, with one longer vertical line and one slightly shorter horizontal line. Hold up your sample so that all can see.
- Mention that the cross is purple because it is a Lenten cross, and purple is the color of being sorry and turning back to God our Father. Comment that we honor the name of Jesus because he loved us so much and even died for us on the cross.
- Explain that Lent is a special time of following Jesus and that this cross will remind the children to do little things for Jesus, even things that are hard, and to turn to God our Father when they need forgiveness.
- Ask the children for examples of little things they can do for Jesus during Lent.
- Write some of their ideas on the board in simple phrases (e.g., be kind, help others, say nice things). Help each child choose one phrase to write on the back of their card as a reminder of a particular intention or resolution to focus on during Lent.
- Invite the children to write their name on the back of their card.
- Conclude the activity by asking the children to stand and hold their crosses up high. Ask them to repeat after you: "Jesus, help us follow you this Lent. Amen!"
- Encourage the children to place their crosses in a place where they will see them every day, perhaps tucked in the frame of a mirror or taped to a wall.

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout "A Prayer for Lent," on page 258 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- purple construction paper, one sheet for each child
- glue sticks

A Prayer for Lent

- Distribute the purple construction paper and the handout. Ask the children to fold their construction paper in half to make a card.
- Direct the children to color the picture of Jesus on the handout.
- Invite the children to fold the handout in half, in the middle, where the fold line is.
- Instruct the children to glue the handout into the folded purple construction paper.
- Read the prayer to the children, and then ask the children to write their name at the bottom of the prayer.
- Suggest that the children take their prayer card home and stand it up where

Materials Needed

- jelly beans or other small tokens in a plastic, resealable bag, one for each child
- a resealable empty bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus,” one for each child
- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

they will see it. Encourage them to say this prayer each day during Lent.

Little Things for Jesus

- Prepare the bags in advance, including the number of jelly beans or tokens corresponding to the number of days left in Lent (depending on when this lesson occurs). Remember that Sundays are not counted as days of Lent.
- Remind the children that in the lesson they learned about doing little things for Jesus.
- Explain that in this activity, they will receive two bags. Share that one bag will be empty and will be labeled “Little Things for Jesus.” Tell them that the other bag will contain jelly beans (or tokens)—one for each day of Lent.
- Distribute the empty bags and the bags of jelly beans (or tokens) to the children. Continue your explanation as follows:
 - Each day, near the end of the day, maybe before bed, look at your bag. Ask yourself, “Did I do good things for Jesus today? Did I try to be kind and helpful?” If you did, take one jelly bean (token) out of the bag and put it in the empty bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus.” Even one good thing is enough to move a jelly bean (token) into the “Little Things for Jesus” bag.
 - If you cannot think of one good thing you did, then you must leave the jelly bean (token) in the unlabeled bag and not move it. However, if you did two good things the next day, you can make up for the day when you didn’t do anything. But I think you can do at least one good thing each day so that you can move all the jelly beans (tokens), day by day, into the bag labeled “Little Things for Jesus.”
 - Sundays are not days of Lent, so you will not have a jelly bean (token) for Sundays. But you can still do little things for Jesus on Sundays.
 - *(Omit this step if using tokens.)* At the end of Lent, when it is Easter, and all the jelly beans are in the “Little Things for Jesus” bag, you may put the jelly beans into your Easter basket and eat them, but not all at once!
- Show the video “I’m So Little, What Can I Do? | A Story About Serving Others” (YouTube, 5:53), and ask the children to think of examples of little things they can do for Jesus during Lent.
- Assure them that they are never too little to do things for Jesus during Lent.

Cut on the dashed lines. Fold the paper in the middle, on the fold line.
Glue the prayer paper inside a piece of purple construction paper.
Place your prayer card where you can see it each day.



**A Prayer
for Lent**

Dear Jesus,
Help me come
closer to you
by being
kind and helpful
this Lent.
I love you!
Amen.

Name

fold



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

This chapter on Lent reintroduced the story of the Prodigal Son. This story is appropriate for Lent because Jesus told it in terms of being lost and then found, being sinful and then welcomed by the father, who is a symbol of God. In the Gospel of Luke, it is the third in a series of “lost” stories: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Lent is a season of returning—for those preparing to be baptized or confirmed, and for all of us preparing for Easter. Like the son in the story, let us return to the Father this Lent, knowing that we will be met more than halfway with forgiveness and mercy.

Your Growing Child

A kindergartner can be helped to be unselfish in a developmentally appropriate way. In this week’s lesson, your child learned about “doing little things for Jesus.” Small actions, such as sharing toys on a playdate, choosing a toy to give to a toy drive, and passing around a bowl of chips at a family party can help a child enjoy sharing with others. We learn from Jesus, and from the season of Lent, that true love sometimes requires sacrifice. We know that caring and sharing often bring more love and joy into our lives than keeping to ourselves what is our own.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today’s lesson, “Growing Closer to Jesus.” Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Participate in the Rice Bowl project from the Catholic Relief Fund. You can join this effort by searching “Catholic Relief Rice Bowl” online. Make a Rice Bowl box for family donations. At the end of Lent, donate the accumulated amount online to Rice Bowl or write a check to Catholic Relief Fund.
- Look for Lenten activities for children in your parish. Search online for “Lenten activities for children” for more ideas that can be used with your family.
- Serve pretzels at meals and for snacks. The traditional pretzel shape was meant to resemble arms crossed over the chest. This was an ancient prayer posture and is still used in Eastern Churches when worshippers receive Holy Communion.

Prayer

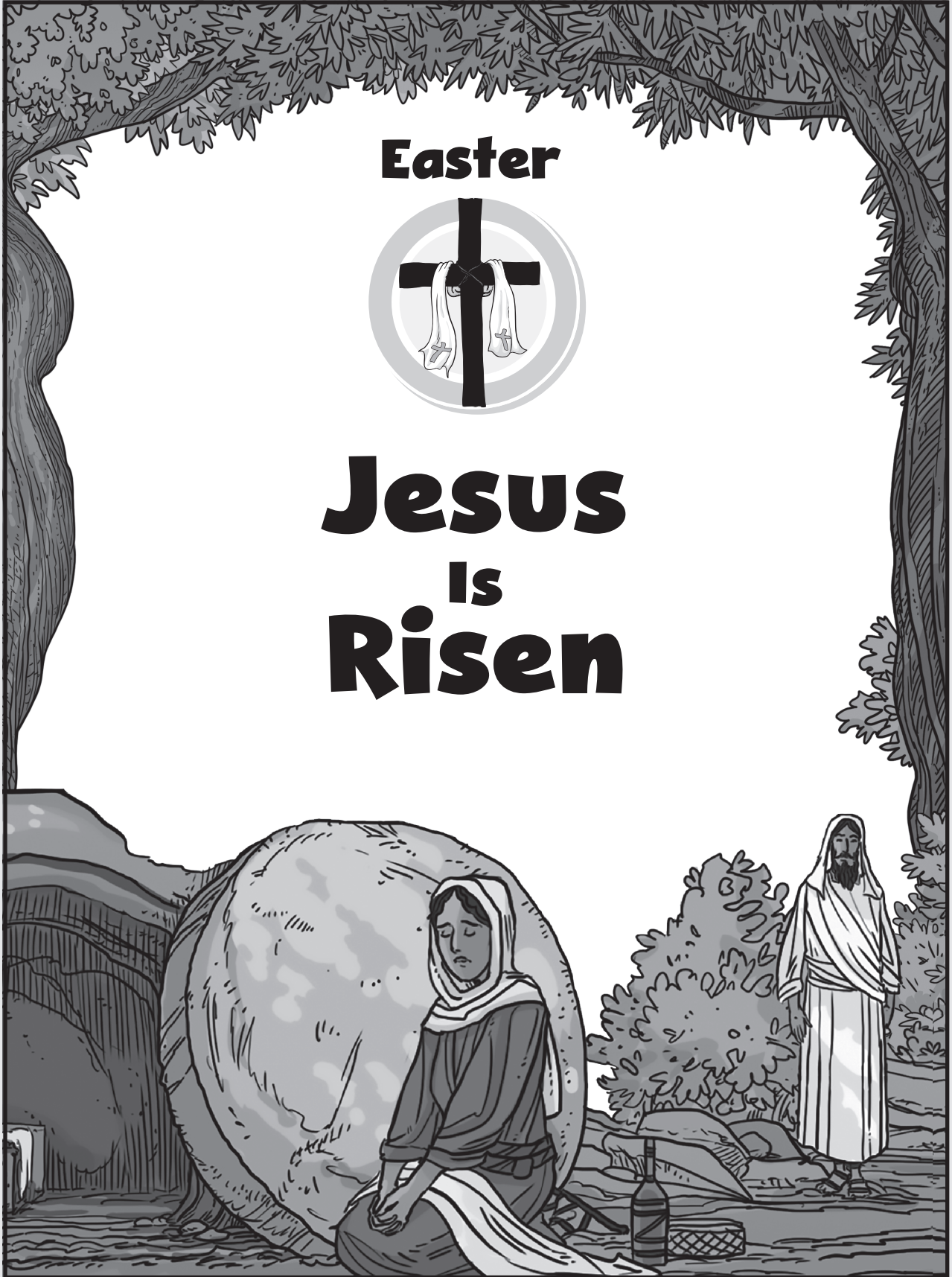
Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

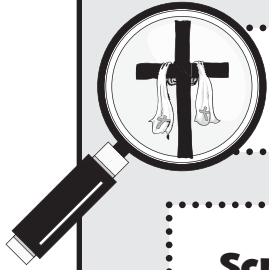
Lord Jesus, help us learn to care and share—within our own family, with neighbors and friends, with strangers in need, and with the whole world. We ask this in your holy name. Amen.

Easter



**Jesus
Is
Risen**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 20:11–14, 16

Lesson Goals

- to recall that Jesus rose from the dead to new life
- to recognize that we celebrate Jesus' rising to new life during Easter
- to understand that Easter is a special season in the Church

Catechism References

638–658

Materials Needed

- the Easter child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Easter family page, on page 269 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 266–267 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In this Bible story, we learn that one of Jesus' close followers and friend, Mary Magdalene, was very sad when Jesus died. She felt even worse when she went to his tomb and discovered that it was empty. She knelt in front of the tomb and cried. Experiencing the loss of her friend and teacher was devastating.

Though most of your students have not experienced a loss of this magnitude, they can relate their own experiences to Mary. This story is not only about sadness and grief, however. It ends with hope and joy. Jesus appears and calls Mary by name. When she hears Jesus' voice, she recognizes him. What a feeling of relief and joy she must have experienced. When teaching this lesson, focus on the deep friendship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and the joy we feel knowing that Jesus has risen.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer:
 - Dear Jesus, be with us today as we learn about a special season of joy in the Church. We celebrate this season knowing you love us very much. We love you too. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

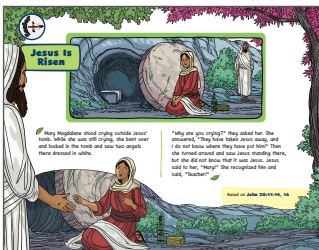
Engage

- Invite the children to name the different seasons in nature: spring, summer, fall, and winter. Ask them to share what each season is like.
- Encourage them to tell you what their favorite season is and why. Affirm their responses, share your favorite season with them, and tell them that there are wonderful things about each season.
- Explain that the Church has special seasons too, but they are different from the seasons in nature. Share that the Church seasons mark special times, and that in today's lesson, the children will learn about one of these important seasons in the Church.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Invite them to put their finger on the picture of the lady kneeling. Explain that this is Mary Magdalene, a dear friend of Jesus.
 - Look at Mary's face. Can you guess how she is feeling? (*Accept responses, and remind the children to look at facial expressions for cues as to how people are feeling.*)
 - Jesus is also in the picture, but Mary Magdalene doesn't see him. Can you tell where Mary Magdalene and Jesus are? (*They are outside near Jesus' tomb.*)
- Direct the children to the bottom of the page, and invite them to share what they see there. Tell them that Mary Magdalene is no longer sad but looks a bit surprised. Invite the children to share why Mary Magdalene might be surprised. (*Jesus is alive. He is standing near her.*)

- Invite the children to listen to the Bible story to find out why Mary Magdalene was sad and what happens when she sees Jesus.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Risen

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside Jesus' tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb and saw two angels there dressed in white. "Why are you crying?" they asked her. She answered, "They have taken Jesus away, and I do not know where they have put him!" Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She recognized him and said, "Teacher!"

(Based on John 20:11–14, 16)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

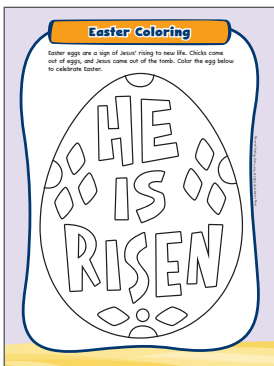
- Invite the children to retell the Bible story in their own words. Make the point that Mary Magdalene was at the tomb where Jesus was placed after he died.
- Explain that Mary Magdalene is crying at the tomb because she loved Jesus very much and she thought he was dead forever.
- Ask the children how they think Mary Magdalene might have felt when she saw the angels.
- Tell the children that after Mary Magdalene saw the angels, Jesus showed himself and spoke directly to her. Invite the children to share how they think Mary Magdalene felt when she realized that Jesus had risen.
- Explain that Mary was so excited that Jesus had risen to new life that she celebrated and ran to share the Good News with others. Share that Jesus' rising to new life is very Good News!

- Continue with the following points:
 - Jesus rose to new life on a Sunday, so Sundays have become special and holy for Christians. We celebrate Jesus' rising in a season of the Church called Easter.
 - What are some ways you celebrate Easter? *(If the children bring up things such as eggs, chicks, bunnies, flowers, and candy, tell them that all these things are reminders of Jesus' rising to new life and the celebration of this "sweet" news. If you have already covered chapter 17, this understanding will have been introduced to the children.)*
- Tell the children that Easter Sunday is an important day in the Church, but that Easter continues for fifty days—that's how important it is! Explain that we call Easter a season in the Church because it lasts for more than a day and marks a special time in the Church.
- Emphasize that Easter is the most important season in the Church.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 266–267 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

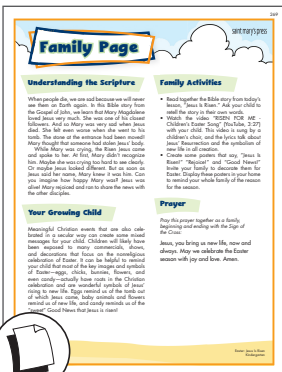
Easter



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - What happened to Jesus after he was buried in the tomb? *(He rose to new life.)*
 - When do we celebrate Jesus' rising to life in a special way? *(at Easter)*
 - Is Easter a celebration that lasts just one day in the Church? *(No, Easter is a season; it lasts fifty days.)*
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this prayer:
 - Dear Jesus, you are the best leader, teacher, protector, and friend. We celebrate your rising from the dead and say with joyful voices, "Hallelujah!" Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (optional)

Interactive Easter Play

- Choose volunteers for the following parts: Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and two angels. Select an area as the “stage,” and invite the children to pretend this is the place where Jesus was placed after his death.
- Direct the child playing Mary Magdalene to kneel or sit on the ground, and have the child playing Jesus stand just behind Mary Magdalene. The children playing the two angels can stand “offstage” or behind some chairs, which can represent the tomb.
- Ask the children to help tell the story by saying the following:
 - We need everyone’s help to tell today’s Bible story. I’ll ask some questions, and when we agree on what each character in the story is doing, that character will act it out. Let’s begin.
 - What was Mary Magdalene doing when she came to Jesus’ tomb? *(She was crying. Direct the child playing Mary Magdalene to pretend to look sad and cry.)*
 - Mary Magdalene looked inside the tomb and saw two angels sitting where Jesus’ body had been. What did the angels ask Mary? *(They asked Mary why she was crying. Direct the angels to ask Mary why she is crying.)*
 - What did Mary Magdalene say in response to the angels’ question? *(Mary Magdalene said Jesus was gone, and she didn’t know where they had taken him. Direct the child playing Mary Magdalene to act confused and say that she doesn’t know where Jesus is.)*
 - Finally, Jesus enters the story. What happened when Mary saw Jesus? *(Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus until he said her name. Direct the child playing Mary Magdalene to look over her shoulder and notice Jesus. Invite the child playing Jesus to say, “Mary!”)*
 - Well done! After Jesus said Mary’s name, she suddenly recognized him. Can you imagine how happy she must have felt seeing Jesus alive and well after she had seen him die three days earlier? *(Direct the child playing Mary Magdalene to look surprised and happy.)*
- Explain that the Bible story has a happy ending. Tell the children that Jesus’ rising was a wonderful and miraculous event and one we celebrate each Easter. Invite the children to share how they celebrate Easter both at church and at home.

Materials Needed

- three Easter baskets
- plastic Easter eggs, one for each child

Easter Egg Relay

- Arrange the children into three groups, and have each group form a line.
- Place an empty Easter basket about ten feet away from each group.
- Distribute a plastic Easter egg to each child, and explain that when you say “Go,” the first child in each line will hop like a bunny to place their egg in the Easter basket. Explain that once they drop their egg in their group’s Easter basket, they should hop back to their group and go to the end of the line.
- Tell the children that when the person in their group returns to the line, the next person will go. Explain that this will continue until each person in the line has hopped and deposited their egg in the basket.
- Encourage them to hop carefully and not to bump into anyone.
- Remind them that Easter eggs are a sign of Jesus’ rising to new life because chicks come out of eggs, like Jesus came out of the tomb. Share that bunnies, and all newborn animals, are also a sign of new life and remind us of Jesus’ rising to new life.
- Start the game with a countdown, and cheer on the groups, helping them remember when to go.
- Congratulate all the groups when the relay has finished, and tell them that everyone is a winner today because Jesus rose for all of us!

Materials Needed

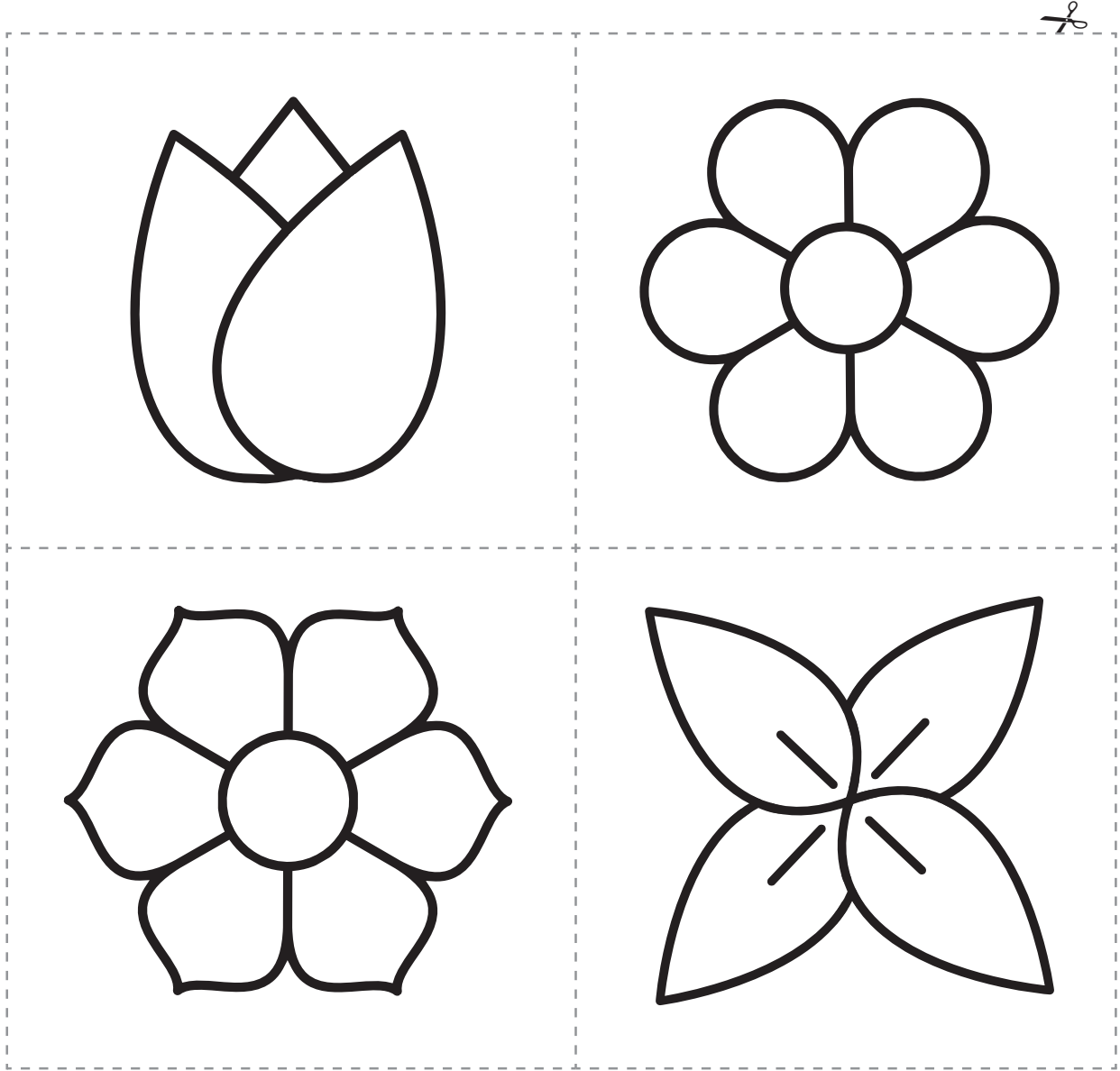
- copies of the handout “Spring into New Life Bouquet,” on page 268 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons
- scissors, one pair for each child
- construction paper, one sheet for each child
- glue sticks, one for each child
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Easter Bouquet

- Distribute the handout, crayons, and scissors.
- Invite the children to count the number of flowers and then color them in. Encourage them to cut out the flowers after they have finished coloring.
- Distribute the construction paper and glue sticks. Tell the children they should use the glue to attach their flowers to the top half of the paper and then draw a stem and leaves for each one, creating a bouquet.
- Write “Easter” on the board or somewhere the children can see it. Invite them to copy it onto their papers.
- Emphasize that Jesus’ rising is joyful and a reason to celebrate at Easter. Encourage the children to take their Easter bouquets home to remind them of the joy and new life that we celebrate at Easter.

Spring into New Life Bouquet

Color each flower, and then cut them out on the dashed lines.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

When people die, we are sad because we will never see them on Earth again. In this Bible story from the Gospel of John, we learn that Mary Magdalene loved Jesus very much. She was one of his closest followers. And so Mary was very sad when Jesus died. She felt even worse when she went to his tomb. The stone at the entrance had been moved! Mary thought that someone had stolen Jesus' body.

While Mary was crying, the Risen Jesus came and spoke to her. At first, Mary didn't recognize him. Maybe she was crying too hard to see clearly. Or maybe Jesus looked different. But as soon as Jesus said her name, Mary knew it was him. Can you imagine how happy Mary was? Jesus was alive! Mary rejoiced and ran to share the news with the other disciples.

Your Growing Child

Meaningful Christian events that are also celebrated in a secular way can create some mixed messages for your child. Children will likely have been exposed to many commercials, shows, and decorations that focus on the nonreligious celebration of Easter. It can be helpful to remind your child that most of the key images and symbols of Easter—eggs, chicks, bunnies, flowers, and even candy—actually have roots in the Christian celebration and are wonderful symbols of Jesus' rising to new life. Eggs remind us of the tomb out of which Jesus came, baby animals and flowers remind us of new life, and candy reminds us of the "sweet" Good News that Jesus is risen!

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Risen." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Watch the video "RISEN FOR ME - Children's Easter Song" (YouTube, 3:27) with your child. This video is sung by a children's choir, and the lyrics talk about Jesus' Resurrection and the symbolism of new life in all creation.
- Create some posters that say, "Jesus Is Risen!" "Rejoice!" and "Good News!" Invite your family to decorate them for Easter. Display these posters in your home to remind your whole family of the reason for the season.

Prayer

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

Jesus, you bring us new life, now and always. May we celebrate the Easter season with joy and love. Amen.

Pentecost



**Filled
with the
Holy Spirit**





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

John 14:16–17, 26–27

Lesson Goals

- to explain that the Holy Spirit is a special helper that Jesus sent at Pentecost
- to teach the children that the Holy Spirit can bring us comfort and peace
- to recognize wind and fire as symbols of the Holy Spirit

Catechism References

683–747

Materials Needed

- the Pentecost child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Pentecost family page, on page 279 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose on pages 276–277 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

In today's Bible story, Jesus promised his followers a great gift. He asked his Father to send the Holy Spirit as a helper to stay with us always. Jesus asked God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to help us understand what Jesus taught. This lesson focuses on the events of Pentecost, who the Holy Spirit is, and what symbols help us understand the Holy Spirit.

Though we cannot see the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit works within us. Just like those who were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and went out to spread the Good News, when we get an idea to do something good, that is the Holy Spirit at work. When we realize something about God, that is the Holy Spirit at work. When we do a good deed that seems impossible to accomplish, that is the Holy Spirit at work. A good reminder for all of us is that we can ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide us every day.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the following prayer:
 - Dear God, please guide us, protect us, and show us the way to be the best followers of Jesus we can be. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

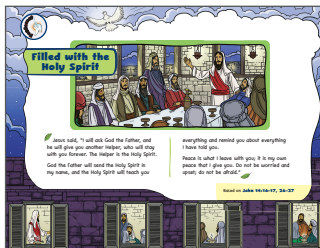
- Ask the children to name some of the good helpers in their lives. Invite them to think about people who cheer them on, help them be their best, and comfort them when they are sad or scared.
- Tell the children that today they will learn about a special helper God has sent us to help us be the best we can be.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by making the following points:
 - In this picture, Jesus is talking to his close friends and sharing a meal. Jesus is standing and wearing a red sash. Find Jesus and put your finger on his red sash.
 - Now look at the picture at the bottom of the page. We can see Jesus and his friends through the windows. Count how many windows you see. Hold up your fingers to show me how many windows are in this picture. *(four)*
 - Very good! We know Jesus is talking to his friends, but it is hard to tell just by looking at the pictures what this Bible story might be about. Let's listen now to find out.
- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.



Today's Bible Story

Filled with the Holy Spirit

[Jesus said,] "I will ask God the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. The Helper is the Holy Spirit.

God the Father will send the Holy Spirit in my name, and the Holy Spirit will teach you everything and remind you about everything I have told you.

Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid."

(Based on John 14:16–17, 26–27)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

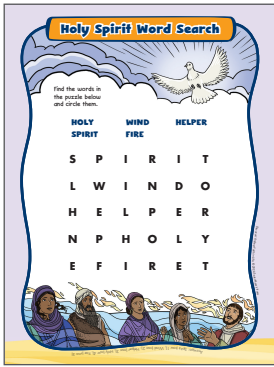
- Invite the children to share what they remember about what Jesus said in the Bible story.
- Point out that Jesus shared a special meal with his friends in this Bible story. Remind the children that Jesus explained he would ask God the Father to send a helper who would never leave his followers. Ask the children if they know the name of the helper. (*the Holy Spirit*)
- Tell the children that Jesus kept his promise, and the Holy Spirit appeared to Jesus' friends on a special day we call Pentecost.
- Explain that on Pentecost, Jesus' friends were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they had the courage to tell others about Jesus.
- Tell the children that we celebrate Pentecost each year in the Church, and that Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the Church because the Holy Spirit helped Jesus' followers share his teachings, and the Church began to grow.
- Explain that Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit comes to everyone at Baptism. Tell the children that the Holy Spirit inspires us to share Jesus' love with others and brings us comfort and peace.
- Share that wind and fire are symbols of the Holy Spirit because wind can be very powerful, and fire can keep us warm and give us light. Tell them they will see the color red in the church during Pentecost because it reminds us of the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Continue with the following points:
 - Maybe you are wondering how we ask the Holy Spirit for help.
 - We ask the Holy Spirit to help us by praying. We don't have to memorize a prayer or promise to be good. We just pray like we are talking to a friend or trusted adult.
 - Let's practice praying and asking for the Holy Spirit's help. Repeat after me:

Holy Spirit,
Come to us and be with us.
You are our helper and our friend.
Amen.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 276–277 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



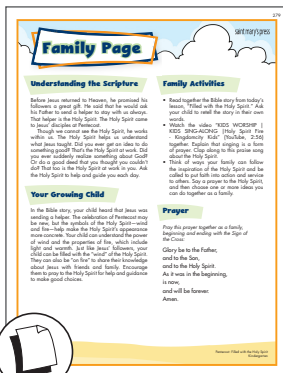
Pentecost



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - When did the special helper come to Jesus' friends? (*on Pentecost*)
 - Who was sent to offer us comfort and peace? (*the Holy Spirit*)
 - What are the symbols of the Holy Spirit? (*wind and fire*)
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Teach the children the words and motions for the prayer below, practicing several times.
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the following prayer, using the hand motions:
 - Come, Holy Spirit. *(Extend your arms in a welcoming motion.)*
 - Fill our hearts, *(Cross your hands over your heart.)*
 - Inspire our minds, *(Point to your head.)*
 - Give us loving words to speak. *(Make the sign of the cross on your lips.)*
 - Amen. *(Fold your hands together.)*
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Happy Birthday, Church!” on page 278 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons
- red, orange, or yellow tissue paper, one sheet for each child
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church

- Distribute the handout and crayons.
- Remind the children that Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the Church because the Holy Spirit helped Jesus’ followers share his teachings with others, which made the Church grow.
- Point out the word *Pentecost* on the cake, and invite the children to color the cake. Distribute the tissue paper while they are coloring.
- Explain that they will tear off pieces of tissue paper and crumple them in their hands. Tell them to make the pieces big enough to be the flames on top of the candles. Have them place the tissue paper flames on top of the candles.
- Share that a birthday cake can also remind us of the symbols of the Holy Spirit. Ask the children if they remember two of the symbols of the Holy Spirit. (*wind and fire*)
- Point out that the flames on the candles are fire and can remind us of the Holy Spirit. Invite the children to “blow out” the candles. (*They should blow the tissue paper off the paper.*)
- Tell the children that they used wind, their breath, to blow out the candles. Remind them that wind is another symbol of the Holy Spirit.
- End the activity by making the following points:
 - Like the wind makes a kite soar or a fan move, the wind of the Holy Spirit helps us share Jesus’ love and teachings.
 - Like fire can give warmth and light, the Holy Spirit helps us to be “on fire” for Jesus. This means we are excited and ready to share God’s message, just like Jesus’ friends.
- Encourage the children to explain the celebration of Pentecost and the symbols of the Holy Spirit at home, using their handout and tissue flames.

Pentecost

Materials Needed

- none

Holy Spirit Helpers

- Invite the children to line up at one end of the room. Share one of the scenarios below, and ask the children to raise their hands if they know how to help.
- Call on a child and invite them to come forward to help you with their solution. If they can’t think of a way to help, encourage them to ask the other children for ideas.
- Encourage them to stand by you once they have offered their help. The goal is to eventually have all the children join you after they have found a way to be a helper.
- Use the following, or similar, scenarios:
 - I broke something, and I’m afraid to tell my parents. How can you help?
 - I’m sad. How can you help?

- I'm hungry. How can you help?
- Someone in my class is being mean to me. How can you help?
- I'm thirsty. How can you help?
- I saw someone break the rules. How can you help?
- I was invited to a sleepover, but I'm nervous to sleep away from home. How can you help?
- I'm nervous to be around dogs. How can you help?
- I'm embarrassed because I have a food allergy. How can you help?
- I'm afraid of the dark. How can you help?
- I got invited to a pool party, but I'm not a strong swimmer. How can you help?
- I got lost at the park. How can you help?
- I fell off my scooter. How can you help?
- Encourage the children to be thoughtful and creative in their responses. After every child has had the opportunity to help, direct them to join hands.
- Invite them to raise their arms up high in victory because they are great helpers. Tell them their ideas about how to help others remind us of the help the Holy Spirit gives to us.
- Share that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate helper. Remind the children that all we need to do is ask for help, and the Holy Spirit can inspire us to try things in a new way, give us a brave heart to tell the truth, bring us comfort when we are sad, and remind us of Jesus' teachings and God's love.

Materials Needed

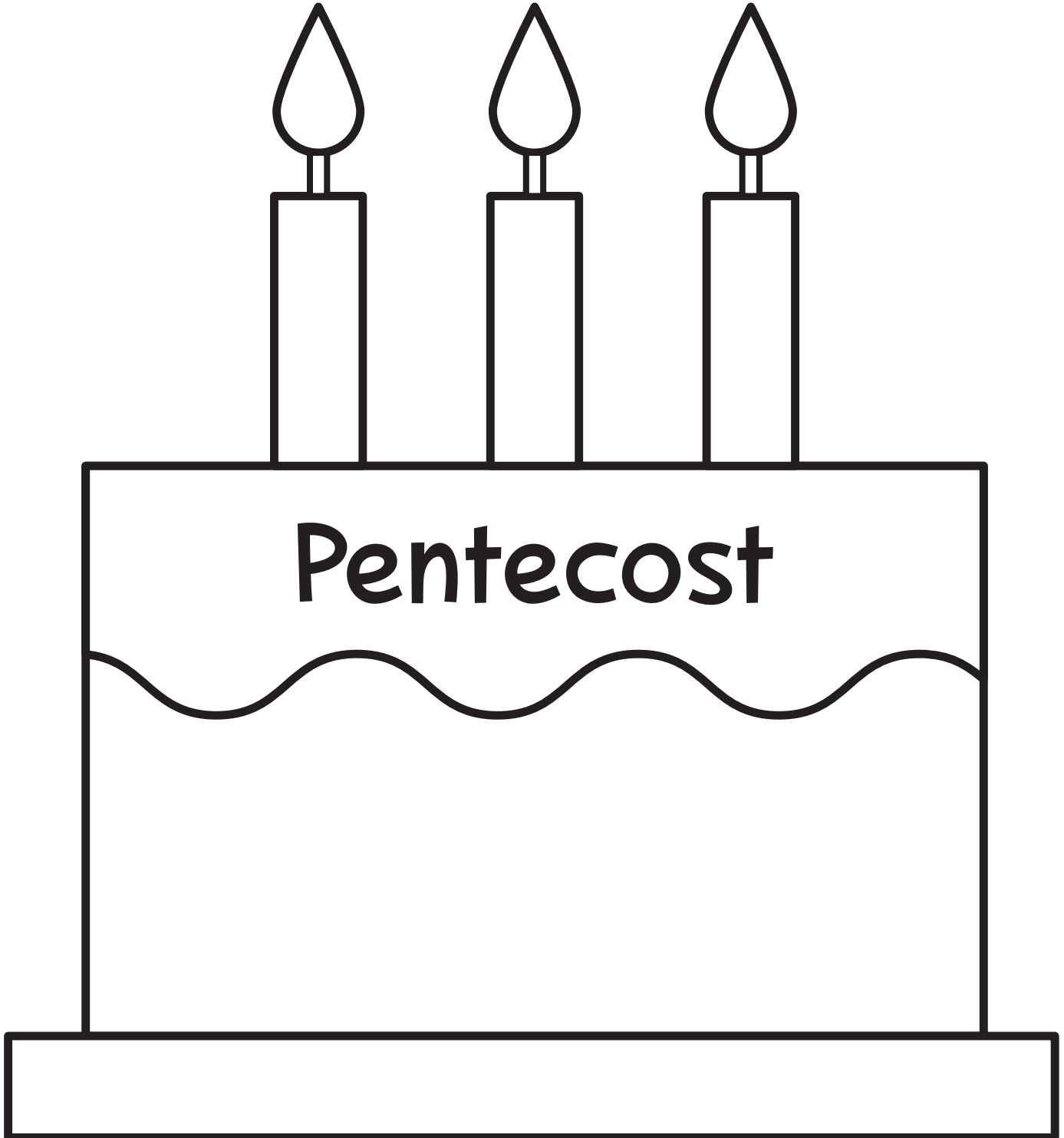
- half-sheets of red, orange, or yellow construction paper, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child
- long strips of brown construction paper, one for each child
- clear tape
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Holy Spirit Headbands

- Tell the children that today they will make a headband to remind them that the Holy Spirit is with them as their helper. Explain that just like Jesus' followers, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can share Jesus' Good News.
- Distribute the half-sheets of construction paper, and demonstrate how to draw a flame. Tell the children to do the same. After they have drawn their flame, distribute the scissors and invite them to cut out the flame.
- Circulate while they are drawing and cutting to assist as needed.
- Use the long strip of brown construction paper to measure around each child's head. Tape the strip so it fits snugly around their head, creating a headband.
- Show the children how to attach the flame to the headband with tape.
- Invite the children to put on their Holy Spirit headbands as a reminder that we have a helper who is always with us and guides us to be the best followers of Jesus we can be.
- End with a little cheer for the Holy Spirit.

Happy Birthday, Church!

Color the birthday cake. Then use tissue paper to be the "flames" on the candles.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Before Jesus returned to Heaven, he promised his followers a great gift. He said that he would ask his Father to send a helper to stay with us always. That helper is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples at Pentecost.

Though we cannot see the Holy Spirit, he works within us. The Holy Spirit helps us understand what Jesus taught. Did you ever get an idea to do something good? That's the Holy Spirit at work. Did you ever suddenly realize something about God? Or do a good deed that you thought you couldn't do? That too is the Holy Spirit at work in you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help and guide you each day.

Your Growing Child

In the Bible story, your child heard that Jesus was sending a helper. The celebration of Pentecost may be new, but the symbols of the Holy Spirit—wind and fire—help make the Holy Spirit's appearance more concrete. Your child can understand the power of wind and the properties of fire, which include light and warmth. Just like Jesus' followers, your child can be filled with the "wind" of the Holy Spirit. They can also be "on fire" to share their knowledge about Jesus with friends and family. Encourage them to pray to the Holy Spirit for help and guidance to make good choices.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Filled with the Holy Spirit." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Watch the video "KIDS WORSHIP | KIDS SING-ALONG | Holy Spirit Fire - Kingdomcity Kids" (YouTube, 2:56) together. Explain that singing is a form of prayer. Clap along to this praise song about the Holy Spirit.
- Think of ways your family can follow the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and be called to put faith into action and service to others. Say a prayer to the Holy Spirit, and then choose one or more ideas you can do together as a family.

Prayer

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

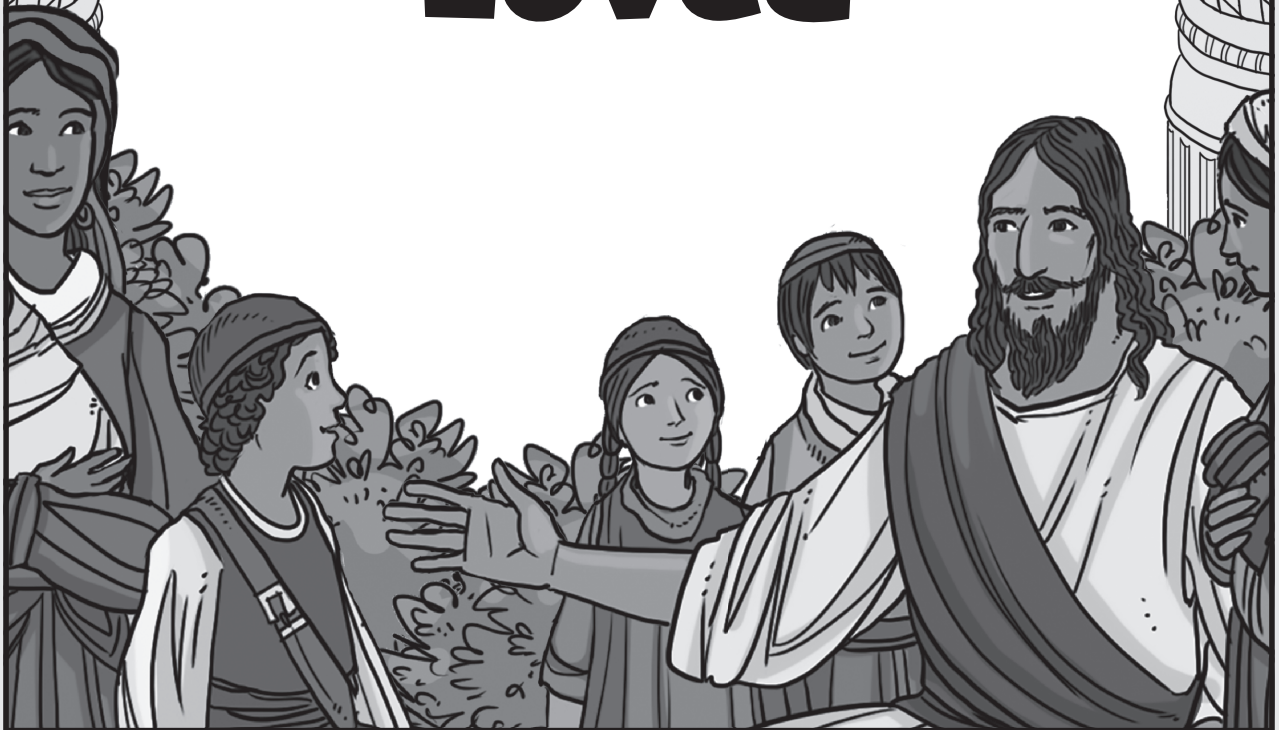
Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now,
and will be forever.
Amen.



Ordinary Time



We Are Loved





Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Romans 8:35, 37–39

Lesson Goals

- to understand that nothing can separate us from God's love
- to explain that Ordinary Time is a season for learning about Jesus' life and teachings
- to recognize that the liturgical color green is associated with Ordinary Time

Catechism References

218–220

Materials Needed

- the Ordinary Time child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Ordinary Time family page, on page 289 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 286–287 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

The word *ordinary* in Ordinary Time doesn't mean "usual" or "unremarkable." It comes from the same root as the word *order* and refers to how each week in Ordinary Time is numbered or sequenced (first Sunday in Ordinary Time, second Sunday in Ordinary Time, etc.). During this season in the Church year, we grow in our understanding of Jesus and his teachings, and we learn how to integrate them into our daily lives. The growth that can occur in our lives during this time is symbolized by the color green, which represents this season. This unique season is divided into two parts and doesn't have one culminating feast day or celebration. Ordinary Time occurs after Christmas until the beginning of Lent, and again after Pentecost until the beginning of Advent. It comprises more than half of the Church year, which shows how important it is for Christians.

† Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Lead the children in singing the following song to the tune of “Happy Birthday”:
 > We love you, dear God!
 We love you, dear God!
 We love you, we love you,
 We love you, dear God!
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Invite the children to share something they love that they never want to be separated from. This might be family, friends, a special stuffed animal, a blanket, a toy, a pet, or even their home.
- Assure them that it can be hard to be apart from someone or something that is so important, and it can make us feel sad or scared. Share that we can take comfort in knowing that nothing can separate us from God’s love, which is what they’ll hear in today’s Bible story.

† Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story

- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture using the following prompts:
 > Find Jesus in the picture. Put your finger on Jesus’ red sash. Jesus is talking to a group of people, including adults and children. Look at their faces and tell me if you think Jesus is sharing good or bad news. (*Accept responses.*)
 > Now look at the picture at the bottom of the page. There are many more people, and Jesus is wearing a crown. Put your finger on the crown. Who usually wears a crown? (*a king or queen, royalty*) But Jesus was raised to be a carpenter. When he was a grown-up, he started teaching, preaching, and sharing God’s message.



- Why do you think Jesus is wearing a crown in this picture? (*Accept responses; remind the children that Jesus is like a good king who loves and watches over his people.*)
- When we read any Bible story, we must know who is telling the story. In some of the stories you have heard, Jesus is the one talking. The Bible story you will hear now was written by a follower of Jesus, a man named Paul. When you listen to the story, remember that Paul tells us about God's love. Let's listen now.
- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

We Are Loved

Who can separate us from Jesus' love? Can trouble or hardship or hunger or poverty or danger or death? No, in all these things we have complete victory through Jesus. I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love, neither death nor life, neither angels nor other rulers or powers, not the past or the future. . . . There is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Based on Romans 8:35, 37–39)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Explain that the most important message from this Bible story is that nothing can separate us from God's love. Invite the children to think about the people who make them feel safe, comforted, and loved. Tell them that God's love for us is so big that he loves us even more than we could ever know, and he loves us no matter what.
- Ask them if they want to feel how big God's love is. Invite them to open their arms wide and then wrap them around themselves to give themselves a big hug. Remind them that this is how tightly God's love holds on to us, in good times and in bad.

- Explain that the message in this Bible story is an example of the messages we hear in a season of the Church called Ordinary Time. Tell the children that the season of Ordinary Time is when we learn about Jesus' life and teachings and are reminded of how much God loves us.
- Share that the priest always wears green during Ordinary Time because green is the color of growth, just like we grow in our love for Jesus.
- Tell the children that following Jesus and being a part of our Church family isn't just about special holidays like Christmas and Easter, but we follow Jesus during our everyday lives as well. Continue with the following points:
 - What do you do in your daily routine? Eat breakfast? Go to school? Play outside? Watch some TV or play games? Talk to friends?
 - Jesus did a lot of those ordinary, everyday tasks or routines too. He ate meals, traveled, learned, and spent time with friends. This is one way we know that Jesus understands what our daily lives are like.
 - This season of Ordinary Time is just as important as the other seasons in the Liturgical Year that end with a holiday or celebration like Christmas or Easter.
 - Ordinary Time is important because it is a time for us to continue growing in our faith. In fact, that is why green is the color for this season. Green reminds us of plants and trees that grow, and the color symbolizes Ordinary Time because we are growing in our faith by learning about Jesus and how to follow his teachings.
- Explain that Bible stories, like the one we heard today, remind us of how loved we are and that we are never alone. Assure the children that as we grow and learn, God never leaves us—he guides us, cares for us, comforts us, and loves us every day.

Learning Activities

- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 286–287 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today's lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child's page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

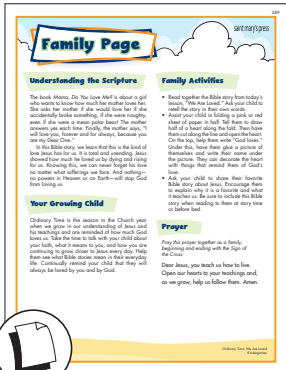




Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Can anything separate us from God’s love? (*no*)
 - What do we learn about during the season of Ordinary Time? (*Jesus’ life and teachings*)
 - What color is associated with the season of Ordinary Time? (*green*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite the children to sing this prayer with you to the tune of “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.”
 - I’ve been learning about Jesus,
all the livelong day.
I’ve been learning about Jesus,
and the words that he does say.

Thankful for the love we’re given
as we go his way.
Help us to continue growing,
loving day by day.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Color by Number,” on page 288 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- green, brown, and skin-tone crayons, one of each for each child

Color by Number

- Distribute the handout and crayons to the children, explaining that the handout is a coloring page of a priest dressed in vestments for Mass. Explain that *vestment* is another name for the special clothes the priest wears during Mass. Tell them that the different colors of the vestments tell us what season of the Church year we are in.
- Explain that the handout is a color-by-number activity. Tell them that they will look for the numbers and color the spaces according to the numbers. Show them the key on the handout, and read through the different colors and numbers.
- Discuss the colors for other liturgical seasons, such as purple for Advent and Lent, white for Christmas and Easter, and red for the Triduum. Remind them that green is the color for Ordinary Time, as it is a symbol for growing in faith as we learn about Jesus’ life and teachings.

Materials Needed

- none

God Is with Us Every Day

- Introduce this activity by telling the children they are going to play a game of charades. Explain that you will whisper to a volunteer an activity that children do during their day. Share that the volunteer will act out the activity, and the other children will guess what they are acting out.
- Ask for a volunteer, or choose a child who is comfortable in front of a group to go first. Tell them the action they need to model for the class. Here is a sample list:
 - brushing teeth
 - eating a meal
 - giving a hug
 - going to school
 - reading
 - doing homework
 - running
 - playing outside
 - playing a game
 - walking the dog
 - feeding pets
 - listening to music
 - making the bed
- Help the children if they get stuck by suggesting possible actions that might help others guess what they are doing.
- Invite the children to share how God is with them during each of these daily activities as they are guessed. Remind them that God is with us in all that we do. Explain that when we approach our daily actions with God in mind, our attitude is more pleasant, our work is completed easier, and we feel a sense of peace and accomplishment.

Materials Needed

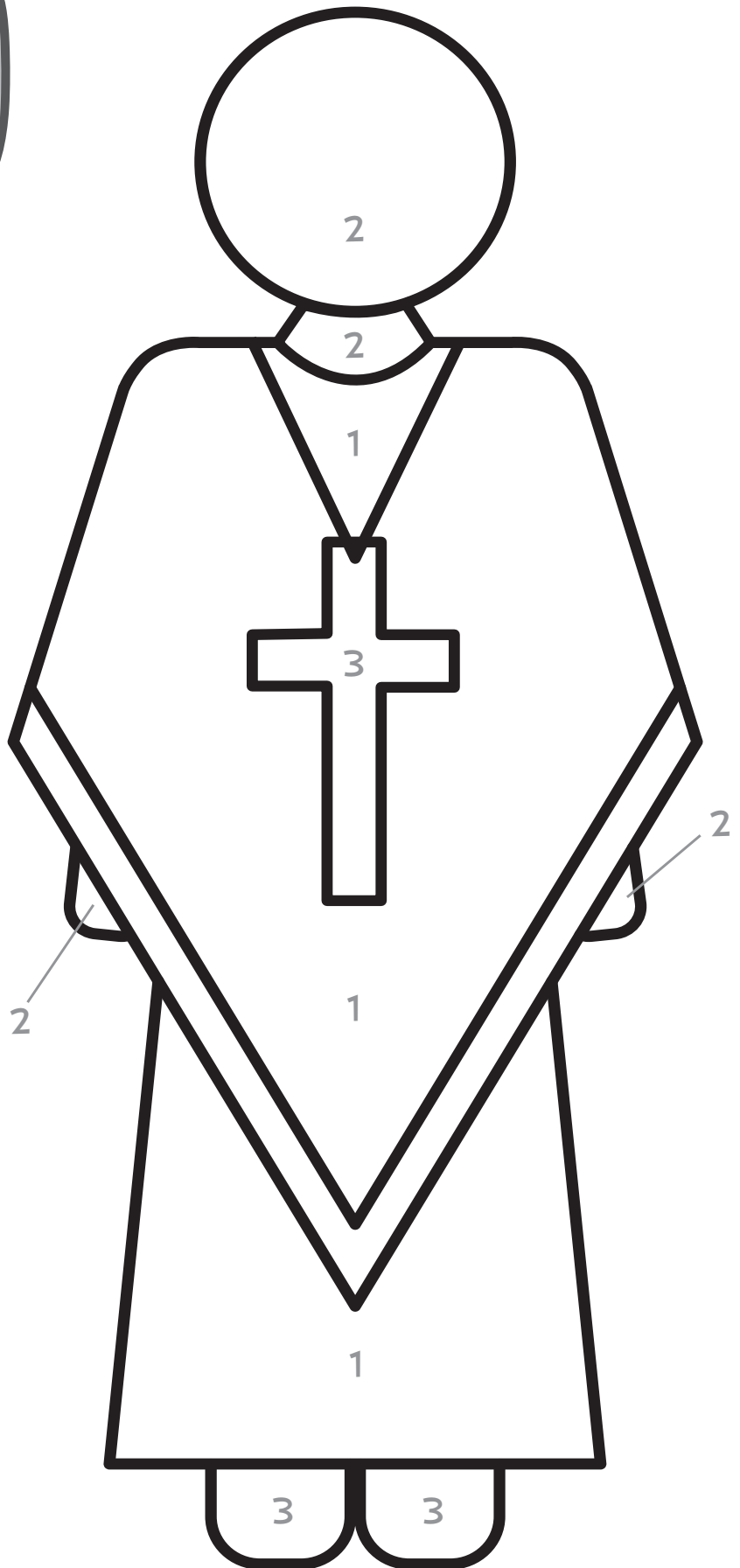
- blank sheets of paper, one for each child
- crayons

My Ordinary Time Checklist

- Distribute the paper and crayons, and explain that there are many activities the children can do with their family during Ordinary Time.
- Tell them they should write "Ordinary Time List" on the top of their paper. Write this on the board or somewhere the children can see, and help individual children as needed.
- Explain that they are creating a checklist of activities they can do with their family members during Ordinary Time to continue to grow as Christians.
- Invite them to draw a box before they write each sentence. Tell them that when they have completed an activity, they will place a check mark in the box.
- Write the following activities on the board or in a place where the children can see, and have them copy them onto their paper:
 - Pray together.
 - Go to Mass.
 - Have family Sunday dinner.
 - Do an act of kindness.
- If the children want to add more items to their list, help them brainstorm ideas. Write these where the children can see so they can copy them onto their paper.
- Encourage them to illustrate their list with green plants or a green border to represent Ordinary Time. Invite them to share their list with their family so they can all try to become closer to God by trying some of these Ordinary Time activities.

Color by Number

The priest's special clothes can tell us which season of the Church year we are celebrating. Color the picture by following the numbers and colors in the key. Then add the priest's face and hair.



Coloring Key

- 1 = green
- 2 = skin tone
- 3 = brown



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

The book *Mama, Do You Love Me?* is about a girl who wants to know how much her mother loves her. She asks her mother if she would love her if she accidentally broke something, if she were naughty, even if she were a mean polar bear! The mother answers yes each time. Finally, the mother says, "I will love you, forever and for always, because you are my Dear One."

In this Bible story, we learn that this is the kind of love Jesus has for us. It is total and unending. Jesus showed how much he loved us by dying and rising for us. Knowing this, we can never forget his love no matter what sufferings we face. And nothing—no powers in Heaven or on Earth—will stop God from loving us.

Your Growing Child

Ordinary Time is the season in the Church year when we grow in our understanding of Jesus and his teachings and are reminded of how much God loves us. Take the time to talk with your child about your faith, what it means to you, and how you are continuing to grow closer to Jesus every day. Help them see what Bible stories mean in their everyday life. Continually remind your child that they will always be loved by you and by God.

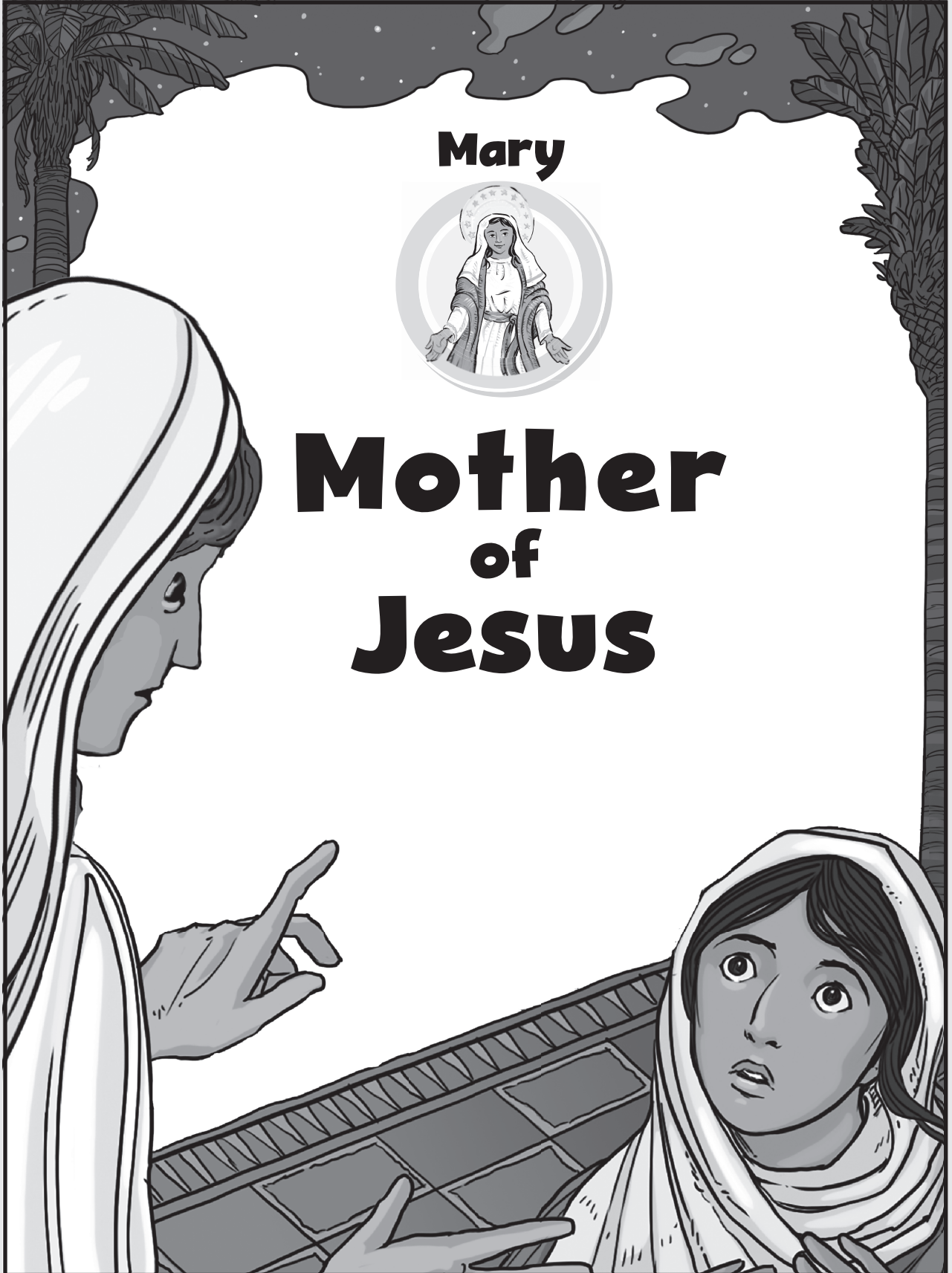
Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "We Are Loved." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Assist your child in folding a pink or red sheet of paper in half. Tell them to draw half of a heart along the fold. Then have them cut along the line and open the heart. On the top, help them write "God loves." Under this, have them glue a picture of themselves and write their name under the picture. They can decorate the heart with things that remind them of God's love.
- Ask your child to share their favorite Bible story about Jesus. Encourage them to explain why it is a favorite and what it teaches us. Be sure to include this Bible story when reading to them at story time or before bed.

Prayer

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

Dear Jesus, you teach us how to live.
Open our hearts to your teachings and,
as we grow, help us follow them. Amen.



Mary

**Mother
of
Jesus**



Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Lesson Goals

- to understand that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus
- to learn that we celebrate Mary all year long through special feast days
- to recognize and identify symbols associated with Mary

Catechism References

279–301

Materials Needed

- the Mary child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- copies of the Mary family page, on page 299 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- a calendar, large enough for the children to see, with the Marian feast days marked (see page 293)
- materials for any of the activity ideas you choose from pages 296–297 of the catechist guide

Background Reflection

Everyone born on Earth needs a mother. God chose the perfect person to be the mother of Jesus, and that person was Mary. God sent the angel Gabriel with a special message for Mary. Gabriel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of the Son of God and that his name would be Jesus.

Mary was surprised, but she agreed to God's plan. Mary said yes. So, from the beginning, Mary agreed to be the servant of God, cooperating with all the work that Jesus would do on Earth. You have also agreed to do God's work by engaging the hearts and minds of the young children in your care.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with the Hail Mary prayer, praying it for the children:
 - Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

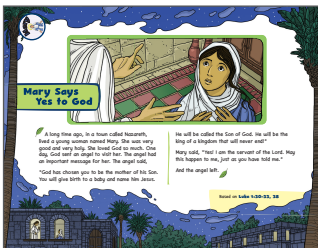
Engage

- Invite the children to name some special women in their lives.
(Allow responses.)
- Tell them they will learn about the most special woman of all time, a woman who was very important in the life of Jesus and a woman who is very important in our lives as well. Ask the children if they can guess who this very special woman is. *(Mary)*
- Remind them that they have already learned about Mary in the first lesson, and that today they will learn how the Church honors Mary through special celebrations.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Bible Story



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture using the following prompts:
 - We have seen this Bible story before. Does anyone remember what happened in this Bible story? *(Accept responses.)*
 - In this picture, we see a young woman. That is Mary.
 - An angel came to visit Mary and told her not to be afraid. The angel shared that God had big plans for Mary if she was willing to say yes. Do you remember what Mary said? *(She said yes.)*
 - Now let's look at the bottom of the page. We see the angel and Mary through the windows. Point to Mary and the angel. This was the beginning of many important things Mary would say yes to.

- Read the story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.

Today's Bible Story

Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God so much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)



Discover! (25 minutes)

Core Teaching

- Prepare in advance by marking the following dates on a calendar to show the children:
 - January 1—The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
 - March 25—The Feast of the Annunciation
 - August 15—The Feast of the Assumption
 - December 8—The Immaculate Conception
- Remind the children that God picked Mary for a special job. Tell them that the angel Gabriel said God wanted her to be the mother of his Son, Jesus. Share that Mary was probably confused and a little bit scared, but she trusted God and said yes right away.

- Continue with the following points:
 - Mary was the best mom. She loved Jesus so much. She helped him grow up strong and healthy. What are some ways you show love to the people who are important to you? *(Accept responses.)*
 - Because Mary was so close to Jesus, we honor her as the greatest saint. In fact, we celebrate Mary on special days throughout the year.
- Hold up the calendar, and ask the children if they know the months of the year. Page through the calendar, pointing to the name of each month and saying it aloud. If time allows, you can add the children's names and birth dates to the calendar.
- Find each of the feast days you have previously added to the calendar and point out each one. Give the following simple explanation for each of the feast days:
 - On January 1, we celebrate a feast day called the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This important feast day celebrates Mary's role as the mother of Jesus.
 - On March 25, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. This is a celebration remembering the events we read about in the Bible story today, that Gabriel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus.
 - On August 15, we celebrate the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this day, we remember that Mary's body and soul were taken to Heaven.
 - On December 8, we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, when we celebrate that Mary was always a very holy person. This made her the perfect woman to be the mother of Jesus.
- Remind the children that not only do we celebrate special events in Mary's life throughout the year, but we also often ask Mary to take our prayer requests to Jesus because Mary prays for us and our needs.
- Explain that they will often see certain flowers, symbols, or colors when they look at pictures or statues of Mary. Tell the children that these items help us learn more about who Mary was and what her life as Jesus' mother was like.
- Share that white lilies symbolize Mary's holiness, and the rose reminds us that because of Mary, Jesus was born into our world. Marigold flowers used to be called "Mary's gold," and they remind us of her glorious, heavenly home.
- Tell the children that when we see Mary wearing blue, this represents the color of the sky/Heaven and her holiness. Explain that Mary is sometimes pictured wearing a crown because she is the Queen of Heaven, and she is sometimes seen with a rosary because the Rosary is Mary's prayer.
- Invite the children to look the next time they see an image or statue of Mary and see if they notice lilies, roses, or marigolds. Tell them they might also see her wearing a golden crown or a crown with stars above her head.

Learning Activities

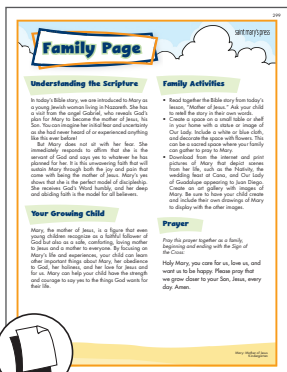
- Choose an activity from the ideas outlined on pages 296–297 of the catechist guide, and explain the directions to the children.
- Lead the children in the activity, taking time to help them connect the activity and today’s lesson.
- Introduce the activity on the child’s page, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Recall the lesson goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did God choose to be the mother of Jesus? (*Mary*)
 - How do we celebrate Mary all year long? (*through special feast days*)
 - What are some of the symbols we might see in pictures or statues of Mary? (*flowers, the color blue, a crown, a rosary*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child’s page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_p

Closing Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray the following prayer, inviting the children to repeat after you:
 - Mother Mary, pray for us.
We want to be just like you,
ready to say yes
to whatever God asks.
Pray that when God calls us,
we will be ready.
We trust that he will bless our life.
Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a statue or icon of Mary
- flowers, one for each child (*real or artificial*)
- quiet music and appropriate equipment for playing it (optional)

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Mary, Queen of Heaven,” on page 298 of the catechist guide, one for each child
- crayons

May Flowers for Mary

- Explain to the children that devotions honoring Mary are quite popular worldwide. Share that these traditions vary from culture to culture. Tell the children that during the month of May, Catholics everywhere focus on praying the rosary and celebrating Mary.
- Introduce the activity by saying the following:
 - Today we are going to participate in a ceremony to honor Mary. In this ceremony, we will be laying flowers at the feet of Mary. The most popular flower for this celebration of Mary is the rose. What prayer sounds like the word rose? (*the Rosary*)
 - That’s correct! When we pray the Rosary, we focus on important moments in Jesus’ life. Many of these times involve Mary in some way. When we pray a section of the Rosary, we are praying ten Hail Marys and one Our Father. So the Rosary is one way to become closer to Jesus through Mary.
- Distribute a flower to each child.
- Play some quiet music, if desired, and encourage the children to walk slowly to the statue or icon of Mary, placing their flowers at or near the statue or icon.
- Encourage the children to think of Mary as they place their flowers. They can think about how much she loved Jesus and how much she loves us.
- Gather the children at the foot of the statue or icon and pray a Hail Mary. If the children don’t know the prayer by heart, you can pray it for them.

Connect the Dots

- Distribute the handout and crayons.
- Explain that this is a connect-the-dots activity to complete a picture of Mary, Queen of Heaven. Share that Mary is sometimes called the Queen of Heaven because she lives with God in Heaven and is honored like a queen.
- Tell the children they should connect the dots for each star, beginning with their crayon on number 1 and then drawing a line to the following numbers until the star is completed.
- Demonstrate for the children by drawing one of the stars, slowly moving from one number to the next. Trace over the dashed line from number 5 to number 1 to complete the star.
- Share that the children should repeat the steps for each star. Explain that when they have finished connecting the dots, they should color the picture of Mary.

Materials Needed

- lunch-size paper bags, two for each child
- crayons or markers
- a sample of the craft for the class to view

Paper-Bag Puppets

- Distribute the paper bags and crayons. Explain that today they will be making paper-bag puppets. Remind the children that in the Bible story they heard today, the angel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of his son, Jesus. Tell the children that Mary is the model of faithfulness and obedience because she said yes to God's plan.
- Explain that they will make two puppets, Mary and the angel Gabriel. Tell the children they will be drawing faces, hair, and clothes on the puppets.
- Invite them to make sure their paper bags are flat with the flap at the top. Tell them to draw Mary's face, with the top of her mouth on the edge of the flap and the bottom of her mouth right below the flap.
- Suggest that they add hair and a halo or crown at the top. Mention that they can also add a blue dress, a rosary, or even some flowers.
- Encourage them to follow the same process to create a paper-bag puppet of the angel Gabriel, remembering to draw his mouth, face, hair, and maybe a white or gold robe for clothes.
- Explain that they can use the puppets to act out the scene of the angel visiting Mary. Encourage them to use their imagination to engage in this creative play in which they can explore Mary's role as Jesus' mother and God's obedient servant.

Mary, Queen of Heaven

Complete the picture by following the numbers with your crayon.
Then color the picture.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In today's Bible story, we are introduced to Mary as a young Jewish woman living in Nazareth. She has a visit from the angel Gabriel, who reveals God's plan for Mary to become the mother of Jesus, his Son. You can imagine her initial fear and uncertainty as she had never heard of or experienced anything like this ever before!

But Mary does not sit with her fear. She immediately responds to affirm that she is the servant of God and says yes to whatever he has planned for her. It is this unwavering faith that will sustain Mary through both the joy and pain that come with being the mother of Jesus. Mary's yes shows that she is the perfect model of discipleship. She receives God's Word humbly, and her deep and abiding faith is the model for all believers.

Your Growing Child

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a figure that even young children recognize as a faithful follower of God but also as a safe, comforting, loving mother to Jesus and a mother to everyone. By focusing on Mary's life and experiences, your child can learn other important things about Mary, her obedience to God, her holiness, and her love for Jesus and for us. Mary can help your child have the strength and courage to say yes to the things God wants for their life.

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mother of Jesus." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Create a space on a small table or shelf in your home with a statue or image of Our Lady. Include a white or blue cloth, and decorate the space with flowers. This can be a sacred space where your family can gather to pray to Mary.
- Download from the internet and print pictures of Mary that depict scenes from her life, such as the Nativity, the wedding feast at Cana, and Our Lady of Guadalupe appearing to Juan Diego. Create an art gallery with images of Mary. Be sure to have your child create and include their own drawings of Mary to display with the other images.

Prayer

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

Holy Mary, you care for us, love us, and want us to be happy. Please pray that we grow closer to your Son, Jesus, every day. Amen.

