

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

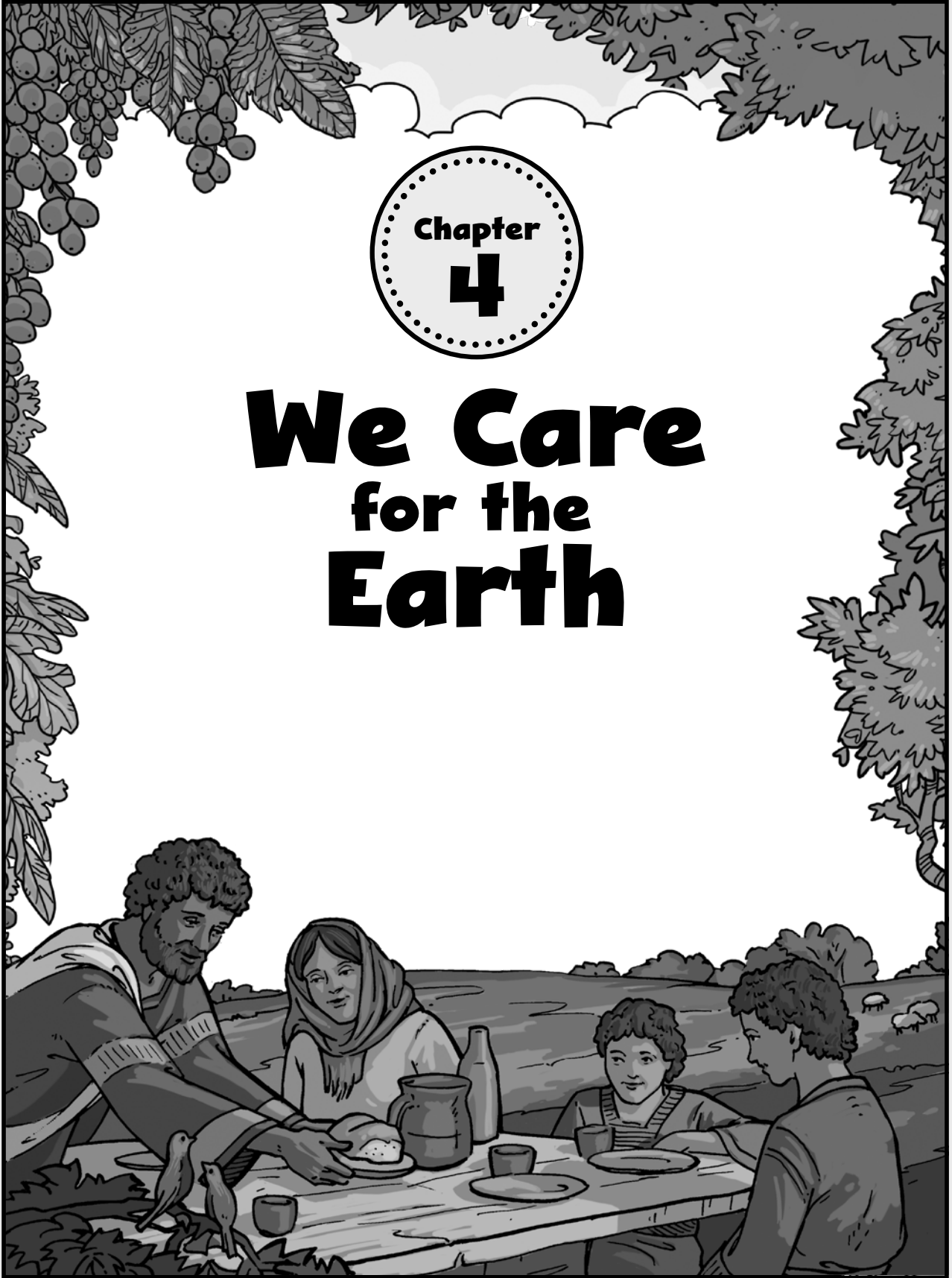
Catechist Guide

3



Chapter
4

We Care for the Earth




 Chapter
4

Lesson at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Psalm 104:5–15

Lesson Goals

- to name the Book of Psalms as a group of songs and poems to God
- to state that some of the Psalms are prayers of praise to God
- to identify that we are entrusted with caring for the world because it was created for us by God

Catechism Pillar

Live: Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching Focus

Care for God's Creation

Catechism References

293–294, 2415–2418, 2585–2589, 2639–2641

Key Words

psalm, praise, entrusted

Music Suggestions

- “Awesome God,” by Catholic Kids Worship (Catapult)
- “Shout to the Lord,” by Shout Praises Kids (Integrity Music)

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children's Bible* and the chapter 4 activity booklet
- a board or poster to write on
- crayons or colored pencils
- index cards
- pennies and dice
- copies of the handout “Praising God for Creation” (TX006176), one for each child
- materials for any of the additional activities you choose

Background Reflection

The Book of Psalms is an essential part of the prayer of our Church. It includes prayers for all situations in life: prayers of praise, thanksgiving, frustration, and sorrow. We turn to the Psalms at each Mass to respond to and praise God after the first reading and before the Gospel. The Psalms speak of the intimacy of God, but they are also prayers of community. We are praising God and praying to him—not just for ourselves, but for the whole world.

In this chapter, we concentrate on a psalm that praises God for all his creation. Catholic social teaching tells us that as stewards of the gift of creation, we must care for all that God has made. Sometimes we need to step back and look at what sort of footprints we are leaving on this Earth. Before you begin this lesson, think about your own habits and how you care for the gift of God's creation.



Get Ready! (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 of the chapter 4 activity booklet.
- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer on page 1 of the activity booklet to the group. Invite all the children to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Engage Activity

- Invite the children to brainstorm about all the wonderful things they see in creation and write their responses on the board or in a place the children can see.
- Explain to them that when we appreciate the beauty in the world around us, we are thankful to God. Tell the group that our appreciation honors God, who created all things.



Dive In! (15 minutes)

Scripture Focus

- Invite the children to find Psalm 104:5–15 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 921–922).
- Tell them that a **psalm** is a song or poem written as a prayer to God.
- Explain that this psalm is a prayer of **praise** to God. Praise is when we honor God for all good things and also when we honor and thank God just for being God.
- Read the Scripture passage to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - Who is this psalm written to? (*God*)
 - What does the psalm say to God? (*The psalm recognizes that God created everything and cares for everything.*)
 - What parts are clues that this is a psalm of praise? (*The psalm’s title is “In Praise of the Creator.” The psalm admires all the wonderful things God has done in creation.*)
- Have the children turn to the activity on page 2 of the activity booklet and complete it. *Answers will vary.*

Understand It!

- Read the Understand It! on page 1 of the activity booklet to the children, or have a volunteer read it.
- Invite the children to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.

- Review some of the key points with them:
 - To look at something with wonder is to look with awe and respect.
 - The writer of the psalm thought the world God made was wonderful.
 - God gave us the job of taking care of the world he gave us.

Live It!

- Read the Live It! on page 1 of the activity booklet, or have a volunteer read it.
- Give everyone a chance to write a poem. Remind them that their poem can, but does not have to, rhyme. Consider whether the group could benefit from learning the format of a haiku as another possibility. (A haiku consists of three lines: the first with five syllables, the second with seven syllables, and the third with five syllables.)

Tell It!

- Invite several volunteers to share the main points of Psalm 104:5–15 in their own words.
- Affirm the points the children remember. Help them identify key points they may have left out.



Discover! (25 minutes)

What Am I?

- Prepare index cards in advance, each with a word or phrase on one side related to caring for (or not caring for) creation: for example, “sun,” “trees,” “recycling plastics,” “throwing trash on the ground,” “running water while brushing teeth.” Create enough index cards for at least half the number of children in the group to use one.
- Invite the children to stand in a circle, and tell them that you are going to play a guessing game using a stack of cards with words related to creation and the care of it.
- Explain that you will ask for a volunteer who will pick a card from the stack without looking and hold it facing out on his or her forehead so the other children can see the writing on the card.
- Tell the children that they will then shout clues for the word or phrase on the card. Explain they may not use the actual word or phrase.
- Encourage the child holding the card to guess what the card says based on the clues offered by the group. Once he or she guesses the word or phrase, invite another child to select a card. Continue the activity for 5 to 10 minutes.

Process the Activity

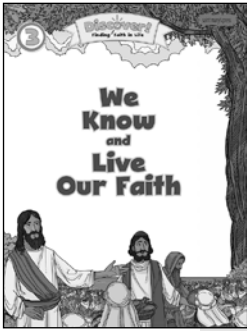
- Use the ideas on the cards to discuss the different ways we care for creation, as well as ways that we might fail to care for creation.
- Explain that God created the world for our use, but he also made us responsible for caring for all creation.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 78 in its place.

Core Teaching

- Explain that the Psalms were written as songs and prayers to God. Make the following points:
 - The Book of Psalms in the Bible contains 150 Psalms written for many different situations.
 - Today we read part of Psalm 104, which is a prayer of praise.
 - When we praise God, we honor him above all else, just for being God.
- Remind the children that when God made all of creation, he said it was good, and he cares for all of creation.
- Explain that when we praise God for creation, we are keeping wonder and awe in our minds and hearts.
- Help the children understand that it is our responsibility to take care of creation, using the following points:
 - When we litter, throw away food, mistreat our clothes, or waste other resources, we are *not* caring for God's creation. We are being irresponsible.
 - God **entrusted** us with the care for his creation. That means he gave us the responsibility to care for it, and he believes in our ability to use our resources wisely.
- Ask the children some questions to check for comprehension, such as the following:
 - How we can keep the wonder and awe of God's creation in our minds and hearts? *(We can offer prayers of praise to God.)*
 - What are we doing when we praise God? *(We are honoring God just for being God.)*
 - Whose responsibility is it to care for God's creation? *(It is our responsibility.)*
 - How does God want us to care for creation? *(God wants us to be responsible and use our resources wisely, not to waste or mistreat his creation.)*
- Invite the children to turn to the activity on page 3 of the activity booklet. Ask them to form pairs. Hand out a penny to each child, and give a die to each pair. Invite the children to play the game on page 3 with their partners.
- Have the children turn to page 4 of the activity booklet. Read the "People of Faith" section to the group. Add any other information you know about Saint Francis of Assisi, and encourage the children to say, "Saint Francis, pray for us," during the next week.



We Know and Live Our Faith

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

- “The Prayer of Praise” and activity, pages 60–61

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



Go! (10 minutes)

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take time to get input from the group and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - The Book of Psalms is a group of songs and poems to God.
 - Some of the Psalms are prayers of praise to God.
 - We are entrusted with caring for the world because it was created for us by God.
- Distribute the handout. Invite the children to complete the puzzle right away, or have them complete it at home, depending on time availability.
Answer: Care for Creation
- Remind the children to transfer the circled letter in their final answer (T) to the correct locations on their folders.

Note: The handout can be found at the end of this chapter or accessed online at www.smp.org/discover_grade3.

Praising God for Creation

How can we show thanks to God for our world? Find the answer by looking at the lowercase letters under the black lines at the bottom of the page and writing them corresponding capital letters into the white spaces in the grid. Then transfer the circled letter to your final answer in the space marked with the number 4 at the back of your folder.

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Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross. Then say, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God,” followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Lead the children in the following prayer:
 - God of all creation, we praise you with wonder and awe because of your beautiful world. We ask you to help us be good caretakers of all creation. Help us to always be aware of ways we can take care of the world.
- Invite the children to respond with “Amen.” Then close with another Sign of the Cross.

Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- recyclable or compostable paper cups
- a small bag of potting soil
- vegetable seeds that germinate quickly, such as radish seeds or beans
- a pitcher of water

God's Garden (15 minutes)

- Hand out the cups. Then invite the children to fill their cups with potting soil.
- Distribute seeds, and invite the children to plant two or three seeds in their cups, about a finger's width below the soil. Then help each child carefully water their seeds.
- Discuss with the children how to care for their plants. Explain that they need to water the soil a little bit every day. Tell them that after seven to ten days, they should begin to see sprouts poking above the soil.
- Tell the children that once the plant has become a healthy seedling, they can repot it in a larger pot or plant it outside.
- Invite the children to brainstorm what this activity teaches them about God's creation.

Materials Needed

- clay or dough

Our Own Creations (15 minutes)

- Give each child some clay or dough.
- Tell the children to use the clay to model something that represents their favorite part of God's creation. Allow 5–10 minutes for the children to work.
- Invite volunteers to share what they have made and why.
- Ask the volunteers to explain one way to care for the part of God's creation they have modeled.

Materials Needed

- a computer with internet access
- a computer projector

Sing and Move Along: God of Wonders (15 minutes)

- Show the video "God of Wonders—Lifeway VBS" (YouTube, 3:11) to the group. Be sure to preview the video yourself and practice the hand movements for the chorus so you become comfortable leading your group.
- Introduce the children to the hand movements for the chorus and lead them in practicing the chorus several times. Then play the entire video again and invite the children to sing along and do the hand movements.
- Invite volunteers to suggest ways we can praise God. Make the point that we praise God with our lives.

Praising God for Creation

How can we show thanks to God for our world? Find the answer by looking at the lowercase letters under the blank lines at the bottom of the page and writing their corresponding capital letters from the code above in the blanks. Then transfer the circled letter in your final answer to the spaces marked with the number 4 on the back of your folder.

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Chapter 4

Discover! Finding Faith in Life

We Care for the Earth

Psalm 104:5–15

Understand It!

A famous song says, "I think to myself, what a wonderful world." To *wonder* means to look on something with awe and respect. We look at something beautiful and say, "Wow! Isn't that something!" When the writer of Psalm 104 looked at the ocean, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the sky, and the animals, he just had to write a song praising God for his wonderful world!

But to look at the world with wonder is not enough. God gave us the job of taking care of the wonderful world he gave us. If you love something, you will take care of it. Look again at the world around you. Think, "What a wonderful world." Then think about ways you can take care of the world God gave us.

Live It!

Write a poem or song about God's wonderful world. Take your work home and post the words where they can be seen by everyone in your family. You might even want to send your poem or song to your relatives and friends. Let everyone know that you love and care for the world God gave us!

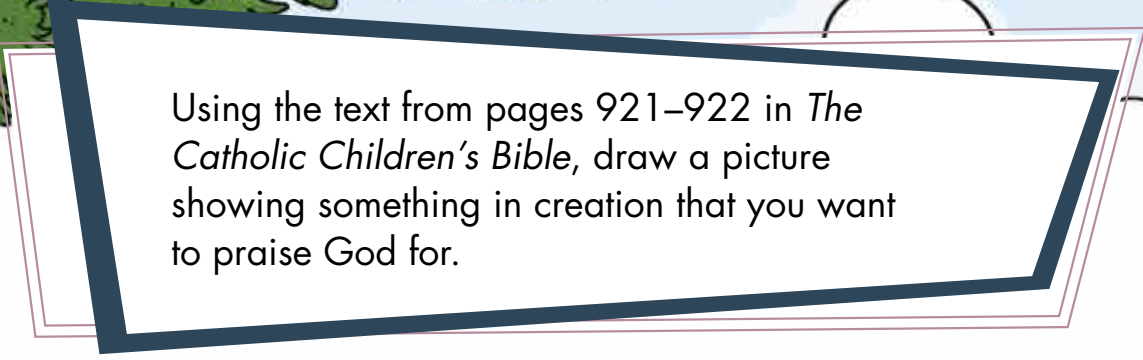
Prayer

"Praise the LORD, my soul!

O LORD, my God, how great you are!"

(Psalm 104:1)

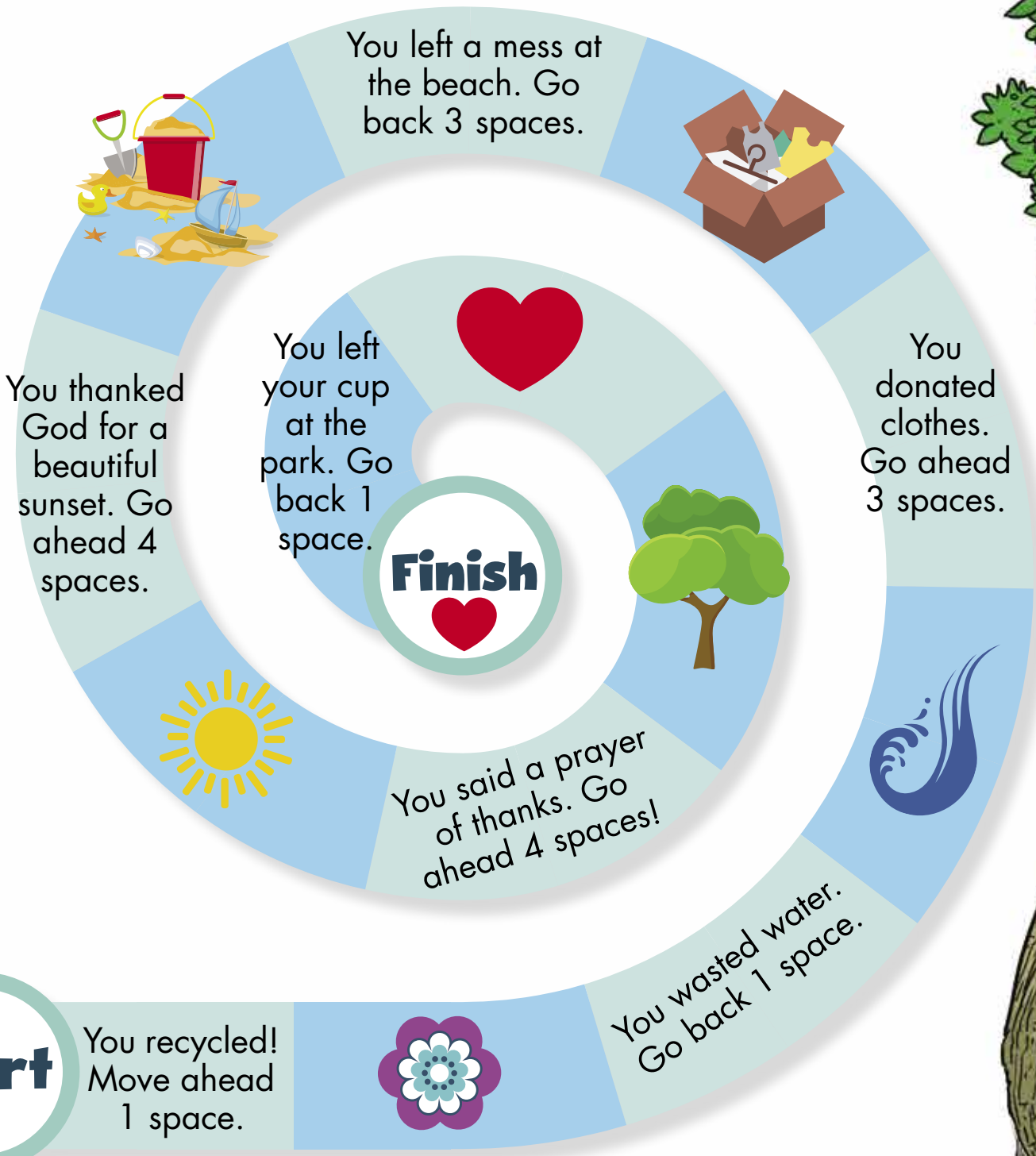




Using the text from pages 921–922 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible*, draw a picture showing something in creation that you want to praise God for.



Use pennies as markers. Take turns with your partner to roll the dice to move your markers. See how well each of you has taken care of God's creation by the time you get to the finish line!



Family Page

Background Reflection

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In this chapter, we concentrate on a psalm that praises God for all his creation. Catholic social teaching tells us that as stewards of the gift of creation, we must care for all that God has made. Sometimes we need to step back and look at what sort of footprints we are leaving on this Earth. Before you begin these activities, think about your own habits and how you and your family care for the gift of God's creation.

Family Activities

- Find out about your community's recycling programs. Discuss how your family could throw away less trash by reusing, donating, and recycling.
- Read together Psalm 104:5–15 from this lesson. Invite your child to reflect on the fact that this psalm praises God's creation of the world for us to use and care for. Make a plan to explore God's creation together, whether that be a nearby park, a nature trail, or a state or national park.
- Watch the video "What a Wonderful World | Playing for Change | Song Around the World" (YouTube, 3:41) together. Discuss how your child sees and cares for the world. What is the most wonderful part of creation for your child? How does your child praise God for his creation?

People of Faith

Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226)

Saint Francis praised God in his preaching and writing. He respected God's creation and treated animals with kindness. Francis lived simply and is known for his love for those who are poor and in need. The Church celebrates his feast on October 4.

Prayer

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

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all of your creation is beautiful. We praise your wonderful world. Help us be good caretakers of your creation. Amen.

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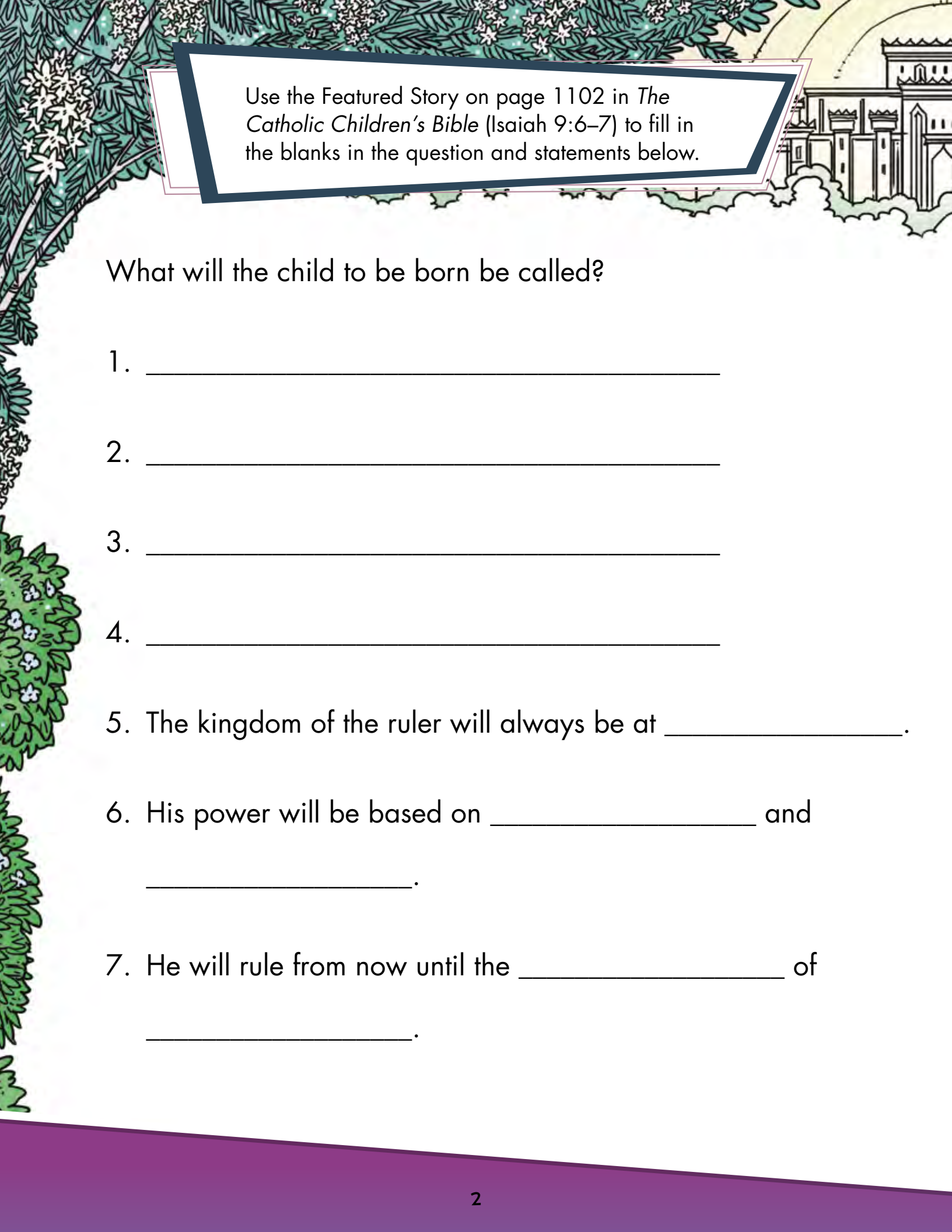
The King Is Coming

Isaiah 9:6-7

Prayer

O God, bless our homes, our families, and our friends as we prepare for Christmas. Teach us to wait in joyful hope and to be kind to one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.





Use the Featured Story on page 1102 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (Isaiah 9:6-7) to fill in the blanks in the question and statements below.

What will the child to be born be called?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. The kingdom of the ruler will always be at _____.

6. His power will be based on _____ and
_____.

7. He will rule from now until the _____ of
_____.



Come, Lord Jesus!

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

Leader: Let us sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

All: O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Leader: Dear God, we are getting ready to celebrate the birthday of your Son, Jesus. We ask your help to prepare our hearts for his coming. Fill us with joy. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless us with patience to wait as the people of Israel waited for their promised king. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Bless our Advent wreaths and help us to reach out to those who need our help. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Leader: Help us to make this world a better place by the light we bring into it. Come, Lord Jesus!

All: Come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

Family Page

Background Reflection

In the midst of busy Christmas preparations, the season of Advent calls us to a different preparation—one of reflection, excitement, and growing joy! Waiting for Christmas can be difficult for the best of us, and it can be even harder for children. The first Advent wreaths and calendars were an attempt to help children to count the passing days, to focus their impatience, and to build anticipation and joy. These traditional practices also help adults to focus our longing and place our hope on the coming of the Messiah, in Bethlehem, in our lives now, and at the end of time.

The people of Israel were also impatient, enduring years of hardship and exile. The prophet Isaiah promised a great king and named him Prince of Peace, Eternal Father, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. What do we name that king? We name him Jesus! The birth of a king in an obscure, small, and humble place was not at all expected. So we are reminded that greatness often hides in the ordinary fabric of our lives and in the hidden corners of our world. The King of Kings is Emmanuel: God with us.

Family Activities

- Start making a paper chain with red and green construction paper strips to decorate your tree or a doorway. Cut out twenty-four strips of paper, about 6 inches long, for December 1–24. Each day, connect a new strip of paper to the chain. Use this time to talk about how you can make Advent a special time of preparation for Christmas.
- Decorate a can or jar. Write “Advent Pennies” on a label and attach it to the can or jar. Collect pennies and loose change to donate to a charity.
- View the video “Advent in 2 Minutes (NEW!)” (YouTube, 2:09) together. Discuss what your child saw in the video and any points that were new for her or him. Make a commitment to celebrate Advent in a new way this year.

People of Faith

Saint Lucy (c. 283–304)

Saint Lucy was a young woman who chose to die rather than give up her faith. Her life was a witness to the light of Christ and his love. Lucy means “light”. Saint Lucy’s feast day is December 13, and is often celebrated by lighting candles and sharing a sweet Saint Lucy bread.

Prayer

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

Loving God, in this season of Advent, help us grow in love and fill our hearts with peace. As we prepare to celebrate your coming into the world, let us be grateful for all our gifts and especially for the gift of Jesus. Amen.

