

Chapter 3

Featured Story

Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy (Matthew 5:1–12)



Background Focus

Eating together is a sign of unity and love. If we think back to some of our most happy and significant moments with family and friends, they often involve food and drink. We may also have direct experience of the importance of making up our differences before we sit down to eat together in order to preserve this sign of unity and love.

When we gather around the table at Mass, we do something similar. We ask for forgiveness and for the prayers and support of the community in the Penitential Act. This helps us prepare to receive the Eucharistic meal with awareness of the great gift that it is and honor the unity and love that it offers to us.

This chapter provides an opportunity to make the connection between being truly happy and being a person who is merciful, pure of heart, and focused on peace. Forgiveness is at the center of each of these key characteristics and is an important part of our preparation to receive the Eucharist with happy and joyful hearts.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 in the chapter 3 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Invite your child to read the prayer on the activity page. Respond with “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put the activity booklet away for now.

Lesson Goals

- to identify three actions that lead to true happiness
- to explain why we want to be in a state of friendship with God when we receive the Eucharist
- to articulate that we ask for God’s forgiveness at Mass to prepare for the Eucharist

Lesson at a Glance

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

Engage Activity

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

Core Learning Activity

Find (20 minutes)

God’s Treasure of the Eucharist

Lesson Wrap-Up

Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 3 activity booklet
- computer and Internet connection (if available)
- blank piece of 8½-by-11-inch paper, crayons or markers

Music Suggestions

- “The Beatitudes Song,” by The Church at Brook Hills (Brook Hills Music)
- “The Beatitudes,” by The Wonder Kids (Wonder Workshop)

Engage Activity

- If you have access to a computer and Internet connection, show the following YouTube video to start the lesson: “Pharrell Williams – Happy (Despicable Me 2 – Lyric Video)” (3:53). If you don’t have access, skip to the next step.
- Write the word *Happy* on a piece of paper, and invite your child to think of all of the things that make them happy. If your child focuses solely on material objects, challenge them to think of people, events, actions, attitudes, and other things that bring them happiness.
- Explain that in today’s Bible story they are going to learn about what Jesus said would bring true happiness, and it might be surprising.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find Matthew 5:1–12 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1454–1455).
- Direct your child to turn the page and place an “I found it!” sticker next to the Featured Story (page 1456). Tell them that the story between the leaves on page 1456 is a shortened version of the Scripture story on the previous pages.
- Ask your child to look at the artwork on pages 1456–1457, and to see how quickly they can find Jesus on page 1457.
- Invite your child to read the title of the Featured Story and the Bible story. Explain that another name for these teachings from Jesus about happiness is the Beatitudes. Then ask several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What does it mean to be merciful? (*being kind to someone who needs help or asks for forgiveness*)
 - What does “pure in heart” mean? (*without sin*)
 - What are some of the things Jesus says will bring happiness? (*desiring to do what God requires, being merciful, being pure in heart, working for peace*)

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1457.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points:
 - Jesus names the ways we should act to be truly happy.
 - He did not just teach us these things; he lived them.
 - Three ways that lead to happiness are: being a helpful and forgiving person, avoiding all sin, and working for peace.
 - When we follow Jesus’ example, we will be truly happy.
- Encourage your child to think of ways they can be merciful, be pure of heart, and work for peace.

Live It!

- Read Live It! on page 1457.
- Have your child turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the drawing activity described in Live It!, drawing a picture of someone having mercy, being pure of heart, or working for peace.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1457.
- Encourage your child to describe what is being shown in each picture and whether it is an example of mercy, purity of heart, or working for peace.
- Invite your child to answer the question, “What do each of these actions lead to?” (*true happiness*)
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapters.

Core Learning Activity

The Lesson of Forgiveness

- Hand out a blank piece of paper and crayons or markers. Remind your child that one way we become happy is by being pure of heart and trying our best to avoid sin. Ask your child what we can do when we sin (*ask God for forgiveness in our hearts and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation*).
- Instruct your child to draw either a vertical or a horizontal line dividing their paper in half. Then encourage them to think of a time they acted in a way that didn't show purity of heart, a time when they sinned. Have them think of that experience while they write the word *Sin* on one half of their piece of paper.
- Have your child think of what they learned from that experience. You may need to give them some examples, such as "I won't do that again," "I shouldn't act that way," "When I did that, I felt bad," etc. Encourage them to write what they learned on the other half of the piece of paper.
- Ask your child to tear their piece of paper in half by ripping the paper along the line they drew as best they can. It doesn't matter if it doesn't rip perfectly. Invite them to crumple up the side that describes how they felt when they sinned.
- Place an empty box or wastebasket in the center of the room or another appropriate place. Then have your child throw their crumpled-up paper into the basket. It doesn't matter if they make it in the basket or not.
- Invite your child to think about how the activity symbolizes how God forgives our sins and we are given the gift of peace because our sins are forgiven. What remains with us is the lesson and the desire not to sin again.
- Tell your child that when we ask for forgiveness in our hearts and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it leads to purity of heart and true happiness.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of the Eucharist

- Ask your child if they remember the four main parts of the Mass (*Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Concluding Rites*).
- Tell your child that during the Introductory Rites, we pray for God's forgiveness in the **Penitential Act**. Continue with the following information:
 - The Penitential Act gives us a chance to say that we are sorry for our sins and the times we have hurt our friendship with God and others.
 - We promise God in our hearts that we will try to do better.
- Ask your child if they can think of a reason that we pray a prayer for forgiveness at the beginning of the Mass. Explain to them that when we receive the Eucharist, we want to be in a state of friendship with God. Tell them that this prayer helps us prepare to listen to the Bible readings and to receive the Eucharist.
- Tell your child that, as one possibility for the Penitential Act, the priest or deacon might say, "Lord, have mercy." Ask your child if they know how the assembly responds after this (*Lord, have mercy*). Do the same for "Christ, have mercy" (*Christ, have mercy*) and "Lord, have mercy" (*Lord, have mercy*) to mirror the Penitential Act.
- Explain to your child that when we receive the Eucharist, we are forgiven our less serious, or venial, sins that weaken our relationship with God. Tell them that receiving the Eucharist strengthens us to resist serious, or mortal, sins that separate us from God.
- Ask some questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - Why do we pray a prayer for forgiveness at the beginning of Mass? (*It helps us prepare to listen to the Bible readings and to receive the Eucharist.*)
 - What are some of the words we say in the Penitential Act at Mass? (*Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy*)

- Invite your child to turn to page 3 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. Give them a few minutes to read the sentences and match the words with the correct sentences. *Answers: 1. Penitential Act, 2. mercy, 3. sin, 4. forgiveness*

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite your child to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite them to share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made:
 - Jesus taught us that there are actions that lead to true happiness. These include being merciful, being pure in heart, and working for peace.
 - We want to be in a state of friendship with God when we receive the Eucharist.
 - We ask for God's forgiveness at Mass to prepare for the Eucharist.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 3 sticker in the correct circle on the treasure map.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then say, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Direct your child to the Penitential Act on page 2 of *The Order of the Mass and Key Words* booklet. Tell them that this is one of the possible prayers that can be used for the Penitential Act. Pray the prayer together. (Show your child how to strike their breast one time lightly with a closed fist at the words "through my fault." Explain that this is an ancient sign of being sorry.)
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that supports the focus of the lesson.
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

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