

God Created the World

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 1, ages 4-5

Lesson 1 Goal

- Your child will understand that God created nature and everything in it, including the cycle of the seasons.

Key Points

- God made everything in nature.
- God made the seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter.



Parent Reflection

When we look at the cycle of the seasons in God's creation, we find a metaphor of times in our lives. Spring is a time of growth, of new beginnings, comparable to our growth throughout the years of childhood and youth, and the way we grow and change as adults, including new beginnings such as new homes, relationships, jobs, and starting a family.

Summer is a time of warmth and energy. It may be synonymous with a new idea, initiative, or project in our lives—especially one about which we feel some “fire.” Fall is a time of change, reflective of changes and shifts in our lives. Winter is a time of endings and good-byes. We experience winters in our lives when people we love die, when jobs end, or when other good things change in permanent ways. Still, with winter, there is the promise of another spring. A new time of growth and rebirth is just around the corner.

Perhaps God created the seasons to remind us of how things grow and change in our own lives, and to call us to be adaptable and to depend on him for what we need. As Jesus says, the lilies of the field do not worry about what they will wear, but in the proper season they are clothed by God with splendor (Matthew 6:28-30).

Reflection Question

How do the seasons parallel different phases in my own life?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- safety scissors
- seasonal props and clothing for dramatic play
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the

saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: “Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, “God our Creator made everything! We are so blessed by God’s wonderful gifts to us! God gave us trees and birds. What else can you think of that God has given us?” (Encourage your child to name some aspects of nature.)

“Our Creator also made the four seasons of the year. Let’s name them together: spring, summer, autumn (or fall), and winter. Now let’s thank God for the seasons and things that we see or hear or smell in these seasons.

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Blessed are you, God of all Creation. For spring, and the tulips and lambs and bunnies! (Encourage your child to add spring ideas. Repeat this with each season.)

“Blessed are you, God of all Creation. For summer, and colorful butterflies and sparkly fireflies and sandy beaches.

“Blessed are you, God of all Creation. For autumn and brightly colored leaves, jolly pumpkins, and crisp apples.

“Blessed are you, God of all Creation. For winter and quiet snowflakes, starry nights, and warm cocoa.

“Blessed are you, God of all Creation, for giving us the spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Amen!”

Discovering

The Story of Creation. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the creation of the world.

Ask your child, “What is your favorite part of the image on this page? Why?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. I Am Thankful All Year. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Seasonal Fun (Dramatic Play). Invite your child to act out various seasonal scenes using the props and clothing (examples include going to the beach, making a snowman, raking leaves).

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Columba of Iona. Show your child the picture of Saint Columba on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Columba to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

▶ How can you feel God's presence in creation? (*Guide your child to see ways we can feel God's presence in nature through wind, rain, sun, and so forth.*)

▶ How did Columba help others know about God? (*He wrote poems and traveled to teach about Jesus.*)

Have your child write and draw about Saint Columba using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Blessed are you, God of all Creation, for giving us the spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Amen!"

Saint Columba of Iona

Finding God in All Creation

Long ago, there lived a man named Columba. He was tall and handsome, with grey eyes and a beautiful voice. He was also a very holy man who loved Jesus. Columba built a tiny house on an island called Iona, off the coast of Ireland. There he felt God's presence in a special way. He felt God in the crashing of the waves of the sea. He felt God's presence in the flowers and little animals that lived in the woods. When a great storm pounded the sea and the island, Columba

felt God's power. Everywhere he looked, he saw God's Creation. And in everything God created, Columba came to better understand God, whom he couldn't see.

Columba was a smart man who wrote wonderful poems. These helped others come to see the beauty of God's Creation. He was also a teacher, and traveled to many places to teach others about Jesus. But Columba always returned to Iona where he felt especially close to God.

DRAW



**Saint
Columba,
pray for us!**

God Made Me Special

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 2, ages 4-5

Lesson 2 Goal

- Your child will learn that God made each of us unique and special and that he is very happy with what he has made.

Key Points

- God made each of us and loves us.
- God is really happy with how he made us. We are very special to him.



Parent Reflection

Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? These are some of the most universal questions of our human existence—questions each of us faces at one time or another. Perhaps the best way to begin answering these questions is to say that we are, in our very essence, an expression of God's love. Out of love he created us, and out of love he reveals himself to us. It makes sense then, that we should search for and desire to know God. In his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine states, "You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

We live in a culture obsessed with self-interest and self-esteem. Unfortunately, the type of self-esteem we find in secular culture is often based on feeling good about one's self "just because." However, this type of self-esteem is shallow and easily shattered.

As Christians, we have deep and lasting reasons for feeling good about ourselves. Our faith tells us that God made us good. Just after God created human beings, the Genesis account states, "God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). We are created to do good things—to show love for God and for others. And, freed from Original Sin through Baptism, we have the grace to be everything God made us to be if we are open to his call.

Reflection Question

In what ways am I already living the life God made me to live?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- one piece of bread
- gingerbread cookie cutter
- new watercolor paintbrush
- paper cup containing mixture of one tablespoon of water and milk and one drop of food coloring
- small paper plate
- toaster

- Optional: butter with butter knife and cinnamon sugar
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- Prepare the mixture and place in the paper cup.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: “Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, “Today we will read part of a psalm from the Bible. A psalm is like a poem or song to God.

“I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works! My very self you knew.” (Psalm 139:14)

“With this psalm, we are telling God that we know he made us. We say that we are wonderful because of him. As part of our prayer today, let’s say one thing especially good about ourselves. I’ll start, and you can have a turn. After each of us speaks, we will pray the psalm together by saying, “I praise you, God! You have made me to be wonderful!””

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

State your “wonderful trait,” and then lead your child praying, “*I praise you, God! You have made me to be wonderful!*” When finished, pray the following:

“Dear God, we praise you for making such wonderful things. Thank you for making me. Thank you for loving me. Amen.”

Discovering

God Created All People. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about how God created people.

Ask your child, “Name one way you care for God’s creation.”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. God Created a Beautiful World for Me.

Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Wonderfully-Made-Me Toast. Have your child cut out a gingerbread person shape out of the bread and place it on a plate. Invite him or her to paint their features on the bread using the food coloring mixture. Take the bread and toast it. You may want to butter the toast or sprinkle it with cinnamon sugar.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Joseph of Cupertino. Show your child the picture of Saint Joseph of Cupertino on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Joseph to your child (see page 4).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What special gift did God give Joseph? (*When*

Joseph prayed he was lifted off the ground, like he was flying.)

- ▶ What did other people finally learn about Joseph? (*That he was wonderful, because God had made him that way*)
- ▶ Do you ever do things that make you feel clumsy? (*Suggest breaking things accidentally, forgetting something, etc.*)

Say:

- Everybody makes mistakes. When you do, can you remember that you are like God, so you are wonderful.

Have your child write and draw about Saint Joseph using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

“Dear God, we praise you because you made us to be like you. Help us to be kind and loving. Bless and keep us safe. Amen.”

Saint Joseph of Cupertino

Wonderful Joseph

Long ago there lived a boy named Joseph. He was clumsy. He dropped dishes. Often he got angry. Joseph could not learn easily. He forgot his chores. He walked around, his mouth open, staring at nothing.

His mother shouted, "Joseph, stop wandering and do your chores!"

The shoemaker who hired Joseph shouted, "I have tried hard to teach you to make shoes! You cut the leather wrong, or you sew wrong—or you forget and do nothing!"

The people in town laughed at him and said, "Look at that silly boy!"

Nobody seemed to understand that Joseph was wonderful because God had made him. But

Joseph prayed often. He knew that God loved him.

He asked if he could be a priest. The other priests knew about all the mistakes Joseph made. "We'll see," they said. "For now, just take care of this donkey." So Joseph took care of the donkey and talked with God. He prayed more and more. Pretty soon, the priests saw what God knew: that Joseph was wonderful!

Joseph spent hours each day talking to God. Then God would give Joseph a miracle. Joseph was lifted off the ground while he prayed, as if he could fly!

Many, many people saw Joseph pray like this. Finally, everyone understood that Joseph was wonderful, because that is how God made him!

DRAW



**Saint
Joseph,
pray for us!**

We Talk to God

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 3, ages 4-5

Lesson 3 Goal

- Your child will learn simple ways to pray spontaneously and will also participate in praying the Lord's Prayer.

Key Points

- God is our friend, and wants us to talk with him.
- There are many ways to pray.



Parent Reflection

Prayer is our response to the call of a loving God. He calls us through nature, other people, and our very hearts and minds. As he calls us, we answer his call through prayer.

- In a prayer of *blessing*, we acknowledge and respond to God's goodness with joy and gratitude. Because God blesses the human heart, we can in return bless him who is the source of every blessing.
- Prayers of *petition* ask God for something specific. For many people, this is the most common form of prayer.
- Prayers of *intercession* are similar; however, the requests made are for someone else. For example, in a prayer of intercession, you might ask God to bring healing to someone you know who is sick.
- In prayers of *thanksgiving*, we acknowledge God as our Creator and thank him for his goodness. We can also offer prayers of thanksgiving for specific gifts God has given us.
- Finally, prayers of *praise* express our love for God.

We often use multiple forms in the same prayer, and find examples of this in Scripture (such as in the "Our Father," for example). But no matter what form of prayer we use, we should remember that God is always listening, calling us ever closer to him.

Reflection Question

Which form or forms of prayer might I need to focus on using more often?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- low table
- tablecloth
- cross
- various statues
- battery-operated tea lights
- prayer book/children's Bible
- artificial flowers
- plastic container for flowers

- music or musical instruments
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- Prepare a special place of prayer for your child and provide the suggested supplies.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: “Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, “Today we are going to pray with the prayer that Jesus taught us for talking to God. Because Jesus gave us this prayer, we call it The Lord’s Prayer. We also call it the Our Father, because those are the first words in the prayer. I will say the prayer, and you can listen with your ears and with your heart. People all around the world know this prayer!”

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Jesus, today we use the words you taught us to pray. We know that there are many ways of talking to God in prayer. We also know that listening to you is praying too. So we will listen now, finding the quiet in our hearts. (Bow your head to model for your child.)”

“Jesus said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.’ (Based on Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 11:1–4)”

Discovering

Jesus Teaches Us to Pray. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus and prayer.

Ask your child, “What prayers can we pray as a family?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. What's the Order? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Prayer Space for Kids. Prepare a special place of prayer for your child by providing a low table with a tablecloth. Invite him or her to decorate the prayer space with a cross, statues, battery operated "candles," prayer books, and flowers. Encourage your child to use the space to pray or sing or play a few songs to Jesus. Participate in your child's spontaneous prayer and singing.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Show your child the picture of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Thérèse to your child (see page 4).

Ask your child:

► Thérèse knew that God loved her. Do you know that God loves you too?

► When do you talk with God?

► Where do you talk with God?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Thérèse using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray the Our Father with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.*

Close with the following prayer: "Dear Jesus, We praise you, we bless you, we thank you, and we adore you. Bless everyone and bring us back safely until we can be together again. Amen."

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Learning to Pray

Little Thérèse had four big sisters. She played with them and played tricks on them! Sometimes Thérèse was shy, sometimes stubborn. But even when she was not so well-behaved, her family loved her.

Thérèse's family showed her that God always loved her too. They taught her many ways to talk with God.

Her mother taught her prayers. Each night Thérèse knelt down with her whole family to pray these prayers.

When Thérèse was scared, her mother told her to talk to Jesus, because he would understand how she feels.

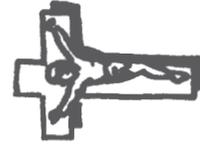
One day when Thérèse was four years old, her mother found her behind a curtain and asked, "Are you playing a hiding game?"

"No," said Thérèse. "I sit here to think about God."

Another time, while at the seashore, Thérèse saw how the sunshine on the water looked like a path. "That light is like Jesus' love, showing us the way to him," Thérèse said to her sister.

Fishing with her father, Thérèse saw how beautiful everything was, and thought of God. In all these ways, Thérèse prayed. Sometimes she talked. Sometimes she listened. Always she knew that Jesus loved her.

DRAW



**Saint
Thérèse,
pray for us!**

We Thank You, God

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 4, ages 4-5

Lesson 4 Goal

- Your child will consider ways of thanking God and will name some of the good things God has done for us.

Key Points

- God has done many good things for us.
- We should say thank you to God for the great things he does for us.



Parent Reflection

Thankfulness is at the core of our faith. As we acknowledge God as the giver of all good things, we are also better able to enjoy and appreciate our own lives and the persons with whom we come in contact. An attitude of thankfulness prepares us to act in charity toward one another, because it's only when we understand all that we have been given that we understand all we have to give. The following are some tips for promoting a spirit of thankfulness for your child:

- 1. Model thankfulness.** Be generous in acknowledging the contributions and good deeds of your family members.
- 2. Provide opportunities to give thanks.** Be sure to pray before meals, and pray prayers of thanksgiving before or during special family celebrations.
- 3. Encourage your child to appreciate others who are a blessing in his or her life.** Prompt your child to name some of the things special ways parents, grandparents, babysitters, and teachers show love and care. Together, make a thank-you card for one of these special people.

Reflection Question

How can I show my thankfulness to God and to others for all of the blessings in my life?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- safety scissors
- access to outdoors
- 9" x 12" construction paper
- clear contact paper, cut to 8.5" x 11.5"

- paper bag to collect nature items
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear God, our Father and Creator, you have given us the sun and moon, night and day, winter and summer. You have given us tears and laughter, and people who love us.”

Together: “Thank you, God for our gifts. May we use them to do your work. Amen.”

Discovering

Giving Thanks to God. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus and the men he healed.

Ask your child, “Why is it important to say thank

you to Jesus?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Who Is Thankful? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Thank-You Nature Walk. Go on a nature walk, and have your child collect small nature items, such as pebbles, twigs, and leaves, and place them in a paper bag. After the walk, return to a table and peel the backing from the contact paper and place it sticky-side up on the table. Invite your child to place some of the nature items on the contact paper. Once he or she is finished, place a sheet of construction paper over the contact paper to seal the items. Talk about the items in the collage and together thank God for the gift of nature.

3. The Communion of Saints: Raphael the Archangel. Show your child the picture of Raphael the Archangel on the Family Activity page and read the text. Then read more about Raphael to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Who was Raphael? (*An angel/archangel*)
- ▶ What did Raphael tell Tobit and his family to do? (*Thank God every day; praise him with songs.*)
- ▶ Can you thank God every day? What will you say?

Have your child write and draw about Raphael the Archangel using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear Jesus, we praise you! Thank you for the world and everything in it. Thank you for our families. Help us to remember to give thanks. Amen.”

Raphael the Archangel

The Angel’s Advice

Long ago, there was a holy man named Tobit. He lived with his wife, Anna, and their son, Tobias. Now Tobit was a good man who loved God, but he had many troubles. Among his problems was that he could no longer see. He prayed, asking God for help.

Tobias had to go on a long trip. He did not know the way, and Tobit did not want him to travel alone. One day, Tobias met someone named Raphael, who offered to go on the trip, too. From then on, Raphael helped the family and protected them while they traveled, for it was a dangerous journey. He healed Tobit’s eyes, and now Tobit could see again! Raphael even helped Tobias meet Sarah, the young woman God wanted him to marry.

Tobit and his son were very grateful to Raphael. And then, one day, Raphael told them something astonishing: He was an angel! Tobit and Tobias were amazed that God had sent an angel to them!

“When you prayed, asking for help, it was I who told God of your prayer,” Raphael said. “Thank God every day for all he has given you! Praise him with songs!”

So they began thanking God and singing God’s praises. Raphael then left them, but Tobit, Anna, Tobias, Sarah, and their children never forgot the angel or God’s great goodness to them. Every day, for the rest of their lives, the family thanked God for all good things. (*Based on the Book of Tobit*)

DRAW



**Saint
Raphael,
pray for us!**

God Keeps His Promises

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 5, ages 4-5

Lesson 5 Goal

- Your child will hear the story of Simeon and Anna meeting Baby Jesus at the Temple.

Key Points

- Mary and Joseph took Baby Jesus to the Temple, where two holy people named Simeon and Anna recognized Jesus as the Messiah.
- God promised Simeon that he would see Jesus someday, and he met Jesus at the Temple.



Parent Reflection

Eight days after Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph went to the Temple for the ritual purification prescribed by Jewish law. There they met two older members of the community, Simeon and Anna. Simeon had been promised that he would see the Messiah before he died, and when he saw the Baby Jesus, he immediately knew who the child was.

The encounter with Simeon and Anna is significant in several ways. In presenting Jesus at the Temple, Mary and Joseph showed their dedication to God and their desire for Jesus to be close to God the Father and to the faith community. In addition, as Jesus is introduced to members of the faith community, his mission is made clearer.

The Story of the Presentation highlights two important points about catechesis—namely, that parents are the first and most important teachers of the faith and that the community of faith is the most important place where catechesis occurs.

Reflection Question

How do I shape the faith of my child?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Activity Master #5
- card stock paper
- safety scissors
- tape
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the

saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #5 and #2 (included with this lesson).
- Copy Activity Master 5 onto card stock.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Long ago, God spoke to a holy man and prophet named Isaiah. Isaiah wrote down what God told him. It was this: ‘I will make Jesus to be a light to all the countries, so everyone, all over the world, will know my love for them.’ That is why we say that Jesus is the Light of the World.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

Parent: *Dear Jesus, we know God sent you to come and be with us.*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming to us!*

Parent: *We know that you came not only*

for us, but for all the people, everywhere in the world.

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming to us! Amen.*

Discovering

Simeon and Anna Meet Baby Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about how two people met Baby Jesus in the Temple.

Ask your child, *“What was special about Simeon and Anna?”* (*They were holy people who loved God and prayed often.*)

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the *“Ask Me!”* questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Meeting Baby Jesus. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Jesus Is the Light of the World. Invite your child to cut and decorate the candle from Activity Master 5. Help him or her assemble it and secure it with tape. Mention that Jesus is the Light of the World.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Blaise. Show your child the picture of Saint Blaise on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Blaise to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What blessing did the child receive from Saint Blaise? (*Saint Blaise saved the boy from choking.*)
- ▶ Blaise was kind to animals and helped people. What are some ways we can help people?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Blaise using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the

Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

Parent: *Jesus, God promised you to the whole world,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming!*

Parent: *Jesus you were presented in the Temple for all to see,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming!*

Parent: *Jesus, Simeon took you into his arms and blessed you,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming!*

Parent: *Jesus, Anna gave thanks and sang your praises,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming!*

Parent: *Jesus, you are a Light to the nations,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming!*

Parent: *Jesus, you are the glory of your people,*

Together: *Thank you, Jesus, for coming! Amen.*

Saint Blaise

A Gift of Healing Prayer

Note: *Saint Blaise was a bishop, possibly a doctor, and a martyr for his faith. While these are some of the only surviving facts about him, stories of his healing abilities abounded for centuries after his death.*

Blaise lived a long, long time ago. He was a good and holy man. He was a priest who loved Jesus very much.

At that time, there were people who did not want him to love Jesus. So Blaise went far into the countryside so that he could live all by himself. Where would he live? He found a cave and made it his home. There he could pray as much as he wanted to!

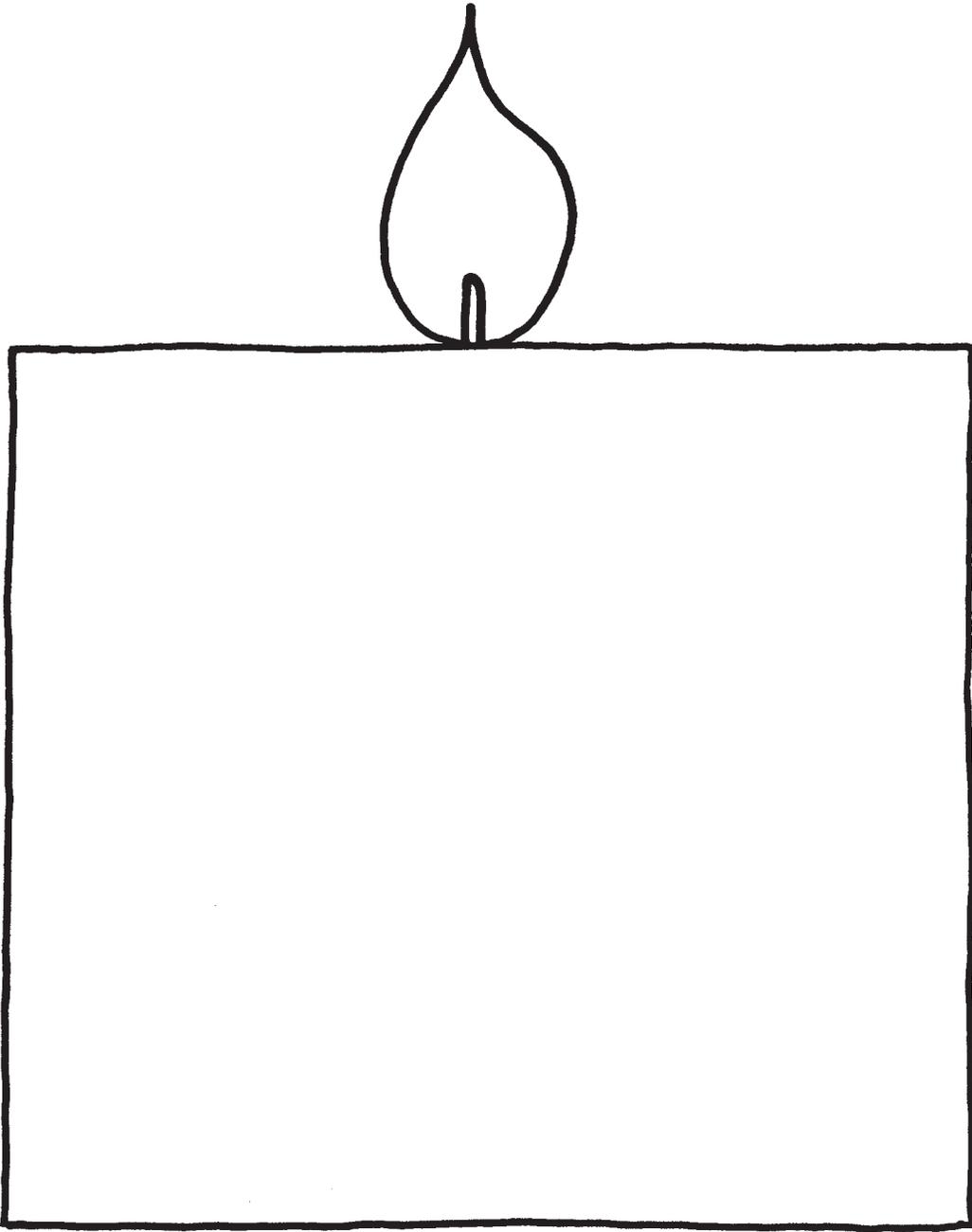
Living in the countryside, Blaise often found wild animals that were sick or hurt. Blaise took care of them. Some became tame, and stayed with him.

Then one day something happened that shows how holy Blaise had become. A little boy accidentally swallowed a bone. He was choking!

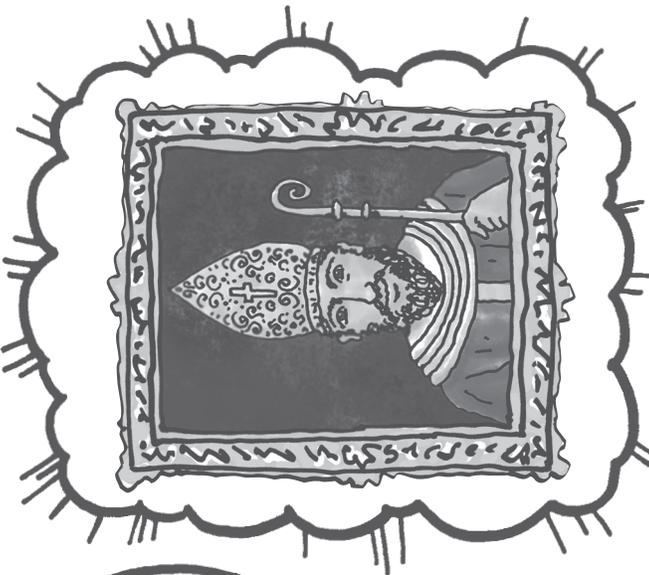
His mother was frightened. She saw Blaise. "Please, help my little boy!" she begged.

Of course this good man would help! He prayed, asking Jesus to help the child. The little boy began to cough. The bone came out of his throat. He was fine!

What a wonderful blessing the child received from Saint Blaise!



DRAW



**Saint
Blaise,
pray for us!**

Jesus Is God's Son

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 6, ages 4-5

Lesson 6 Goal

- Your child will learn that “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” are names of God.

Key Points

- The Holy Trinity is one God.
- There is one God in three Divine Persons, called God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



Parent Reflection

God has revealed himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We understand these Three Divine Persons of the Trinity as working in concert, and being one, but yet also having distinct roles. We traditionally think of God the Father as the Creator, God the Son as the “Word made flesh” who lived among us and sacrificed himself for us, and God the Spirit as the sanctifier, the one who dwells within us. He makes us holy through the gifts of the Spirit: wisdom, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (CCC, 1831). The one God in three Divine Persons is the most fundamental concept of our faith, and yet it is a mystery that we will not fully comprehend in our lifetime on earth.

It is important, however, that as we grow, we are not continuing to carry a young child’s understanding of the nature of God. Just as we grow in our understanding of other complex aspects of life, we can mature in our grasp of who God is. God intends for us to grow ever closer to him through study of Scripture and Church teaching, and through our experience of God in prayer, the sacraments, and the Christian community, which also forms a unique image of God as the “Body of Christ.”

Reflection Question

How has my understanding of God changed over the years? In what ways do I still seek to grow in this understanding?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- ❑ Family Activity Sheet
- ❑ crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- ❑ three-in-one objects for your child to find, such as a shamrock plant, a vase of flowers with one stem and three flowers, a tree branch with three leaves
- ❑ Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather to-

gether a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- ❑ Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- ❑ Hide the three-in-one objects in the dramatic play area, in a variety of places.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Now we will learn about the prayer called the Sign of the Cross. We call this prayer the Sign of the Cross because we trace the shape of the cross on us as we say it.”*

Show your child, how you make the Sign of the Cross, slowly, from forehead to heart, from shoulder to shoulder.

Say, *“This is a very holy sign. It helps us think about God. Sometimes we use it to help us start or end our other prayers. Sometimes it helps us just feel that God is near. Let’s make this holy sign together.”*

Model the gesture slowly, again making a big cross, not a hasty, “scrunched” one.

Say, *“The Sign of the Cross helps us to gather ourselves, because we touch our heads and our hearts, our thinking and feeling, and then our arms, which we use to take in everything in life.”*

Model it again while praying the words.

Have your child repeat the words with you. Then have him or her pray the words and make the gestures together. Repeat.

Say, *“Now we will make the Sign of the Cross to lead us into our closing prayer. Let us pray.”*

Begin in prayer:

“Dear God, you are with us today. We will learn that you have many names. You love us in many ways. We praise you for your goodness. Amen.”

Close by praying the Sign of the Cross together.

Discovering

The Baptism of Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus’ Baptism.

Tell a story about your child’s day of baptism.

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Meeting Baby Jesus. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Three-in-One Symbols Hunt. Encourage your child to look for the three-in-one objects. Explain to him or her to come and tell you when one is found.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Patrick of Ireland. Show your child the picture of Saint Patrick on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Patrick to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

▶ What did Saint Patrick use to help people understand that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? (*A shamrock*)

▶ Patrick taught many people that God loved them. What are some ways that show us how God loves us?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Patrick using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross together. Pray aloud with your child:

"Dear God, you have many names. You love us in many ways, too. Please bless everyone and keep us safe. Amen."

Saint Patrick of Ireland

Teaching about the Trinity

Long ago in Ireland, a boy named Patrick took care of other people's sheep. Patrick stayed in the hills with the sheep, even when it was snowy or rainy or windy or dark.

Patrick had no people to talk to. He knew we could always talk to God, no matter where we are, so that is what he did. He prayed to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Patrick loved the sheep and the hills, the trees and clouds and flowers, but he loved God best of all.

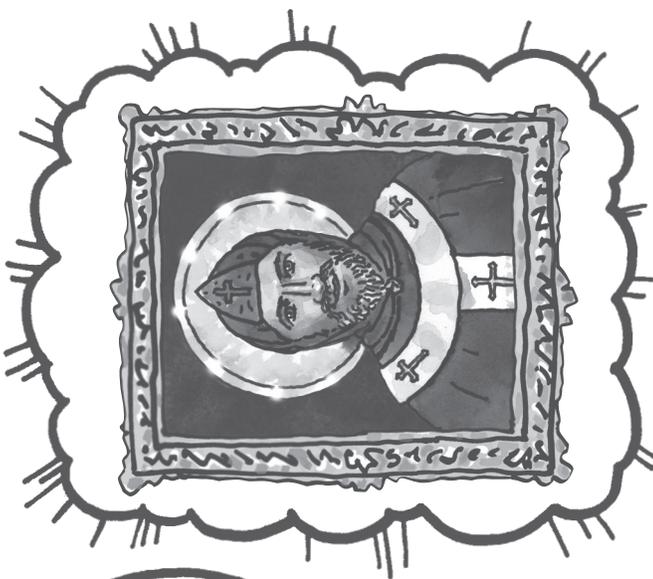
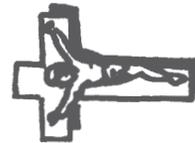
When Patrick got older, he became a priest and a teacher. He told many people about God. They had questions.

One person said, "You say there is one God, but you also say God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That's three!"

Patrick looked down and saw a shamrock, a plant that had three leaves on one stem. He picked it. "See this shamrock? It is one plant, but there are three side-by-side leaves on one stem, just as there is one God, but three names for God."

Patrick went on teaching about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Because God made Patrick such a good teacher, many people came to learn from him and to love God.

DRAW



**Saint
Patrick,
pray for us!**

Jesus Cares for Our Needs

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 7, ages 4-5

Lesson 7 Goal

- Your child will explore how Jesus fed multitudes with five loaves and two fish. He or she will learn how we can cooperate with God to give others what they need.

Key Points

- Jesus made sure the crowd of people listening to him did not go hungry.
- God wants us to work together to give others what they need.



Parent Reflection

In today's story, thousands of people are following Jesus and listening to his teach. When the day begins to draw to an end, Jesus' disciples come to him and ask him to send the people away, since they will certainly be hungry soon. Jesus commands his disciples to give them something to eat. The account of this event in the Gospel of John has Philip arguing that it would take "two hundred denari" (several months' wages) to feed such a large crowd. Peter's brother Andrew informs Jesus that a boy in the crowd has five barley loaves and two fish, but immediately stresses that this wouldn't be any good for feeding such a large crowd. Jesus asks the people to sit down, and then takes the loaves and fish, blesses them, and tells the Apostles to distribute them. Not only are the 5,000 fed, but there are twelve basketfuls of leftovers!

Sometimes we see a need and feel inadequate to meet it. Like Philip, our response to the tug of the Holy Spirit to help with a problem may be, "But I can't do anything about such a big issue." Or, like Andrew, we may find a way to help, but then decide that it's probably not good enough. But if we are willing to give what we have in faith, if we will then sit and wait for God to act, we might find that he does more than we could have asked or imagined (Ephesians 3:20).

Reflection Question

How can I, as a parent and Catholic, help others recognize and use their gifts?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- sheet of white paper
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather to-

gether a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“In today’s lesson, we will learn that we should share the things we have. When we share with others, we share with Jesus!”*

Begin in prayer:

Begin by praying the Sign of the Cross with your child. Then pray:

“Dear God, thank you for sharing your Son, Jesus, and than you for showing us how to share with others. Amen.”

Discovering

Jesus Feeds Many People. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about how Jesus’ miracle.

Ask your child, “What would you say to Jesus if you were there?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Loaves and Fishes. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Doing God’s Work. Give your child a sheet of white paper and invite him or her to trace an outline of his or her hands on the paper. Then remind your child of the story of the little boy who gave his basket of loaves and fish to Jesus and how Jesus fed a large crowd of people with this basketful of food. Ask him or her to think about ways that we can do what Jesus wants us to do. How can we do God’s work? In the handprints, help your child write ways that we can use our hands do God’s work. Ideas might include: feeding the family pet, drawing a picture for Grandma, sharing toys, helping tidy up at home.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Andrew. Show your child the picture of Saint Andrew on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Andrew to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- ▶ “Do you ever feel shy?”

► “Do you think Andrew was shy when Jesus called out to him? Why or why not?” (*Explain to your child that he or she never has to be shy with Jesus, for we can talk quietly with him in our heart.*)

Have your child write and draw about Saint Andrew using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Thank you, God, for our gifts. May we use them to do your work. Amen.”

Saint Andrew

Bringing People to Jesus

One day while Andrew was fishing, he saw Jesus walking by. He had heard that Jesus was a very special and holy person. Andrew followed Jesus, and Jesus invited Andrew to join him. They spent the afternoon together. Jesus talked and Andrew listened.

Andrew hurried to his home where he lived with his older brother, Simon Peter.

“Simon! We have found him! We have found the Savior sent by God!” Andrew exclaimed.

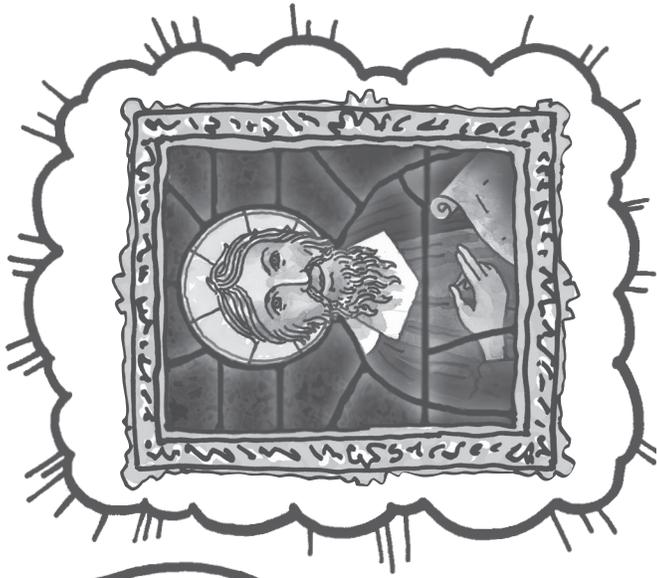
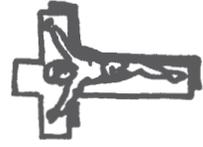
Andrew brought Simon Peter to meet Jesus.

Jesus asked them to be his special friends and followers.

Andrew and Simon Peter were fishermen, but they left their jobs. From then on, they went with Jesus as he taught crowds of people. Others joined them, but Andrew was the very first.

For the rest of his life, Andrew brought people to Jesus. After Jesus had gone back to Heaven, Andrew continued to bring people to him by traveling to faraway places and teaching about Jesus and his great love for all people.

DRAW



**Saint
Andrew,
pray for us!**

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 8, ages 4-5

Lesson 8 Goal

- Your child will learn about the Parable of the Good Shepherd to discuss how God cares for each of us.

Key Points

- Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd.
- Jesus takes care of us like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep.



Parent Reflection

In the time and place where Jesus was teaching, one would not have had to search for long to see a shepherd on the hillside tending his sheep. His listeners would have been familiar with Psalm 23 of David, “The Lord is my shepherd...,” so his proclamation of himself as Good Shepherd contains the implication that he is “Lord” and also the understanding that a good shepherd leads his sheep to green pastures, cool water, etc. But Jesus adds something new: he speaks of the Good Shepherd “[laying] down his life for the sheep” (Psalm 23:11). While those listening could not have possibly understood his meaning, Jesus was foreshadowing his eventual death for the salvation of humankind.

The Christian life means following Christ, the Good Shepherd, and the Church, his Body on earth. We sometimes forget that Jesus is indeed a Good Shepherd, and we are sometimes reluctant to follow him out of our comfort zones, but he will never ask more of us than we can handle.

Reflection Question

How has God been a Good Shepherd to me?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- safety scissors
- white card stock
- two clothespins
- glue
- cotton balls
- Activity Master #9

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #9 and #2 (included with this lesson).
- Precut sheep from Activity Master 9 onto white card stock paper.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: “Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, “Today from Scripture we will hear a psalm. These are songs written long ago to praise or thank God. This psalm is often called ‘The Lord Is My Shepherd’ or the Twenty-third Psalm.”

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Invite your child to listen as you pray Psalm 23 aloud.

*The Lord is my shepherd;
There is nothing I will need.
In green pastures you let me graze;*

*To safe waters you lead me;
you restore my strength.*

*You guide me along the right path,
for the sake of your name.*

*Even when I walk through a dark valley,
I fear no harm for you are at my side;
Your rod and your staff give me courage.
You set a table before me.*

*You will anoint my head with oil.
My cup overflows.*

*Only goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come.*

Discovering

The Good Shepherd. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the Good Shepherd.

Ask your child, “How can we tell or show Jesus ‘thank you’ for loving us?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Knowing the Sheep. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Little Sheep. Invite your child to cut and color the sheep from Activity Master #9. Have him or her glue cotton balls to make a fluffy coat for the sheep. When the glue dries, fold the sheep so that it has a front and back side. Show how to pinch the clothespin and place it on the sheep to make legs. Remind your child that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Cuthbert. Show your child the picture of Saint Cuthbert on the Family Activity page and read about

him. Then read more about Saint Cuthbert to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

▶ God gave Cuthbert lots of energy. Do you have lots of energy?

▶ Cuthbert used his energy to work for God. Is there something you can do for God? (*Help your child think of some ideas.*)

Have your child write and draw about Saint Cuthbert using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for being a Good Shepherd to us. Thank you for loving us and knowing each of us by name. Help us to follow your voice. Amen."

Saint Cuthbert

A Shepherd for God

Cuthbert was a strong child. With his friends, he ran races and wrestled in the grassy hills. In winter, he played wildly in the snow. When other children wanted to rest, Cuthbert was surprised. He wasn't tired!

Other times, Cuthbert would go alone to a quiet place on a hill. There he sat so still that even wild rabbits were not afraid of him! He thought about God and how he might someday work for God.

When Cuthbert was old enough, he became a shepherd. His sheep grazed in the hills, where there were many hiding places for robbers or hungry wild animals. Cuthbert watched and protected his sheep carefully.

At night all the shepherds would gather their sheep together. Often the other shepherds slept and Cuthbert stayed awake to guard the sheep.

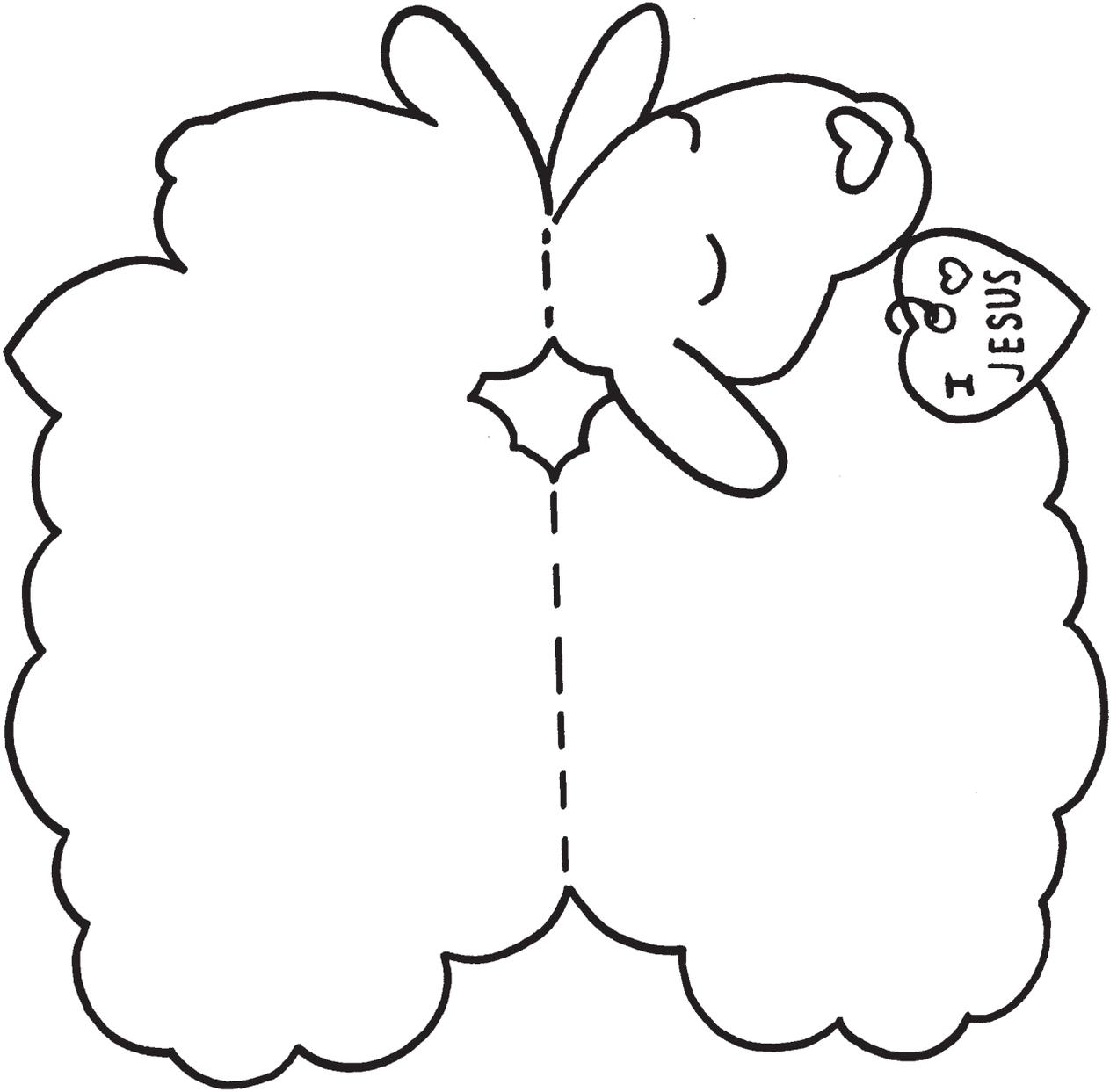
He prayed in the quiet night.

One very dark night, with no stars to be seen, Cuthbert was praying. Suddenly, a bright light appeared in the sky. This light streamed down to the earth and angels moved on this light!

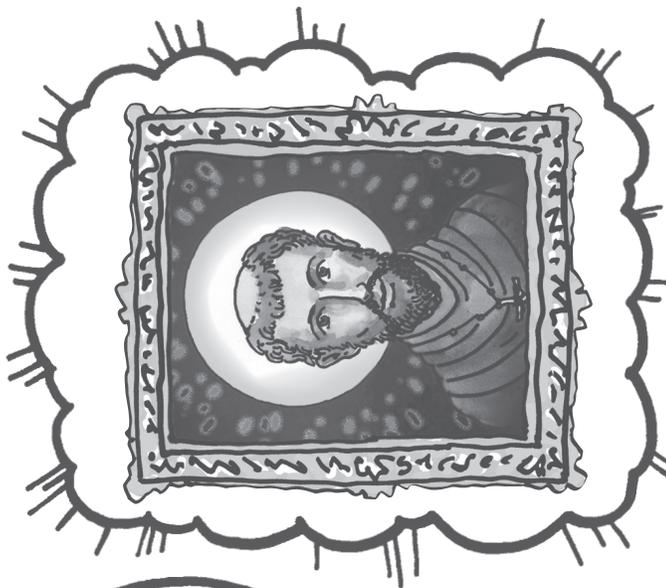
Cuthbert knew then that God wanted him to be a different kind of shepherd. He wanted to be like a shepherd caring for God's people. He became a priest.

Now with his great energy, he still went through the hills, but now he looked for people who listened to him as sheep listen for the shepherd's voice.

Cuthbert felt great joy because he knew God loved him. Because of Cuthbert's work, other priests, mothers, fathers, children, and grandparents all came to love God joyfully too.



DRAW



**Saint
Cuthbert,
pray for us!**

Jesus Helps Us

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 9, ages 4-5

Lesson 9 Goal

- Your child will discuss how Jesus healed the sick and will relate this with how parents take care of children when they are sick.

Key Points

- Jesus cared about people who were sick, and he healed them.
- I should pray for and help people who are sick or suffering.



Parent Reflection

Jesus described himself as a physician who came to heal the sick. Indeed, many people came to him to be cured of physical illnesses, but Jesus was most concerned with the soul. Jesus often linked the physical healings he performed with the forgiveness of sins (John 20:23). This was because he intended physical healings to be a visible sign of the healing of the soul. Jesus also gave his disciples the authority to forgive sins and sent them to heal the sick (Mark 6:12–13). The Church continues Christ's ministry of healing in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick (CCC, 1421).

Comforting the sick is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy taught by Jesus (Matthew 25:36). There are many ways in which we can care for those who are sick, in our families, our parishes, and our communities. Sending a kind note, visiting and praying with someone who is ill, serving as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to the sick, or taking a meal to someone who is homebound are all examples of ways in which the Christian community cares for those struggling with illness. In acting in compassion for those among us who are suffering, we fulfill Scripture's command to "help carry one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

Reflection Question

Whom do I know who is sick and in need of comfort?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- elastic cloth bandage
- pillow or cloth
- child's wagon or cardboard box large enough for child to sit in
- cloth to place on a child's shoulders

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: "Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God."

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *"Today we are going to pray for people we love who are sick. We will ask Jesus to help heal them. I will pray each part of the prayer and you will repeat after me."*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Ask your child to name someone who is sick for whom he or she would like to pray for.

Say, *"Jesus, you care about people who are sick. Please help (name of person or persons)."*

"Jesus, you love them." (Repeat.)

"Please send them your healing." (Repeat.)

"We love them, we pray for them." (Repeat.)

"Jesus please send them your healing."
(Repeat.)

Discovering

Jesus Heals the Sick. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus healing the hurt man.

Ask your child, "How did Jesus help the hurt man?"

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the "Ask Me!" questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. We Can Help Others. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Jesus the Healer Play (Dramatic Play). Encourage your child to act out the Scripture story "Jesus Heals the Sick" using the suggested

materials. Mention that he or she can also use the provided materials to act out ways that family members, nurses, and doctors help us when we are sick, or to show ways that each of us can help others who are in need.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Camillus de Lellis. Show your child the picture of Saint Camillus de Lellis on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Camillus to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Who cares for you when you are sick?
- ▶ What can you do to help someone who is sick?

- ▶ How can you help a sick person know that Jesus loves him or her?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Camillus using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

“Dear Jesus, thank you for helping us when we are sick. Thank you for our families who help us too. Amen.”

Saint Camillus de Lellis

Loving to Heal

Camillus was in a hospital because of his leg injury. His leg ached, but he wasn't getting much help.

In Camillus' time, hospitals were not clean places with caring nurses and doctors. The hospital Camillus was in was dirty, with dirty floors, dirty beds, and even dirty people. Germs were everywhere, making the sick people even sicker. But that was not the worst of it! The people who worked there were often mean and angry. They treated the sick people very badly and did not give them good care. Because of this, most people never got well.

At the hospital, Camillus worried about the other patients. He decided to do something to help. Limping painfully, he visited patients, offering kind and friendly words.

After leaving the hospital and recovering from his injury, Camillus felt called to become a priest. With two companions, he founded a special group called the Ministers of the Sick. This order of priests dedicated themselves to take care of the sick. Camillus and the other priests ministered to the sick in hospitals in Rome and in other parts of Italy, and they founded new hospitals for the care of the sick. They made sure the patients were treated with respect and care, and that the hospitals were clean and well kept so the sick people who went there could get well.

Because of Jesus' love, Camillus made hospitals good places where those who are sick could be healed.

DRAW



**Saint
Camillus,
pray for us!**

Jesus Is Our King

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 10, ages 4-5

Lesson 10 Goal

- Your child will learn that Jesus, the Son of God, is also our King.

Key Points

- Jesus is the King of Heaven and the earth.
- We celebrate the “kingship” of Jesus on the feast of Christ the King.



Parent Reflection

In the second chapter of his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul connects Jesus’ kingship to his humility, saying that even though Jesus was God, “he did not deem equality with God as something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave” (Philippians 2:6-7). The passage goes on to say that God the Father exalted Jesus to the highest place because of this humility.

Before he went back to be with the Father, Jesus gave Peter the “keys to the kingdom” (Matthew 16:19). This was a common expression in Jesus’ day, when there were more monarchies than there are in present times. When a king gave the “keys to the kingdom,” it meant that the king would be away for a while and he was appointing someone to act in his absence. The person was charged with choosing actions the king would choose were he present.

This Christ-instituted tradition of the papacy has continued throughout the history of the Church. Our honor of Christ the King should also include respect given to the one who holds “the keys to the kingdom.” As parents, this means faithfully handing on the teaching of the Church, showing respect for our leaders, ensuring that we do not misrepresent Church teaching. Instead, we should prayerfully seek to understand why our Church teaches what she teaches, and help others to do the same.

Reflection Question

How do I acknowledge the “kingship” of Christ in my daily life? In what ways do I allow him to lead in the decisions I make?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- safety scissors
- poster board
- glue stick
- pictures from magazines or online images that portray aspects of nature, such as clouds, insects, plants, trees, animals, and pictures of people of varied ethnicities and ages

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- On the poster board, print the words *Jesus Is King of All Creation*.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Today we will learn more about a feast called Christ the King. First, I’ll read a prayer, which is from a beautiful psalm in the Bible. The prayer celebrates Jesus who can also be called Christ the King.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

Read aloud the psalm:

*Sing praise to the Lord with the harp,
with harp and melodious song.*

*With trumpets and the sound of the horn
shout with joy to the King, the Lord.*

Let the sea and what fills it resound,

*the world and those who dwell there;
Let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains shout with them for joy.*

*Before the Lord who comes,
who comes to govern the earth,
To govern the world with justice
and the peoples with fairness.*

(Based on Psalm 98)

Pray together: *“Thank you, God, for our gifts. May we use them to do your work. Amen.”*

Discovering

Sing Praise to the Lord. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about praising God.

Ask your child, “Why is Jesus the most important king of all?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic

faith.

1. Christ the King. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. “King of All Creation” Collage. Explain to your child that in this activity he or she can make a collage. Hold up a few of the pictures that you have ready and lead your child to realize that the pictures show items of creation, such as plants, animals, and people of different ethnicities and ages. Show how to glue the pictures on the poster board. Display the completed collage for the family to see.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint David I of Scotland. Show your child the picture of Saint David I on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint David to your child (see page 4).

Ask your child:

► “David wanted to be a good king. What are some ways he did that?” (*He helped all people who came to him. He built schools. He let people come to him with their problems.*)

► David’s parents taught him to love God and be kind? Who teaches you to love God and be kind?

Have your child write and draw about Saint David I using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

Say, “We know Jesus is our teacher, our friend, and that he helps people. And today, we celebrate Jesus as King of Heaven and earth. He brings us a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, and of justice, love, and peace.

“Let us pray. Dear Jesus, thank you for being the King of our lives. We celebrate you and your love for us. Amen.”

Saint David I of Scotland

A Good King

David was a four-year-old prince. His mother and father were the king and queen of Scotland. Today he was watching his five big brothers and two sisters read and study. The teacher worked with each one. Their mother had carefully chosen the children's teacher.

The door opened and the children smiled. Their mother, Queen Margaret, came in to teach the religion class. "David, you can join us now that you are four years old!" she said. David sat in his mother's lap. First the family prayed together, and then David's lessons began.

On other days David watched his parents do good deeds as king and queen. They welcomed hungry people at the castle, serving the food themselves. His mother held orphaned babies on her lap and fed them. As she held them, she smiled at David and said, "They are God's children, just as you are!"

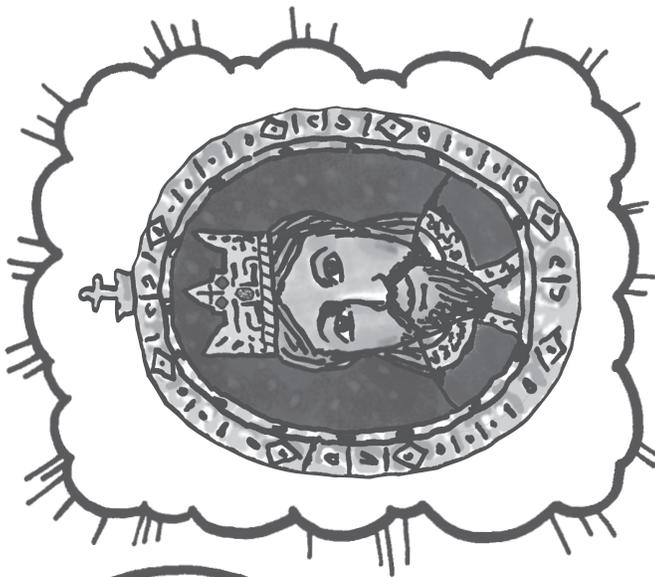
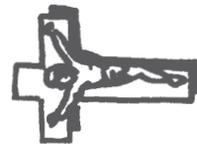
David's parents also had schools and hospitals built for the care of the sick. His mother welcomed everyone to come to her with a problem. "Most kings or queens don't do that," his sister explained.

Each day, the king and queen prayed with their children. David grew up to be a prayerful and happy man. His older brother was now king. But when his brother died, David became the King. King David wanted to be a very good king, following his parents' example. King David prayed. He made laws that were fair to everyone and shared his money. He used his money to build schools, because he wanted everyone, rich or poor, to go to school. Like his mother, Queen Margaret, he let people come to him with their problems.

David was a good king to all people because he knew that all people are children of God.



DRAW



**Saint
David,
pray for us!**

We Live as Jesus Taught

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 11, ages 4-5

Lesson 11 Goal

- Your child will learn about rules.

Key Points

- A community is a group of families and friends who do things together. Our parish church is one of the communities to which we belong.
- All communities have some rules about how to behave and treat one another.



Parent Reflection

Saint Paul says we are united by “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all” (Ephesians 4:5–6). Another more detailed summary of the beliefs we share is contained in the Creed we recite at Mass. But our faith, and indeed our sense of community, is more than what we believe in common, for those beliefs take root and flourish in our actions. We are strong as a faith community to the extent that we express our love for God, one another, and those outside our faith community.

Being part of a community can be challenging for us at times, for although God created us to live in community, we must mature beyond our own interests and wants, and this requires a measure of self-sacrifice. It is natural for us to crawl as infants, but equally natural (although challenging) to learn to walk. Likewise, it is natural at some ages to be focused on ourselves, but part of growing up is to learn concern for others.

Reflection Question

What are some of the challenges I face in living in community with others?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- 6"-7" pipe cleaners
- assorted beads (pony beads work best)
- small craft crosses (found in the bead section of the craft store)

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Pray together: *“Dear Jesus, you are our friend who loves us very much. Today we pray that we will come to know we are a part of a family—your family, the family of God. Thank you for our friends. Thank you for loving each one of us. Amen.”*

Discovering

Living as Jesus Taught. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the disciples of Jesus.

Ask your child, “Share how you lives as Jesus taught today.”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Who Is Being a Friend? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Friends-in-Christ Bracelets. Invite your child to make a friendship bracelets to share using pipe cleaner and beads. Loop one end of the pipe cleaner so that the beads do not fall off. When your child has finished stringing the beads, twist both ends together to secure the bracelet.

• Make a bracelet for yourself as well and then exchange the bracelets, saying, “You are my friend in Christ.”

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Margaret of Scotland. Show your child the picture of Saint Margaret on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Margaret to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ “What are some ways Saint Margaret and her family lived like Jesus’ friends had long before?”
- ▶ “What can we do in our family or community to be like Jesus’ friends?”

Have your child write and draw about Saint Margaret using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear God, thank you for your Good News. Thank you for my friends and family. Bless every one of us and keep us safe. Amen.”

Saint Margaret of Scotland

Helping Children in Need

Long ago, there was a wonderful Scottish queen named Margaret. She and King Malcolm loved each other and their eight children very much. They loved the people of their land, too.

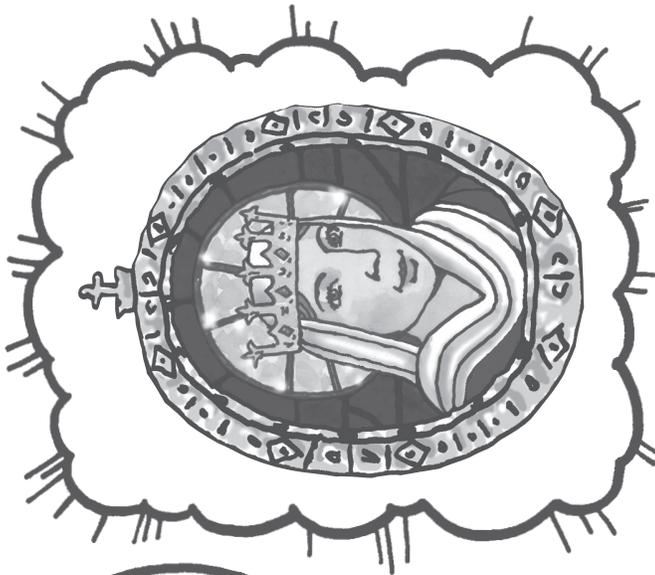
The queen and king also loved God. They decided to live the way Jesus’ friends had lived many years before. They prayed together. They shared their clothing and medicine with others. They paid workers to build hospitals and schools. They also paid teachers to teach and

doctors to take care of sick people.

The queen and king also took care of the hungry people. Every day they invited many poor people as their guests for dinner. Queen Margaret also took care of babies who did not have parents and who were hungry and lonely. She made sure they had good food to eat and gave them love and affection.

The babies loved Queen Margaret, and so does God.

DRAW



**Saint
Margaret,
pray for us!**

My Family Cares for Me

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 12, ages 4-5

Lesson 12 Goal

- Your child will reflect on and talk about your family, and will learn about Jesus' family, the Holy Family.

Key Points

- God gives us a family to love and take care of us.
- Jesus had a family, too: Mary, his mother, and Joseph, his foster father.



Parent Reflection

The Catechism of the Catholic Church calls the home “the first school of Christian life” (CCC, 1657), meaning that by God’s design, families are the first and primary place children learn about God. In families, this learning usually takes place not through structured lessons but through the events of everyday life. As children watch their parents living out the Christian life, they grow in the faith.

Today, the definition of family is itself under scrutiny. The example of the Holy Family can help us to understand the nature and purpose of the family in God’s plan. While there are some ways in which our families are different from that of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, one important way in which we can follow their example is in trying to be as open as possible to God’s will. When families can see simple everyday tasks such as cleaning, preparing food, and helping one another as acts of love to which they are called by God, and when they can accept whatever comes their way, even that which is unexpected, as part of God’s larger plan for their lives, they are celebrating the sacrament of the present moment. It is in these simple, everyday happenings that God reveals himself.

Reflection Question

How is God currently revealing himself in the everyday life of my family?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- safety scissors
- a family photo
- a Bible with Old Testament stories bookmarked (possible stories include the Creation Story, Noah and the Ark, or Jonah and the Whale)
- large blanket
- serving tray, cups, plates
- foods from Old Testament times to share, such as grape juice, flat bread, cheese, olives
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Today, we will pray for our family. Families are a gift from God. All of us who take care of you and love you are your family. And, everybody is also in God’s family! Together, let’s name the people in our family. After each of us speaks, we will say a prayer together.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Take turns naming people in your family. After each person speaks, say together: *“Dear God, please take care of our family.”*

In closing, pray: *“Thank you, God our Fa-*

ther, for loving us so much that you gave us our family. Please be with us always. Amen.”

Discovering

Caring for Baby Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Joseph and the angel.

Ask your child, “How do you think Joseph felt when the angel appeared?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. The Holy Family, My Family. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Holy Family Story Time. Sit together on a blanket and share Old Testament stories while

sampling the same foods that the Holy Family may have eaten. Explain to your child that Mary and Joseph shared the very same stories with Jesus. Close story time with a prayer to thank God for your family.

3. The Communion of Saints: The Virgin Mary. Show your child the picture of Mary on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Mary to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

▶ God sent the Angel Gabriel to ask Mary to be Jesus' mother. Why did Mary say yes to what God asked, even though she knew it would be hard? (*She trusted God.*)

▶ What did Gabriel say about Jesus? (*He is the Savior.*)

Have your child write and draw about the Virgin Mary using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Dear Jesus, we thank and praise you for our wonderful family. You will be our Father and we will be your sons and daughters. Bless every one of us and keep us safe. Amen."

The Virgin Mary

The Mother of Jesus

Long ago, in a little village there lived a young woman named Mary. She would soon marry Joseph. One day, perhaps when she was baking bread or sewing, an archangel named Gabriel appeared to her. "Hail, Mary, the Lord is with you!" Gabriel said.

Mary felt afraid. She did not understand what was happening.

"Don't be afraid," Gabriel said. "God loves you. He has chosen you for a very special responsibility. God wants you to be the mother of his Son, Jesus, the Savior."

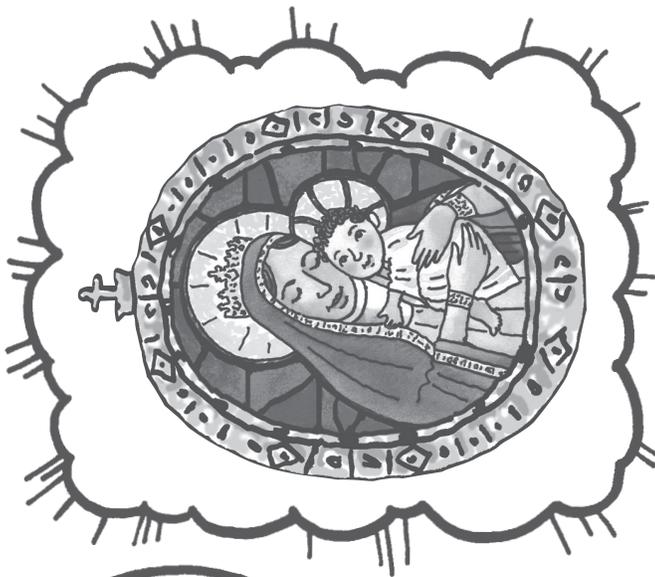
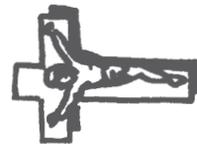
Mary still was not sure what all this meant. She knew this special job would be hard sometimes, but she trusted that God knew what was

best. She said to Gabriel, "Yes. I will do what God asks."

Mary did what God asked of her always. She became the mother of Jesus and watched over him and cared for him always. She cared for Jesus when he was a baby. With Joseph she traveled to Egypt to keep him safe. She watched over him when he was a child. She was devoted to him when he taught people about God. She was by his side when he died.

Just like Mary cared for Jesus, she cares for us all. Because of her love and care for us we call her our Mother. She wants us to be good followers of Jesus and always helps us.

DRAW



**Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
pray for us!**

We Celebrate Together

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 13, ages 4-5

Lesson 13 Goal

- Your child will discuss various types of celebrations and will learn that the Mass is a holy celebration.

Key Points

- Families celebrate special times together.
- The Church is the family of God.
- The Mass is the greatest “family celebration” of the Church.



Parent Reflection

Like many families, our spiritual family has family rituals and celebrations. The Mass is our most important celebration, because it is where Jesus makes himself truly present to us. He is present in the Christian community, in the Word, and most fully in the Eucharist.

For the Church, the Eucharist is both a sign and a source of our communal bond with one another. Pope Saint John Paul II said, “Eucharistic communion ... confirms the Church in her unity as the Body of Christ.” He goes on to quote the Apostle Paul, who states, “Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17).

Reflection Question

How well do I live out my role as a member of the Body of Christ? What more could I do to care, teach, learn, and serve?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- ❑ Family Activity Sheet
- ❑ crayons or colored pencils
- ❑ Bible bookmarked at several child-friendly stories
- ❑ secular books about families and celebrations

- ❑ Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- ❑ Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“We are usually happy when we celebrate. Let’s pray to thank God for the celebrating we do with our family.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

“Thank you, God, for birthdays, when we celebrate with our family!” (Child repeats)

“Thank you God for (Christmas, Easter, etc.), when we celebrate with our family!” (Child repeats)

Allow your child to name other special celebrations.

“Thank you God for _____, when we celebrate with our family!” (Child repeats)

“Thank you, God, for the Mass, when we

gather to celebrate your love with our Church family.” (Child repeats *“Thank you God for the Mass.”*)

“Thank you, God our Father, for loving us so much that you gave us our family. Please be with us today. Amen.”

Discovering

Happy Families. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about families.

Invite your child to name some ways your family has been blessed.

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Where Are They Going? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it. Talk with your child about the family going to Mass, and that the Mass is the Church’s greatest celebration.

2. Family Story Time. Set up a cozy space on the floor with picture books and Bible. Read stories together and talk about ways they related to your family.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Sergius of Radonezh. Show your child the picture of Saint Sergius on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Sergius to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

► “When Sergius grew up, he taught many people about Jesus. What are some things you would

tell other people about Jesus?” (*Being kind and fair with others, told stories, prayed for people.*)

- What did you like best about the story of Saint Sergius?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Sergius of Radonezh using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

Saint Sergius of Radonezh

Sergius and the Psalms

Long ago in Russia, there lived a holy man named Sergius. He taught many people to love God. Here is a story about Sergius as a child, which shows God’s love for him.

Little Sergius had a big problem: He could not learn to read. He tried. Teachers tried, but Sergius did not learn. So, he prayed.

One day, he met a very old man who asked him, “Child, what do you want?” Sergius said quickly, “More than anything, sir, I want to read!”

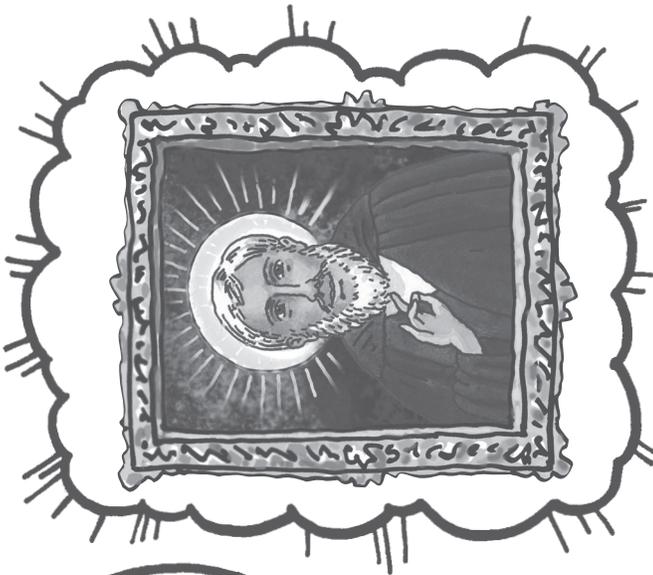
Together, they walked to Sergius’ house. “I will pray with your family,” the man said to Sergius. “And you will read the Psalms.”

“Me?” Sergius squeaked. “Yes, you,” he answered.

The family prayed with their guest. And, like at Mass, they listened to a reading from the Bible. The guest handed the Bible to Sergius. It was open to the Psalms, beautiful prayer-poems that talk to God.

Sergius began to read! He read wonderfully! As the family walked to the door with the old man, he disappeared! Was he an angel? Had an angel helped Sergius to read? Certainly, God’s love was with Sergius that day and for the rest of his long life.

DRAW



**Saint
Sergius,
pray for us!**

We Help the Church

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 14, ages 4-5

Lesson 14 Goal

- Your child will learn that many God calls us to use our gifts to serve him and others.

Key Points

- God gives us talents, and calls us to use those talents for him.
- People in the Church help in many different ways.



Parent Reflection

In Chapter 12 of Saint Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, we find a discussion of the Church as the Body of Christ—one Body, whose various members are called to work together in harmony. Each member of the Body has a special role, and we all need one another.

As Saint Paul states, we all have a place in the Body of Christ. At Mass, we can serve as greeters, ushers, lectors, musicians, altar servers, or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. We can also serve through works of social service or charity, helping with food pantries, drives for basic material needs, outreach to the sick and those in prison, and other services to the poor, marginalized, or those in crisis. The variety of opportunities to serve is a sign of the diversity of gifts given to us by God and the various ways in which God calls our Church to act in the world.

Reflection Question

What are some of the gifts I see present and in use within my own parish community?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- paper
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather to-

gether a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“A gift or talent is something we do well. God the Father gives his people many gifts and talents. Because Jesus’ followers long ago used their gifts to serve God and one another, they helped make the Church stronger. We understand that God gives us gifts and talents so that we, too, can do his work. In our church family, we see how some of these gifts are used. Let’s thank God for the people in church who use their gifts and talents.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“God our Father, thank you, for our gifts and talents. May we use them to do your work. Amen.”

Discovering

Our Gifts. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about gifts.

Ask your child, “How do we share our talents with others?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Our Own Special Gifts. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. “I Can Thank Jesus for My Gifts” Art. Ask your child to think of one gift or talent that he or she has.

Say, *“Everyone has gifts and talents to use for God’s work. Many people in our church family use their gifts to help at Mass.”*

Give your child colored pencils or crayons and paper so that for drawing a picture for Jesus and thank him for the gifts in our lives. Place the pic-

ture in front of a statue of Jesus at home.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint John

Bosco. Show your child the picture of Saint John Bosco on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint John Bosco to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What was one way that John Bosco did God's work with the poor children?
- ▶ How can you follow his example?

Have your child write and draw about Saint John Bosco using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

"Dear Holy Spirit, thank you for the many gifts you give us. Bless our family and keep us safe. Amen."

Saint John Bosco

Helping Children with a Smile

John Bosco lived in Italy a long time ago. As a boy, he taught himself to walk across a rope stretched tightly between two fence posts. Standing on a post, he put one foot and then the other on the rope. He tried to walk across it. He fell. He tried and fell again. But soon he walked across the rope without falling!

He also taught himself to juggle and do gymnastic tricks. John sang and told great stories. He remembered everything he learned. And he was always smiling! Other children loved being with him.

John was from a poor family, but he had many gifts from the Holy Spirit. His mother taught him that God loved him greatly. John grew up knowing he would use his many gifts to do God's work.

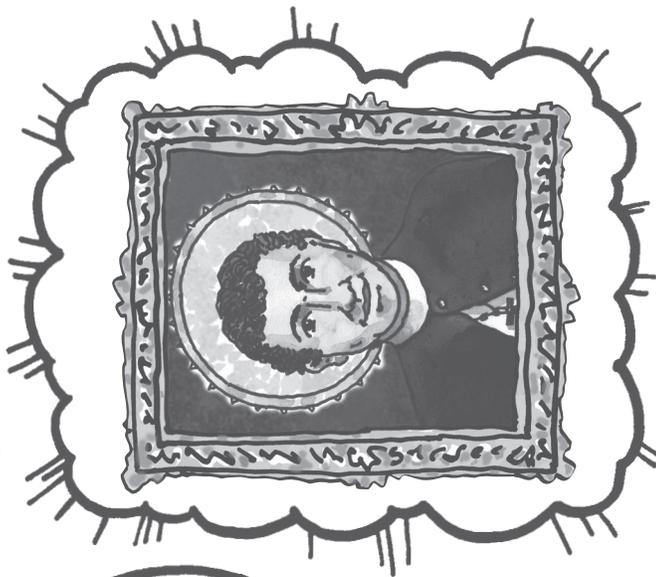
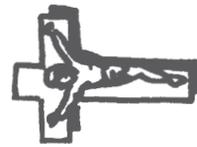
Wearing old, worn-out clothes, John went to

school and worked hard. When he grew up, he became a priest.

During Saint John Bosco's time, there were many children in Italy who were poor and hungry. John understood that God wanted him to work with these children. First, he juggled, walked a tightrope, did flips, told stories, and sang songs. The children began watching him. Soon, they were talking and singing with him. Then they were praying with him.

John soon got a home where these children could live. He became their teacher, he cooked for them, he played ball games, cooked their food, and helped them get good jobs when they were older. Most important, he taught them that God loved each one of them greatly. John helped hundreds of children.

DRAW



**Saint
John Bosco,
pray for us!**

The Church Prays All Year

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 15, ages 4-5

Lesson 15 Goal

- Your child will discover the colors of the Church year and how they relate to liturgical seasons.

Key Points

- The Church uses colors to mark time.
- The seasons of the Church year help us think about and celebrate Christ's life and work of salvation.



Parent Reflection

As a Church, we re-experience the events of salvation history as we celebrate the cycle of the Liturgical Year. In Advent, we experience the promise of the Light to come. The Christmas Season is a time of joy, light, and hope. Ordinary Time makes up the bulk of our Church year. It is a joyful time (we still sing the “*Gloria*,” and “*Alleluia*” at Mass), but without the high intensity of Christmas and Easter.

During Lent, we are called to reflect upon our lives, repent of our sins, and purify ourselves through sacrifice. It is a “dark” time that foreshadows the suffering and death of Christ. But there is light at the end of Lent.

The Easter Vigil that begins the new season of the Church Year is all about light. The Vigil liturgy begins in darkness; we then light “the new fire” as we remember Jesus our light, a light that could not be extinguished by the power of sin and death, a light that forever shines through the Church. It is fitting that in this celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, we celebrate the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), welcoming those who have been called to join the Catholic Church. It is a sign of the new life our Church has through Christ.

It is important to note that Sunday is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist. Going to Mass on Sunday is so important that it is the foundation of the whole Church year.

Reflection Question

In what ways does the cycle of the Church year parallel the experiences of my own life?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
 - o purple for Advent and Lent
 - o green for Ordinary Time
 - o red for Easter Triduum and Pentecost
 - o gold/yellow for Christmas and Easter
- craft/fabric glue
- white felt or foam sheet
- Activity Masters #14 and #15
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #14, #15, and #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: “Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, “Today we are going to talk about the different colors we use in church. The church uses these colors at different times of the year to help us think about different times in Jesus’ life.”

Display Activity Master #14 to show your child the Liturgical Year calendar. Point to the purple sections. Say, “We use purple at two different times of the year, called Advent and Lent. Purple means we are getting ready.”

Point to the white sections. Say, “We use white for Christmas and Easter. Sometimes for these special feasts, we use gold instead of white.”

Point to the green sections. Say, “We use green for Ordinary Time. This is when we hear stories about Jesus as a grown-up, when he teaches and helps people.”

Point to the red sections. Say, “We use red for Pentecost and when we remember the Holy Spirit and on certain days when we honor Jesus and the saints.”

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear Jesus, thank you for our Liturgical year. Teach us to honor all the special seasons of the church year. Amen.”

Discovering

A Time for Everything. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read “A Time for Everything.”

Ask your child, “What is your favorite season of the year? Why?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. How the Church Tells Time. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Liturgical Year Banner. Have your child color each section of the Liturgical Year calendar (Activity Master #15) with the appropriate color. Ask him or her to cut out the Liturgical Year calendar and glue it to the felt/foam sheet. Write your child's name on the banner and display it in your home.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Francis of Assisi. Show your child the picture of Saint Francis on the Family Activity page and read

about him. Then read more about Saint Francis to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Have you ever heard of Saint Francis before? Do you know any other stories about him?
- ▶ What is something in winter for which you would like to thank God? in spring? summer? autumn?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Francis of Assisi using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Let us pray. Dear Jesus, thank you for all the Church's holy seasons. Amen."

Saint Francis of Assisi

Loving Jesus All Year 'Round

Long ago, there lived a holy man named Francis. He loved Jesus with his whole heart.

In the winter, he walked barefoot in the snow, watching the sun setting in the pink and purple sky. A tiny mouse scurried to its warm nest, preparing for a long, cold night. Francis too was preparing. He was getting ready for Christmas by planning to teach others the story of Jesus' birth. Francis smiled, thinking of Jesus as a sweet baby.

In the spring, Francis helped some doves by building nests for them! Soon he saw eggs, and then baby doves in the nests. New life! Francis smiled, for it was also time to celebrate the new life of Jesus at Easter.

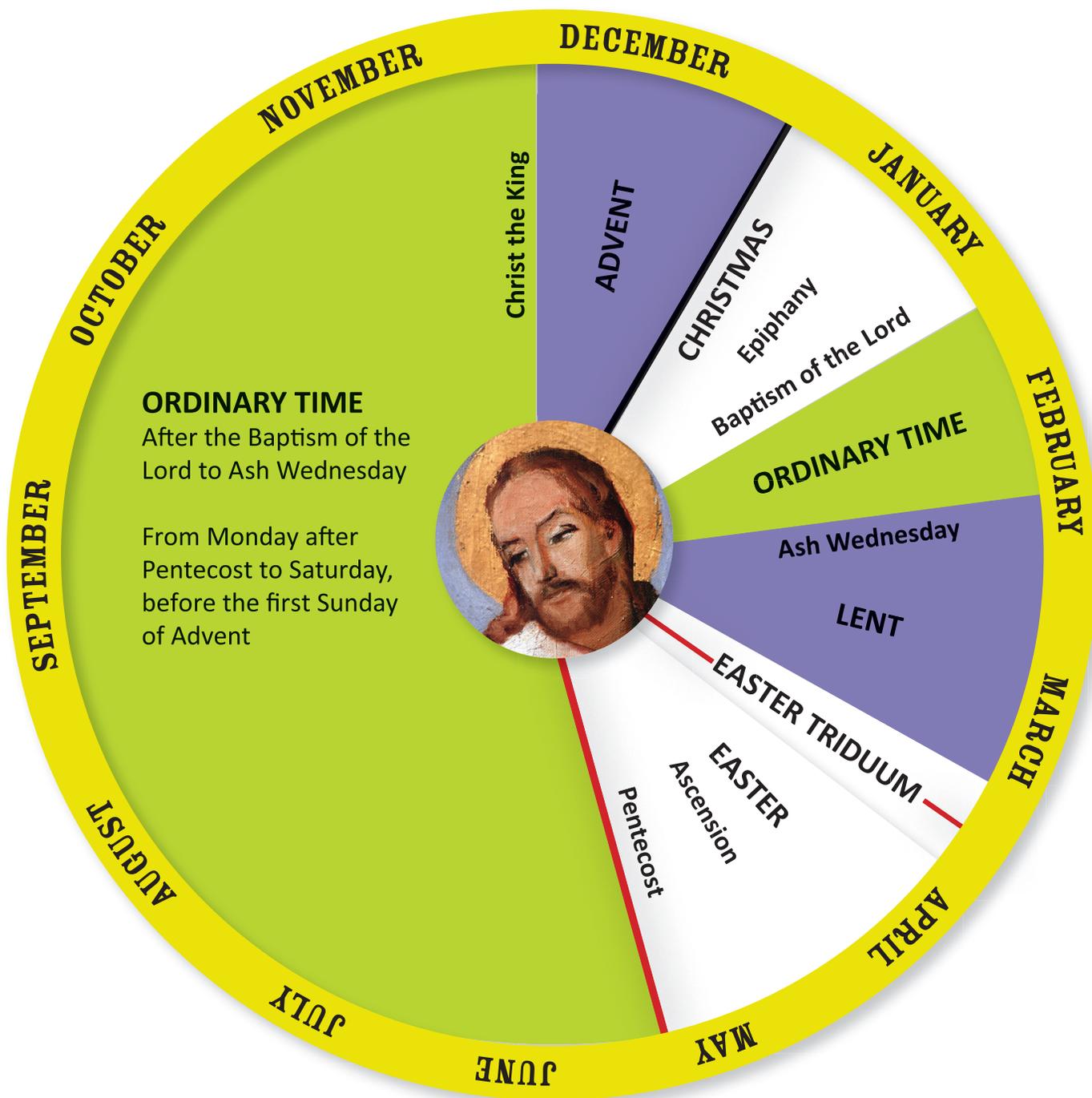
In the hot summer fields, Francis found a

little bunny caught in a trap. He freed it, but the bunny became sad, for it did not want to leave Francis! So Francis cheered it up, and the bunny scampered off. Francis happily saw all the beauty of God's earth and smiled. Then, he sang his happiness to Jesus.

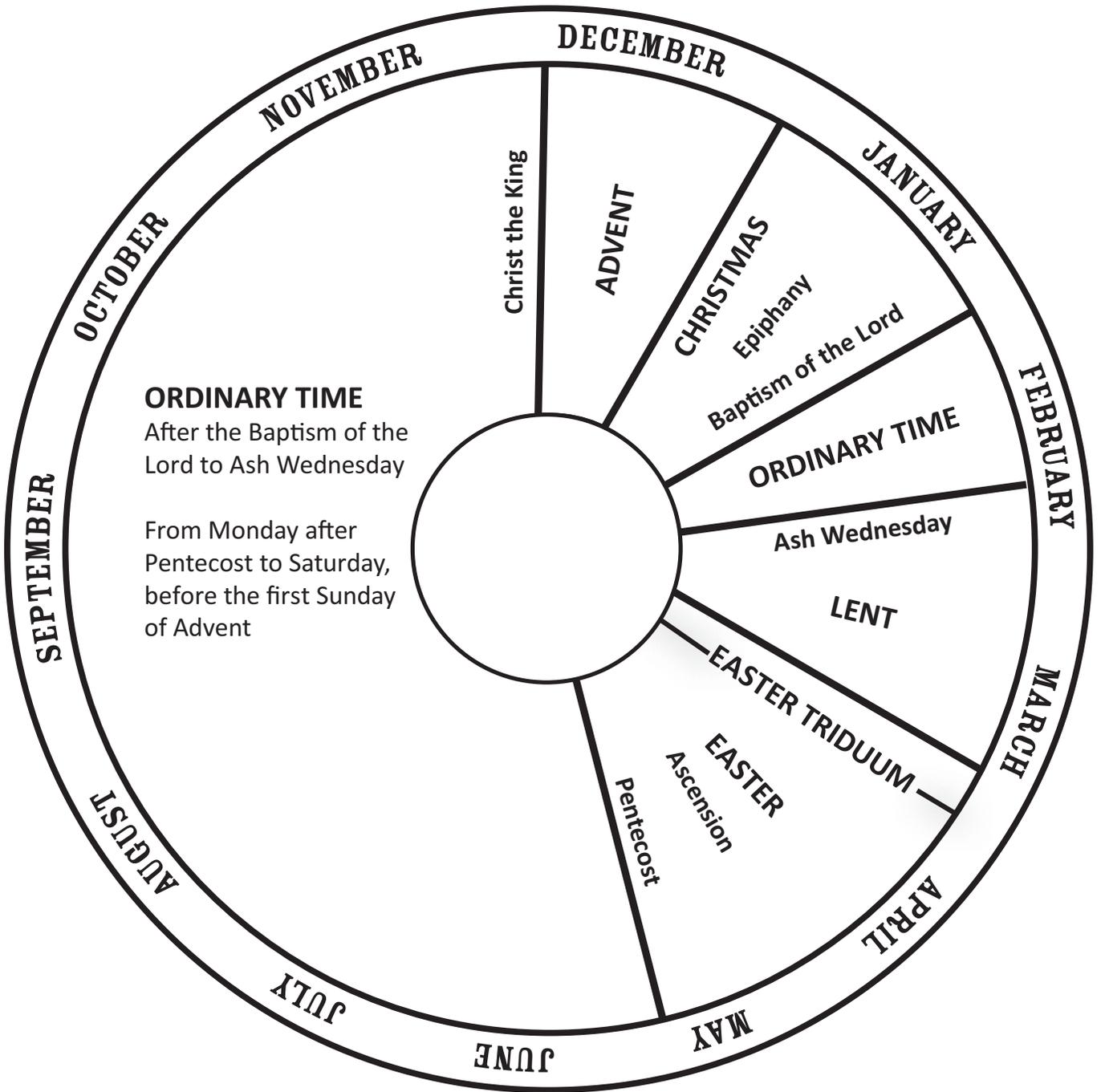
In the autumn, the grapes and vegetables grew full and delicious. Francis smiled. His love for God was strong, and he joyfully prayed, "Be praised, my Lord, for our sister earth, who gives us fruits and flowers!"

In these ways, Francis sang and prayed and smiled all year 'round!

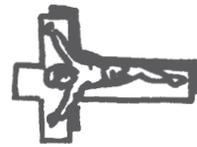
(Story based on legends associated with Saint Francis)



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DRAW



**Saint
Francis,
pray for us!**

Jesus Cares for His Friends

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 16, ages 4-5

Lesson 16 Goal

- Your child will discuss various feelings and will learn that everyone has feelings, including Jesus, who also experienced happy and sad times.

Key Points

- God created us to have many kinds of feelings.
- It is okay to have many kinds of feelings.



Parent Reflection

Emotions can sometimes be a challenge for us. They can complicate communication, compromise our ability to think objectively and make good decisions, and even spur acts of violence and war.

How can we help to ensure that we are using our emotions as God intended—mastering them, and not letting them control us? One source of help for us is found in the example of Jesus. In the Gospels, we see Jesus experience a variety of emotions, from sadness at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:35), to anger at the thieves who set up shop in the Temple (Matthew 21:13), to joy at God's grace at work in the minds and hearts of the simple (Luke 10:21), to almost overwhelming anxiety just before his death (Mark 14:33–36). He openly shared even difficult feelings with God the Father (we see a clear example of this in the prayer in the garden on the night before he died), but he was always showing his feelings, not out of self-interest, but out of love.

We can learn two things, then, from the example of Jesus. One is that feelings are given to us by God and should be expressed freely, as Jesus expressed his own feelings. A second lesson is that we should consciously express our feelings with a spirit of love for others, to make sure we are not acting out of our own selfishness but in an effort to give of ourselves and come to some understanding.

Reflection Question

Which feelings do I find easiest to express? Which are more difficult for me?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- cream cheese, a few small marshmallows, one slice of bread, two blueberries or raisins
- large circle cookie cutter
- plate
- knife to spread the cream cheese

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Today we will learn about feelings. Do you think Jesus felt sad sometimes? (Pause.) Jesus felt happy when he was with his friends and when he was praising God. He shared the joy of God’s love with others. God gave us all of our feelings, and it is good to have many kinds of feelings as long as we show them in a peaceful way and talk about them.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear God, thank you for giving us feelings. Help us to always show our feelings in a peaceful, loving way. Amen.”

Discovering

The Story of Lazarus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus and Lazarus.

Ask your child, “How can you know that God always loves you?”

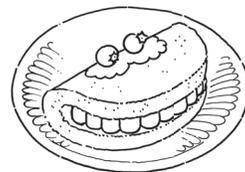
Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. How Would I Feel? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Happy Smile Snack. Cut a circle from a slice of bread using a cookie cutter. Invite your child to spread the cream cheese on the bread. On one half of the bread, use the marshmallows as teeth. Stand the marshmallow teeth in an up-



right position. Fold the bread in half. Dab a bit of cream cheese to the top of the bread to 'glue' on the blueberry or raisin eyes. Pray grace and enjoy the snack. Be sure to thank God for your happy smiles!

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Katharine Drexel. Show your child the picture of Saint Katharine Drexel on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Katharine to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Did Katharine ever feel angry?
- ▶ Did Katharine use her feelings in a peaceful way?
- ▶ How does this story make you feel? Why?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Katharine Drexel using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

"Let us pray.

Dear Jesus, thank you for the gift of feelings. We know that you care about us when we feel sad. Help us to talk to you and to others about it. When we feel angry, help us get our angry feelings out so that we aren't mean to others. When we feel happy, help us to share our joy. Thank you for loving us. Amen."

Saint Katharine Drexel

Happy and Sad Times

Like Jesus, and like us, Saint Katharine Drexel had many feelings.

She worked hard at school. She played with her sisters. Sometimes she dressed in fancy gowns and danced at balls. She loved her family and they loved her.

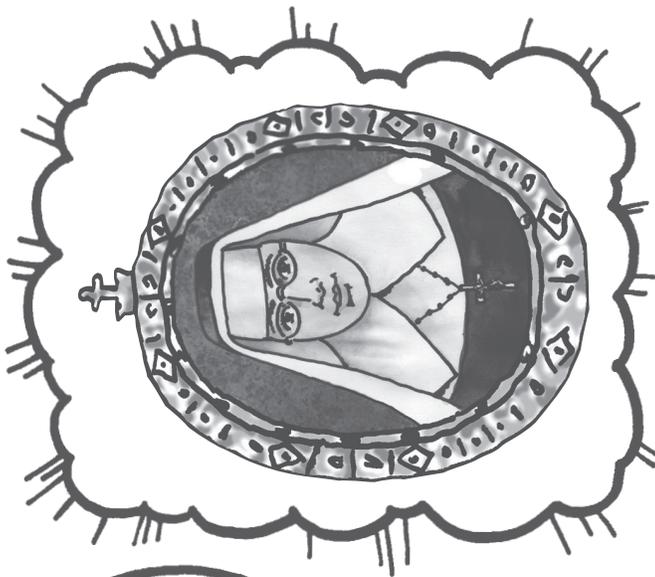
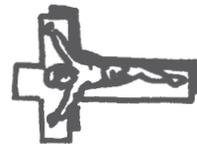
Katharine's parents loved God. Her family prayed every day. They were very rich and knew that God wanted them to use their money to help others. Three days a week, they invited people to their home, and gave them food, money, clothes, or other help. Katharine's mother taught school in their home for children who were poor. Katharine helped teach them that Jesus loved them.

Her family traveled by train to many places. This was great fun! But along the way, she was upset when she met people who were very poor. Many of the poor children were also not able to go to school. This made Katharine angry.

Katharine thought about what she would do as a grown-up. She prayed. She remembered the many poor people she had met, and their children who could not go to school. Using her money, Katharine spent the rest of her long life starting schools for children in need all over the United States.

Like Jesus, Katharine had many feelings, including sadness for people in need. And like Jesus, she shared God's love with others, and helped make other people happy.

DRAW



**Saint
Katherine,
pray for us!**

We Follow the Rules

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 17, ages 4-5

Lesson 17 Goal

- Your child will learn how it is a parent's "job" to help children understand what they should do, and it is a child's "job" to listen to his or her parents and do what they say.

Key Points

- Parents and children have special jobs in a family.
- One of the jobs of children is to follow their mom's and dad's rules.



Parent Reflection

God knows us better than we know ourselves, and he knows what we need in order to truly be happy. For this reason, he gives us guidelines to keep us on track, rules or "commands" that are intended to preserve our freedom, not diminish it. Jesus encourages us to look upon God as a loving parent and tells us we should call him "Our Father." Through the Fourth Commandment, God willed that, after him, we should honor our parents and those whom he has vested with authority for our good (CCC, 2248).

Rules for children should be clear and concise, developmentally appropriate, and understandable. Good rules are also backed up by action. As parents, when we teach and model rules in a loving way, we teach important lessons about the Christian community and way of life.

Reflection Question

How do the rules in our home and the ways in which I communicate them reflect a respect for the dignity of my child?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- large paper plates
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather to-

gether a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“Jesus was once a little child like you. He lived with his family and had to follow his parents’ rules. He had to learn all the things that other children learn. Jesus understands that children have bad days sometimes. Let’s ask Jesus to help us be good listeners and follow family rules.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear Jesus, you were once a little child who lived in a family and had to learn many things. We do too. Please help me to listen my parents and to honor our family rules. Amen.”

Discovering

Mary and Joseph Find Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus when he was a young boy.

Ask your child, “Why is it important to listen to mom and dad?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Who Is Listening? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Happy Faces. Give your child a paper plate and a marker. As you draw a happy face on your plate, have your child draw a happy face his or her plate. Invite your child to hold up the happy-face plate and describe an action that makes parents happy. For example, your child might hold up his or her happy-face plate and say “I give my mom a hug,” or “I say “thank you.” Talk about why these things make parents happy.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Joseph. Show your child the picture of Saint Joseph on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Joseph to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What are some ways Joseph cared for his family?
- ▶ What did you like best about the story of Saint Joseph?
- ▶ Who in your life is like Saint Joseph?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Joseph using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear Jesus, you were once a little child who lived in a family and had to learn many things just as we do. Please help us as a family to listen to and love each other each day. Amen.”

Saint Joseph

A Loving and Caring Father

Long ago there lived a good and prayerful man named Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter. He and his wife got news they had to travel to another town just when her baby was ready to be born!

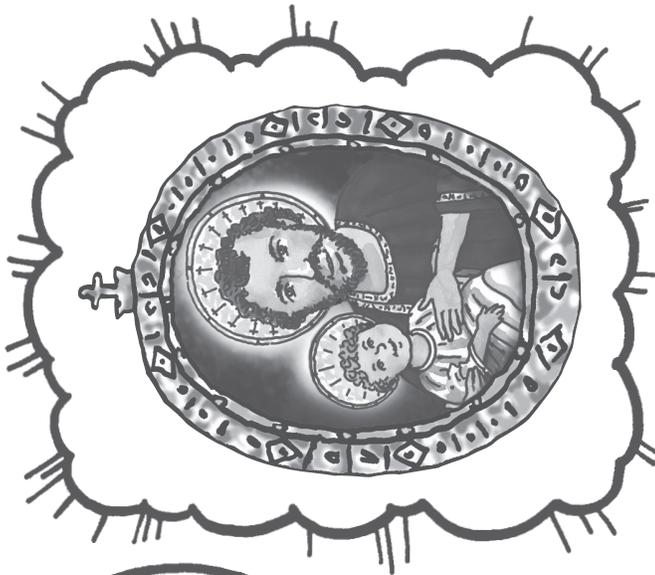
It would be a hard trip. There were no cars and planes then. They walked or rode a donkey. The baby was coming soon, so Joseph helped his wife, Mary, travel. As soon as they arrived, Joseph tried to find a nice place to stay. But the town was so crowded with other travelers they could only find a kind of barn to stay in. When the child was born, Joseph watched over and protected the newborn baby and his mother, far

from home and staying in a barn.

When the baby boy was a bit older, the family traveled to another country, again walking or riding a donkey. They were in danger, so they traveled at night. Joseph cared for his wife and child.

Sometime later, the family had to move again, and yet again, Joseph found a safe home. There he continued his carpentry so that his family had a house and food as the little boy grew up. Joseph always prayed with his family. He loved his family and cared for them.

DRAW



**Saint
Joseph,
pray for us!**

We Love God and Each Other

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 18, ages 4-5

Lesson 18 Goal

- Your child will be encouraged to express one way someone shows love to him or her and one way to show love to someone else.

Key Points

- God loves us, and he wants us to love one another.
- We can show love to others in many different ways.



Parent Reflection

God reaches out to us in love, and teaches us what love is all about. He does this in the most complete and dramatic way in the person of Jesus Christ, who loves even to the point of sacrificing his very self for us.

The *Catechism* states, “Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own ‘to the end,’ he makes manifest the Father’s love which he receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.’ And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you’” (CCC, 1823). It is in acts of love that we truly find ourselves and come to lasting joy.

Reflection Question

How can I grow in my expressions of love to others?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- sheet of pastel or white construction paper
- safety scissors
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the

saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say the following or similar words: *“Now that we are in this prayerful space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so we can talk with God.”*

Sit together for several seconds of shared silence.

Say, *“All of us have people who love us. This must make Jesus happy! And we also have people we love. Let’s pray for these people now.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Let’s pray for one person we each love.” (Invite your child to name a person to pray for.)

“Dear Jesus, we know you love us. We are learning to know and love you too. We know you want us to love others. We are learning how to love others, too. Amen.”

Discovering

Jesus Teaches about Love. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus.

Invite your child to name some people who God wants us to love.

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Who Is Showing Love? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Loving Hands. Explain to your child that you are both going to make loving hands—hands that show what you could do to show love for another person. Have your child draw an outline of one hand on a sheet of construction paper and cut out the hand outline. Then have him or her draw a picture on the hand outline that shows one way we can show love for another person.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint John of Kanty. Show your child the picture of Saint John of Kanty on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint John to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Who treats you with kindness and love?
- ▶ Who do you treat with kindness and love?
- ▶ What are times you have seen others being kind?

Have your child write and draw about Saint John of Kanty using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for the love you show to us. Help us to show your love to each other at home, at school, at church, and everywhere we go. Amen.”

Saint John of Kanty

Sweet, Kind, Loving

On a cold winter night in a small town in Poland, as Father John was eating his dinner, he looked out the window and noticed someone walking by. This person looked very poor. “Maybe he’s hungry,” Father John thought. He grabbed his bread and bowl of soup and went outside, and gave the person his dinner.

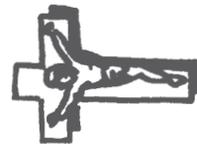
Another day, Father John was invited to be the special dinner guest at the home of some very rich friends. John was an excellent teacher at a school, but because he was always giving his money, clothes, and food to people who needed them, when he arrived at the home of his friends, he was wearing old clothes. Because of this, the servant who came to the door did not

realize John was the invited guest. “Go away!” the servant told him. So Father John walked home, laughing a little.

But most people knew Father John. Poor people, rich people, students at the school, and families at the parish church loved him. He was known all over the city of Krakow for his kindness.

Father John of Kanty told his students to treat others with sweetness, kindness, and love. Father John loved God, and he knew God wanted him to love others. By treating others with sweetness, kindness, and love, Father John was doing what God asked.

DRAW



**Saint
John,
pray for us!**

Jesus Teaches Us About Love

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 19, ages 4-5

Lesson 19 Goal

- Your child will learn and talk about ways of treating others as he or she wants to be treated.

Key Points

- Jesus said to treat others the way we want to be treated.
- We should welcome others, share with them, and care for them.



Parent Reflection

The development of empathy is a process that begins in early childhood, but continues into adulthood. As we become better acquainted with ourselves and more aware of others' needs, we grow in our capacity to understand and respond to the feelings of others.

It is only when our love is given unselfishly, even sacrificially, that we are truly showing the love of Christ. Pope Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical said, "Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me" (*Deus Caritas Est*, 18). Let us follow Christ in love.

Reflection Question

How can I show the love of Christ to others more in my life?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- costumes or dress-up clothes representing clothes from Jesus' time and today
- toy doctor kit
- doll
- adhesive bandages

- pennies in a small bag
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Today, we will learn one of the most important rules. Jesus’ rule is this: Treat others the way you want to be treated.”*

Help your child give appropriate responses to the following questions.

- Imagine you were playing with a friend and you fell down and hurt your knee. What would you want your friend to do?
- When you are feeling sad, what do you need?
- When you are hungry or thirsty, does someone you love help you? How?

Say, *“The people that would do these things for you are showing you love. Do you remember Jesus’ rule? Treat others the way you want to be treated. We must treat people the way we would want to be treated. Let’s pray to ask Jesus to help us always follow this rule.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Parent: *Jesus, our teacher, when someone gets hurt,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is scared,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is sad,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is hungry or thirsty,*

Together: *Help us show our love. Amen.*

Discovering

The Good Samaritan. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the Good Samaritan.

Ask your child, “Can you think of a time you helped someone?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child's understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. What Can I Make to Share? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Taking Care of Others (Dramatic Play). Encourage your child to act out the Scripture story with you or to pretend her or she is taking care of a hurt person day.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Brigid of Ireland. Show your child the picture of Saint Brigid on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Brigid to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ How do you like to be treated?

- ▶ What are some ways you help others?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Brigid of Ireland using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

Parent: *Jesus, our Lord and our Teacher, When someone gets hurt,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is scared,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is sad,*

Together: *Help us show our love.*

Parent: *When someone is hungry or thirsty,*

Together: *Help us show our love. Amen.*

Saint Brigid of Ireland

Giving Away the Bread

"Stop giving away the bread!" angry grown-ups yelled at little Brigid.

Brigid was stubborn. She was stubborn about doing what Jesus asks. She knew Jesus wanted her to treat others as she wanted to be treated. When someone was hungry, she shared what food she had, because she knew what it felt like to be hungry. When she knew Jesus wanted her to help, she helped no matter what the grown-ups said.

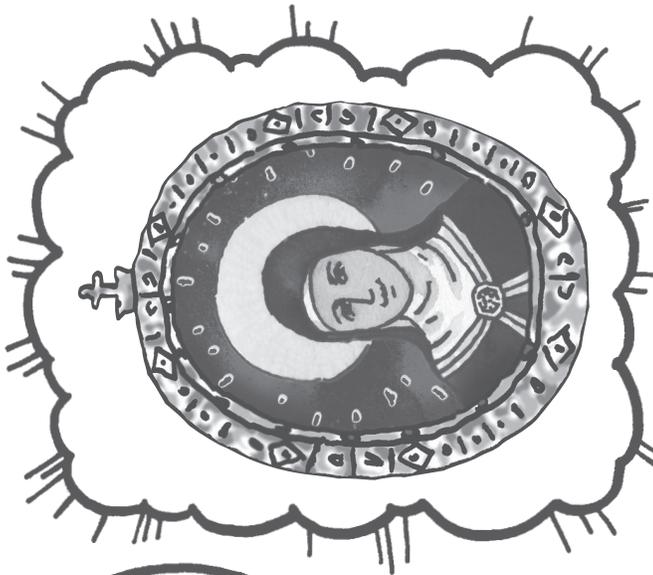
Young Brigid's own life was hard. Her family was very poor. But they were rich in their love for Jesus, and the family prayed together every day. Brigid's mother taught her to have great

trust in God.

Brigid was strong and happy. She smiled and laughed, making others laugh. People loved her, even those who sometimes were angry with her!

As Brigid grew older, she found many more ways to treat others the way she wanted to be treated. As a grown-up, she set up a wonderful place called an abbey, where holy women and men lived a life of prayer and service to God. She taught hundreds of children and adults about Jesus, and she took care of sick people. And she always cared for and fed those who were hungry, just as she did when she was a little girl.

DRAW



**Saint
Brigid,
pray for us!**

God Forgives and Helps Us

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 20, ages 4-5

Lesson 20 Goal

- Your child will learn about the importance of saying “I’m Sorry” and making things right with God and others when we have done something wrong.

Key Points

- God loves me always, even when I make a bad choice.
- When I do something that is wrong, I should say, “I’m sorry,” and try to help make things right.



Parent Reflection

The story of Zacchaeus in this lesson helps us to understand several key points about God’s mercy and compassion. First, it is God who reaches out to us in love. Saint Paul’s Letter to the Romans states, “It is precisely in this that God proves his love for us: that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Second, we can understand that God is able to heal our relationship with him, and asks us to participate in that process by doing what we can to heal the pain we have caused.

God has a plan for each of our lives, and we are our best selves when we are living out this plan. But there are times when we sin, when we fail to be the loving people we were created to be. But God loves us no matter what, and his love for us gives us the motivation and the strength to participate in making things right.

Reflection Question

How has God shown mercy to me?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- washable tempera paints
- paint apron/smock
- clean brushes
- easel
- painting paper

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“In today’s prayer, we will think about Jesus’ love for us. I will say the first part, and together we will say the second part.”*

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear Jesus, you love us when we smile, when we do what we are supposed to do, and when we share. But sometimes we fight with each other and don’t share, and sometimes we don’t follow the rules. But we know that you love us in those times too. Jesus, thank you for loving us all the time. Amen.”

Discovering

Jesus and Zacchaeus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus and Zacchaeus.

Ask your child, “When have you said ‘sorry’ to

someone?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Making Good Choices. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Jesus and Zacchaeus Illustrations. Provide your child with art supplies and direct him or her to create a painting illustrating the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Augustine. Show your child the picture of Saint Augustine on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Augustine to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What did Augustine ask God for when he realized he had been making wrong choices?

► What do you tell God when you make a wrong choice?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Augustine using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by

tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

Let us pray.

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us always, even when we make bad choices. Help us to make better choices. When we choose wrong, help us to say we are sorry and to make things right. Amen.

Saint Augustine

Growing in Holiness

When Augustine was young, he was a very bright student and did well in school. He enjoyed spending his time reading and learning. He also enjoyed being with his friends and having a good time. Augustine's mother told him that he should also make time to pray and learn about God, but Augustine did not listen to her. Instead, Augustine was only interested in doing what he wanted to do, even if it was against God's rules.

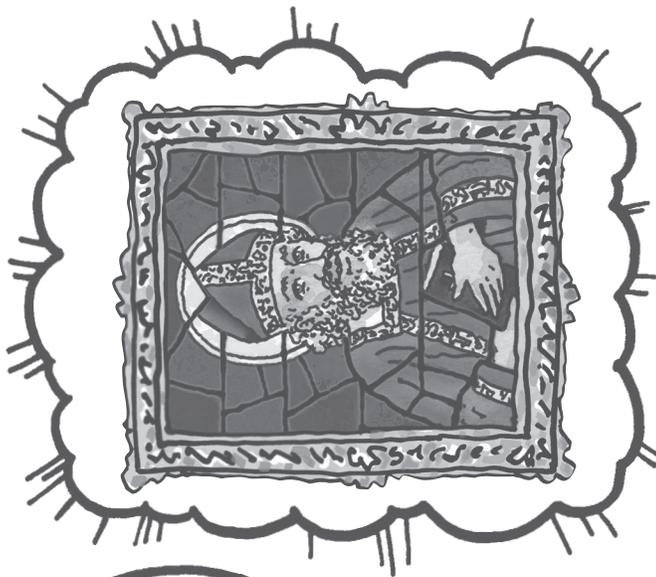
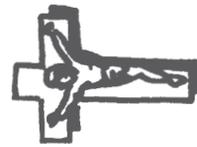
One day Augustine met a holy man named Ambrose. Ambrose talked to Augustine about God, and about how much he loves us. Ambrose

also taught Augustine how important it is to follow God's rules and to live in a way that pleases God.

Augustine listened to all that Ambrose had to say, and he decided that he wanted to grow closer to God and live a more holy life. He asked God for forgiveness for the way he had lived his life in the past, and promised to do better.

Augustine asked to be baptized. He later became a priest and a bishop. He continued to grow in holiness and became one of the Church's greatest teachers and saints.

DRAW



**Saint
Augustine,
pray for us!**

We Learn to Forgive

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 21, ages 4-5

Lesson 21 Goal

- Your child will learn basic Christian principles related to conflict resolution.

Key Points

- When we have a problem with someone we should try to make peace.
- When we disagree with others, we should talk instead of fighting.



Parent Reflection

When it comes to having empathy, understanding another person's perspective, and giving people the benefit of the doubt, God is much more generous than we are. If we truly wish to follow Christ's example, we must be prepared to forgive, as Jesus tells Peter, not just seven times, "but seventy-seven times" (Matthew 18:22).

When we recognize that we have been hurtful, there are also some important steps we can take towards reconciliation. First, we should think through the situation carefully, and try to imagine what it must have been like for the other person. How did he or she interpret our actions, and how did that feel? Realize that seeking reconciliation means making yourself vulnerable and admitting you were wrong, even if you feel the other person didn't handle it well either. Tell the other person what you now understand about how they felt, and make a commitment to avoid being hurtful in the future. Finally, realize that forgiveness is a choice, but trust is not. While the other person may forgive you, it may take some time for trust to be re-established. Be patient with this process.

Reflection Question

How do I go about solving conflicts with others?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- eight blue index cards
- eight yellow index cards
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- On each blue card, write the word *sorry*.
- On each yellow card, write the word *forgive*.
- Keep one of each of the cards. Hide the rest around the room or house in places your child will be likely to find them.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, “Today, we will talk about when we say we are sorry or when we forgive someone who has made us angry or sad. When you do these things, you are a peacemaker.”

Begin in prayer:

Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Parent: *When someone takes our toys,*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers!*

Parent: *When someone makes us cry,*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers!*

Parent: *When we get angry,*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers!*

Parent: *When we make someone cry,*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers!*

Parent: *When someone says something mean to us,*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers!*

Parent: *If you need to forgive someone, or ask someone to forgive you, you can ask God to help you with this. We will pray silently for a moment, asking for God’s help. (Allow for a moment of silence.)*

Together: *Jesus, help us be peacemakers! Amen.*

Discovering

Forgiving Each Other. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about forgiving one another.

Ask your child, “When have you forgiven someone?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. How Can We Be Peacemakers? Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Hide-and-Seek Cards. This activity will help your child become more aware of the important words *sorry* and *forgive* while you play a familiar game together. Show the two cards you prepared with the words *sorry* and *forgive* to your child. Read the words aloud. Explain that you have hidden seven blue “*sorry* cards” and seven yellow “*forgive* cards” in the room. Direct your child to look for the cards. Tell him or her to place each found card on a table or other designated place. When your child has found all seven blue and all seven yellow cards, praise his or her good work. Remind your child that these two words are very important and help us get along with others.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Kateri Tekakwitha. Show your child the picture of

Saint Kateri on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Kateri to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

▶ Kateri forgave those who treated her badly. What can you do if someone is mean to you?

▶ What can you learn from Kateri’s example?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Kateri Tekakwitha using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear Jesus, help us to remember how to use our words when we have problems with each other. Help us to talk about our disagreements instead of fighting. We thank you for sending our parents and teachers to help us. Amen.”

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Loving and Forgiving

Long ago, there lived a Native American girl named Tekakwitha [tek-uh-kwith-uh]. Her parents and baby brother died from a sickness when she was very young. Tekakwitha was sick too, but she got better. But because of the sickness, she was no longer strong and she could not see well.

Her aunt and uncle took good care of her. They loved her. She gathered firewood; planted corn, beans, and squash; and picked berries. She learned to sew pretty beads onto clothing.

When Tekakwitha was a little bit older, she learned about Jesus and how much he loved her. The villagers did not want anything to do with the visitors because they had brought the sickness to their village and would not accept their

stories about Jesus.

But Tekakwitha knew Jesus was good. She loved to wander in the woods, making little crosses out of sticks and talking in her heart to Jesus.

When she got older, she decided to be baptized. She took the name ‘Kateri’, after Saint Catherine. She was happy and felt so close to Jesus!

Others in her village were upset. They did not want her to love Jesus! They tried to change her mind by treating her badly. But Kateri Tekakwitha knew that Jesus would forgive them. Like Jesus, she forgave them and still treated them kindly.

DRAW



**Saint
Kateri,
pray for us!**

We Wait for Jesus with Joy

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 22, ages 4-5

Lesson 22 Goal

- Your child will learn the meaning of the word “promise,” and about God’s promise to send Jesus.

Key Points

- Making a promise means saying you will do something.
- God promised to send his Son, and he kept his promise.



Parent Reflection

Because God the Father delights in working together with his children, he chooses people through whom he can accomplish his will. We see a profound example of this in the story of the Annunciation. Mary is called by God to help bring his plan to fruition. She is given a choice about whether or not to participate. Through her “yes,” she and all people are blessed.

Today, God still chooses to work together with his people to accomplish his will in the world. It is our hands he uses to feed the poor, our voices to speak for justice, our lives to point the way to Jesus, his Son. Like Mary, if we seek God, we will be shown his plan for our lives and will be called to work with him. If, in courage and faith, we say “yes” to God’s plan for our lives, we will bring God’s blessings to those around us.

Reflection Question

How has God called me to participate in his plan?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- two paper towel rolls
- adult scissors
- 8½" x 14" sheet of paper
- glue or clear tape
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- Cut the paper towel rolls to a length of 8½ inches.
- Place the 8½" x 14" and horizontally on the table.
- Glue or tape the paper towel rolls onto either side of the sheet.
- Roll both ends of the paper so that it looks like a scroll.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Long, long ago, God the Father made a promise. When you make a promise, you say you will do something. It is important that you then do it. That is keeping the promise. Today we will talk and pray about God’s promise. What do you think God promised? (Encourage some answers.) He promised his people that he would send Jesus to us. Did he do that? (Encourage an appropriate answer.) Let’s say a thank-you prayer.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Thank you, our Father in Heaven, for sending us your Son, Jesus. You promised you would and you did! Thank you for keeping your wonderful promise. Amen.”

Discovering

The Angel Announces Jesus’ Birth. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the Annunciation.

Ask your child, “How can you show your love for God, as Mary did?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. The Angel Visits Mary. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Share the Good News Scrolls. Have your child illustrate the story of the Annunciation on the prepared “scroll” and invite him or her to

share the Good News with the rest of the family.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Nicholas. Show your child the picture of Saint Nicholas on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Nicholas to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Can you surprise people like Saint Nicholas did? Let's name three ways you could surprise someone at school or home.
- ▶ What are some blessings you can share with others?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Nicholas using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by

tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray the Hail Mary aloud with your child, leading him or her in repeating each phrase.

Hail Mary, (Repeat.)

full of grace. (Repeat.)

(Continue helping the children repeat each phrase.)

The Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women

and blessed is the fruit

of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Saint Nicholas

Special Gifts

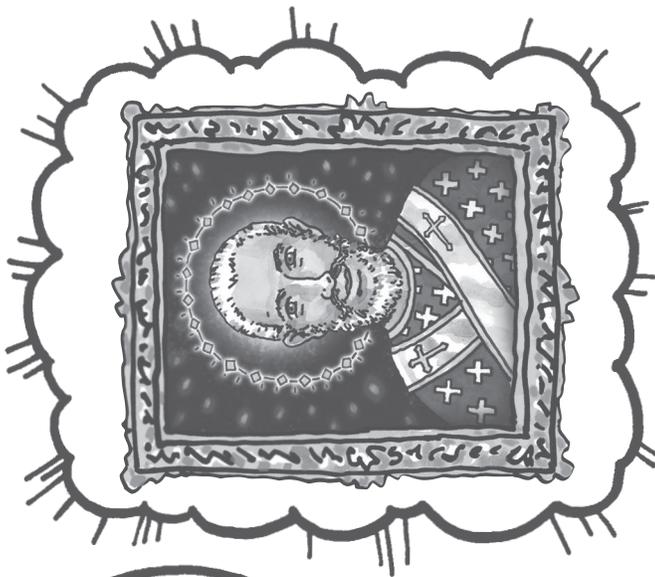
Nicholas' parents had a lot of money. They loved God and his people, and shared their blessings with people who were poor. They taught Nicholas that Jesus wants us to work for fairness for all people. When Nicholas was a teenager, he secretly gave all his money away to help people in need.

Nicholas lived near the house of a man with three daughters. The family was very poor and had a hard time paying for food! Nicholas wanted to help the family. One dark night, he put money into a cloth bag and quietly brought the

bag to the man's house and dropped it into the house through an open window. He then went away quietly so no one would know he had done this kind deed.

Nicholas soon began to leave unexpected gifts for other people who were in need. He became known for caring so much for people. When he grew older, Nicholas decided to become a priest. He continued to care for all people who came to him for help. Stories of his kindness spread to many countries. We still remember his gift-giving and generosity today!

DRAW



**Saint
Nicholas,
pray for us!**

Jesus Is Born

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 23, ages 4-5

Lesson 23 Goal

- Your child will learn the story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and Jesus' birth in a stable, and about welcoming others.

Key Points

- Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.
- We should help others feel welcome.



Parent Reflection

In the Gospel story of Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus calls a census, and Joseph must register in Bethlehem since he is descended from David. Mary's and Joseph's journey would not be far by today's standards, but it is a steep and treacherous one in their day. By the time they arrived, the town was quite full. Joseph goes door to door, frantically searching for a place to settle for the night as Mary is about to deliver. Finally, one innkeeper offers the stable behind the inn as a makeshift room for the couple.

Although God's people had awaited the promised Messiah for so many years, on the night he is born, there is no room for him in the inn. This should cause us to pause and ask ourselves the ways in which Jesus comes to us today, and whether we make room for him. Jesus himself tells us some of the ways he will be present in the opportunities we have to give to others ("I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me" [Matthew 25:35-36].) When we show kindness to those in need, we are receiving the greater gift. For while we may offer material assistance or a listening ear, we are given an encounter with Jesus himself. Let us make him welcome.

Reflection Question

In what ways (or persons) is Jesus coming to me today? How will I welcome him?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- safety scissors
- six craft sticks
- tape
- Activity Master #21
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the

saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #21 and #2 (included with this lesson).
- You may wish to precut the drawings for the stick puppets (Activity Master 21).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, “Today we will tell Jesus through our prayer that we welcome him to our hearts. This means that we are asking Jesus, who loves us so much, to be close to us.”

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Parent: *Dear Jesus, When we pray,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we learn,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we sing,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we play,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we are sad,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we meet new friends,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we are alone,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Say, “Let’s each add other times when we welcome Jesus.” (Encourage your child to contribute.)

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Discovering

The Birth of Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus’ birth.

Ask your child, “Share your favorite Christmas story.”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. On the Way to Bethlehem. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him

or her complete it.

2. Christmas Stick Puppets. Provide the drawings for the stick puppets (see Activity Master 21). Invite your child to color and cut the pictures of the people and animals. Help him or her tape each figure to a craft stick. Have your child use the stick puppets to retell the Christmas story.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Marguerite d'Youville. Show your child the picture of Saint Marguerite on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Marguerite to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Why did Marie Marguerite help people?

- ▶ What is one way you can help someone feel welcome at school?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Marguerite d'Youville using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Dear God, Thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Help us to always be welcoming and to treat one another with love. Amen."

Saint Marguerite d'Youville

A Welcoming Saint

Marie Marguerite worked very hard to have enough food for her two little boys and herself. She made beautiful clothing to sell. Even though Marie Marguerite did not have much money, she shared the money she earned with people who were poorer than she was.

She knew that God loves every single person. Marie Marguerite helped people because of God's love for them. She visited those who were sick and mended clothing for those with few things to wear. Marie Marguerite taught children who had no families.

One day, she met a blind woman who had no home. "You are welcome to live at my house," Marie Marguerite said. So the woman came home with Marie Marguerite.

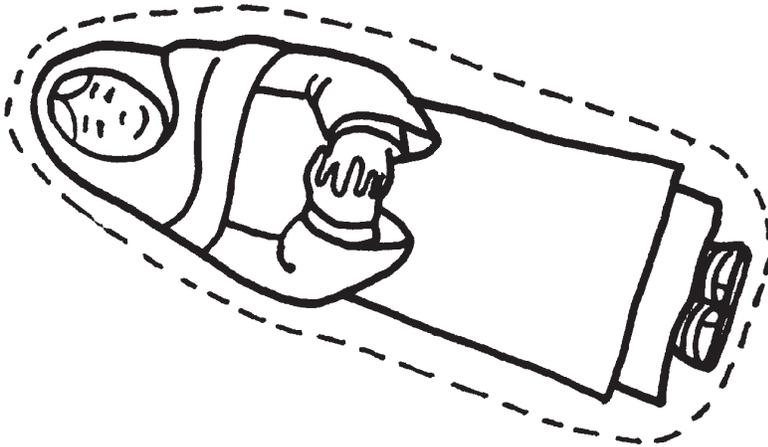
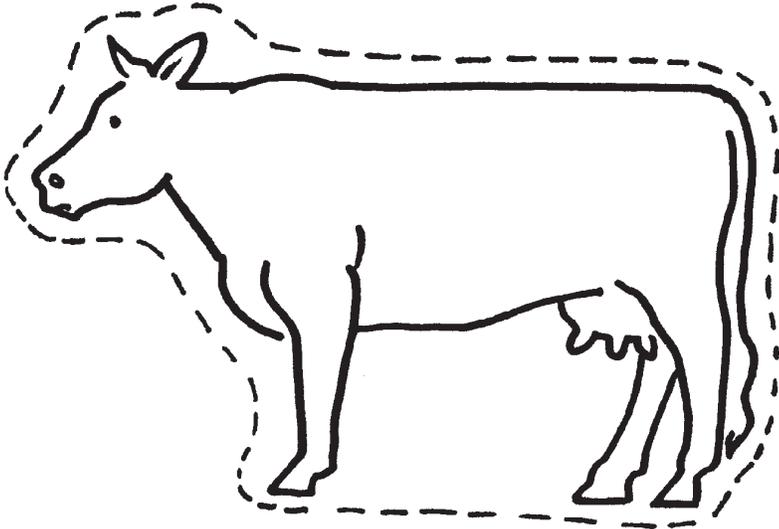
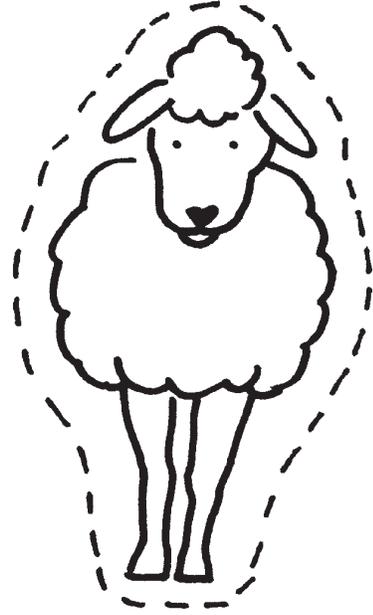
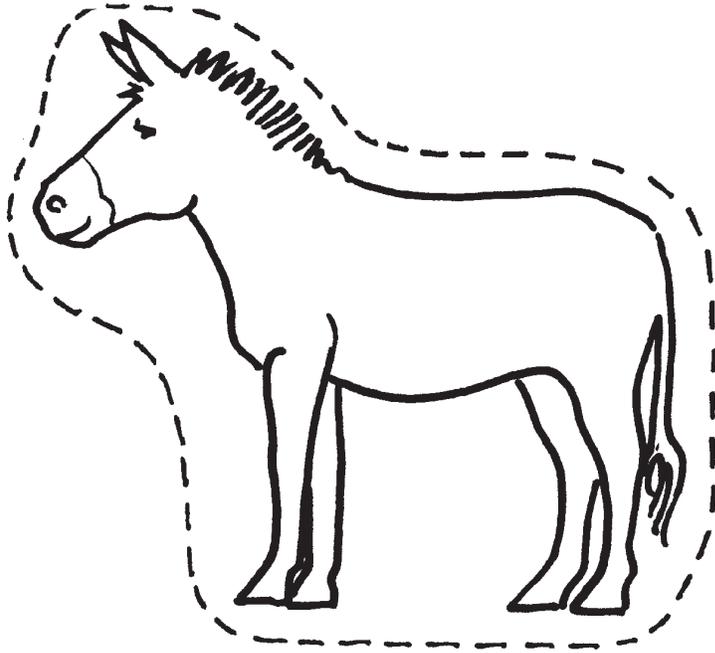
Another time, three women came to see Marie Marguerite. One of them said, "We see what

you do to help others. We would like to do that work too." Marie Marguerite welcomed them to live with her, too. Together, these women served the poor and the sick.

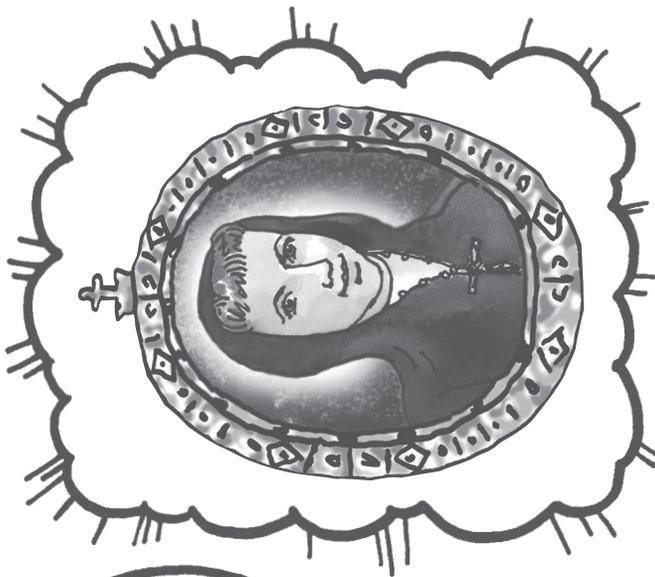
In their work, these women met women who had no homes. They were very poor and needed much help. Soon they too were welcomed into Marie Marguerite's home.

Later, more women joined her in her work. They were able to move to a big building that had been a hospital. There they welcomed and took care of old people, babies who had no families, soldiers who were hurt, and people who were very sick.

All her life, Marie Marguerite welcomed people who needed help as she welcomed Jesus into her heart.



DRAW



**Saint
Marguerite,
pray for us!**

Jesus Came for All People

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 24, ages 4-5

Lesson 24 Goal

- Your child will learn the story of the shepherds who were invited by the angels to the place of Jesus' birth.

Key Points

- The angels invited poor shepherds to meet Baby Jesus.
- God welcomed the shepherds to Jesus' birth to show that Jesus came for everyone—especially the poor.



Parent Reflection

The angel's announcement of Jesus' birth must have been quite a surprise for the shepherds in the hills near Bethlehem who were tending the flocks on that "silent night." And while Scripture tells us that they were at first "filled with fear," we read the story with a little envy, knowing that these poor shepherds will be among the first witnesses of the most important event in human history.

God's choice to extend the invitation to poor shepherds also fits with the later teachings of Jesus and the Church, which include the idea that the poor and downtrodden should be "served first," and that they are particularly blessed by God. As we consider God's invitation to the poor shepherds, let us reflect on our own willingness to reach out to the poor and marginalized in our society today.

Reflection Question

Do I extend a special welcome to those who are considered by some to be "unimportant"?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- tablecloth and table
- plastic or wooden Nativity set
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather to-

gether a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).
- Place the tablecloth on a table. Place the Nativity figures on the table.

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, “We will thank God for sending Jesus to us. We will say the words that the angels sang on that first Christmas, ‘Glory to God in the highest!’”

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Parent: *Thank you, God the Father, for sending us your Son!*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Parent: *Thank you, God, for sending your Son to all the people of the world!*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Discovering

The Shepherds’ Surprise. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the angels and shepherds.

Ask your child, “How do you tell people about Jesus?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. The First Christmas. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. The Christmas Story. Invite your child to retell the Christmas story using the Nativity set. Gently guide him or her in exploring the story further by inviting conversation or asking questions.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Vincent de Paul. Show your child the picture of Saint Vincent de Paul on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Vincent de Paul to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- What are some ways Vincent helped others? (*Starting hospitals, schools, and orphanages; teaching others to pray; providing for the poor*)
- Vincent’s father worked hard so that Vincent

could go to school to become a priest. What are ways that your family helps you learn about Jesus and about prayer?"

Have your child write and draw about Saint Vincent de Paul using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

Parent: *Jesus, your angels were sent to announce your glorious birth,*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Parent: *Jesus, you are the Savior of the world,*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Parent: *Jesus, you came for all people, rich or poor,*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Parent: *Jesus, the shepherds sang your praises,*

Together: *Glory to God in the highest!*

Parent: *May we always sing your praises and be thankful for your birth,*

Together: *Amen.*

Saint Vincent de Paul

Helping Everyone

Vincent grew up with seven sisters and brothers. His family was poor, and lived on a farm in France. Vincent wanted to become a priest. His father sold the family's oxen so that Vincent had money to go to school.

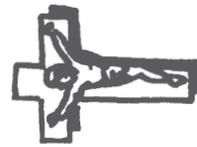
At that time in France, even though there were some people who were very rich, most people were very, very poor. When he first became a priest, Vincent worked with people who were rich. He enjoyed this.

Then one day, Vincent met a man who was even poorer than Vincent had been as a boy. This touched Vincent's heart, and he knew that Jesus wanted him to work with people like this man.

From then on, Vincent helped sick babies, frightened prisoners, and hungry families. Some of his rich friends wanted to help, so Vincent founded homes, places where they cooked healthy food and fed babies and children. That was a good beginning. After that, Vincent started hospitals, schools, and orphanages. Both poor and rich people came to him to pray and to work for others. Thousands of poor people were helped because of Vincent's work. Vincent taught people, poor and rich, to pray and love Jesus. Vincent did all this with God's help.

He prayed many times a day—each time he heard a clock chime, he would talk with Jesus in prayer.

DRAW



**Saint
Vincent de Paul,
pray for us!**

Our Lenten Walk with Jesus

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 25, ages 4-5

Lesson 25 Goal

- Your child will learn about the last days before Jesus died, with a focus on Holy Thursday and the special meal Jesus shared with his disciples.

Key Points

- Before he died on the Cross, Jesus shared a special meal with his friends.
- Even though he was afraid, Jesus wanted to do what God the Father asked him to do.



Parent Reflection

Jesus gave himself in a special way on that night before he died as he washed the disciples' feet and then when he established the Eucharist—Jesus' perpetual gift of self to all Christians in every generation. The next day, Jesus gave his life on the Cross. Out of love for his Father and for us, he expressed his commitment to follow the Father's plan, saying, "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

If we spend time in prayer, reflection, and the reading of Scripture, we will inevitably encounter calls from God that make us uncomfortable. We may hear God asking us to do something that would mean giving of ourselves in a new or unexpected way. We may be called to "give up" something that would feel like a real sacrifice. Much of our willingness—and ability—to answer these calls depends on our capacity to see our actions as conscious "choices" rather than as things we are forced to do or to say.

Reflection Question

With what issues in my life do I need to say, "Not my will, but yours be done"?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- large, plastic bowl
- plastic pitcher (empty)
- towel or apron
- small paper plates
- small pieces of crackers
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Today for our prayer, we are going to ask Jesus to help us have courage to do something hard for someone else.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear Jesus, our friend and our God, please help us be kind and loving to others even when it is hard. Please give us courage. Amen.”

Discovering

At the Last Supper. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the Last Supper.

Ask your child, “What are some things Jesus did at the Last Supper?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. At the Last Supper. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. The Last Supper (Dramatic Play). With your child, use the props to act out the Scripture story of Jesus washing the feet of his Apostles and then sharing a special meal with them.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Peter Claver. Show your child the picture of Saint Peter Claver on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Peter to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

- ▶ If Jesus saw a person being mean to another person, what do you think he would have done?
- ▶ If you see someone being mean to another person, what could you do?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Peter Claver using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud

with your child:

“Dear Jesus, you showed us that we should help one another. Give us the courage to follow your example, and help us grow in our love for you. Amen.”

Saint Peter Claver

Helping Others as Jesus Did

Father Peter Claver walked down a crowded and busy street. He had a hard job to do. He was going to help some people. Some were sick. Some were hungry. Others were frightened. These people were sick, hungry, and frightened because others had treated them very, very badly.

Peter carried a bag filled with medicine for the sick people. He had food and water for the hungry. Of course, he would talk and pray with those who were frightened.

He had done this work for many years, so he knew how he would feel when he arrived. Peter would be sad and upset. It was very hard work to do.

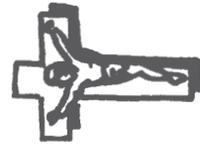
But Peter kept walking, because he knew that Jesus had also done hard things for other people.

Peter remembered the story from Scripture when Jesus washed the Apostles' feet to show them they must help others as he had helped them. Peter knew the suffering people were also God's people, and deserved to be treated with respect and care.

Peter believed God wanted him to do this important work. So even though doing this work would make him upset and sad, he shifted his bag of medicine and food to his other shoulder, and prayed that God would give him courage to do the hard job.

Whenever Peter had done this work before, God always seemed to give him enough courage. God would this time, too.

DRAW



**Saint
Peter Claver,
pray for us!**

Jesus Is Risen!

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 26, ages 4-5

Lesson 26 Goal

- Your child will learn that Jesus died on the Cross on Good Friday, but rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Key Points

- Jesus died on the Cross on Good Friday.
- Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.



Parent Reflection

Our lives are full of change. This is the nature of human existence. Things changed as well for Jesus' disciples in the week before he died. It must have felt like a definitive ending for the disciples as their friend and leader was sentenced to death and then suffered and died one of the cruelest deaths imaginable. And then, how things changed for them on Easter Sunday! What didn't seem possible suddenly was reality. Not even death could conquer the Son of God.

Christianity is overflowing with hope, for we can say that when it gets so bad that even God himself can be killed, something good can happen. God can take an impossible situation and make it better than we could have even imagined.

Reflection Question

In my life, when have I seen God act in an unexpected way to bring joy and hope from a situation that seemed hopeless?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- washable tempera paints
- paint apron/smock
- clean brushes
- painting paper

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Today we celebrate a glorious day! We are so happy that Jesus is alive and with us!”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

“Dear Jesus, you died for us on Good Friday and we see how we need you to be with us. On Easter Sunday, you rose from the dead and we are amazed! We praise you and thank you for coming back to life. Because of you, we too can have new life. Amen.”

Discovering

The Resurrection. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about the Resurrection.

Ask your child, “How would you feel if you saw the Risen Jesus?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. On Easter Morning. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Jesus Is Alive. Invite our child to make a painting of the Scripture story about Jesus’ Resurrection.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Mary Magdalene. Show your child the picture of Saint Mary Magdalene on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Magdalene to your child (see page 3).

Ask your child:

• “Who do you think called Mary’s name? (*Jesus called Mary’s name. Help your child understand that Mary was with Jesus when he died and was the first person to see him when he rose from the dead.*)

• What can you learn about being Jesus’ friend from Mary Magdalene’s example?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Mary Magdalene using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

Together: *Jesus, our friend, our brother, our God,*

Parent: *You died for us.*

Together: *Jesus, our friend, our brother, our God,*

Parent: *You rose from the dead and we are amazed!*

Together: *Jesus, our friend, our brother, our God,*

Parent: *You rose from the dead and we are so very, very happy!*

Together: *Alleluia! Amen!*

Saint Mary Magdalene

Jesus' Friend Is Happy!

Mary Magdalene could remember all the wonderful times when she, Peter, John, and Jesus' other special friends were with him. They listened as he taught them about God's great love. Just like Peter and John, Mary Magdalene understood how special Jesus was, and how important his prayers and his words were. And she saw the crowds of people who also longed to hear him and to ask for his healing.

With the other disciples, Mary often went with Jesus, learning and asking him questions.

Mary could also remember the terrible sad-

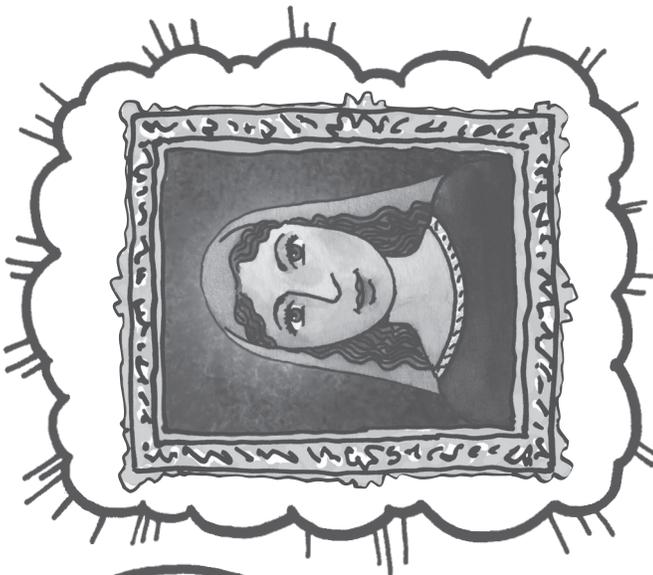
ness of the day Jesus died on the Cross. She had stood with Jesus for hours. Some must have thought how brave she was that day.

Three days after Jesus died, Mary and another friend of Jesus named Mary went early in the morning to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid, feeling very sad.

But to her great amazement, she saw an angel there. "Jesus is not here!" said the angel.

Confused and worried, Mary turned and saw a person. He said one word: "Mary!"

DRAW



**Saint Mary
Magdalene,
pray for us!**

Jesus Returns to Heaven

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 27, ages 4-5

Lesson 27 Goal

- Your child will focus on Jesus' "good-bye" to his friends as he ascended to his Father in Heaven and will be reminded that Christ will come again at the end of time.

Key Points

- Sometimes good friends have to be apart, but they can still be friends and remember one another.
- Jesus is with us, especially when we remember him.



Parent Reflection

When we experience something emotionally or spiritually profound, it's easy to want to stay in that moment, even when we know we cannot do so. This is true of many different stages and growth experiences of life. It is the dilemma facing Jesus' disciples upon the occasion of Jesus' Ascension. He reassures them that they will not be alone—he would send his Spirit to guide and strengthen them.

God is continually calling us to greater growth, to the next step of his beautiful plan for our lives. On multiple occasions, Jesus uses metaphors related to plants and trees to describe what happens when faith takes root in our lives. Likewise, we are called to continual spiritual growth. Sometimes, like Jesus' disciples, we may not think we are ready for the next step. But God is with us, and he knows us better than we know ourselves.

Reflection Question

In what areas of my life is God calling me to grow right now?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- small white cotton balls
- glue
- Activity Master #23

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #23 and #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Today we are going to pray for people we can’t see. We will pray for these people because they do not live near us—maybe a cousin or grandfather who is far away. We will also pray for people we have never seen but we still care about, such as hungry children in our country and in other countries.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Say, *“Let’s close our eyes. Picture in your mind someone you want to pray for and say a little prayer silently.”* (Pause.)

“Dear Jesus, even though we can’t see these people, we care about them. We ask you to watch over them. We can’t see you but we know you are with us and we can talk with you as we are doing now.” (Pause 10 seconds and then have your child open his or her eyes.)

“Thank you, God, for our gifts. May we use them to do your work. Amen.”

Discovering

Jesus Returns to His Father. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus’ Ascension.

Ask your child, “How do we know Jesus is always with us?”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. Jesus Ascends to Heaven. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Jesus Is Always in My Heart. Give your child a copy of Activity Master #23. Have him or her recall the story “Jesus Returns to His Father” and encourage discussion. Invite your child to color the picture and glue cotton balls to make fluffy clouds. Share that the picture reminds us that we can talk with Jesus and feel his love in our minds and hearts.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint John the Apostle. Show your child the picture of Saint John on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint John to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What did Saint John the Apostle do after Jesus went back to Heaven? (*He taught and wrote about Jesus.*)
- ▶ What did Saint John always say when he taught? (*"Sisters and brothers, love one another."*)

Have your child write and draw about Saint John the Apostle using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

"Dear Jesus, sometimes it's hard to say good-bye, and it's sad when we can't be with people we love. Help us to remember that you are always with us, especially in the Eucharist, Holy Scripture, and through those who serve you in church. Thank you for also watching over the people we love. Be with all of us today and always. Amen."

Saint John the Apostle

Jesus in His Heart and Thoughts

John watched with the rest of Jesus' disciples as Jesus rose up toward Heaven. Now they would no longer have Jesus right in front of them. Yet John knew Jesus was still with him, in his heart and in his thoughts.

John had felt close to Jesus for a long time. Jesus called John and his brother James to be among his special friends, the Apostles. From then on, John was always a faithful disciple.

John watched Jesus turn five loaves of bread into thousands of loaves! He listened closely as Jesus was teaching.

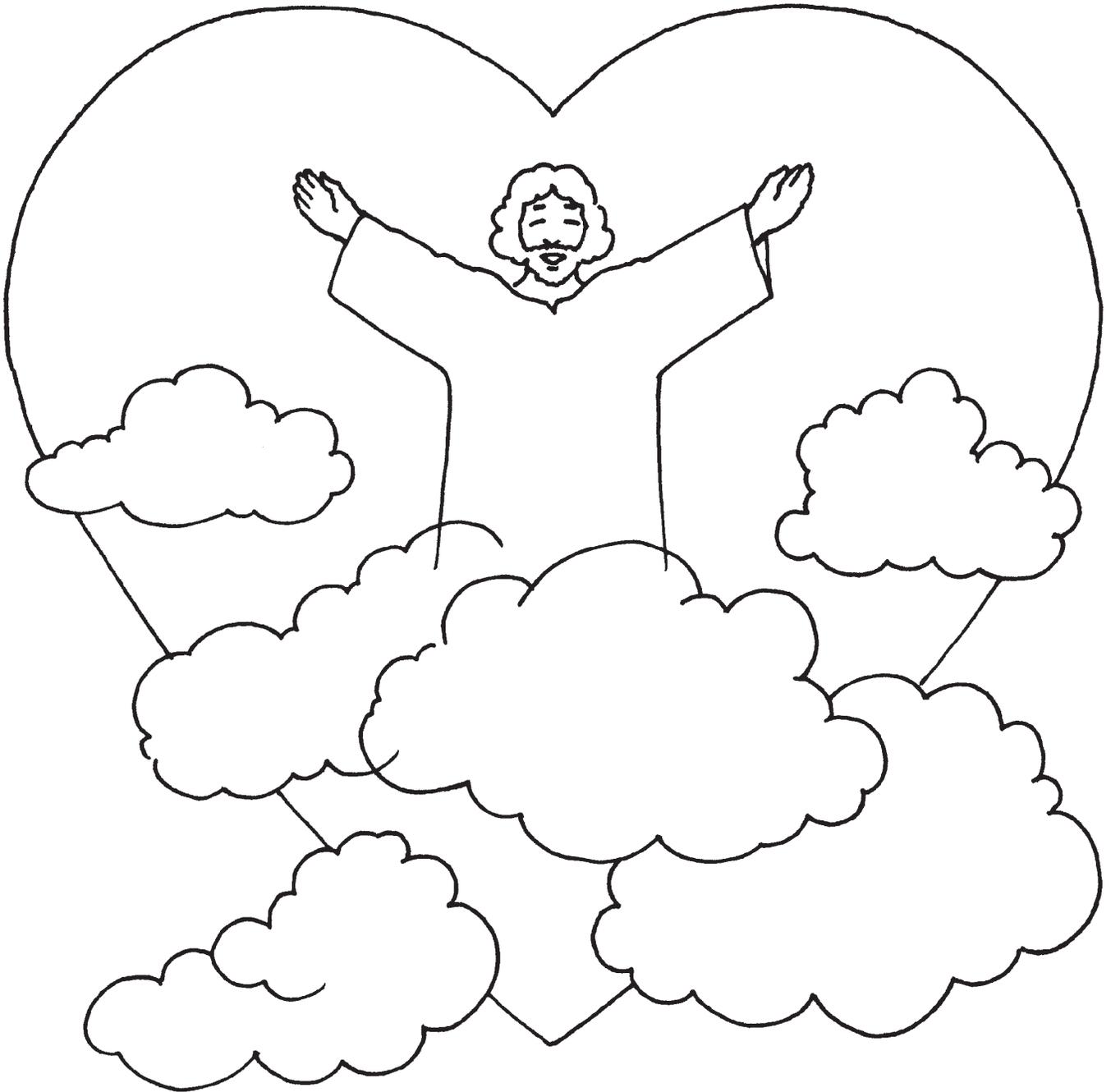
Now John could no longer see Jesus ev-

ery day, but with Jesus in his heart and in his thoughts, John was able to teach many, many people all about Jesus and his teachings. John wrote about Jesus, too, so hundreds of years later, we can still learn about Jesus through John's writing. Some of our Scripture stories were written by John.

When John was very old, he still taught people. Each time he was teaching, John said: "Sisters and brothers, love one another."

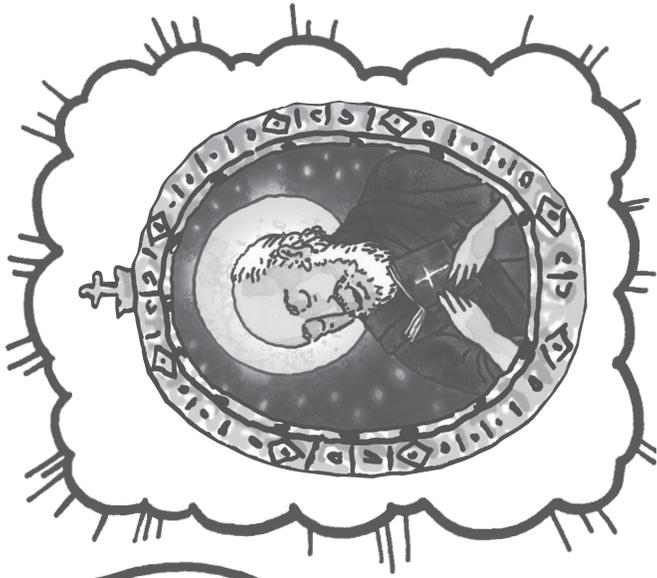
John had Jesus in his heart and thoughts, and he knew that love was the most important thing Jesus taught.

JESUS IS ALWAYS IN MY HEART



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DRAW



**Saint
John,
pray for us!**

The Holy Spirit Helps the Church

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 28, ages 4-5

Lesson 28 Goal

- Your child will learn the story of Pentecost and will identify it as the day when the work of the Church began.

Key Points

- On the day of Pentecost, the Apostles taught many people about Jesus.
- Pentecost is often referred to as the day the work of the Church began.



Parent Reflection

In the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read the account of the day of Pentecost. On this day, the Holy Spirit moved within the Apostles and filled them with courage. They went out to the temple square and began to speak to the people. A mighty, rushing wind was heard, and tongues of fire appeared above their heads. As they spoke, each person heard the Apostles in his or her own language.

God comes to us and speaks to us in our own language, through the events of everyday life, through relationships, in the quiet of our minds, and through Scripture and the Church. Like the Apostles, we have a responsibility to speak to others about Christ in a language they can hear and understand. As we let God's Word take root in our lives, even in the smallest actions, the Body of Christ is born in us.

Reflection Question

How can I speak God's Word to others through my actions or words this week?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- cake
- party hat
- sheet of drawing paper

- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Master #2 (included with this lesson).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, *“Today we are going to ask God the Holy Spirit to come be with us. Because we can’t see the Holy Spirit, we use symbols to learn about and pray to the Holy Spirit. Symbols can be things we see or touch to help us understand in our hearts what we can’t see with our eyes.”*

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”*

“Dear Jesus, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit! May the Holy Spirit watch over us always. Amen.”

Discovering

The Day the Holy Spirit Came. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Pentecost.

Ask your child, *“What amazing things happened at Pentecost?”*

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask

your child the *“Ask Me!”* questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. The Holy Spirit Comes to Us. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him or her complete it.

2. Celebration of the Church. Invite your child to put on a party hat and join you in a celebration. Share that today’s party does not celebrate the day a person was born; it celebrates the day our Church started its work. Help your child recall the name of this special Church’s feast (Pentecost). Invite your child to make a drawing of something he or she can do for the Church. Possible ideas include a way to tell a friend about Jesus, or reading a Bible story with the family. Talk about your child’s picture and other ways your family can do the work of the Church. Pray grace and enjoy the cake with your child.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Peter the Apostle. Show your child the picture of Saint Peter on the Family Activity page and read about him. Then read more about Saint Peter to

your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ What amazing thing did Peter know about Jesus? (*That he is the Son of God*)
- ▶ What did you like best about the story of Saint Peter?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Peter the Apostle using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by

tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child.

Parent: *Come like a gentle dove, so we will know God's love!*

Together: *Come to us, Holy Spirit!*

Parent: *Come like a brisk wind, so we will know God's greatness!*

Together: *Come to us, Holy Spirit!*

Parent: *Come like a warming fire, so we will know God's wisdom!*

Together: *Come to us, Holy Spirit!*

Saint Peter the Apostle

Breakfast with Jesus

It was night, and the boat rocked on the sea. Peter had decided to go fishing. So far, he and the others with him had not caught even one little fish.

Just as the sun was coming up, a man called to them from the shore, "Have you caught anything to eat?"

When they answered, "No," the man said, "Cast the net over the other side of the boat."

They did this, and immediately there were so many fish in their net, they couldn't pull it out of the water! It was a miracle! John turned to Peter and said, "That's Jesus on the shore!"

Jesus! Peter loved Jesus so much, he jumped into the water and swam to him. When the

others brought the boat in, Peter dragged in the heavy net filled with fish. All together, they sat by an early morning fire and ate breakfast.

Peter had traveled and worked with Jesus for three years now. Through good times and hard times, they had been together. When Peter did things that were right and good, Jesus loved him. When Peter did things that were silly or wrong, Jesus still loved him. When Peter was frightened, Jesus loved him. When Peter was brave, Jesus loved him.

Now, Jesus turned to Peter. Peter knew the most amazing thing of all: that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" And Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

DRAW



**Saint
Peter,
pray for us!**