

God Gives Us Life and Love

- ◆ Before beginning Unit 1, read *A Letter Home*, found on page 2 of your child's book. Then begin the next paragraph with your child.
- ◆ Say: **The title of our book is *God Cares for Us*. Look through the book together. Say: In Unit 1 we will learn about God's gifts to us and how Baptism opens our hearts to God.**

CHAPTER 1 God Is the Giver of Gifts

Centering PAGE 1

- ◆ Read aloud the title and the Bible verse on page 1. Discuss the picture. Ask: **What are some gifts you have received?** Say: **Here is a picture of a gift that is not wrapped up and tied with a pretty bow.** Ask: **What is the gift in this picture?** (a baby) Say: **God has given us hundreds and hundreds of gifts out of love.**

Sharing PAGE 3

- ◆ Have your child read aloud the title on page 3. Then read aloud the poem and have your child say the words in all capital letters with you. Ask: **Who are some of the people who love and care for you?** (friends, parents)
- ◆ Say: **We all have strengths and weaknesses, but God loves each of us, and that is why God made us. We are special gifts. We are made like God in some ways.**

Sharing PAGE 4

- ◆ Have your child read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 4 and point out the word *Trinity*. Say: **We recognize the Trinity every time we pray the Sign of the Cross.**
- ◆ Ask: **What three things can we do because we are made in the image and likeness of God?** (think, choose, love)
- ◆ Read aloud the rest of page 4. Ask: **How can we give the gift of ourselves to others?** (give our time to help someone, give someone a smile or a kind word) **How can we give ourselves back to God?** (by offering ourselves to God in prayer, by doing everything for God)

Sharing PAGE 5

- ◆ Guide your child through the activities on page 5 and discuss his or her responses.
- ◆ Use the family Bible to tell the story about how God cares for all creatures. (Luke 12:24–29) Say: **Jesus wanted people to know that God our Father cares for everything he made, but he cares for people in a special way.**
- ◆ Discuss how people can care for creation. Ask: **How can you take care of yourselves?** (eating well, learning) **How can you take care of other people?** (sharing with them) **How can you take care of the beautiful land God has given us?** (by not littering) **How can you take care of living things such as animals?** (feeding, playing with, and loving your pets; respecting wild animals)
- ◆ Ask: **How can you show God during mealtimes at home and in the cafeteria that you're grateful for the gift of food?** (Don't waste food. Don't play with food. Pray before and after meals.)

Sharing PAGE 6

- ◆ Have your child read aloud the top of page 6 and complete the activity.
- ◆ Lead your child in prayer using A Moment with Jesus. Invite your child to spend some quiet time with Jesus each day.
- ◆ Ask: **Why are people greater than the other things God has made?** (God made people in his own image and likeness.) **How are people like God?** (They can think, choose, and love.)
- ◆ Say: **Because we are more advanced than other created things on earth, we have a responsibility to take care of them.**

Sharing PAGE 7

- ◆ Have your child read aloud the first sentence and the directions on page 7. Give your child time to draw his or her special gift.
- ◆ Read aloud the rest of the page, pausing to allow time for your child to answer the questions. Then help your child write the prayer on the line.

Acting PAGE 8

- ◆ Help your child complete the Chapter 1 Review on page 8.
- ◆ Say: **There is always a prayer in the We Respond section. I will help you pray it. Pray this one after me: "How wonderful are your gifts. They are more than I can count."** (Psalm 40:6) Have your child repeat the prayer.
- ◆ Encourage your child to share the Building Family Faith section with other members of your family, or together read aloud the section to review.

Gather and Go Forth PAGES 9–10**INSPIRE**

- ◆ Read aloud the text and the Scripture in the sidebar on page 9. Say: **When we receive God’s message from the Bible or in the celebration of the sacraments, God wants us to share it with others. This is a big job, but one we can all do because God is with us always.**

PROCLAIM

- ◆ Read aloud the Know and Proclaim text and the chart. Say: **God made and loves everyone.**
- ◆ Read aloud the question and answers in Test Your Catholic Knowledge. Have your child answer the question and say: **Knowing our Catholic faith helps us know God and share his love.**
- ◆ Read aloud A Catholic to Know on page 10. Say: **Bernadette was a witness to Mary’s love. A witness is someone who sees or hears something and then tells the truth about it.** Ask: **How can you give witness to Jesus?** (by hearing and sharing Jesus’ message)
- ◆ Read aloud the Witness and Share introductory text. Then read aloud each faith statement in My Way to Faith, pausing to allow time for your child to reflect on each one.
- ◆ Read aloud the Share Your Faith directions and have your child complete the activity.

TRANSFORM

- ◆ Ask your child to reflect on what he or she wrote in Share Your Faith. Ask: **What special gift or talent will help you share God’s love?**
- ◆ Say: **Imagine shining your light everywhere. Our special light from God gets brighter the more we share it.**

CHAPTER 2 Jesus Is God's Best Gift**Centering**

- ✦ Say: Name some gifts that God has given us. Ask: Why has God given us so many wonderful gifts? (He loves us.)
- ✦ Say: God loves us so much that he even gave us his best gift. Ask: What do you think it is? (Jesus)

Sharing PAGE 11

- ✦ Have your child read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 11.
- ✦ Say: A savior is someone who saves another person. Ask: Who was Maria's savior that day at the ocean? (her brother) What did he save her from? (drowning) Say: All of us have been saved by Jesus.
- ✦ Say: God loves us so much that he gave us his only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. He let his Son become a man and live with us on this earth.
- ✦ Say: Jesus showed us the Father's love by doing good things while he was on earth. Ask: What are some good things Jesus did? (He showed us how to love God and one another. He helped people. He died for us and rose from the dead.)
- ✦ Point to the illustration. Ask: Why did Jesus suffer and die for us? (to save us from sin, to give us a share in his life, to open heaven for us)
- ✦ Have your child read aloud the last two paragraphs on page 11. Say: Grace is the life of God in us. We received the gift of grace when we were baptized.

Sharing PAGE 12

- ✦ Use the family Bible to read aloud Jesus' story about a seed (John 12:23–24).
- ✦ Help your child complete The Story of a Seed on page 12.
- ✦ Have your child read aloud Jesus Saves Us at the top of page 12. Say: Jesus is like a seed that dies to give life to a new plant. Jesus died on the Cross to give us new life.
- ✦ Ask: When did Jesus rise from the dead? (on Easter Sunday) Why are we happy on Easter? (because Jesus is alive and brings us new life)

Sharing PAGE 13

- ◆ Have your child read aloud page 13. Point out the word *disciples*.
- ◆ Ask: **What is a disciple?** (a friend of Jesus who tries to follow him) **Who are some disciples?** (Peter, Andrew, James, John, Mary) **Who is the Mother of the Church?** (Mary) **What do we call the life of Jesus in us?** (grace)
- ◆ Say: **The people who followed Jesus are called his disciples. They became his Church. After Jesus died and rose, his disciples carried on his work.**

Sharing PAGE 14

- ◆ Read aloud the top part of page 14. Ask: **To what did Jesus compare himself?** (a vine) **What did Jesus say we are?** (branches) **How are we like branches on a vine?** (Just as branches are united, or joined, with the vine and share its life, we share in God's life when we stay close to Jesus.)
- ◆ Say: **One way that we can remember how much Jesus loves us and how he saved us by the Cross is by praying the Sign of the Cross. We pray the Sign of the Cross over our bodies.** Demonstrate how to pray the Sign of the Cross. Say: **This shows we are Christians, followers of Jesus.**
- ◆ Ask: **When do you see people praying the Sign of the Cross?** (going into church, before praying, before and after meals) Say: **When you were baptized, the priest, your parents, and your godparents made the Sign of the Cross on your forehead to mark you as a Christian.**
- ◆ Have your child remove and fold the punchout card with the orange cross. Display it at home as a reminder of Jesus.

Acting PAGES 15–16

- ◆ Read aloud page 15 and have your child complete the activity.
- ◆ Have your child use the photos on page 15 to practice praying the Sign of the Cross. If necessary, demonstrate again to your child how to pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ◆ Lead your child in prayer using A Moment with Jesus. Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- ◆ Help your child complete the Chapter 2 Review on page 16.
- ◆ Encourage your child to share the Building Family Faith section with other members of your family, or together read aloud the section to review.

Gather and Go Forth PAGES 17–18**INSPIRE**

- ✦ Read aloud the text and the Scripture in the sidebar on page 17. Say: **Jesus is the most precious gift of all. Jesus tells us how we can grow closer to God.**

PROCLAIM

- ✦ Read aloud the Know and Proclaim text and the chart. Say: **We are Jesus' followers too.**
- ✦ Read aloud the question and answers in Test Your Catholic Knowledge. Have your child answer the question and say: **The Father, the Son, and the Spirit (choice 3) together are called the Trinity (choice 4), which is God.**
- ✦ Read aloud A Catholic to Know on page 18. Say: **Peter was the leader of the Church. But he was not perfect. He made some mistakes along the way. Jesus chose him anyway.**
- ✦ Read aloud the Witness and Share introductory text. Then read aloud each faith statement in My Way to Faith, pausing to allow time for your child to reflect on each one.
- ✦ Read aloud the Share Your Faith directions and have your child complete the activity.

TRANSFORM

- ✦ Ask your child to share what he or she wrote for Share Your Faith. Together make up a simple faith cheer that tells its main idea.
- ✦ Encourage your child to teach the faith cheer to a family member or friend.

CHAPTER 3 Jesus Lives in His Church

Centering

- ◆ Point out the picture at the top of page 19. Recall family Baptisms you have attended and share any pictures you may have of these occasions.
- ◆ Ask: **How did Jesus win new life for all of us?** (by dying and rising)
Say: **Today you will learn about the time you first received this new life from Jesus.**

Sharing PAGE 19

- ◆ Read aloud page 19 and have your child point out the words *Original Sin*, *sacrament*, *faith*, and *Confirmation*. Have your child look up the meanings in the Glossary.
- ◆ Say: **At Baptism, the priest asks the parents for the baby's name. The baby often receives a Christian name or a saint's name to show that he or she belongs to the Church.** Remind your child of his or her Christian name and say: **Your special saint shows you how to be holy by living the new life you received in Baptism.**
- ◆ Say: **At Baptism, we received three gifts that are like keys to our hearts. They are faith, hope, and love. Find the Act of Faith, Hope and Love inside the back cover of your book. Pray it with me. [Pause.] Learn this prayer by heart and try to pray it in the morning or at the end of the day. When you know it, color the cross by it in your book.**
- ◆ Say: **This year you will celebrate two more sacraments.** Ask: **What are they?** (Reconciliation, the Eucharist)

Sharing PAGES 20–21

- ◆ Point out the pictures on pages 20 and 21. Say: **These are pictures from the Graham family's photo album. They were taken at Molly Elizabeth's Baptism.**
- ◆ Have your child look at each picture and read aloud the text next to it.
- ◆ Ask: **Who helped you at your Baptism?** (parents, godparents) **Who are your godparents?**
- ◆ Say: **Listen carefully as I read the baptismal promises. If you really want to keep them, answer "I do." Do you promise to stay away from what is evil? (I do.) Do you promise to try to live always as a loving child of God? (I do.) Do you believe in God, our loving Father; in his Son, Jesus Christ, Our Savior; and in his Holy Spirit? (I do.)**
- ◆ Ask: **What happened to Molly and you when you were baptized?** (We received God's life. We became members of the Church. Sin was taken away.)

- ◆ Say: **Molly's baptismal candle was lit from the Easter candle. This shows that Jesus gave Molly his light. You were given a baptismal candle too. Your baptismal candle reminds you to let Jesus' light shine from you.**

Sharing PAGE 22

- ◆ Have your child read aloud *We Belong to the Church* on page 22. Say: **Saint Paul said the Church is a house made of "living stones."** Ask: **What do you think that means?** (The Church is really made of God's people and is not a building.) Say: **All people who are baptized belong to the Church.**
- ◆ Have your child read aloud *Jesus Helps Us Through His Church* on page 22 and point to the words *bishops* and *priests*. Identify the names of your bishop and your priest(s).
- ◆ Ask: **Do you remember some of the names of the apostles you learned about?** (Peter, John, Andrew, James) **Whom did Jesus choose to lead his Church as the first pope?** (Peter) Say: **Peter and the other apostles cared for the Church by teaching people what Jesus taught. The apostles baptized them and helped them grow in God's life.**
- ◆ Ask: **What is the current pope's name?** Say: **We call the pope the Holy Father. Do you know why?** (He cares for the Church like a father.) **Our Church leaders speak to us for Jesus. What else do they do for us?** (They teach us and help us be like Jesus. They provide the sacraments for us.)
- ◆ Say: **Each of us is important to the Church. Why?** (Each person has a place that no one else can fill. If we don't do our part, the Church is like a house with a missing stone. It is not as good and strong as it could be.)

Acting PAGES 23–24

- ◆ Read aloud the top of page 23 and have your child complete the activity.
- ◆ Lead your child in prayer using *A Moment with Jesus*. Read aloud each sentence, pausing to allow your child time to reflect on each statement and converse with Jesus.
- ◆ Say: **We belong to the Church. We try to live like Jesus. As Christians, we promised to live in love.**
- ◆ Help your child remove the paschal candle punchout from the back of his or her book. Have your child color the flame and the Chi-Rho, the Greek letters that designate Christ.
- ◆ Help your child complete the Chapter 3 Review on page 24.
- ◆ Encourage your child to share the Building Family Faith section with other members of your family, or together read aloud the section to review.

Gather and Go Forth PAGES 25–26**INSPIRE**

- ◆ Read aloud the text and the Scripture in the sidebar on page 25. Say: **Peter is reminding early Christians who they are.** Ask: **Why are names important?** (They help us communicate with each other.)

PROCLAIM

- ◆ Read aloud the Know and Proclaim text and the chart. Say: **In Baptism, grace flows into us like water or light. It washes away Original Sin.**
- ◆ Read aloud the question and answers in Test Your Catholic Knowledge. Have your child answer the question and say: **We belong to our family, our parish, our community, and our country. We belong to the best group of all—the family of God, the Church.**
- ◆ Read aloud A Catholic to Know on page 26. Say: **When we follow Jesus and do God’s work, we can make a big difference.**
- ◆ Read aloud the Witness and Share introductory text. Then read aloud each faith statement in My Way to Faith, pausing to allow time for your child to reflect on each one.
- ◆ Read aloud the Share Your Faith directions and have your child complete the activity.

TRANSFORM

- ◆ Ask your child to reflect on what he or she wrote for Share Your Faith. Say: **Trusting God when we face a problem helps us grow closer to him.**
- ◆ Have your child pray for someone he or she knows who is facing a challenge.

CHAPTER 4 God Speaks to Us

Centering PAGE 27

- ✦ Have your child read aloud *Jesus Helps Us Hear God Speak* on page 27.
Ask: **What might have been the first sounds the man heard?** (Jesus talking to him) **What do you think the man learned by listening to Jesus?** (about Jesus' love for his Father and for all people) **What do you think the man's first words were?** (words of thanks or praise)
- ✦ Have your child read aloud the directions and complete the activity at the bottom of page 27.

Sharing PAGE 28

- ✦ Take turns reading aloud page 28. Have your child point out the words *Old Testament*, *New Testament*, and *saints*. Look up their meanings in the Glossary. Ask: **Where do we hear God's Word?** (everywhere in the world, in the Bible, in church, in nature, in our homes)
- ✦ Say: **God also speaks to us through his gifts in the world: in the beauty of a dandelion, in a juicy red apple, in the warm love of those who care about us.** Ask: **What are some things that God says to us through gifts?** (that he cares for us, loves us, and wants us to be happy)
- ✦ Ask: **Who are some people who bring us God's Word and help us understand it?** (priests, catechists, parents) Say: **Saints are people who listened to God and spoke about God. You are saints too when you hear God's Word and tell people about his goodness. God especially knows you hear him when you are kind to others, when you help those in need, and when you follow Jesus' example.**

Reviewing PAGES 29–30

- ✦ Say: **Because you are so important for the Church, you should know about the Church. We will play some games to help you remember some things about God's family.**
- ✦ Write *C-h-r-c-h*. Ask: **Why isn't it the word *Church*?** (The letter *u* is missing.) Say: **See how important "you" are for the Church? Without the letter *u*, the word isn't Church. Without "you," the Church is not complete.** Have your child add *u* to the word you wrote. Ask: **What is the name of the prayer that is a sign that we belong to the Church?** (the Sign of the Cross) **What is this prayer a sign of?** (that Jesus died and rose to give us new life)

- ◆ Make a sign that says “I belong to the Church.” Take turns holding the sign with your child. While holding the sign, name what you do to show you belong to the Church. (I tell others I am sorry when I hurt them; I try to help my mother by setting the table; I take part in Sunday Mass and remember Jesus.)
- ◆ Help your child complete the Church Puzzle on page 29.
- ◆ Help your child complete the Unit 1 Review on page 30.

Celebrating PAGES 31–32

- ◆ Say: **Today we will think of wonderful things God has done for us and celebrate our new life as members of God’s family, the Church.**
- ◆ Place a plant with a vine and a bowl of water on a table. Say: **The vine reminds us of the new life that God our loving Father shared with us at Baptism. The water reminds us of the water poured over us at Baptism. Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches. Let’s bow our heads and close our eyes to thank God for all of creation.** [Pause.]
- ◆ Take turns reading aloud the parts of the Vine and the Branches on page 31. Have your child bless himself or herself with the water and pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ◆ Read aloud the part of the Leader on page 32 and direct your child to respond with “Pray for us” after each saint is called upon in the litany.

Acting

- ◆ Help your child tear out the Scripture prayer booklet “I Am the Good Shepherd” from the back of his or her book. Say: **This booklet will help you talk to God. It has verses from the Bible, prayers, and things to do. You can take this booklet and read a verse, think about it, and speak to God in your heart. Then you can write a few words to remember your conversation. On page 2, you can color a piece of stained glass whenever you use your booklet. Hopefully, you will use this booklet so much that the entire stained-glass window will be colored.**
- ◆ When you’ve completed this unit, help your child tear out the Family Feature section on pages 34a–34d and encourage him or her to share it with other family members, or read and complete the section together.

Gather and Go Forth PAGES 33–34**INSPIRE**

- ✦ Read aloud the text and the Scripture in the sidebar on page 33. Say: **When we are baptized, we become members of a royal priesthood. We are royal because we are God’s people. We are priests because it is our job to serve others and share the Good News of Jesus.**

PROCLAIM

- ✦ Read aloud the Know and Proclaim text and the chart. Say: **The Scripture passage we discussed is from the New Testament, but Peter is using phrases from the Old Testament.**
- ✦ Read aloud the question and answers in Test Your Catholic Knowledge. Have your child answer the question and say: **We can all help the Holy Spirit spread God’s Word.**
- ✦ Read aloud A Catholic to Know on page 34. Say: **We serve others in different ways. But we are all called to teach in God’s name. God wants us to use our talents to serve others.**
- ✦ Read aloud the Witness and Share introductory text. Then read aloud each faith statement in My Way to Faith, pausing to allow time for your child to reflect on each one.
- ✦ Read aloud the Share Your Faith directions and have your child complete the activity.

TRANSFORM

- ✦ Ask your child to think about the Bible story he or she named in Share Your Faith. Ask: **What did someone in your chosen story do to serve God and others?**
- ✦ Encourage your child to take a similar action to serve God and others.