



The Church, Our Community in the Spirit

Begin

Before you meet with your child, find a picture of Jesus or a church to cut up to make puzzle pieces. Give half of the pieces to your child and keep the other half. **Say:** *Let's work together to complete the puzzle.* When the puzzle is complete, point out how you both contributed pieces to the puzzle. **Say:** *The community of Jesus is similar to this puzzle. Each of us plays an important role.* Read aloud the unit title on page 61. **Say:** *Our new unit will help us learn about how we belong to a community of believers.*

Introduce the Saint

Direct your child's attention to the picture of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Read aloud the text. Discuss if your family knows any priests or brothers who are Jesuits.

Turn to page 62. Have your child read aloud the text. **Ask:** *How do we imitate Jesus? (by being kind to others, serving the community, volunteering at church)* **Say:** *Saint Ignatius went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat. He left his sword on the altar, gave up his riches, and went on to write the Spiritual Exercises. These writings help people find God's will for them and the courage to follow God's call.*

Say: *We remember Saint Ignatius of Loyola because he founded the Jesuit community to serve the Church and teach Jesus' Word.*

With your child add Ignatius's feast day, July 31, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the dedication of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

The Church Is One

Engage: Page 63

- ▶ Talk about celebrations that are American customs, such as Thanksgiving and Independence Day. **Ask:** *Why do you think celebrating an ethnic heritage or nationality is important to many people?* (It is part of their history and tradition.)
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's responses. Point out the picture. **Say:** *In this session we will learn how the Church celebrates God's Word in various ways around the world.*
- ▶ Share experiences you have had celebrating Mass in different places. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 64–65

- ▶ Ask your child to name different roles that people can take to serve the Church.
- ▶ Read aloud Different Roles for Church Members on page 64. Point out the vocabulary words. **Ask:** *What is the role of the laity?* (They are called to be holy, to be a witness to Christ in the world, and to foster Gospel values in society.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Unity in Beliefs. Help your child locate the Apostles' Creed in his or her book to complete the activity.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *Jesus knows that the differences among us do not keep us apart, but add to our unity.*
- ▶ Read aloud page 65. **Ask:** *Who are the visible signs of unity in the Church?* (the pope, the bishops) *Why do you think Pope Gregory the Great called himself the "servant of the servants of God"?* (He served the people of God, who are called to serve others.)

Art Exploration: Page 235

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a community praising God together.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the colors and the expressions on the faces of the people.
- ▶ **Say:** *Psalm 100 says that God is the Lord of all lands and of all ages. He is without race, and he is timeless.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 235. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

- ▶ Read aloud Unity and Diversity in the Church. **Ask:** *Why is the body a good way to describe the unity and diversity in the Church?* (Like a body, the Church is one unit with many parts.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud In My Parish . . . Complete the activity together.
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Find opportunities to listen to the liturgy celebrated in a language different from your own.
- ▶ Using household items and art supplies, ask your child to make his or her own musical instrument. Encourage him or her to write a song about unity and diversity in the Church and to use the instrument to express the rhythm of the song.

Reflect: Pages 66–67

- ▶ Together look at page 66 and discuss the picture. **Say:** *The Apostles' Creed is like a family heirloom. It is passed from generation to generation.*
- ▶ Read aloud the first two paragraphs. **Say:** *As members of the Church, we are united in our belief, regardless of where we live and what language we speak. Let's pray the prayer that expresses these beliefs as it was taught by the apostles and is still taught by the Church.* Pray aloud the Apostles' Creed together. Then slowly read aloud the next two paragraphs. Give your child time to reflect on the prayer. Read aloud the last paragraph. **Say:** *The Apostles' Creed reminds us to practice Jesus' teachings in our daily lives.*
- ▶ Read aloud Examining the Eastern Tradition on page 67. If possible, find a map of the areas described. **Say:** *Though there are differences in how we and the Eastern Church celebrate, there is unity in the Eucharist and in many of its accompanying prayers, as well as in the participants of the congregation.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Comparing the Liturgies and complete the chart. Discuss the similarities and differences between the traditions.

Respond: Page 68

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can respect and love all people.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

Called to Holy Orders

Engage: Page 69

- ▶ **Ask:** *What qualities does a good leader possess?* (capable, confident, enthusiastic, reliable, honest) **Say:** *Good leaders recognize everyone's worth, talent, and ability.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's responses. Point out the picture. **Ask:** *Who is in the picture?* (a deacon, a girl, a guinea pig) *What are they doing?* (The deacon is blessing the guinea pig.) **Say:** *In this session we will learn about the Sacrament of Holy Orders.*
- ▶ Ask your child to make a thank-you card for someone in the community who helps him or her. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 70–71

- ▶ Together name the sacraments. **Ask:** *What do Holy Orders and Matrimony have in common?* (Both enable people to devote themselves to the service of others.)
- ▶ Read aloud Sacraments at the Service of Communion on page 70. **Ask:** *What do we call the Sacraments of Matrimony and Holy Orders?* (Sacraments at the Service of Communion) *What special service do priests provide?* (They continue Jesus' presence on earth by carrying on the tradition begun by the apostles.)
- ▶ Ask your child to read silently the Meet a Saint feature. Have him or her underline the two most important facts about Saint Turibius and share the answers with you.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud The Sacrament of Holy Orders and The Rite of the Sacrament of Holy Orders on page 71. Point out the vocabulary words. **Ask:** *What does a man receive through the Rite of Ordination?* (a character, a permanent spiritual mark)
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. **Say:** *It is important that we remember our priests in prayer so that they will grow in holiness.*

Art Exploration: Page 236

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Pope John Paul II saying Mass or meeting with people.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what appears to be happening.
- ▶ **Say:** *Like the apostles, Church leaders are chosen to be witnesses to Jesus Christ and to carry on his work.*

- ▶ Have your child turn to page 236. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud The Apostles Choose a New Member. **Say:** *Who does the work of the apostles today?* (deacons, priests, and bishops)
- ▶ Read aloud Letter to Clergy and have your child write a thank-you letter to your parish priest or deacon.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *Jesus is saying that Peter, whose name means "rock," will be the foundation of the Church.*
- ▶ Invite your child to imagine that he or she was present when the apostles picked Matthias. Have your child make a sketch of what was happening as the apostles reached a decision. Encourage your child to capture the emotions of the apostles in their expressions.

Reflect: Pages 72–73

- ▶ Together look at page 72. **Ask:** *Why is the setting in the picture a good place to focus on your prayers?*
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph. **Say:** *This prayer is a prayer of petition, asking God for the selflessness to serve him and others completely.* Together read aloud the prayer. Then read aloud the last two paragraphs. Pause for a few moments to allow your child to reflect silently. Conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Knowing Your Church Leaders on page 73. Work together to fill in the chart.
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. **Say:** *The title basilica is an honor given by the pope to certain churches to recognize some particular distinction of the church, its location, or its people.*

Respond: Page 74

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can help others learn more about Jesus.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

The Domestic Church

Engage: Page 75

- ▶ **Say:** *Imagine you are on a deserted island. List 10 things you want with you, such as family, entertainment, and food. After a time say: Now cut the list in half and keep only the essential items. Remind your child to thank God for family support and emphasize where family should be on the list.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's responses. Point out the picture. **Ask:** *What is your role in our family?* **Say:** *In this session we will learn how we are part of the domestic church—our family.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think of all the everyday things his or her family has done for him or her this week. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 76–77

- ▶ Share a memory of your child when he or she was younger. Point out that each family is unique and special, just as God makes each person unique and special.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 76. Point out the vocabulary term. **Ask:** *What are ways we can learn about God and Jesus here at home?* (praying before meals and before bedtime, going to church together)
- ▶ Read aloud The Sacrament of Matrimony on page 77. **Ask:** *Why is the Sacrament of Matrimony a sign of a special vocation?* (God has called the couple to live a life of love in a community.)
- ▶ Read aloud Celebrating Matrimony. **Ask:** *How is the sacrament like a covenant?* (The husband and wife make a lifelong promise to each other.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Read Ruth 1:16 together.

Art Exploration: Page 237

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Mary finding Jesus in the Temple.
- ▶ **Say:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including how Jesus looks while speaking to the adults.
- ▶ **Say:** *Jesus knew that teaching God's Word was his mission, which gave him wisdom and understanding beyond his years.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 237. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

- ▶ Read aloud Jesus in the Temple as a Child. **Ask:** *What does this story tell you about Jesus? (He was confident in his mission. He followed the customs of his time.)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Lost and Found and complete the activity. Share your own feelings about your child's experience.
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. **Say:** *What is the Ark of the Covenant? (a vessel that contained the Ten Commandments) Which of the Ten Commandments is relevant to this story? (Honor your father and mother.)*
- ▶ Invite your child to draw your family tree. Provide him or her with magazines and newspapers. Have your child look for pictures that symbolize what your family means to him or her. Ask your child to decorate the family tree with these symbols. Display the family tree in your home.

Reflect: Pages 78–79

- ▶ Together look at page 78. **Ask:** *What is the girl in the picture doing? Suggest that your child write mealtime prayers on note cards and place them on the family table.*
- ▶ Read aloud the first two paragraphs. Then pray together the Prayer Before Meals. After a few moments of silence for personal reflection, pray together the Prayer After Meals. **Say:** *We learn these prayers and pray them with our families before and after meals to thank God for the gifts of food and family.* Read aloud the last paragraph. Allow time for your child to reflect on God's generosity.
- ▶ Read aloud Building the Domestic Church on page 79 and have your child complete the activity. Encourage your child to share his or her ideas with your family.
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. **Ask:** *How does the liturgy relate to family life? (A family can form a community of prayer that mirrors the community of prayer formed when we celebrate the liturgy.)*

Respond: Page 80

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can promote love and closeness within your family.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

God Calls Us

Engage: Page 81

- ▶ **Ask:** *Think of a time someone told you "I'm counting on you." How did it make you feel? (nervous, excited, proud)* **Say:** *God counts on us to be holy and to serve his kingdom.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's responses. Point out the picture. **Say:** *The plants are counting on the boy to keep them healthy. In this session we will learn how God is counting on us to be stewards of his Word.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about how Mary felt when God asked her to be the mother of Jesus. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 82–83

- ▶ Together make lists of your special talents. Discuss how both of you can share your talents with the Church community.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Using One's Talents for Service on page 82. **Ask:** *What was the problem in the Corinthian community? (People weren't using their special spiritual gifts in ways that promoted the good of the community.)*
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *This passage reminds us to be like Samuel and to be open to God's call.*
- ▶ Read aloud The Blessed Virgin Mary's Calling on page 83. **Ask:** *What was Mary's call? (to be the Mother of God) What does Assumption mean? (Mary was taken into Heaven, body and soul.) How does Mary help us today? (She prays for us.)*
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. **Ask:** *What does it mean to call Mary the patroness of the United States? (We ask for her help and protection.)*

Art Exploration: Page 238

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Joseph working as a carpenter together with Jesus.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the work the people are doing.
- ▶ **Say:** *Jesus calls everyone to use his or her talents to serve God and others.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 238. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud The Universal Call to Holiness. **Say:** *We can bring holiness to each thing we do in our lives.*

- ▶ Read aloud Assembling a Sculpture. **Ask:** *What were some of the special talents of the people who worked on the project?* (artistic ability, knowledge of construction, technical support, leadership)
- ▶ Read aloud Cooperating on a Project and have your child complete the activity. Discuss his or her experience.
- ▶ Discuss jobs that serve God and the community. Ask your child to draw on small sheets of paper pictures of people who do these jobs. Provide string and ask your child to attach his or her drawings to a mobile, signifying the Church.

Reflect: Pages 84–85

- ▶ Together look at page 84. **Say:** *As you pray to Mary, remember her as a young person who understands you and the choices you are asked to make.*
- ▶ **Say:** *Imagine Mary is with you and ready to listen.* Read aloud the first four paragraphs. Pause for your child to reflect and imagine a conversation with Mary. Read aloud the final sentence and invite your child to pray the Hail Mary together with you.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Sharing Talents on page 85 and complete the activity. Ask your child to name ways he or she can share talents with the people in your neighborhood.
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. **Say:** *Shrines to Mary, like this one in Cuba, are found all over the world. Many people visit these sites to honor Mary as someone who answered God's call.*

Respond: Page 86

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can participate in the Mass.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 87

- ▶ Display images of a Nativity scene. **Ask:** *What do these pictures represent? (Christmas, when Jesus was born) What do you know about Christmas? (We celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25.)*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and text. Discuss the picture. **Ask:** *When does the Christmas season end? (the first Sunday after Epiphany with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord)* **Say:** *In this session we will learn more about our Church's Christmas season and discover all the wonderful reasons we have to celebrate.*
- ▶ Ask your child to make a list of things your family can do to prepare for the Christmas season. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Page 88

- ▶ **Ask:** *What are some ways that we can live holy lives? (bring love and forgiveness to the world, understand and console others, treat others as we want to be treated)*
- ▶ Read aloud We Celebrate God's Gift During Christmas. **Say:** *Christmas is a time to honor God's gift to us of his Son by answering his call to live a holy life.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud How Can I Live a Holy Life? Discuss ways Jesus lived a holy life, such as spending time in prayer, attending Mass, and celebrating the sacraments. Have your child complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *God, who calls us to be holy, is the Most Holy. Since this call comes from him, we must try to be holy in all that we do.*

Reflect: Page 89

- ▶ **Ask:** *When do we honor people in our family? (birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day)* **Say:** *We have a special feast day to honor the Holy Family.*
- ▶ Read aloud Mass During Christmas. **Say:** *The Holy Family is Jesus' family: Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, but Mary and Joseph raised him as their child.*
- ▶ Read aloud What We Experience. Discuss what you see in church during the Christmas season. Read aloud The Holy Family Inspires Our Own Family. Have your child complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. **Say:** *Joseph needed to work to support Mary and Jesus. To do this, he labored as a carpenter.*

Art Exploration: Page 239

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows a Nativity scene celebrating the night Jesus was born.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the modern elements of the artwork.
- ▶ **Say:** *Although Jesus lived thousands of years ago, the story of his birth is still a relevant and important part of our lives today.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 239. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud Celebrating Christmas. **Say:** *The first Sunday following Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Family. This feast day is an opportunity to honor Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, as well as our own families.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud The Gift of Jesus. **Say:** *Only when the people put aside their greed and selfishness and chose to love God and one another did they find peace and happiness.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Show Your Love and complete the activity. Share your own ideas about how to show your love toward others.
- ▶ Together with your child, use art supplies and a shoe box to make a diorama of your interpretation of the birth of Jesus. Encourage your child to include everything he or she remembers from the story, such as sheep and shepherds, the Magi, the star of Bethlehem, and the manger.

Respond: Page 90

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can show kindness and respect to others.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.