The Church, Our Community in the Spirit

Begin

▶ Write the word mission on a sheet of paper. Ask: What is a mission? (a job or goal to achieve) Say: In Unit 2, we learned that Jesus sent his Apostles and disciples on a mission. What was the mission? (to proclaim God’s Word and continue the work of Jesus Christ) Read aloud the unit title on page 85. Say: Since then, many members of the Church have accepted a mission to continue the work of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In this unit, we will learn more about the Catholic Church and its gifts and about important leaders of the Church.

Introduce the Saint: Pages 86–87

▶ Point to the picture on page 86. Tell your child that Katharine Drexel accepted a mission from the pope to serve the Kingdom of God. Read aloud the text. Say: People who travel to tell other people about God are missionaries.

▶ Have your child look at page 87. Ask him or her to read aloud the text. Say: Katharine continued the work of Jesus Christ through her generosity to Native American and African American people. Ask: What group did Katharine organize to help others? (Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament) Ask: What do you think Jesus’ mission is for you? Guide your child in answering by calling attention to his or her strengths and interests and how they could be put to the service of others. With your child, add Katharine’s feast day, March 3, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the generosity of Saint Katharine Drexel.
**Unit Opener: Page 88**

- Remind your child that Jesus invites us to be generous. Give examples of generosity, such as sharing a snack or helping with a chore. Ask your child to give other examples.
- Ask: **How does it feel to be generous?** (Possible answer: It feels good to know I can help someone else.) Say: *Saint Katharine teaches us that we can share God’s love by being generous in many different ways.* Then read aloud the title on the page and the first paragraph.
- Read aloud We Can Be Generous. Say: *Katharine was wealthy and generous with her money, but she was even more generous in other ways.* Ask: **What are some things or qualities you have to offer?** Help your child recognize qualities from your earlier discussion as he or she writes the three ways in which he or she can be generous.
- Call attention to the Reading God’s Word feature. Remind your child that as Katharine was generous with what she had, God is generous with his gifts to us. Say: *Let’s thank God for the many gifts he has given us.* Pray the psalm together.
Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

Engage: Page 89

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud John 14:15–21. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
- Ask your child about a time when a friend stood up for him or her. Say: As I read, think about how reassuring it is to know that someone will watch out for you. Read aloud the paragraphs. Say: Now think about how reassuring it is to know that Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to help and guide you every day. Ask: How does the Holy Spirit help us? (He makes sure we are not alone but always have Jesus’ love with us.) Say: Let’s ask Jesus to help us receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying Amen.
- Ask: What is a disciple? (a person who is a follower of Jesus) Say: The disciples were excited when the Holy Spirit visited them. In this session, we will learn how the Holy Spirit is part of our lives.
- Ask your child to think about how the Holy Spirit helps him or her.

Explore: Pages 90–91

- Find and play from the internet a video with the sound of wind in nature. (Alternatively, invite your child to listen as you make the sound of a breeze.) Say: The disciples heard a strong wind when the Holy Spirit first visited them. They heard the wind inside the room where they were.
- Tell your child that you are going to read a story that comes from a book of the Bible called Acts of the Apostles. Read aloud A Wind from Heaven on page 90. Ask: What amazed the crowd about the disciples? (The crowd consisted of people who spoke many different languages, and yet each person in the crowd heard the disciples speaking in his or her own language.) Look at the picture. Say: The Holy Spirit got the disciples “fired up” to tell the world about Jesus.
- Invite your child to read aloud The Disciples Accept Jesus’ Mission on page 91. Say: Every Christian has a duty to give witness to the Good News about Jesus, which is that he loves us and wants us to love God and one another. Read aloud The Holy Spirit Builds the Church. Ask: How does the Holy Spirit continue to build the Church today? (by giving us the strength to spread God’s Word) Invite your child to read aloud Jesus’ Mission in Our Lives and complete the activity. Encourage your child to share his or her responses with you.
- Read aloud the Link to the Liturgy feature. Say: On Pentecost Sunday, priests wear red vestments. The color symbolizes the tongues of fire that appeared above the disciples’ heads when the Holy Spirit came.
Art Exploration: Page 92

▶ Find in a magazine, a book, or online an image of a work of art featuring a dove or doves. Ask: What do you think the dove stands for in this picture? (hope, the Holy Spirit, reconciliation, forgiveness, peace, inspiration) Say: Sometimes we feel closest to God and the Holy Spirit when we are with God’s wonderful creations in nature.

▶ Invite your child to turn to page 92. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question. Then read aloud together The Holy Spirit Is with Us. Ask: How does the Holy Spirit help us? (He shows us how to live prayerful lives and guides us on our journey to heaven.) Give your child time to complete the sentence.

▶ Read aloud Doves. Remind your child of your discussion of what a dove might stand for. Have your child complete the activity and invite him or her to share it with you.

▶ Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Invite your child to read the passage. Ask: Why was Jesus coming out of the water? (He had just been baptized.) Why is the Spirit compared to a dove? (It flies down lightly and is white, like light.)

▶ Around your house, hide some doves that you cut out from white paper, and invite your child to find them. Remind him or her that the Holy Spirit is always with us.

Reflect: Pages 93–94

▶ Together look at page 93. Say: We open our hearts to the Holy Spirit to feel his presence and great love for us.

▶ Have your child get comfortable as you read aloud the first paragraph. Invite your child to pray aloud the prayer with you. Read aloud the last sentence and give your child time to reflect. Lead him or her in praying the Sign of the Cross.

▶ Read aloud the title and the first section on page 94. Ask: What happens when we let the Holy Spirit guide our actions? (We see the results in the form of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.) Ask: How do the Gifts of the Holy Spirit help us? (They strengthen us and help us do what God asks of us.) Have your child read aloud The Spirit in Our Actions. Give your child time to complete the activity and invite him or her to share the sentences with you.

▶ Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature as your child follows along. Say: This is from one of Paul’s letters to his friends. He lists some of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: qualities we possess when we are guided by the Spirit.

Respond: Pages 95–96

▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can show kindness to others. Then invite your child to complete the activity.

▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

▶ Read aloud With My Family on page 96. Talk with your child about how he or she knows the Holy Spirit is with him or her.
The Catholic Church

Engage: Page 97

► Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Acts of the Apostles 16:4–5. Then say: The Word of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Thanks be to God.

► If your child does not know what a relay race is, explain that it is a race between groups of runners or swimmers in which one runner or swimmer on a team starts when the one before finishes. Say: Jesus handed on to the Apostles the task of carrying out his mission. They handed it on to the people who came next, like in a relay race. Read aloud the paragraphs. Ask: How do our church leaders help us today? (They watch over the church family.) Say: Let’s ask Jesus to help us follow him. Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude the prayer by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 98–99

► If your child participates in a sport, ask: What does your coach do? (leaders, trains, teaches, supports, and encourages the team; helps all the players do their best and work together) If not, substitute the leader of an activity he or she participates in, or a teacher, and ask the same question. Read aloud Popes, Bishops, Priests on page 98. Ask: Who is the Vicar of Christ? (the pope) Have your child read aloud My Church Leaders. Help your child complete the activity by filling in the names of your parish, pastor, bishop, and pope.

► Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: Why did Jesus tell Peter to feed his sheep? (He wanted Peter to take care of Jesus’ followers.) Take turns reading aloud page 99 with your child. Say: Let’s name some key words for each of the Marks of the Church. (one—one faith, one life; holy—Body of Christ, sacraments; catholic—accepts everyone, universal; apostolic—Apostles, church leaders) Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Ask: Why do you think we pray for our leaders? (They have difficult jobs, and their work affects all of us, so we want to ask God to help them.)

Art Exploration: Page 100

► Find in a magazine, a newspaper, a book, or online an image of Saint Peter holding keys.

► Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including objects shown in the artwork.

► Say: Jesus told Peter he was the rock on which Jesus would build his Church and that Jesus would give Peter the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven.

► Have your child turn to page 100. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
Have your child read aloud Peter and the Church. Ask: *To what object did Jesus compare Peter?* (a rock) *What did Jesus give Peter?* (keys to the Kingdom of Heaven) Read aloud the activity directions for Symbols of Peter and have your child complete the sentences. Share your own responses to these questions.

- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: *When we look at a rock, we can think of how Jesus chose Peter to be the foundation on which to build the church.*

- Invite your child to make a key out of modeling clay that hardens. While the clay is still moist, insert a pencil point to make a hole so that later your child can pull string through to hang the key. Give your child the key to keep as a symbol of his or her faith.

**Reflect: Pages 101–102**

- Together look at page 101. Say: *The girl in the picture looks peaceful.* Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and receive God’s peace.

- Remind your child that you have been learning the parts of the Apostles’ Creed together. Read aloud the first paragraph. Say: *Repeat each line of the last part of the Apostles’ Creed after me.* Then invite your child to pray the entire Creed with you. Read aloud the Reflection, pausing after each sentence. Allow time for your child to talk to Jesus silently and then pray *Amen.*

- Have your child read aloud the heading and the first paragraph on page 102. Read aloud the activity directions and have your child answer the questions. Read aloud the directions at the bottom of the page. Ask your child to share his or her answer with you.

**Respond: Pages 103–104**

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can spread God’s love in your church community. Then invite your child to complete the activity.

- Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

- Read *With My Family* on page 104. Invite your child to pray the Apostles’ Creed often to learn it by heart. Offer to help.
Our Response to God’s Gifts

The Church Prays

Engage: Page 105

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Matthew 6:5–8. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
- Invite your child to make a list of people he or she talks with most often. Say: We talk most often with those who are closest and most important to us. It is important that we talk with God so that we can grow closer to him. Read aloud the paragraphs. Ask: How does praying quietly and sincerely help us feel closer to God? (We give God our full attention.) Say: As we pray, think of how blessed we are when we receive the sacraments.
- Pray together the prayer. Pause for reflection; then pray Amen.
- Show your child pictures of some traffic signs that do not have words on them. Together state the signs’ meanings. Say: These signs give us directions and protect us. Say: Like these signs, God’s signs give direction and send important messages to us. In this session, we will learn more about God’s messages.

Explore: Pages 106–107

- Ask: When we go to Mass together, who else is there with us? (friends, the priest, Jesus) Have your child read aloud page 106. Ask: What do the sacraments do for us? (They help us grow in faith and live as God wants.) Look together at the picture of the boy and the priest. Make sure your child knows that the boy is receiving Holy Communion. Model with your child the gestures we perform when receiving Communion as shown in the photograph. Read with your child Prayer, Gesture, and Ritual. Ask your child to tell you one or two gestures or prayers he or she remembers performing or praying at Mass.
- Read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 107. Ask: What is grace? (the gift of God that fills us with God’s life and makes us his friends) Say: Both objects and actions can be sacramentals. Ask: What action is a sacramental? (a blessing) Say: A blessing is a prayer that calls upon God to care for a person, a place, a thing, or an activity.
- Read aloud A Sacramental at Your House and have your child write his or her description. Discuss your child’s response.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: Sacramentals help prepare us to receive the grace of the sacraments.
Art Exploration: Page 108

- Find in a book or online an image that shows Jesus healing someone. Discuss with your child the aspects of Jesus that convey he is a healer. Say: *Jesus Christ reaches out to all people.*
- Have your child turn to page 108. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question. Read aloud *Jesus and the Roman Officer*. Ask: *Why did Jesus heal the man’s servant?* (He was impressed by the man’s faith, and he wanted to show that his mission was to all people.) Invite your child to read aloud the last paragraph and complete the activity. Discuss the ideas that your child has written.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: *As we prepare to receive Holy Communion, we ask for God’s healing grace.*
- Provide art supplies for your child. Invite your child to imagine being present when the servant realizes he is well again and to draw what he or she imagines.

Reflect: Pages 109–110

- Together look at page 109. Say: *It is important to feel comfortable as you prepare to pray. Let’s close our eyes and quiet ourselves.* Read aloud the introduction. Then read the reflection in a reverent tone, pausing after each paragraph. Pause so that your child has time to talk to Jesus. Lead your child in praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Have your child read the first paragraph on page 110. Have your child complete the sentences and fill in the puzzle. Together unscramble the circled letters to complete the last sentence.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: *What does Jesus’ answer mean to you?* (When we are helping people, Jesus is working through us. The Kingdom of God is among us.)

Respond: Pages 111–112

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud *Ways of Being Like Jesus*. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can be helpful to friends and family. Then invite your child to complete the activity.
- Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- Read With My Family on page 112. Invite your child to reflect on how Jesus taught us to pray.
Mary Is Holy

Engage: Page 113


> Ask your child if he or she has ever received praise—such as from you, a teacher, a coach, or a friend—and then kept the resulting warm feeling with him or her. Say: Sometimes we like keeping something good in our own minds so we can always come back to it. Read aloud the paragraphs. Ask: What did Mary keep in her heart? (God’s message that her son would be the Savior) Say: Let’s pray to Mary’s Son, Jesus, who can help us follow Mary’s example. Pray the prayer together. Then pray the Sign of the Cross.

> Write the letters of the word mother down the side of a sheet of paper. Together think of words and phrases beginning with each letter that describe why mothers are special.

> Say: We are going to talk about a mother that everyone shares. Ask: Who is it? (Mary) Say: In this session, we will learn about how Mary said yes to God.

Explore: Pages 114–115

> Together find images of Mary in books or on the internet. Ask: Where else can we see images of Mary? (statue in church, statue or painting in a museum) Have your child read aloud page 114. Say: Mary is an excellent example of what it means to be a saint because she devoted her life to serving God. Ask: How can we be like Mary? (trust in God always, care for others, listen to God) What is one word to describe the Communion of Saints? (togetherness, one, united) Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: In 1846, the U.S. bishops placed our country under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We celebrate her Immaculate Conception on December 8.

> Read aloud page 115. Say: We just finished learning the last part of the Apostles’ Creed, so you now know all the prayers that make up the Rosary.

> Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: Ruth and Hannah were mothers who served God. Esther rescued the Jewish people from an enemy.

Art Exploration: Page 116

> Find in a magazine, a book, or online a work of art showing the Annunciation. Look at it together with your child and discuss what each of you thinks Mary might be experiencing. Say: God called Mary to be the mother of his Son, the Church, and all of God’s children.
Have your child turn to page 116. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question. Invite your child to read aloud Mary, Full of Grace. Ask: What did Gabriel say to Mary? (that she was going to have a baby) How did Mary react? (She was happy, excited; she felt blessed.) Read aloud Mary as Our Mother and invite your child to complete the activity. Briefly discuss your child’s response to the activity.

Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: Why did Elizabeth say that Mary was blessed? (Because Mary trusted in him, God gave her his most precious gift of all—his Son, Jesus.) Invite your child to think about what it is like to visit a mother and new baby. Ask: What would you say and do? Would you ask to hold the baby, help with chores, bring food, ask questions? Role-play visiting Mary and baby Jesus. Together improvise a conversation between your child and Mary.

Reflect: Pages 117–118

Together look at page 117. Say: As you pray each Hail Mary in the Rosary, think about one of the five Joyful Mysteries and its importance in the lives of Mary and Jesus. Invite your child to read aloud each event and then close his or her eyes while you describe how Mary felt at each one. Read aloud the last sentence and give your child time to reflect silently. Together pray the Sign of the Cross.

 Invite your child to read aloud Mary’s Song of Praise on page 118. Ask: Why were Mary and Elizabeth so happy? (They were going to have very special children.) Who were these children? (Jesus and John the Baptist) Say: Mary prayed the Magnificat to praise God for the great things he had done for her. Read aloud the activity I’m Thankful for . . . Give your child time to reflect before writing his or her list.

Respond: Pages 119–120

Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can show love for Mary and follow her example of faith and love. Then invite your child to complete the activity.

Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

Read With My Family on page 120. Invite your child to take time to praise our mother Mary this week by praying the Rosary.
Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 121

▸ Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read Matthew 1:18–23. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

▸ If there has recently been a newborn baby in your family or you and your child have ever visited a family with a newborn, talk together about what it was like. Ask: How do people interact with a newborn baby? (They look at the baby, admire it, marvel at God’s creation of new life. They may softly greet the baby. They speak softly around it.) Can you imagine if a newborn baby you were visiting was God come to earth to save us? Invite your child’s response. Then read aloud page 121.

▸ Ask: What do you think was the response of the Magi when they first saw Jesus? (in awe at being in the holy presence of the Savior) Ask your child when the Christmas season begins and ends. (at the celebration of Mass on Christmas Eve; at the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord) Ask: Who were the Magi, and why were they important? (They were wise leaders from far away whose visit signaled that Jesus is the Savior.) Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying Amen.

▸ Say: In this session, we will learn about Christmas as the time of year when we celebrate Jesus’ birth and pray to be more like him.

Explore: Page 122

▸ Discuss with your child how your family celebrates Christmas, including your Christmas traditions. Read aloud We Celebrate During Christmas. Call attention to the sentence about the Eucharist. Say: When we receive the Eucharist at Christmas Eve Mass, we remember Jesus coming to be with us.

▸ Have your child read aloud Christmas Morning and complete the activity. Invite your child to share his or her sentences with you.

▸ Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: How is Jesus referred to in the passage? ("one who is to be ruler in Israel") Where did the prophet say this ruler would come from? (Bethlehem)

Reflect on the Mass: Page 123

▸ Look at pictures of two different Nativity scenes and discuss how they are alike and different. Say: All Nativity scenes have the same essential pieces: Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.
Read aloud Mass During Christmas. Ask: What is the Hebrew meaning of the word Bethlehem? (house of bread) Who is the Bread of Life? (Jesus) Read aloud the section What We Experience. Discuss the symbols of Christmas that your child might see at Mass, such as a Nativity scene, evergreens, lights, and the color white. Read together Your Nativity Scene and invite your child to complete the activity.

Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: The word Christmas is formed from two Old English words, Christes and Maesse.

Art Exploration: Page 124

Find in a magazine, a book, or online a work of art that shows the Nativity and/or the adoration of the Magi.

Discuss with your child the setting, the people, and what is happening in the picture. Point out that people are in awe of the divine child that has been born. Look together at the expressions on the faces of the people shown in the painting. Say: When we celebrate Christmas, it reminds us of how much God loves us.

Have your child turn to page 124. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

Read aloud Celebrating Christmas. Ask: What do we celebrate at the Feast of the Epiphany? (the visit paid by the Magi to Jesus, revealing to the world that he is the Savior) Have your child read aloud The Gift of Jesus and the passage from 1 John. Ask: What do you think this passage from 1 John means? (that God and love are the same) Have your child read A Gift for Baby Jesus. Give him or her time to draw the picture. Ask your child to explain the gift he or she chose for Jesus.

Play or sing “Silent Night.” Ask: What does this song convey about Jesus’ birth? (The night was quiet and holy. Although it was night, it was bright around Mary and the newborn Jesus.)

Respond: Pages 125–126

Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can help in your community. Then invite your child to complete the activity.

Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.

Read With My Family on page 126. Invite your child to think about gifts you can give to Jesus to celebrate his birth—to celebrate God’s coming to be with us.