God, Our Creator and Father

Begin

Say: The title of this book is Finding God. God is our Father and Creator. Ask: Where do we find him? Discuss with your child where you each find God in your everyday life. Tell your child that you find God in him or her and in your love for him or her. Read aloud the unit title on page 2. Say: In this unit, we will learn about God as our Father and Creator. God created everything that is. His creation shows his love for us. One way we show our love for God is by praying. Prayer brings us closer to him.

Introduce the Saint

Focus your child’s attention on the picture of Saint Teresa of Ávila on page 2. Ask: What can we tell about Saint Teresa of Ávila based on this picture? (She was a holy person. She liked to write.) Have your child read aloud Saint Teresa of Ávila on page 3. Ask: How did Teresa describe contemplative prayer? (as “being on terms of friendship with God”) What title did Teresa receive for what she wrote? (Doctor of the Church) Explain that the Church believes that her writings about prayer are important to Church teachings.

Read aloud the Be Inspired feature. Say: Saint Teresa of Ávila spent a lot of time praying and thinking about prayer. She also wanted to help other people learn how to pray. Ask: Who helps you learn how to pray? (Possible answers: family members, priests, catechists)

Say: We remember Saint Teresa of Ávila because she dedicated her life to prayer. We are going to learn how we can grow closer to God through prayer.

With your child, add Teresa’s feast day, October 15, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the teachings of Saint Teresa of Ávila.
Unit Opener: Page 4

▶ Say: *We all have bad days. When we are feeling upset or angry, we can share our problems with someone we trust.* Ask: *How can it be helpful for someone to listen to your problems?* (It makes me feel comforted and less alone.) Say: *Saint Teresa of Ávila wants us to know that God is a good listener.*

▶ Invite your child to read aloud Finding God in Prayer on page 4. Discuss the different ways to pray and when you might pray each type of prayer.

▶ Read aloud Prayers Open Doors and invite your child to do the activity. When your child is finished, discuss his or her three short prayers. Talk about how praying can help us feel closer to God.

▶ Direct your child’s attention to the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: *Saint Teresa of Ávila teaches us that God listens when we pray from our heart.* Read aloud the Scripture. Then invite your child to pray aloud the Scripture with you.
God Creates Us

Engage: Page 5

- With your child, look out the window and find beautiful aspects of God’s creation. Ask: *What makes these things beautiful? Why do you think God created them?*
- Read aloud the session title. Say: *In this session of our Finding God book, we will learn about the wonders of God’s creation and how we are called to care for what God has given us.*
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud Psalm 8 from your Bible. Then say: *The Word of the Lord.* Invite your child to respond *Thanks be to God.*
- Say: *God has given us all of creation as a gift. We are called to be thankful for this gift and to care for it.* Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 5. Ask: *What are some words you would use to describe God’s creation?* Say: *Let’s ask God to help us follow his plan for his creation.* Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 6–7

- Say: *Think of a time you saw a rainbow.* Ask: *How did you feel when you saw the colors of the rainbow?* Say: *God has created those amazing colors.*
- Have your child read aloud God’s Wonderful Creation on page 6. Look up the terms *soul* and *free will* in the Glossary. Say: *Having a soul makes us human and makes us beings who are made in the image and likeness of God.* Ask: *What is free will?* (our ability to choose good because God has made us like him) *What kinds of choices do you think God wants us to make regarding the earth?* (God wants us to use our free will to choose to care for everything he has given us.)
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: *Everything God makes is good, and he takes care of everybody and everything.*
- Have your child read aloud Care for the World on page 7. Ask: *Why is it important not to waste the resources we have received from God?* (to show our gratitude for the gift of creation)
- Read aloud Care for a Special Place. Have your child complete the activity. Discuss his or her response.

Art Exploration: Page 8

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a tree with flowers and butterflies.
- Ask: *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the colors and the flowers.
Say: *Creation is a gift from God. There are many ways we can thank him for this gift.*

Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 8.

Invite your child to read aloud God the Creator. Look up the word *psalm* in the Glossary. Ask: *What aspects of God’s creation are included in this psalm?* (the earth, water, pastures, flocks [of animals], valleys, grain) Say: *Creation is full of life. The living things that surround us remind us to thank God for the gift of creation.*

Read aloud Write a Psalm and invite your child to write and share his or her own psalm.

Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: *There are different types of psalms. We can use some of them to pray prayers of thanks, prayers of praise, and prayers of sorrows.*

Give your child art supplies and a sheet of paper and ask him or her to draw an outline of a tree. Take turns decorating the tree with aspects of God’s creation that you and your child find especially beautiful. Conclude by praying together a prayer thanking God for the gift of creation.

Reflect: Pages 9–10

Read aloud God Calls Us to Pray on page 9. Then direct your child’s attention to the picture of the girl. Ask: *What is the girl in the picture focusing on?* (a bird) Say: *As you pray, focus your attention on a specific image to help you concentrate and reflect.*

Invite your child to get comfortable and perhaps close his or her eyes. Pray aloud the prayer. Pause to give your child time to reflect and pray silently. Together pray *Amen* and the Sign of the Cross.

Read aloud God’s Gift of Creation on page 10. Ask: *Why is it important to thank people for the gifts they give us?* (to show how much we appreciate their thoughtfulness and generosity) *What are some things we can do to show God how thankful we are for the gift of creation?* (pray a prayer of thanks, recycle, use only what we need)

Read aloud Thank God for Creation and have your child complete the activity. Invite him or her to share the drawing and the prayer.

Respond: Page 11

Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 11. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest ways he or she can thank God for the gift of creation. Then invite your child to complete the activity.

Pray aloud the prayer with your child. Then pray the Sign of the Cross together.

With My Family: Page 12

Read aloud With My Family on page 12. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer. Say: *Our world reminds us of God’s love. Let’s remember that we have a responsibility to care for his gift of creation.*
Our Father in Heaven

Engage: Page 13

- Give your child markers and a sheet of paper and have him or her draw a tree with long branches. Help your child write the name of a family member on each branch. Ask: How does God want us to treat our family members? (lovingly) Say: In this session, we are going to learn more about how God calls us to treat one another.
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud Matthew 12:46–50 from your Bible. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
- Read aloud the session title. Say: Jesus says that everyone who obeys God the Father is his family. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 13. Ask: How does God want us to treat our Church family? (with love and respect) Say: Let’s ask Jesus for his help to know God the Father more deeply. Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 14–15

- Talk about some of the different reasons that we pray (for example, to praise and thank God and to ask for help). Ask: What are some prayers you know by heart? In addition to praying these prayers, how else can we pray? (sing a song, go to Mass, read the Bible)
- Take turns with your child reading aloud God the Father Listens to Us on page 14. Ask: Why does God listen to our prayers? (because he loves us and wants to help us) Why might we pray the Lord’s Prayer? (to become closer to God)
- Say: Let’s find out what Jesus taught the disciples about prayer. Read aloud the Scripture passage. Say: God always listens to our prayers. When we pray to God with a need, we are praying a prayer of petition.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: The Lord’s Prayer helps us grow in relationship with God. Pray together the Lord’s Prayer.
- Read aloud The Kingdom of God on page 15. Look up the term Last Judgment in the Glossary. Ask: How might we describe the Kingdom of God? (It is proclaimed in the Gospels. It is present in the Person of Jesus.) Say: Through Jesus and the Gospels, we learn how to follow God the Father’s plan for us. This is the way we help build up God’s kingdom.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: There are religious communities who pray for us every day.
- Have your child read aloud Serving God’s Kingdom and complete the activity. Discuss your child’s response.
Art Exploration: Page 16

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a family reading the Bible together. Ask: *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what the family members are doing.
- Say: *When we read the Bible together, we learn about God.*
- Ask: *Who or what has helped you learn about God?*
- Read aloud the heading and the first paragraph on page 16. Ask: *What happens when we choose to follow God’s plan for us?* (We help build up the Kingdom of God.)
- Ask your child to read aloud the second paragraph. Ask: *What do we read about in the Gospels?* (Jesus’ life, Death, and Resurrection) Point out in your Bible where your child can find the Gospels.
- Have your child read aloud Jesus, the Son of God. Give your child time to read the passage in your Bible and complete the activity. Discuss his or her responses.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: *What can we do to grow in our relationship with Jesus?* (pray, attend Mass, celebrate the sacraments)
- Invite your child to use art supplies to draw or paint a picture of your family doing something together to grow in your relationship with Jesus. Invite your child to tell you about his or her picture.

Reflect: Pages 17–18

- Read aloud Our Faith in God on page 17. Say: *When we profess our belief in God, we profess our belief in the Trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.*
- Pray aloud the Act of Faith slowly and with expression. Close the prayer by asking your child to join you in praying the Glory Be to the Father.
- Read aloud Faith, Hope, and Charity on page 18. Look up the term *Theological Virtues* in the Glossary. Ask: *What do the words faith, hope, and charity mean to you?* (Faith is trust in God, hope is the confidence that God will always be with us, and charity is love of God and one another.) *What are some ways you can practice faith, hope, and charity in your life?* (pray, trust in God, treat others as I want to be treated)
- Have your child read aloud Sacred Symbols and complete the activity. Talk about the symbols that your child draws.
Respond: Page 19

▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 19. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can follow God’s plan in everyday life. Then invite your child to complete the activity.
▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Then pray the Sign of the Cross together.

With My Family: Page 20

▶ Read aloud With My Family on page 20. As a family, complete the page and plan to do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Say: We can be more loving like Jesus by trusting God, our loving Father, and following his plan for us.
God’s Plan for Salvation

Engage: Page 21

► Talk with your child about times he or she has waited for an exciting event, such as a birthday party. Ask: How do you feel when something good is about to happen? (excited, hopeful) Say: People waited a long time for God to fulfill his promise of a Savior. In this session, we will learn about God’s plan for our salvation.
► Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
► Read aloud the session title. Say: God promised that he would send a Savior to deliver us from our sins. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 21. Ask your child to name some people he or she trusts and tell why. Say: We trust God and his plan for salvation. His word is true. Pray aloud the prayer with your child. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 22–23

► Invite your child to share what he or she knows about Adam and Eve. Together look at the pictures on page 22. Ask: What do you see? (an apple, a snake, a nature scene with birds, a lion, and a tree)
► Ask your child to read aloud page 22. Ask: What choice did Adam and Eve have to make? (whether to eat the fruit from the tree or to obey God) What did they decide to do? (to eat the fruit) What were the consequences of their decision? (God told them to leave the garden. Their relationship with God was injured.)
► Read aloud God’s Promise on page 23. Look up the words temptation and salvation in the Glossary. Say: Original Sin is the loss of holiness and justice that resulted from Adam and Eve’s choice to turn away from God. Ask: What is the result of Original Sin? (a world full of temptation where it can be difficult to follow God’s plan for us) What promise did God make? (A Savior would save us from our sins.) What happens through God’s gift of salvation? (forgiveness of sins and restoration of our friendship with God)
► Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: God knows that sin is part of our world. However, God has sent a Savior to show us how to live and to save us from our sins.
► Invite your child to create a picture book of the story of Adam and Eve for younger children in your neighborhood to enjoy.
Art Exploration: Page 24

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a statue of Jesus with his arms outstretched.
- Ask: Whom do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the position of Jesus’ arms.
- Say: Jesus is always ready to welcome us. He is always ready to accept us. He loves us.
- Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 24.
- Have your child read aloud Salvation Through Jesus. Ask: Why is salvation through Jesus the greatest gift God has given us? (It allows us to live with God forever in heaven.) What choice does God want us to make when we are faced with temptation? (to follow his plan for us, resist temptation, and accept the gift of salvation)
- Read aloud Saved by Jesus. Explain how to write an acrostic. With your child, brainstorm a list of words or phrases for the first line. Then invite your child to finish the acrostic and share it with you.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: When we pray the Penitential Act, we ask God to forgive us and to help us mend the relationships we have harmed through our sinful choices. We can pray this prayer any time we want to express our sorrow to God.
- Have your child use modeling clay to sculpt a statue of Jesus. Encourage your child to portray one of Jesus’ characteristics in the statue, such as his love, compassion, or forgiveness. Display the statue in a place of honor in your home.

Reflect: Pages 25–26

- Together look at page 25. Say: The Act of Hope and the Act of Faith are like family keepsakes—these two prayers have been passed on from generation to generation.
- Read aloud Our Hope in God. Then pray aloud the prayer with your child. Close the prayer by praying Amen and the Glory Be to the Father.
- Read aloud Our Free Will on page 26. Then complete the Make Good Choices activity with your child. Take turns reading aloud each situation and talking about how to use free will to make good choices.
Respond: Page 27

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 27. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can demonstrate to others that he or she trusts in God. Then invite your child to complete the activity.
- Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Then pray the Sign of the Cross together.

With My Family: Page 28

- Read aloud With My Family on page 28. As a family, complete the page and plan to do the activity. Pray the family prayer. Say: We show God we are thankful for his gift of salvation when we do good deeds and care for others. I can’t wait to hear about the good deeds you do this week!
God Calls Us to Obey

Engage: Page 29

- Talk with your child about some of the rules he or she is asked to follow and why those rules are in place. Ask your child for examples of rules that help us succeed in a particular sport or activity.
- Read aloud the session title. Say: God gives us rules to follow so that we can be free to live good lives. In this session, we are going to learn about the importance of making good choices. We’ll also talk about behaviors that help us follow God’s plan for us.
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud John 8:32 from your Bible. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
- Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 29. Ask: Who helps us develop a good conscience and use our free will to make the right choice? (the Holy Spirit) Say: Jesus wants us to make good choices and feel free. Let’s ask God to help us make good choices. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 30–31

- Ask your child to recall the story of Pinocchio. Explain that Jiminy Cricket serves as Pinocchio’s conscience. Ask: What does your conscience help you do? (distinguish between right and wrong)
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: Where does this verse come from? (the Lord’s Prayer)
- Have your child read aloud Examination of Conscience on page 31. Ask: When might you make an examination of conscience? (as part of prayer before you go to bed, before celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation)
- Read aloud Good Choices. Ask your child to make an examination of conscience using page 270 in the back of the book. Then have your child complete the activity. Discuss your child’s response.
Art Exploration: Page 32

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a child being helpful, for example, by doing a chore or reading to a younger child.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what good choice the child is making.
- Say: The child in this picture is following Jesus by choosing to be helpful.
- Ask: How can the Holy Spirit help us follow Jesus?
- Read aloud Living in Freedom on page 32. Ask: When we are faced with temptation, what can we do to help us find the strength to live in true freedom? (follow the Ten Commandments, practice the virtues, pray to the Holy Spirit for strength)
- Have your child read aloud Help from the Holy Spirit and write a prayer.
- With your child, use art supplies to create a small mural that shows people using their free will to make good choices. Display the mural in your home.

Reflect: Pages 33–34

- Read aloud Making Good Choices on page 33. Say: It is important to think about our relationships to make sure we are treating people with dignity and respect.
- Pray aloud the first paragraph of the prayer slowly, giving your child time to reflect. Then ask your child to join you in praying aloud the second paragraph. Close by praying Amen and exchanging a sign of peace.
- Have your child read aloud A Helping Hand on page 34. Ask: How did Sophia’s choice make her feel? Why? (It made her feel good because she had shown Evan respect and followed the path God had chosen for her.)
- Read aloud Write About Respect and have your child complete the activity.
- Read aloud the Meet a Saint feature. Ask: How can we be more like Saint Peter Canisius? (We can make an effort to get along with one another. We can encourage our friends to treat other people with kindness and respect.)
Respond: Page 35

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 35. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest another way he or she can form a good conscience. Then invite your child to complete the activity.
- Pray aloud the prayer with your child. Then pray the Sign of the Cross together.

With My Family: Page 36

- Read aloud With My Family on page 36. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer. Say: The Holy Spirit will help us do the right thing. Let’s remember to pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance to make good decisions.
Celebrating Ordinary Time

Engage: Page 37

- Read aloud the session title. With your child, look at a church calendar. Help your child find the days marked as Ordinary Time. Ask: How many times during the year do we celebrate Ordinary Time? (two) Say: In this session, we will learn about growing as Jesus’ disciples during Ordinary Time.
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Say: Jesus calls all of us who are baptized to join him in his mission. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 37. Ask: What qualities do you have that make you a good disciple of Jesus? Say: Let’s pray together for help to be like Jesus this Ordinary Time. Pray aloud the prayer with your child. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Page 38

- List these virtues on a sheet of paper: honesty, charity, patience, joy, hope, justice, courage, faith, temperance, and self-control. Take turns using each word in a sentence to show its meaning. Use the following to define the listed virtues. [honesty: truthfulness; charity: love; patience: waiting for something even when it is difficult to do so; joy: happiness; hope: confidence that God will always be with us; justice: the strong desire to give to God and to others what is due to them; courage: bravery; faith: the trust we place in God and his revealed teachings; temperance: moderation in thought, action, and feeling; and self-control: the ability to control one’s thoughts, actions, and feelings]
- Read aloud We Grow in Virtue During Ordinary Time on page 38. Look up the words discipleship and prudence in the Glossary. Ask: What do we try to better understand during this season? (Jesus’ invitation to love God the Father, serve others, and avoid sin) What does God’s grace help us do? (grow in virtue and avoid temptation)
- Have your child read aloud Grow Strong and complete the activity. Discuss your child’s response.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: When we live in Jesus’ light by following his teachings, we produce good things.
Reflect: Page 39

- With your child, find John 13:1–9 and Matthew 10:40–42 in your Bible. Say: Here are Gospel stories in which Jesus teaches what it means to be a disciple. Read aloud the stories.
- Read aloud Mass During Ordinary Time on page 39. Ask: Whom do we adore and glorify during the celebration of the Mass? (God the Father) Who makes Jesus’ saving grace present to us? (the Holy Spirit)
- Have your child read aloud What We Experience. Say: The candles in church symbolize the light of Christ and remind us that we are called to share Christ’s light with others.
- Have your child read aloud Share Christ’s Light and complete the activity. Discuss your child’s response.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Remind your child that Ordinary Time goes from the Monday after the Baptism of the Lord until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, and then from the Monday after Pentecost until the first Sunday of Advent. Use the church calendar to point out the days.

Art Exploration: Page 40

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a person in prayer.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the gestures and facial expression of the person who is praying.
- Say: When we pray, we use traditional prayers, use our own words, read Scripture, or focus on an object or an image.
- Ask: How can prayer help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
- Read aloud Called by God on page 40. Ask: How can we learn what God is calling us to do? (by praying) What do we discover when we take time to pray and reflect? (how God wants us to share his love and peace with others)
- Have your child read aloud Respond to God’s Call and complete the activity.
- With your child, read your most recent parish bulletin or information on your parish website. Invite your child to use art supplies to make a poster of different opportunities your family can participate in through your church to serve others. Display the poster in your home and discuss what you would like to do as a family.
Respond: Page 41
▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 41. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can practice the virtues of faith, hope, and charity in everyday life. Then invite your child to do the activity.
▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Then pray the Sign of the Cross together.

With My Family: Page 42
▶ Read aloud With My Family on page 42. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer. Say: Let’s remember to look for ways to act like Jesus and share his light with others.