The Church, Our Community in the Spirit

Begin

▶ Ask: Who are some of the saints we have learned about? (Saint Teresa of Ávila, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint John Baptiste Vianney) What made these people saints? (They followed God’s plan for them. They helped other people follow God.) Read aloud the unit title on page 86. Say: Our new unit will help us learn about the Church, the community of Jesus’ followers. First, we are going to read about Saint Louis IX. He is a model for serving others and building up the Church.

Introduce the Saint

▶ Focus your child’s attention on the picture of Saint Louis IX on page 86. Ask: What can you tell about Saint Louis IX based on this picture? (He was a king. He ate dinner with people who weren’t wealthy or royal.) Say: As king, Louis IX was concerned about the French people. As a Catholic, he worked to strengthen the Church.

▶ Have your child read aloud Saint Louis IX on page 87. Ask: What did Saint Louis IX do to serve God? (He supported the building of hospitals, schools, libraries, and churches. He supported efforts to spread the Good News.) Say: Saint Louis IX supported two religious orders: the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Members of these orders took a vow of poverty. They supported themselves by begging.

▶ Read aloud the Be Inspired feature. Ask: Why is it important to comfort and be kind to people who are suffering? (As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to help others, especially those in need. People who are suffering need our kindness and care.)

▶ With your child, add Saint Louis’s feast day, August 25, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the efforts of Saint Louis IX.
Unit Opener: Page 88

▶ Ask: How do you think a leader who knew that all people were important would act? (He or she would treat other people equally, seek justice, and be kind to everyone.) Say: Louis IX was good to people who were poor. He fed them at his own table. He knew that their lives mattered. Have your child read aloud Faith with Dignity. Ask: Why was Louis fair to all his subjects? (He knew that all people have God-given dignity.)

▶ Read aloud We Are Precious in God’s Eyes. Have your child complete the activity and then talk about his or her responses. Discuss how seeing ways we are all similar can help us understand that all people have dignity and deserve to be treated with respect.

▶ Direct your child’s attention to the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: God calls us to love and care for one another. Read aloud the Scripture. Then invite your child to pray aloud the Scripture with you.
The People of God

Engage: Page 89

- Ask: What communities do you belong to? (family, school, parish, town) Discuss how you are welcomed into these communities and how you show that you are an active member of these communities. Say: Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are welcomed into the Church community. In this session, we will learn more about the Church, the community of people who believe in and follow Jesus.

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.

- Read aloud 1 Peter 2:9–10 from your Bible. Then say: The Word of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Thanks be to God.

- Say: As members of the Church community, we make our love of God known to others. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 89. Ask: How do we make God’s greatness known? (through our words and actions) Say: Let’s ask God to help us teach others about his Son, Jesus. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 90–91

- Display a globe or a picture of one. Ask: What is this? What does it represent? (the planet Earth) How are people who live on earth the same? How are they different?

- Have your child read aloud We Continue Jesus’ Mission on page 90. Ask: What did Jesus tell his followers to do? (go out and make new disciples, continue his mission by teaching others how to follow God’s commandments) Look up the term universal Church in the Glossary. Say: The Church is universal because it is open to everyone.

- Have your child read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: We entrust children who die without Baptism to God’s mercy. We pray for their salvation.

- Read aloud Welcomed into the Church on page 91. Ask: What are the three Sacraments of Initiation? (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist)

- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: Who is speaking in this passage? (Jesus) What is he saying? (that his followers will receive the strength of the Holy Spirit to be his witnesses in the world)
Art Exploration: Page 92

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Saint Dominic.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage children to describe the picture in detail, including what Saint Dominic is wearing and how he wears his hair.
- Say: Saint Dominic founded a religious community called the Order of Preachers. Members of this community are often called Dominicans.
- Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 92.
- Have your child read aloud Saint Dominic. Ask: What did Dominic believe was one of the best ways to help others grow in faith? (by sharing the Good News through both word and action) What did many of the early members of the Dominicans do? (They traveled from city to city to preach the Good News.)
- Read aloud A Good Example. Give your child time to complete the activity and then discuss his or her response.
- Invite your child to imagine that he or she is with Saint Dominic and his companions as they travel from city to city, preaching the Good News. Ask: What do you hear in your travels? What do you see? What do you do to teach others about Jesus? Invite your child to pray in the quiet of his or her heart, thanking God for the opportunity to share the Good News with others.

Reflect: Pages 93–94

- Together look at page 93. Say: The girl in the picture is finding a quiet time in her day to be with God. Invite your child to find a comfortable position for prayer.
- Say: During our prayer, you are going to use your imagination to pretend that you are with the Apostles when Jesus sends them out into the world. Read aloud Sent by Jesus. Then pray aloud the prayer slowly and reverently. Pause after each paragraph to give your child time to reflect. Conclude by praying Amen.
- Read aloud We Celebrate with Jesus on page 94. Look up the term People of God in the Glossary. Ask: In what four ways is Jesus present in the celebration of the Mass? (in the Scripture readings, in the priest, in the People of God, in the Eucharist)
- Have your child read aloud Pray with Jesus. Work together to come up with ideas for how you can participate more fully in the Mass.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: Holy water cleanses us of Original Sin. A white garment reminds us of the purity and joy of being clothed in Christ. A candle reminds us that we are called to share Christ’s light with others.
Respond: Page 95

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 95. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child what he or she might say to share the Good News with a new member of your parish. 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 96

- Read aloud With My Family on page 96. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of each member of your family and say: Peace be with you.
The Church Teaches Us

Engage: Page 97

▶ With your child, name tasks where two people could work together to finish sooner than one person working alone. Ask: What behaviors do you think can help people work together well? (communication, trust, respect) Say: In this lesson, we will learn about how our Church leaders work together to carry on Jesus’ mission in the world today.
▶ Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
▶ Read aloud Matthew 16:13–20 from your Bible. Then say: The Gospel of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
▶ Say: Jesus trusted Peter and the other Apostles to carry on his mission after he ascended into heaven. Invite your child to read aloud the session title and the paragraphs on page 97. Ask: Who carries on Jesus’ work today? (the Church) Say: Let’s be aware of Jesus in our hearts as we pray. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 98–99

▶ Read aloud The Apostles and Their Successors on page 98. Ask: Who are the leaders of the Church today? (the pope and the bishops) Say: The pope and bishops are direct successors of the Apostles. Each bishop has been ordained by another bishop, who was ordained by another bishop, all the way back to the Apostles.
▶ Have your child read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: As Jesus’ followers, we are part of the Body of Christ.
▶ Have your child read aloud Shepherds of the People of God on page 99. Look up the word diocese in the Glossary. Ask: What do the pope, bishops, priests, and deacons do? (shepherd the People of God)
▶ Read aloud Know Our Leaders and work together to complete the activity.
ART EXPLORATION: Page 100

- Find a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of the Twelve Apostles.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the differences among the Apostles.
- Say: While the followers of Jesus are all different, he has called us to work together as members of the Church to carry out his mission in the world today.
- Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 100.
- Read aloud A New Apostle. Look up the term cast lots in the Glossary. Ask: Which Apostle betrayed Jesus? (Judas Iscariot) Say: When the Apostles cast lots, they threw stones on the ground. The way the stones landed determined the outcome of the Apostles’ decision. Ask: Who was chosen as the replacement for Judas Iscariot? (Matthias)
- Read aloud Choose a Candidate and have your child complete the activity. Invite your child to share his or her response with you.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Ask: Why did the Apostles believe the number 12 was important? (There were 12 tribes of Israel; the Apostles thought of themselves as carrying on this tradition.)
- Give your child a sheet of paper and colored pencils or markers. Invite your child to draw a picture of someone he or she knows who carries on Jesus’ work in the world today. Then discuss how the person is following Jesus’ example.

REFLECT: Pages 101–102

- Together look at page 101. Say: Every morning is a new opportunity to get to know God and others better. With God’s help, we celebrate the joys of each new day.
- Read aloud An Offering to God’s Son, Jesus. Together pray aloud the Morning Offering. Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- Have your child read aloud We Grow with God on page 102. Look up the term precepts of the Church in the Glossary. Say: Following the precepts of the Church helps us grow in our relationship with God and with the Church.
- Read aloud The Precepts of the Church and have your child complete the activity. Ask him or her to share the picture and caption with you.
Respond: Page 103

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 103. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can choose to live as God calls him or her to live. 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 104

- Read aloud With My Family on page 104. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Say: *Remember to pray for our Church leaders. Ask God to watch over them.*
God Is Our Friend

Engage: Page 105

- Together discuss your child’s friends. Ask: Why are these children your friends? How do friends treat each other? Do friends always get along?
- Read aloud the session title. Say: When we have done something wrong, we can apologize to God, just as we apologize to the people we hurt. In this session, we will learn about sin and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud 1 John 1:5–10 from your Bible. Then say: The Word of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Thanks be to God.
- Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 105. Ask: How is God like light? (He forgives our sins, taking away our darkness.) Say: Let’s pray together for help to ask for God’s forgiveness when we do something wrong. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 106–107

- Discuss the story of Adam and Eve. Ask: What did the serpent convince Adam and Eve to do? (eat fruit from the forbidden tree) Remind your child that even though Adam and Eve turned away from God, he never stopped loving them.
- Have your child read aloud page 106. Look up the terms mortal sin, venial sin, and Capital Sins in the Glossary. Say: Venial sins can become bad habits that lead to more serious sins. Capital Sins are like venial sins. The more often we commit them, the more likely they are to lead to more serious sins.
- Read aloud the heading and the first paragraph on page 107. Look up the terms perfect contrition and imperfect contrition in the Glossary. Say: When we are truly sorry for our sins, we have perfect contrition. When we say we’re sorry to avoid getting in trouble, we have imperfect contrition.
- Read aloud the remaining paragraphs. Ask: What do we receive when we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (the grace of God’s forgiveness, the grace to forgive others and ask for forgiveness) Say: Remember that we make an examination of conscience before we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This helps us know if we have done something wrong.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: God loves us so much. Because he has created us, he will never forget us.
Art Exploration: Page 108

► Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a father and son.
► Ask: *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including how the father and his son are interacting with one another.
► Say: *God is our loving Father, who always forgives us.*
► Ask: *How does it feel to know that God is always ready to offer his love and forgiveness?*
► Read aloud The Forgiving Father on page 108. Ask: *How did the father respond to his son’s homecoming?* (He celebrated with a great feast.) *How is God the Father like the father in this parable?* (God is always ready to welcome us.) *How are we sometimes like the son?* (We sometimes choose to turn away from God.) Say: *Even when we turn away from God, he still loves us and wants us to return to him.*
► Have your child read aloud A Lesson Learned and complete the activity. Discuss why the other two sentences are incorrect.
► Give your child art supplies and invite him or her to paint or draw an illustration of the parable of the forgiving father. Ask your child to tell you about his or her illustration.

Reflect: Pages 109–110

► Together look at page 109. Say: *The girl in the picture is taking time to reflect on her surroundings.*
► Read aloud Embraced by God. Then say: *Close your eyes, fold your hands in front of you, and listen with your heart.*
► Pray aloud the prayer, pausing at the end of each paragraph to give your child time to reflect. At the end of the prayer, allow time for your child to pray silently. Close by praying *Amen.*
► Read aloud Forgive Others on page 110. Ask: *When someone hurts us, what does Jesus want us to do?* (forgive the person) Say: *In this passage, Jesus tells us that when we forgive someone, we are called to go above and beyond what is expected of us.*
► Read aloud Forgiveness Skit. Work together to think of a situation and write dialogue.

Respond: Page 111

► Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 111. Review the Words I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can show forgiveness to someone who has been unkind. 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 112

- Read aloud With My Family on page 112. As a family, complete the page and plan to do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Say: *When we ask for forgiveness and forgive one another, we bring peace to our relationships with God and with one another.*
Serving God and Others

Engage: Page 113

- Together discuss your child’s talents. Talk about what your child is good at and what he or she enjoys doing. Ask: How do you share these talents with others? Read aloud the session title. Say: In this session, we will learn about sharing our talents with others to serve God’s kingdom.
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Say: Mary recognized that her Son, Jesus, was special. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 113. Ask: How do we follow Mary’s example? (We love and honor Jesus.) Say: Let’s pray for Jesus to help us follow Mary’s example of loving and serving God. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Pages 114–115

- Look at the pictures of Mary on pages 114 and 115. Ask: Why do we often include pictures and statues of Mary in our churches? (They remind us that she is an important person to whom we can pray and whose example we can follow.)
- Have your child read aloud page 114. Ask: Why did Mary agree to do what God asked of her? (She trusted God.)
- Read aloud The First Disciple on page 115. Ask: What did God give Mary to help her say yes? (the gift of grace) Say: When Mary agreed to become Jesus’ mother, she became the first and greatest of the disciples. Ask: How can we respond to the call of discipleship? (by following Jesus, by telling others about the Kingdom of God, by caring for creation) Look up the word solidarity in the Glossary. Say: We care for others because all people are equal before God.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Name some of Mary’s feast days. (January 1, Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God; August 15, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; December 8, the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe)

Art Exploration: Page 116

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Mary.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including Mary’s expression.
- Say: When we follow Mary’s example by saying yes to God, we help build up God’s kingdom.
Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 116.

Have your child read aloud Mary, Mother of the Church. Ask: As Jesus was dying on the Cross, what did he tell Mary and his beloved disciple, John? (to treat each other as mother and son) Say: When Jesus said this, Mary became the Mother of the Church. Explain that the Communion of Saints is the community of all those who have been saved in Jesus Christ. Say: When we proclaim our belief in Jesus, we are united with those who belong to the Communion of Saints.

Read aloud Mary’s Flowers. Say: Modesty means “to speak and act in an appropriate manner.” Ask: Why is modesty a good description of Mary? (Mary chose to follow God’s plan.) Have your child complete the activity. Discuss where you have seen these flowers in your community.

Invite your child to use construction paper, markers, and scissors to make paper flowers. Have your child write on each flower something he or she can do to follow Mary’s example. Place the completed flowers in a vase and use them to decorate your home. Encourage your child to complete the actions he or she wrote on the flowers.

Reflect: Pages 117–118

Together look at page 117. Say: The Gospel of Luke tells us that Mary made it a practice to reflect on things in her heart. She understands our need to reflect.

Read aloud Mother of Mercy. Before praying, explain some of the words in the Salve Regina. Say: The “banished children of Eve” are all the descendants of Adam and Eve who live in a world full of sin and temptation as a result of Adam and Eve’s choice to turn away from God. An “advocate” is someone who pleads the case of another. “Clement” describes someone who is merciful.

Pray aloud the reflection slowly, pausing to give your child time to reflect. Then pray aloud the Salve Regina. Conclude by praying together the Sign of the Cross.

Have your child read aloud We Listen to God on page 118. Say: As king, Jesus did not rule over people by telling them what to do. He attracted people to him because he cared for them. We can care for others as he did.

Read aloud What Does God Say to You? Give your child time to complete the activity. Invite him or her to tell you about the picture.

Read aloud the Meet a Holy Person feature. Say: Father Miguel used disguises to conduct an underground ministry. He celebrated the sacraments and attended to the physical and spiritual needs of the people he served.
Respond: Page 119

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 119. Review the Word I Learned. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can be kind and respectful to others. 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 120

- Read aloud With My Family on page 120. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Say: Mary is the Mother of us all. Let’s remember to walk in love with her.
Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 121

Display a Nativity scene or a picture of one and discuss it. Ask: What is this? When do we display Nativity scenes? (during the Christmas season) What do you see in the Nativity scene? Say: We use Nativity scenes to remind us of Jesus’ birth.

Read aloud the session title. Say: In this session, we will learn how to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus’ birth.

Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.


Say: God sent angels to announce that his Son, Jesus, was born. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 121. Ask: Why did God send the angels to poor shepherds and not to people with more social status? (He wanted us to know that Jesus is for everyone.) Say: Let’s thank God the Father for the birth of his Son, Jesus. Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying Amen.

Explore: Page 122

Light a candle. Ask: What do candles or flames symbolize? (Christ’s light, the Holy Spirit, warmth, heat) When do we see candles in church? (at Baptisms, at the altar during Mass, during Advent)

Read aloud We Share Christ’s Light During Christmas. Say: We call Jesus the Light of the World because he has shown us how to live. Ask: How can we share Christ’s light with others? (by following Jesus’ new commandment, by practicing the Beatitudes)

Have your child read aloud The Bread of Life. Ask: What do we agree to do when we welcome the Bread of Life into our lives? (share with others everything Jesus has shared with us)

Read aloud Share with Others and have your child complete the activity. Invite him or her to share the response with you.

Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: When we place our trust and faith in Jesus, he gives us everything we need.

Reflect: Page 123

Together sing or listen to your favorite Christmas carols. Discuss how you feel when you sing or hear these songs.

Read aloud Mass During Christmas. Ask: Why is white an appropriate color for the Christmas season? (During the Christmas season, we celebrate the purity and joy of Jesus’ birth.)
Have your child read aloud What We Experience. Ask: **What do the carols and hymns inspire us to do?** (They inspire us to do what is right and to live as Jesus wants us to live.)

- Read aloud Peace in Hymns and Carols. Give your child time to complete the activity. Suggest that your child come up with a melody for his or her verse.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: **Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This is another connection to bread as a symbol for Jesus.**

**Art Exploration: Page 124**

- Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows the Magi honoring the baby Jesus.
- Ask: **What do you see in this picture?** Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what the Magi are holding.
- Say: **The Magi showed their praise by giving Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We can show our praise by offering Jesus our gift of love.**
- Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question on page 124.
- Read aloud God Among Us. Ask: **What do we celebrate on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord?** (that God sent his Son, Jesus, to teach us about his kingdom) **What do we remember on the Feast of the Epiphany?** (the Magi’s visit to Bethlehem where Jesus was revealed to the world as God’s Son who was sent into the world to show us how to live)
- Have your child read aloud A Gift for Jesus. Give him or her time to complete the activity.
- Together make Christmas ornaments for parishioners who are homebound or who live in healthcare facilities. Have your child write a note to accompany each decoration. Arrange with the church office to have the decorations delivered to parishioners.

**Respond: Page 125**

- Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 125. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Share a sign of peace with your child. 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 126**

- Read aloud With My Family on page 126. As a family, complete the page and do the activity. Finally, pray the family prayer. Say: **During the Christmas season this year, let’s celebrate Jesus’ birth by being peaceful, loving people and making good choices.**