The Church,
Our Community in the Spirit

Unit Opener: Pages 86–88

> Invite your child to turn to page 86. Read aloud the unit title. Say: This unit helps us understand how the Holy Spirit guides us to bring God’s presence to the world.

> Ask: Imagine that you are the ruler of a country and have the power to do almost anything. How would you use your power? Brainstorm ideas with him or her. Have your child read aloud the text on page 87. Discuss any similarities between how Helena used her influence and your child’s responses to how to rule a country.

> Ask: What was Helena’s life like before her marriage to a Roman general? (She was poor; she worked at her father’s inn; she was an ordinary person.) What did Helena’s son Constantine do that changed the history of Christianity? (He ended the persecution of Christians by allowing them to worship freely.) How did Helena use her power after she became empress? (She helped people. She had churches built in Jerusalem and Bethlehem.) Why were these cities so important? (Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Temple was in Jerusalem. Jesus died and rose from the dead in Jerusalem.) Say: Saint Helena used her influence to do good things.

> Read aloud the Be Inspired feature. Discuss with your child how your parish community reaches out to those in need.

> With your child, add Helena’s feast day, August 18, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the influence of Saint Helena.

> Ask your child to read aloud One Body, One Church on page 88. Explain that Saint Helena knew that she was called to spread God’s message of love and to help others. She did what she could to provide Christians with places to gather and pray.
Read aloud the introduction and directions for Building Up the Church. Brainstorm with your child ways he or she sees people in your parish making Jesus’ presence known to others. Point out that any act that helps others and shows God’s love helps build the Church.

Direct your child to the Reading God's Word feature. Say: **Saint Helena used her influence to help people pray. One way we can pray to God is with the psalms.** Pray aloud the psalm together.
God’s Presence in the Temple

Engage: Page 89
- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud Hebrews 8:1–6. Then say: The Word of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Thanks be to God.
- Invite your child to describe some locations where something famous happened. Say: It is common for us to designate specific places as important or even sacred. For the Jewish people, that sacred location was the Temple.
- Ask your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 89. Say: Jesus taught us that we encounter God through an ongoing relationship with Jesus himself.
- Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Explore: Pages 90–91
- Invite your child open their books to page 90 and read aloud Solomon’s Temple. Say: Long before Saint Helena had churches built, King David had wanted to build a temple.
- Ask your child to look up the boldface terms in the Glossary. Ask: What was the most sacred room in the Temple called? (the Holy of Holies) What was the Ark of the Covenant? (a large gold box containing the Ten Commandments)
- Ask your child to read aloud the first paragraph on page 91. Say: Judaism refers to the religious practices of the Jewish people. Have your child look up sacrifices in the Glossary.
- Have your child read the second paragraph. Ask: What was the tent in which the Hebrews worshiped called? (tabernacle) Invite your child to look up tabernacle in the Glossary. Say: The ancient Hebrews’ tabernacle held the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Law given to them by God the Father. In Catholic churches, the tabernacle holds the Body of Jesus Christ, which we have also received from God the Father. Both tabernacles hold precious gifts.
- Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. Invite your child to read 1 Kings 6—7 for an in-depth description of the construction of the Temple.

Art Exploration: Page 92
- Find in a book, magazine, or online a representation of Jesus helping someone in need.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage children to describe the picture in detail, including how Jesus is helping someone in need. Ask: How does this image reflect Jesus’ message of caring for others? (Accept reasonable responses.) How do you feel when you learn that some people go without food? (Answers will vary.) Say: God works through us to help people in need.
Have your child turn to page 92. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

Have your child read aloud God’s Presence in Jesus Christ. Ask: When did Jesus call the Temple his Father’s house? (when a young Jesus entered the Temple, the cleansing of the Temple scene) Discuss the term temple and invite your child to describe the new temple, including descriptions of the Church, the People of God, and the new Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Read aloud God’s Presence Within Us. Give your child time to complete the activity and share his or her response with you.

Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: The temple the Jews thought Jesus was talking about was the physical Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was speaking of himself as the new spiritual temple, what was raised three days after he died.

Invite your child to make a drawing depicting one of the statements from Matthew 25:35–36. Suggest that he or she feature Jesus as the recipient of the kind deed.

Reflect: Pages 93–94

Together look at page 93. Say: In this prayer, we express our needs as children of God and temples of the Holy Spirit. Make yourself comfortable as you get ready to pray.

Ask your child to read aloud the introductory paragraph. Then pray the prayer with your child, guiding them to read each line while you read the refrain together.

Have your child read aloud We Are the Church on page 94. Ask: Have you ever witnessed or experienced discrimination? Discuss your child’s response. Why is discrimination unacceptable for God’s people? (God calls us to love and respect everyone.) Say: Those who may be different on the surface could have a lot in common with us.

Have your child read aloud The Sacrament of Holy Orders. Ask: Name the three titles given to men who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders? (priest, bishop, deacon)

Have your child read the activity directions and complete it. Encourage him or her to put his or her ideas into practice this week.

Respond: Pages 95–96

Ask your child to read aloud Faith Summary on page 95. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus.

Ask your child to read aloud Old and New Roles and complete the activity.

Read aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross together.

Read aloud With My Family on page 96. Together as a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer together. Say: Remember that we are all temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit builds the Church, makes it holy, and guides us in following God the Father’s plan for our lives.
Psalms, the Prayers of Jesus

Engage: Page 97

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Read aloud Colossians 3:16–17. Then say: The Word of the Lord. Invite your child to respond Thanks be to God.
- Read aloud the session title. Say: The Book of Psalms can be thought of as the diary of the People of Israel.
- Ask your child to read the paragraphs on page 97. Say: We can use the words of the Psalms to help express our own feelings as we pray to God.
- Pray aloud the prayer together. Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Explore: Pages 98–99

- Ask: What do we do between the First and Second Readings at Sunday Mass? (We sing or say a prayer.) Say: The song or prayer that we say between the First Reading and the Second Reading is a psalm.
- Have your child read aloud A Prayer Collection on page 98. Ask: How many psalms are there? (150) What are the five most common types of psalms? (praise, lament, thanksgiving, intercession, wisdom)
- Have your child continue reading aloud the rest of the page. Ask him or her to look up the boldfaced terms in the Glossary. Discuss examples of both types of prayer. Say: In both types of prayer, we use the words “our Father” as Jesus taught us to address our prayers to God.
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Go to the Sunday Connection at www.loyolapress.com and read aloud the Responsorial Psalm. Have your child pray the response.
- Have your child read aloud page 99. Say: Wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask: Why is Mary called the Seat of Wisdom? (Mary trusted God and had the wisdom and faith to cooperate with him.)

Art Exploration: Page 100

- Find in a book, magazine, or online a representation of a shepherd leading his flock.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the setting and the job of the shepherd. Say: Our relationship with God is similar to that of a shepherd and his sheep. A shepherd cares for his sheep just as God cares for us. God is our shepherd.
- Have your child turn to page 100. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
Read aloud Daily Experiences Make the Word Come Alive. Ask: Why do you think God uses an ordinary person and his daily job to describe the way he cares for and protects us? (A simple, ordinary experience helps us bring God’s message into our daily lives.)

Read aloud the activity directions for The Lord Is… and have your child describe their image of God.

Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Ask: What words could replace or define reproving? (correcting, scolding) What about admonishing? (warning, threatening) Invite your child to reread the passage using more familiar terms.

Invite your child to copy Psalm 23 and illustrate the theme or message learned from the psalm.

Reflect: Pages 101–102

Together look at page 101. Ask your child to read aloud the introductory paragraph.

Take turns with your child to read Psalm 20. Allow time for quiet reflection and join your child in praying the Sign of the Cross.

Say: Psalms are aligned closely with the seasons of the Church, such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Lent, and Advent. Have your child read aloud the directions on page 102. Tell him or her to look at page 212 in the back of the book to review the meaning of each season. Have your child complete the activity. Read aloud each psalm and discuss your child’s response.

Respond: Pages 103–104

Ask your child to read aloud Faith Summary on page 103. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus.

Ask your child to read aloud the directions to The Wisdom of God Guides Us and complete the activity.

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

Read aloud With My Family on page 104. Together as family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer together. Say: Take time this week to pray alone as well as with others. Thank God for the unity we find in the Church, the Body of Christ.
The Mission of the Church

Engage: Page 105
► Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
► Ask: How does the moon seem to shine? (It reflects the sun.) Say: The moon can light up the darkness of the night by reflecting the light of the sun. We can light up the darkness of the world by reflecting the light of Christ.
► Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 105. Ask: How do we shine Christ’s light into the world? (by living a good life; serving others)

Explore: Pages 106–107
► With your child, share an example of how someone has helped you on your journey of faith. Ask your child to think about people who have influenced his or her faith.
► Have your child read aloud The Church Leads in Faith on page 106. Ask: How can we show others that we are members of the Church? (show kindness, help others, pray, celebrate the sacraments) What message do we proclaim through our actions as members of the Church? (We are part of God’s family, and God is present to us.)
► Discuss ways that people show signs of God’s presence to others. Have your child complete On Your Journey of Faith activity.
► Have your child read aloud page 107. Say: Sharing in God’s divine nature means we are temples of the Holy Spirit and carry God’s presence in our hearts. Ask: How do we know that God wants us to be close to him? (We have his presence in our hearts; we can talk with and listen to him in prayer and through the sacraments.)
► Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Peter testified to Jesus’ true identity.

Art Exploration: Page 108
► Find in a book, magazine, or online a representation of Jesus with Peter and the other Apostles.
► Say: Whom do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the actions of Jesus toward Peter. Say: Jesus entrusted the care of the early Church to Peter and his followers.
► Have your child turn to page 108. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
Ask your child to read aloud The Beginning of the Church. Ask: **Why is the day described in this story so important to us today?** (It showed that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and is the Messiah. It was the birth of the Catholic Church.)

Have your child read aloud About Jesus and complete the activity. Encourage your child to share his or her responses.

Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Ask: **How can we announce the Gospel to the world with words and actions?** Discuss your child’s response.

Discuss Christian symbols such as keys, a cross, a fish, a lamb, a shepherd, and a dove. Have your child fold paper into thirds and draw another symbol for the keys and another symbol for the sheep and write an explanation for each. Have your child draw a third symbol and write an explanation for it. Invite your child to pray a silent prayer glorifying God.

**Reflect: Pages 109–110**

Together look at page 109. Have your child read aloud the introductory paragraph. Then explain that as you read aloud the Lord’s Prayer, you will pause after each line, allowing him or her to talk silently to God. Say: **Think about the deeper meaning of the words in light of what you have learned about our faith and our Church.** Read aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying **Amen**.

Have your child read aloud The Church Respects Other Religions on page 110. Say: **Christians, Jews, and Muslims all worship the God of Abraham.**

Read aloud Images of the Church. Ask: **What three images are mentioned?** (Bride of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit, Body of Christ) Have your child complete the activity and share his or her response and drawing with you.

**Respond: Pages 111–112**

Ask your child to read aloud Faith Summary on page 111. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus.

Ask your child to read aloud See the Light. Discuss people in your home and community that reflect Jesus’ teachings with their words and actions. Have your child complete the activity.

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

Read aloud With My Family on page 112. Together as a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer together. Say: **The Church is the sign and instrument of the unity that the Trinity has with all people through the Church; we are united as the People of God.**
Marks of the Church

Engage: Page 113

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Ask: What are four positive traits that characterize our family? (Possible responses: unified, caring, motivated, joyful) Say: Our family—the Church—can also be characterized by four words.
- Ask your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 113. Ask: What are the four words that describe the Church? (one, holy, catholic, apostolic) Say: These four characteristics are called the Marks of the Church.

Explore: Pages 114–115

- Have your child read aloud the first paragraph on page 114. Ask: Where do we find the Marks of the Church? (in the Nicene Creed)
- Ask your child to read aloud The Church Is One. Say: We are all part of the Church, united through the Holy Spirit. Paul spoke of this unity at the very beginning of the Church.
- Ask your child to read aloud The Church Is Holy. Ask: What are some ways we can see that the Church is holy? (by the things we do for others—sharing what we have with others, praying for the needs of others)
- Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: At Mass, when we stand and pray the Nicene Creed, we are praying a summary of our Catholic faith. We affirm our belief in one Lord and one Church made holy by the one Spirit.
- Have your child read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 115. Ask: What does catholic mean? (universal) What are some ways the Church is universal? (All baptized people are part of the Church; the Church proclaims Christ to the entire human race.) What makes the Church apostolic? (Its tradition began with the Apostles and continues their teachings through the pope and bishops.)
- Ask your child to read aloud the final paragraph. Say: God makes it possible for us, even though we sin, to be holy. Mary and the saints are models of how to be holy.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: This is a verse from the Magnificat—Mary’s song of praise to God.

Art Exploration: Page 116

- Find in a book, magazine, or online a representation of Paul preaching.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the reactions of the crowd. Say: Paul reminds us that we must follow Jesus’ example and treat one another with love.
Have your child turn to page 116. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

Ask your child read aloud the first paragraph and Bible verse. Ask: What do you think Jeremiah means? (Possible answers: that God will trust us with his laws, that God will make us his Chosen People)

Ask your child to read the next two paragraphs. Say: Paul’s letters are read at Mass to remind us of the Christian qualities we should live by.

Write on a sheet of paper humility, gentleness, patience, and love. Discuss why these qualities are important. Then have your child complete the activity.

Tell your child that Paul visited many places to speak about qualities that Christians should have in their daily lives and how believers were to treat one another. Have your child write a speech about the importance of following Jesus’ example. Ask: Will your message be like Paul’s? What will you tell everyone? Invite your child to give his or her speech to your family.

Reflect: Pages 117–118

Together look at page 117. Say: The girl in the picture is filled with the joy brought by her faith in God. Today we are going to pray a prayer expressing the joy we feel our unity with God and his Church.

Read aloud the introductory paragraph. Take turns reading the prayer and the reflection. Close the prayer by joining your child in the Sign of the Cross.

Ask your child to read aloud Peace and Unity on page 118. Ask: Why does God give us so many kinds of gifts? (so that we can do good in the world) Ask: Do you think we all have the same gifts? Why or why not? (Possible answer: No, we all have different gifts to serve in many different ways.)

Read aloud Exploring Virtues. Say: Virtues are gifts from God. Have your child complete the activity and then discuss the responses.

Respond: Pages 119–120

Ask your child to read aloud Faith Summary on page 119. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus.

Read aloud the Living Virtues. Invite your child to give examples they have seen of people following Jesus’ example of love and mercy. Then have them complete the activity.

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

Read aloud With My Family on page 120. Together as a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer together. Say: We are called to embody the Marks of the Church with our lives. Pray this week for the wisdom to show humility, patience, kindness, and unity through your words and actions.
Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 121

- Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- Say: For centuries, the Jewish people waited for God to reveal his presence to them. When he did, his presence was revealed in an unexpected way.
- Ask your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 121. Ask: Jesus was born to humble parents in a lowly, out-of-the-way place. This Scripture passage shows us that Christ’s salvation is for all people regardless of social position.

Explore: Page 122

- Ask: What gifts could we give at Jesus’ birth today that hold a spiritual importance? (a Theological or Cardinal Virtue or one of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit)
- Have your child read aloud We Celebrate Epiphany During Christmas. Ask: What did King Herod fear? (that the new king might be a threat to his reign) Why did Herod really want the Magi to return to Jerusalem? (to learn where Jesus was so he could kill him) Say: We celebrate the Magi’s journey to honor Jesus and the revelation that he is God’s Son on the Feast of the Epiphany.
- Read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Say: Visualize the Magi, exhausted from traveling so far. Imagine the joy of finding the infant Jesus they had been seeking.

Reflect: Page 123

- Talk about your favorite family traditions during the Christmas season. Ask: What is a tradition you will carry on with your own family some day?
- Read aloud the first paragraph. Ask your child to share his or her impressions and experiences at Mass during the Christmas season.
- Ask your child to read aloud What We Experience. Ask: How are the experiences at Mass similar to our family’s Christmas celebrations? How are they different? (Discuss your child’s response.)
- Have your child read aloud Jesus and the Magi and complete the activity.
- Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: Frankincense and myrrh were almost as precious as gold at the time. They are actually tree sap that has been dried.
Art Exploration: Page 124

- Find in a book, magazine, or online a representation of the Magi bearing gifts for the infant Jesus.
- Ask: What do you see in this picture? Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what the Wise Men are holding. Say: Just as the Magi did, we find ways to recognize Jesus as our king and Savior.
- Have your child turn to page 124. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- Read aloud The Church Celebrates the Christmas Season. Ask: What key points in the life of Jesus do we learn about during the Christmas season? (his birth, his family, the visit of the Magi, and his baptism) Why is the visit of the Magi to Jesus so important to all Christians today? (It’s part of the revelation; it shows that the child of God was born.)
- Have your child read aloud Guiding Us and complete the activity. Encourage your child to share his or her response with you.
- Ask your child to imagine that he or she welcomed the three Wise Men to the town where Jesus is. Encourage your child to describe the faces of the visitors as they approach the baby Jesus. Say: As you see these three strangers standing before you, what do you ask them? How do the Magi answer? Give your child time to have a silent conversation with the Magi. Have your child offer a petition to Jesus to guide him or her through the day.

Respond: Pages 125–126

- Ask your child to read aloud Faith Summary on page 125. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus.
- Ask your child to read aloud News Flash and complete the activity.
- Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- Read aloud With My Family on page 126. Together as a family, complete the page and do the activity. Pray the family prayer together. Say: Jesus was born both fully human and fully divine. As you celebrate this mystery at Christmas, give thanks for the coming of our Savior and for his presence in the world today.