



The Church, Our Community in the Spirit

Begin

Ask: Can you think of a movie or a book about someone going on an adventure? Share ideas with your child and then discuss any trips your family has taken.

Say: We will learn about a saint who went on many adventures. Read aloud the unit title on page 43. **Say:** This unit will help us understand that the sacraments help us stay close to Jesus.

Introduce the Saint

Focus your child's attention on the picture of Saint Ignatius. **Say:** Saint Ignatius of Loyola served God as a soldier and as a traveler. Just as Ignatius learned about Jesus from his family, we can learn with our family and grow closer to Jesus together.

Have your child read aloud the heading and the first paragraph. **Ask:** What was Ignatius's job? (soldier) Read aloud the second paragraph. **Ask:** Why do you think Ignatius wanted to be like Jesus and the saints? (to spend his life doing God's work)

Tell your child that Saint Ignatius loved teaching children about Jesus.

Say: Saint Ignatius taught about Jesus' love. He told children that they could talk to Jesus anytime in prayer. Now as we learn to listen to God in prayer, we can find out how to love and serve him.

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



We Worship God

Engage: Page 43

- ▶ Discuss what it is like to be the new member of a sports team, a school, a parish, or a club. **Ask:** *How would you welcome a new member?* (invite the person to a gathering, explain any rules, help him or her find things)
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's responses. **Ask:** *What does worship mean?* (to praise God together as a community) **Say:** *In this session we will learn about the Sacrament of Baptism, an important experience that welcomes us to the Church community.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 44–45

- ▶ Raise your forefinger to your lips. **Ask:** *What does this sign mean?* (to be quiet) Give a thumbs up. **Ask:** *What does this sign mean?* (good job) **Say:** *The sacraments are signs too. They remind us that God is with us.*
- ▶ Read aloud page 44. **Ask:** *Who is the Holy Spirit?* (the Third Person of the Trinity) **Say:** *The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are the ways we act when God is alive in us.*
- ▶ Discuss the day that your child was baptized. Have your child read aloud The Sacrament of Baptism on page 45. Point out the vocabulary term. **Say:** *The Rite of Baptism is celebrated by pouring water over someone's head or immersing the person in water. When we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism, Original Sin is forgiven.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Ready for the Sacraments feature. **Say:** *When we talk heart-to-heart with God, we share our innermost thoughts and feelings.*

Art Exploration: Page 179

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a beautiful flowering tree.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the flowers, buds, and trunk.
- ▶ **Say:** *Just as a branch grows strong on a tree, we grow strong and happy when we stay close to Jesus.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 179. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.



- ▶ Read aloud *Jesus Is the Vine*. **Ask:** *Why do you think Jesus calls himself a vine? (He gives us life and keeps us strong.) What do we need to grow in love of God and Jesus? (prayer, sacraments, Bible, good deeds)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *Grow Like a Vine* and complete the activity. Ask your child to share his or her ideas with you.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *The Holy Spirit helps us stay close to Jesus. We bear the beautiful fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness.*
- ▶ Invite your child to draw a tree, leaving the branches bare. Have your child label the tree *Jesus* and the branches *Us*. Ask him or her to add fruits to the branches and label them as the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. Pray silently together, asking the Holy Spirit for these gifts.

Reflect: Page 46

- ▶ Read aloud *Jesus Is the Vine*, pausing after each paragraph to give your child time to reflect. Provide a brief time of silence for your child to talk to God in his or her heart. Pray together the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the heading and the first paragraph of *Close to the Vine*. Discuss the questions with your child.
- ▶ Read aloud *Growing Close to Jesus* and have your child complete the list. Invite your child read aloud his or her list and discuss the ideas.

Respond: Page 47

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



Celebrating Reconciliation

Engage: Page 48

- ▶ With your child role-play this situation: A friend promises to play with you after school but forgets and goes to play at a different person's house. **Ask:** *What do you say to your friend the next time you see him or her?*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's responses. **Say:** *Jesus helps us recognize our sins. He also helps us learn forgiveness. In this session we will learn how to do this.*
- ▶ Discuss times when you and your child have reconciled with friends. Talk about how you each felt after making up with a friend. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 48–49

- ▶ Share a childhood story with your child about a time you disobeyed or disappointed someone you loved. Highlight the consequences of your actions and how you made peace with that person.
- ▶ Read aloud Making Peace with God on page 48 and point out the vocabulary words. **Ask:** *What is one thing both kinds of sin have in common? (They hurt our relationship with God and with others.)* **Say:** *God gives us the wonderful chance to be forgiven through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. We confess our sins to a priest, tell God we are sorry, and receive God's forgiveness.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Preparing for Reconciliation on page 49. Point out the vocabulary term. **Say:** *Let's turn to pages 160 and 161. Discuss these pages and explain that these types of questions help us think about what we will confess to Jesus.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Ready for the Sacraments feature. **Say:** *A penance is a prayer or a deed we do to make up for our sins.*

Art Exploration: Page 180

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Jesus talking to Zacchaeus in the tree.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the locations of the man in the tree and Jesus.
- ▶ **Say:** *Jesus is always happy when we make efforts to be closer to him.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 180. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.



- ▶ Read aloud Zacchaeus, the Rich Man. **Ask:** *Why did the crowd become angry? (Jesus was going to the home of a sinner.) What did Jesus tell Zacchaeus? (that he was saved that day)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Forgive One Another and complete the activity. Share with your child what you think forgiveness means.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Together with your child read aloud the verse again.
- ▶ Read this rhyme aloud and demonstrate the action after each line. Ask your child to join you and read the rhyme again. **Say:** *Zacchaeus had to climb a tree. (mime climbing up) For it was Jesus he longed to see. (hands like binoculars) When Jesus asked him to come down, (mime climbing down) Zacchaeus turned his life around. (turn around) He made peace with God, you see. (pretend to shake hands as if greeting someone) He walked in love through God's mercy. (put hands on heart)*

Reflect: Page 50

- ▶ Together look at page 50 and read aloud Saying "I'm Sorry." **Ask:** *What do you think the boy in the picture is ready to ask God? Say: We are going to learn the Act of Contrition. Contrition is the sadness we feel when we know we have sinned.*
- ▶ Invite your child to pray aloud the Act of Contrition with you. At the end ask your child to take a few moments to talk to Jesus in his or her heart.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Jesus Forgives. **Say:** *After God has forgiven us, we have a pure heart, free from sin. We feel joyful and holy.*
- ▶ Read aloud A Pure Heart and have your child complete the activity. **Say:** *Tell God how good you feel when he forgives your sins, making your heart pure and holy.*

Respond: Page 51

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



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Engage: Page 52

- ▶ **Say:** *Words can hurt people, but words can heal too. Ask: When our unkind words hurt people, what can you say to heal the hurt? ("I'm sorry." "Please forgive me." "Let's be friends again." "I wish I could take it back.")*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's response.
Say: *Reconciliation is a sacrament. A sacrament is a special sign that God is with us. In this session we will continue to learn about how we can make up with God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*
- ▶ **Ask:** *How do you know when you hurt someone you care about? Have your child think about how he or she feels when this happens. Pray aloud the prayer together.*

Explore: Pages 52–53

- ▶ Ask your child to make a poster that shows signs and symbols of peace. At the top of the poster, tell him or her to write *May God give you pardon and peace*. Display the poster in your home.
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud We Are Forgiven on page 52. **Say:** *Jesus forgives us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Point to the vocabulary word *absolution*.*
- ▶ Read aloud At Peace with God on page 53. **Say:** *After confession we are filled with peace in our hearts.* Together turn to pages 162 and 163 of your child's book to read the section How to Make a Good Confession.
- ▶ Read aloud the Ready for the Sacraments feature. **Say:** *The wonderful thing about the Sacrament of Reconciliation is that God frees us from the burden of our sins.*

Art Exploration: Page 181

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows the four friends lowering a paralyzed man through the roof to meet Jesus.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what the men are doing.
- ▶ **Say:** *Jesus heals and forgives us.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 181. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.



- ▶ Have your child read aloud Jesus Heals. **Say:** *The paralyzed man cannot see Jesus without the help of his friends.* **Ask:** *How do they help?* (They carry their friend to Jesus and lower him through the roof.) *Who are some people in your life that help you grow close to God?* (family, friends, priests)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Friendship and complete the activity. Share with your child your own experience of friendship.
- ▶ Invite your child to role-play these situations that teach how to be a good friend: a friend is worried about a sick pet; a friend broke an arm and needs help doing things; a friend has to do chores before playing with you. At the end of each role-play, talk about how being a good friend made your child feel.

Reflect: Page 54

- ▶ Together look at page 54. **Ask:** *How do you think the girl in the picture feels?* **Say:** *God always helps us ask for forgiveness when we sin.*
- ▶ Read aloud Making Peace with God, pausing after each paragraph to give your child time to respond in his or her heart. **Say:** *We can pray the Act of Contrition anytime to tell God that we are sorry for something we have done and to ask for his help.* Pray aloud the Act of Contrition together.
- ▶ Read aloud Peace Be with You and discuss the question. Have your child read aloud Making Peace and complete the sentences. Invite him or her to read aloud the completed sentences.

Respond: Page 55

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



Mary Shows Us the Way

Engage: Page 56

- ▶ With your child discuss special women you both know. Have your child design a trophy for a special woman, using gold construction paper and art supplies. Ask him or her to complete this sentence on the trophy: *You are special to me because _____.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's responses. **Ask:** *Whom do you turn to when you need help?* **Say:** *In this session we will learn how Mary is always ready to help us.*
- ▶ Ask your child to give the trophy to the woman he or she honored. Invite your child to think about how Mary loved her Son, Jesus, and how Mary loves us today. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 56–57

- ▶ Discuss a time when your family traveled to visit a friend or family member. Talk about how you got there and how long it took. Recall how you felt when you finally arrived.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *Mary Visits Elizabeth* on page 56. **Ask:** *What did Elizabeth call Mary?* (blessed) **Say:** *Mary was grateful for all God had done for her.* **Ask:** *What has God given you?* (a healthy body, a home to live in, a good family)
- ▶ Discuss any cultural experiences that are about Mary, such as the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe or a May crowning. **Say:** *Everyone calls Mary blessed as Elizabeth said they would.*
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph and prayer on page 57. **Say:** *The Magnificat is a special prayer of praise that Mary offered to God for choosing her to be Jesus' mother.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Ready for the Sacraments feature. **Say:** *Let's take a few moments to recall the good things God has done for us.*

Art Exploration: Page 182

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows the Virgin Mary with flowers.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what Mary is wearing and holding.
- ▶ **Say:** *Each time you pray to Mary, know that she is always close to you.*



- ▶ Have your child turn to page 182. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud *Mother of the Church*. **Say:** *Mary has the special role of being the Mother of the Church.* **Ask:** *How does God help us to be his children? (He gives us grace.)*
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud *Special Women* and complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Ask:** *What are some of Mary's experiences that you think she remembered? (visit from the angel Gabriel telling her she would be the mother of Jesus, visiting Elizabeth, praising God, the birth of Jesus, finding Jesus in the Temple)*
- ▶ Explain to your child that different cultures picture Mary in their own way. Have your child picture Mary and draw his or her own version of the Mother of God. Display your child's artwork in your home.

Reflect: Page 58

- ▶ Together look at the prayer feature on page 58. **Ask:** *How do you think the boy in the picture feels? (happy)* Remind your child that we ask Mary to pray for us, to help and support us, and to pray with us as we ask God for what we need. **Say:** *Mary, the Mother of the Church, loves each of us and wants us to be close to God and to her Son, Jesus.*
- ▶ Read aloud each paragraph slowly. Allow time for silent prayer. Close the prayer by praying the Hail Mary together.
- ▶ Read aloud Praise God. Read the directions of Poem of Praise. Have your child read aloud each stanza and complete each sentence. When he or she is finished, read aloud the poem together.

Respond: Page 59

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



Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 60

- ▶ Display a picture of Mary. **Ask:** *Why is Mary an important part of Christmas? (She is the mother of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day.)*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and text. On a dry-erase board or sheet of paper, draw a time line showing the Sundays in Advent, Christmas, the Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord. Together look at a calendar to find the Epiphany and the end of the Christmas season for this year. **Say:** *In this session we will learn how the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus.*
- ▶ Ask your child to take a moment to imagine he or she is kneeling next to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus in the manger. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Page 61

- ▶ **Say:** *Let's imagine we are having a special guest come to our home to visit.* **Ask:** *What are some things our family might do to make the guest feel welcome?*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the heading and first paragraph. Discuss the questions. **Say:** *Celebrating Christmas is similar to welcoming a special guest into our home.*
- ▶ Read aloud the second paragraph and have your child complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Ask:** *How does Jesus' birth show that God is with us? (Jesus is God's Son. Jesus is God's gift to us.)*

Reflect: Page 62

- ▶ Together look at a religious Advent calendar. **Ask:** *What do you think we will see when we open the window on December 25? Review the special preparations of Advent and how they help prepare us to celebrate the joy of Christmas.*
- ▶ Read aloud Mass During Christmas. **Say:** *When Christmas finally arrives, families are ready to rejoice. Jesus is here! He is in our hearts, and he is with us.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud What We Experience and complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Ready for the Sacraments feature. **Say:** *Jesus wants to be with us always. He is eager for the day when you can receive him as often as possible, at least once a week, in the Eucharist.*



Art Exploration: Page 183

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows the Nativity scene in Bethlehem.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the setting, the people, and the animals.
- ▶ **Say:** *A Nativity scene reminds us of Jesus' birth and how much God the Father loves us.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 183. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud The Feast of Christmas. **Ask:** *How do we celebrate and remember the importance of Christmas?* (attend Mass, set up a Nativity scene in our homes or yards, send cards to family and friends) *Why do you think we give gifts to one another at Christmas?* (to recall the special gift that God gave us in Jesus) **Say:** *God gave us talents that are meant to be shared. When we give someone the gift of ourselves, we are living as Jesus did.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud You Are a Gift and complete the activity. Examples of talents might include reading to a younger child, playing an instrument, or sharing a positive attitude.
- ▶ Invite your child to design a Christmas card to give to a parishioner or neighbor who is homebound. Have your child fold construction paper in half, decorate the card, and write a special Christmas message inside. Close with a silent prayer asking that all people be remembered on Jesus' birthday.

Respond: Page 63

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