



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 43. **Say:** We are going to learn about a king who was named a saint. Our new unit will help us learn about the Church, the community of Jesus' followers.*

Introduce the Saint

Focus your child's attention on the picture of Saint Louis IX. **Ask:** *What can you tell about Saint Louis IX based on this picture? (He was a Catholic. He was a king.)*

Say: *As king, Louis IX was concerned about the French people, and as a Catholic, he worked to strengthen the Church.*

Have your child read aloud the top part of the page. **Ask:** *What did Saint Louis IX do to serve God? (He supported the building of hospitals, schools, and religious institutions. 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.*

With your child add Louis's feast day, August 25, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the efforts of Saint Louis IX.

The People of God

Engage: Page 43

- ▶ **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.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's response. Point out the picture. **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.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about how he or she can be an active member of the Church. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 44–45

- ▶ 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 and different?*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 44. **Ask:** *What did Jesus tell his followers to do? (go forth and make new disciples, continue his mission by teaching others how to follow God's commandments) Point out the vocabulary term *universal Church*. **Say:** *The Church is universal because it is open to everyone.**
- ▶ Read aloud Welcomed into the Church on page 45. **Ask:** *What are the three Sacraments of Initiation? (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist)*
- ▶ 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.*

Art Exploration: Page 179

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Saint Dominic.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child 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.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 179. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.



- ▶ 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 in 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 invite him or her to share the response with you.
- ▶ 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?* Ask your child to say a silent prayer thanking God for the opportunity to share the Good News with others.

Reflect: Page 46

- ▶ Together look at page 46. **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 imagine that you are with the apostles when Jesus sent them out into the world.* Read aloud the reflection slowly and reverently. Pause after each paragraph to give your child time to reflect. Conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Read aloud A Celebrating Community. **Ask:** *In what four ways is Jesus present in the celebration of the Mass? (in the Scripture readings, in the priest, in the community, in the Eucharist)*

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 share a word of welcome with a new parish member.
- ▶ 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 Church Teaches Us

Engage: Page 48

- ▶ Ask your child to do a chore such as yard work or housework. After he or she has started, offer to help finish the job. **Ask:** *Was it easier to work together? What behaviors do you think can help people work together well?* (communication, trust, respect)
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's response. Point out the picture. **Ask:** *Why might these two people find it helpful to work together?* (By working together, they can accomplish their task more quickly.) **Say:** *In this lesson we will learn about how our Church leaders carry on Jesus' mission in the world today.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about tasks around your home where two people could work together to finish sooner. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 48–49

- ▶ Write the names of the apostles on a sheet of paper. They include Andrew, Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus, James the son of Zebedee, John, Judas, Matthew, Peter, Philip, Simon, Thaddeus, and Thomas. Together find their names in these Scripture passages: Matthew 10:1–4, Mark 3:14–19, and Luke 6:17–19.
- ▶ Read aloud *The Apostles and Their Successors*. **Ask:** *Who are the leaders of the Church today?* (the pope and the bishops) **Say:** *There are over 5,000 bishops in the Church. United by the pope, they symbolize the unity of the universal Church, the Body of Christ.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *Shepherds of the People of God* on page 49. Point out the vocabulary word. **Ask:** *What do the bishops, the priests, and the deacons do?* (shepherd the People of God)
- ▶ Read aloud *Knowing Our Leaders*. Work together to complete the activity.

Art Exploration: Page 180

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Jesus' followers, the twelve apostles.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the differences between the twelve apostles.
- ▶ **Say:** *While each of us is different, Jesus has called each of us to work together as members of the Church to carry out his mission in the world.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 180. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

- ▶ Read aloud A New Apostle. **Ask:** *Which apostle betrayed Jesus?* (Judas Iscariot) **Say:** *When the apostles cast lots, they threw stones onto 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.
- ▶ 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.)
- ▶ Invite your child to draw a picture of someone he or she knows who carries on Jesus' work in the world today. When your child is finished, have him or her explain how the person is following Jesus' example.

Reflect: Page 50

- ▶ Together look at page 50. **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 the first paragraph of An Offering to God. Together pray aloud the Morning Offering. Read aloud the next paragraph and give your child time to reflect.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Growing with God. **Say:** *Following the Precepts of the Church helps us grow in our relationship with God and with the Church.*

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 choose to live how God wants him or her to live.
- ▶ 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.

God Is Our Friend

Engage: Page 52

- ▶ 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 and the text below it. Discuss your child's response. **Say:** *God is our friend. When we have done something wrong, we can apologize to him, just as we apologize to the people we hurt. In this session we will learn about sin and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about how to be a better friend. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 52–53

- ▶ 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 did not abandon them.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Resisting Temptation. Point out the vocabulary words. **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 us to commit more serious sins.*
- ▶ Read aloud the heading and first paragraph on page 53. **Say:** *When we are truly sorry for our sins, we have perfect contrition. When we say we're sorry to avoid getting into trouble, we have imperfect contrition. Read aloud the remaining paragraphs. Reflecting on whether we should confess a sin can be part of the examination of conscience we make before we celebrate the sacrament.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *Isaiah reminds us that God loves us even more than a mother loves her children. Because God has created us, he will never forget us.*

Art Exploration: Page 181

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of the parable of the forgiving father.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the actions of the father, his son, and the townspeople.
- ▶ **Say:** *Even when we do something to hurt God, he still loves us and wants us to return to him.*



- ▶ Have your child turn to page 181. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud The Forgiving Father. **Ask:** *How did the father respond to his son's homecoming? (He celebrated with a great feast.) How is God 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 do something to hurt 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 not correct.
- ▶ Invite your child to imagine that he or she is one of the townspeople watching the father embrace his son. **Ask:** *What are you thinking? How do you feel?* **Say:** *Imagine that you are the son being welcomed back by your father.* **Ask:** *How do you feel?* **Say:** *Imagine you are the father.* **Ask:** *How do you feel as you welcome your son home?* Give your child time to think about these questions and then to pray.

Reflect: Page 54

- ▶ Together look at page 54. **Say:** *The boy in the picture is taking time to reflect on his surroundings.* **Say:** *Close your eyes, fold your hands in front of you, and listen with your heart.*
- ▶ Read aloud each paragraph of the prayer, pausing at the end of each one to give your child time to reflect. At the end of the reflection, allow time for your child to pray silently. Close by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Read aloud Forgive Others. **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.*
- ▶ Work with your child to write an acrostic about forgiveness. Together think of words and phrases about forgiveness that begin with each letter of the word *forgive*. You may wish to use a dictionary or thesaurus for help with ideas for words or phrases.

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 show forgiveness to someone who has been unkind.
- ▶ 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.

Serving God and Others

Engage: Page 56

- ▶ Together discuss your child's talents. **Ask:** *What do you think you are good at doing? What are activities you enjoy doing? How do you share these talents with others?*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text below it. Discuss your child's responses. Point out the picture. **Ask:** *What talent might this girl have that she can share with others? (being a good violinist)* **Say:** *In this session we will learn how we can serve God by following Mary's example.*
- ▶ Invite your child to think of how to share his or her talents in a way that serves the Church. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 56–57

- ▶ Display pictures of Mary. **Ask:** *Why do we 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 The Annunciation. **Ask:** *Why did Mary agree to do what God asked of her? (She trusted God.)*
- ▶ Read aloud The First Disciple on page 57. **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)* **Say:** *Solidarity means that all people have dignity because they are children of God. We care for others because we are all equal before God.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Name some of Mary's feast days: January 1, Mary, the Mother of God; August 15, the Assumption; December 8, the Immaculate Conception; December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Art Exploration: Page 182

- ▶ 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.*



- ▶ Have your child turn to page 182. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *Mary, Mother of the Church*. **Ask:** *What did Jesus tell Mary and his beloved disciple, John, as Jesus was dying on the cross?* (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?* (Rather than doing what she wanted, Mary chose to follow God's plan.) Have your child complete the activity. Discuss where you have seen these flowers in your community.
- ▶ Using construction paper, markers, and scissors, invite your child 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: Page 58

- ▶ Together look at page 58. **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 the first paragraph. Before praying, explain the meaning of some of the words. **Say:** *The "children of Eve" are all the descendents of Adam and Eve. The "land of exile" is the world we live in, which is full of sin and temptation as a result of Adam of 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 prayer slowly, pausing after every line. If necessary, review the meaning of some of the words again. Read aloud the final paragraph and then give your child time to reflect silently. Conclude by praying together the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Read aloud the *Meet a Holy Person*. **Say:** *Father Miguel Pro 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 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 treat others with kindness and respect.
- ▶ 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 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 and text. **Say:** *The Feast of the Holy Family celebrates the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; the Feast of the Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus; and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord celebrates Jesus' baptism. In this session we will learn more about the Christmas season.*
- ▶ Ask your child to prepare for Christmas by marking the important feast days of the season on your family calendar. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Page 61

- ▶ Light a candle. **Ask:** *What do candles or flames symbolize? (warmth, heat, Christ's light, the Holy Spirit) 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? (follow Jesus' new commandment, practice 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 62

- ▶ Together sing or read aloud the lyrics to your favorite Christmas carols. Discuss how you both feel when you 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.)*
- ▶ Read aloud the section What We Experience. **Ask:** *What do the carols and hymns inspire us to do? (what is right and to feel Jesus' love for us)*
- ▶ Read aloud the section 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 183

- ▶ 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 doing.
- ▶ **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.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 183. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud God Among Us. **Ask:** *What do we celebrate on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord? (that God chose 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 to show us how to live) What gifts did the Magi offer? (gold, frankincense, and myrrh) What gift can we offer? (our love)*
- ▶ 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 health-care 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 63

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can share God's love with others by sharing a sign of peace with a family member.
- ▶ 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.