


**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES**

Download and print:

- ▶ Study Corners
- ▶ Where Do I Fit In?

We Belong

Begin

Read aloud the unit title. **Say:** *Imagine that a visitor from another planet wanted to move to our town. Ask: What rules would that person need to follow to be a successful member of our community?* Together make a list of rules. Explain that in this unit, your child will learn what it means to be a member of the Catholic Church. **Say:** *As members of the Church, we have both rights and responsibilities that help us live out Jesus' teachings. Today we're going to learn about two saints who established communities for men and women. Point out that the members of these communities followed a specific set of rules that helped them live as disciples.*

Introduce the Saint

Ask your child to read aloud the paragraph on page 40. **Say:** *Think of a time when you were scared, stressed out, tired, or hungry. Try to recall what your instincts pushed you to do. Ask: Why might it be easy to forget about God during hard times?* (Possible answer: because we are worried about our basic needs) **Say:** *Why is it crucial for us to remember God during hard times?* (Possible answer: Only God can save us and comfort us.)

Invite your child to read aloud How the Saints Relate. **Say:** *We are like Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica when we choose to participate in communities whose members nourish one another and build up God's kingdom by performing acts of service.*

Turn to page 41. Have your child read aloud the section Forming a New Community. **Ask:** *Why did Benedict move to the cave on Mount Subiaco?* (He became discouraged by the immoral lives that many people around him in Rome were living.) *What did he do while he lived there?* (fasted and prayed so that he could better discern what God was asking of him) *Why did other men join him?* (They were interested in a more contemplative way of life.) *Why was it important for the monks to live together in community?* (Possible answer: so that they could support one another in their life of prayer and manual labor)

Read aloud Saint Scholastica. Share your own stories of being reunited with family members, such as at holiday reunions with cousins who live at a distance.

With your child, add Benedict's feast day, March 21, and Scholastica's feast day, February 10, to your calendar. Celebrate their lives by learning more about Benedictine monasteries and identifying how you can follow the example set by Benedictine monks and nuns.

We Believe

Engage: Page 42

- ▶ Give your child a few moments to reflect on how a person models Christian discipleship. Provide art materials and ask your child to make a card thanking this person for the examples that he or she sets in your child's faith story. Encourage your child to give or send the card to the intended recipient.
- ▶ Read aloud the title and discuss the text in the blue box. **Say:** *As Catholics we belong to a family of faith that has a particular story. In this session we are going to learn about decisions made by early Church leaders that have continued to shape our faith story.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 43–44

- ▶ Play the game 20 Questions. Pick an item in the room and have your child guess what the item is by asking no more than 20 yes/no questions. **Say:** *You used clues to try to solve a mystery. In this article we are going to learn how disciples in the early Church used clues to understand the Incarnation.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the title The Early Ecumenical Councils, the first paragraph, and the section The Council of Nicaea. **Ask:** *What teaching did the bishops affirm at the Council of Nicaea? (that Jesus is consubstantial with the Father, that Jesus Christ is God from all eternity, that Jesus was not created)*
- ▶ Read aloud the Council of Constantinople. Point out the word *Trinity*. Draw a triangle, and label each point with one of the Persons of the Trinity. Use this image to emphasize that the Three Persons of the Trinity are connected as one being. Remind your child that the Nicene Creed is the Profession of Faith that we pray together during Mass.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Council of Ephesus on page 44. Emphasize that God entered the world in the Person of Jesus through Mary's willingness to say yes to God.
- ▶ Together read aloud The Council of Chalcedon and An Important Question. Point out that Eutyches believed that Jesus' divine nature negated his human nature. **Ask:** *What did the bishops teach at the Council of Chalcedon? (that Jesus shares a divine nature with his Father in heaven and that he also shares a human nature with the human family)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Sacred Art feature. Explain that a basilica is a Church that has received special honor and is often a pilgrimage location.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Explore: Pages 45–46

- ▶ **Say:** *A mission statement is an overview of an organization's purpose and core beliefs.* Display and read aloud mission statements from various organizations. Invite your child to write a personal mission statement. **Say:** *Now we're going to learn about the Nicene Creed, a statement that summarizes the beliefs of the Church.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the title Professing Our Faith and the first paragraph. **Say:** *After Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, many people became Christians.*

- ▶ Read aloud The Nicene Creed. **Say:** *Here the word Person refers to the three different ways that we, in our limited state, can understand and relate to God.* Point out that we celebrate Jesus' Incarnation at Christmas and that the most important celebration of Jesus' Paschal Mystery happens during Holy Week.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character on page 46. Explain that when we pray aloud the Nicene Creed, we profess from our heart our belief, or faith, in the Church and its teachings.
- ▶ Read aloud Ready for Confirmation. **Ask:** *How can we live out our personal commitment to God?* (Possible answers: Pray. Attend Mass. Celebrate the sacraments. Follow Jesus' example.) Explain that when we renew our baptismal promises by saying "I do," we are making a public declaration of our faith.
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 246 in the back of the book. Pray aloud the Nicene Creed together. Explain that a statement of faith is a sentence or phrase that expresses a central belief of our faith. Name some of the statements of faith that are part of the Nicene Creed. Give your child time to complete the activity I Believe.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Reflect: Page 47

- ▶ Read aloud the title and the paragraphs in the left column. Tell your child that the word *Amen* means "so be it" or "truly."
- ▶ Explain that some of our communal prayers, such as the Nicene Creed, can also be used during our personal prayer time. Begin praying aloud the Creed together. Ask your child to pray aloud each reflection and allow time to pray silently before praying the next part of the Creed.
- ▶ Refer to the Where Do I Fit In? reflective essay to encourage your child to reflect on and recognize God's presence in his or her life. Read aloud the introductory paragraph. **Ask:** *Who are you?* (Possible answers: I am a son. I am a basketball player. I am a musician.) **Say:** *As you continue to grow into adulthood, one of your biggest responsibilities will be to discover your identity. As a member of the Church, you have a head start.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud Who Am I and What Do I Believe? **Ask:** *How does the author describe some of the things he did as a teenager?* (stupid, not me) Point out that it is important to pay attention to this feeling because if we ignore it, the feeling will eventually go away. **Say:** *When we listen to this feeling, we are listening to our conscience.*
- ▶ Invite your child to complete the activity and share his or her personal identity symbol and its meaning with you.

Respond: Page 48

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the directions and complete the activity. Point out that he or she can use the page references for help completing each sentence.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? After your child completes the activity, encourage him or her to follow through with the ideas during the week. Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.

Praise God in Worship

Engage: Page 49

- ▶ Have your child make a calendar for the past week and write some of the activities he or she did each day. **Say:** *Let's think about this. If you gave this calendar to someone who did not know you, what might this person think your priorities were?* Then read aloud Matthew 6:19–21. **Ask:** *What does this passage teach us about the treasure of time?* (Possible answer: We should use our time to do things that build up God's kingdom.)
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we are going to learn about someone who used his time to follow Jesus. His life of prayerful service provides an example that we can follow.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 50–51

- ▶ Display a wrapped package that contains a symbol of a gift you share with others. Ask your child to open the gift. **Say:** *Each of us has received gifts from God that we are called to share with others.* Invite your child to share the gifts he or she has received from God and tell how these gifts can be used to serve others.
- ▶ Read aloud the title Saint Gregory the Great and the first five paragraphs. **Ask:** *What did Gregory want to do instead of becoming pope?* (He wanted to remain a monk at Saint Andrew.) **Ask:** *Ultimately, what did Gregory decide to do?* (Follow God's will for him.) **Say:** *Gregory's life demonstrates why it is important to spend time listening to God in prayer. Doing so helps us discover what God is asking of us.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Life in the Church. **Ask:** *How might we believe that the Holy Spirit animated Gregory the Great's life?* (Possible answer: He sold most of his land and donated the proceeds to people who were poor.)
- ▶ Read aloud Gregory's Influence on the Liturgy on page 51. Explain that while the Mass is the most commonly celebrated liturgy, any public celebration of our faith could be considered a liturgy.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character. **Ask:** *What was so great about these two popes?* (Possible answer: They used their authority to help others.) Explain that sometimes people with authority use their power to glorify themselves.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Explore: Pages 52–53

- ▶ Play a recording of "O, Come, All Ye Faithful." Invite your child to sing along. **Ask:** *What can we do to show Jesus adoration?* (Possible answer: Pray before the Blessed Sacrament.) **Say:** *In this article we are going to learn about how to adore God and how we are called to do so.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the title Called to Worship God and the first paragraph. **Say:** *Adoration is a form of prayer in which we are fully present to God.*
- ▶ Turn to page 238 and read aloud the First Commandment. Then read aloud the section The First Commandment. **Ask:** *What does the First Commandment teach us?* (We are called to believe in, hope in, and love God above all else.)

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Sacred Art feature. Explain that during adoration, we are shown Jesus in the Eucharist so that we can adore God for the gift of Salvation we receive through the Paschal Mystery.
- ▶ Read aloud the Second and Third Commandments on page 238. Then have your child read aloud the sections about the Second and Third Commandments on page 53. **Ask:** *How can we respect God's name? (by not using it, or the names of Mary and the saints, in ways that dishonor them) What can our family do to observe the Third Commandment? (Possible answers: Attend Mass together. Watch a movie or play a game together.)*
- ▶ Read aloud Our Relationships with Others. Emphasize that through his words and actions, Jesus taught us how to put the Ten Commandments into practice.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Keeping the Commandments. Work together to complete the activity.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Reflect: Page 54

- ▶ Read aloud the title How Awesome Is Your Name and the paragraphs in the left column. **Ask:** *How do you work to conserve the natural resources we have been given by God? (Possible answer: by turning off the water when I brush my teeth)*
- ▶ Pray aloud A Psalm as Prayer together. Invite your child to reflect on the wonders of creation that he or she has seen.
- ▶ Refer to the Where Do I Fit In? reflective essay to encourage your child to reflect on and recognize God's presence in his or her life and surroundings. Share song lyrics you once misunderstood and how you felt when you discovered what the words really were. Read aloud the introductory text of Where Do I Fit In? **Say:** *The teachings, practices, and rituals of the Church are like song lyrics. Let's read how one little girl learned to sing her faith.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud What Shapes Us? Invite your child to describe similar moments in his or her faith life and tell what basic message was learned. Then have your child identify contrary messages that come from our consumerist culture. **Ask:** *How can we help ourselves be shaped by the faith messages rather than by these contrary messages? Discuss your child's response.*
- ▶ Have your child complete A Message of Faith independently. Encourage him or her to share the response with you.

Respond: Page 55

- ▶ Read aloud the directions and have your child write the answers to the questions independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? Have your child complete the activity and be mindful of his or her response during the week. Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.

Monasteries and Communities

Engage: Page 56

- ▶ **Ask:** *Why do we follow rules?* (Possible answer: to help us live together peacefully) Together make a list of rules that you both think can help people live together peacefully.
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we are going to learn about the monastic movement in the early Church. Living and working in a community can be challenging, but it can also be rewarding.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 57–58

- ▶ Sit together in a dark room. **Ask:** *What can you see? How does the darkness make you feel?* (Possible response: anxious) Turn on a flashlight. Discuss how the light makes you feel better because it is easier to see your surroundings. **Say:** *In this article we are going to learn how the Church served as a beacon of light during the Early Middle Ages.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the title A Response to the Early Middle Ages and the first three paragraphs. **Ask:** *Where can people turn for help when they are facing difficult situations?* (Possible answers: family, friends, charitable institutions, the Church) Point out that just as it does today, the Church served as a source of comfort for people during the Early Middle Ages. **Ask:** *How did the Church serve as a beacon of light during this time period?* (Church leaders worked to preach the Gospel to invading tribes, heal people who were sick, and reestablish society. Bishops served as civic leaders and protected the people from dishonest tax collectors.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character. **Say:** *The word rule comes from the Latin word regula, which means “guidepost,” or “a source of direction when one is lost.”*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud The Rule of Saint Benedict. **Ask:** *Why did Benedict write his Rule?* (Possible answer: to remind the monks to seek God in prayer, silence, work, and service to guests and one another) *How did Benedictine monks serve the Church?* (offering shelter to travelers and pilgrims, feeding those who were hungry, healing those who were sick, keeping historical records)
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Art feature on page 58. **Say:** *Visual art expresses something that we cannot express in words. As we see here, people often go to extraordinary lengths to save and preserve art.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the section A New Rule. Invite your child to complete the activity independently and share his or her response with you.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Explore: Pages 59–60

- ▶ Together look through newspapers or magazines for ads that reinforce the notion of immediate gratification. **Ask:** *What is an example of a way that we can give up instant gratification to achieve lasting joy?* (Possible answer: We can refrain from buying the latest video game to save money for college.)
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the title The Evangelical Counsels and the first six paragraphs. **Ask:** *How can we live out the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience?* (We can live out

the virtue of poverty by donating part of our allowance to charity. We can live out the virtue of chastity by refraining from sexual relationships. We can live out the virtue of obedience by respecting those who are responsible for our care.)

- ▶ Read aloud *Strengthened by the Counsels*. Point out that during physical labor, monks and nuns practiced meditation by reflecting on God's presence in the world and the gifts he has given us. **Say:** *We can meditate throughout our day as well. One of the greatest contributions that Saint Ignatius of Loyola made to the Church is his spirituality, which reminds us to look for God in the world around us.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud *Past Meets Present*. Point to the word *monasticism*. **Say:** *Long before Saint Benedict founded his first monastery, people lived together in religious communities. This movement is known as monasticism.*
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.
- ▶ Remind your child that we are all called to practice the evangelical counsels. Take time to summarize ways we can live out each one.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Reflect: Page 61

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the title and the paragraphs in the left column. **Say:** *As Jesus' followers we are called to heal broken relationships rather than walking away from them.*
- ▶ **Say:** *Take a moment to center yourself. Open your heart to God's presence. Together pray aloud the prayer. Say: Take a moment to pray a short prayer, asking God to bring healing to a broken relationship that you might be experiencing. After giving your child time to pray silently, conclude by praying together the Glory Be to the Father.*
- ▶ Refer to the *Where Do I Fit In?* reflective essay to encourage your child to reflect on and recognize God's presence in his or her life. Ask your child to recall a small disagreement or difference of opinion he or she has experienced in the last few days. Discuss how the disagreement was resolved. **Ask:** *How might the disagreement have been a gift from God in disguise?* (Possible answer: It gave me a chance to be generous and understanding.) Read aloud the introductory paragraph and the title in *Where Do I Fit In?*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud *Why Do We Need Community?* **Ask:** *Why is it difficult for us to prefer someone else's fulfillment over our own?* (Possible answer: Our society tells us that it is more important to be concerned with our needs than the needs of other people.)
- ▶ Have your child complete the activity *Called to Community* independently. Invite your child to share his or her response.

Respond: Page 62

- ▶ Read aloud the directions. Remind your child to read all the choices before choosing one. Have him or her complete the activity independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under *Say What?* Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud *Now What?* **Say:** *Practicing the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience helps us build up God's kingdom and live together peacefully.* Have your child complete the activity and then together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.

Sent on a Mission

Engage: Page 63

- ▶ Discuss experiences you have both had where you shared exciting news with someone. Point out why you were excited to share the news and how other people responded to the news. **Say:** *A benefit of living in a community is having people who support us when times are tough. We also have others with whom we can share our good news.*
- ▶ Read aloud the title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we are going to reflect on how our relationship with Jesus fills us with joy and how we are called to share that joy with others by serving as missionaries.*
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 64–65

- ▶ If possible, play a recording of the theme song from *Mission: Impossible*. **Say:** *In Mission: Impossible, the agents were sent to complete tasks that many thought could not be done. As Jesus' followers we are also sent on a mission—to spread the Gospel message.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the article title The Church's Mission and the first three paragraphs. **Say:** *The word mission comes from a Latin word meaning "to send."*
Ask: *What did Church leaders send the early missionaries to do? (to leave their homes and share the Gospel with people who lived beyond the boundaries of the empire)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Ready for Confirmation. **Ask:** *What does the Sacrament of Confirmation call us to do? (Spread the Gospel. Be missionaries in our own lives.) What are a few concrete examples of how we can be missionaries? (Possible answers: by helping a neighbor with yard work, by speaking up for those who are oppressed)*
- ▶ Read aloud Respond to the Call. Point out that people who stand up for the truth are often persecuted. Research contemporary missionaries who are persecuted for standing up for what is right.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Past Meets Present on page 65. Explain that during his life, Jesus sent women and men to spread his message. Read aloud the story of the Samaritan women at the well [John 4:4–42] or the story of Mary Magdalene [John 20:11–18].
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Explore: Pages 66–67

- ▶ Play a game where you both sit six feet away from a wall and see who can roll a ball closest to the wall without touching the wall. **Say:** *This game required a gentle touch. Now we're going to learn about spreading the Gospel to others, which often requires a gentle touch as well.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the article title Called to Spread the Good News and the first three paragraphs. Point out that the theme of the New Evangelization is that all of us are called to share the Gospel with others. **Say:** *Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI developed the New Evangelization as a response to our contemporary culture, which often rejects Christian values.*

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Sacred Art feature. **Say:** *This picture reminds us that Jesus is always with us.* Point out that when we engage in acts of evangelization, we help others recognize Jesus' presence in the world around them.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Live Faith-Filled Lives. **Ask:** *What is the message we spread when we give in to temptations?* (Possible answers: that our faith is not important to us, that societal values are more important than Christian values) Explain that the Church calls us to respect people's religious freedom because it recognizes that each religious tradition reveals some ray of truth. Share your experiences of interacting with people from other religious traditions. **Say:** *By remaining true to our own faith and treating people of other traditions with respect, we spread the Good News.*
- ▶ Read aloud the section A Modern Missionary on page 67. Give your child time to complete the activity and invite him or her to share the answers with you.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Reflect: Page 68

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the title and the paragraphs in the left column. Explain that there are different types of meditation and that Christian meditation is always focused on God.
- ▶ **Say:** *Find a comfortable position and quiet yourself for prayer.* Invite your child to pray aloud the first paragraph of the section Meditation of a Missionary. Pause briefly, then pray aloud the quotation from Pope John Paul II's message. Read aloud the next sentence and the questions that follow. Pause after each question to give your child time to reflect. Then pray aloud the final paragraph. Conclude by praying together the Lord's Prayer.
- ▶ Refer to the Where Do I Fit In? reflective essay to encourage your child to reflect on and recognize God's presence in his or her life and surroundings. **Ask:** *What is the butterfly effect?* (a small change in one place that has a ripple effect and makes very large changes elsewhere) **Say:** *Our actions in the world are like this effect. One small word or deed can have a life-changing impact on someone we hardly know.* Have your child read aloud the introductory paragraph.
- ▶ Together read aloud Who Has Carried the Message of Jesus to Me? **Say:** *Mrs. Brennan doesn't know it, but by teaching an ordinary lesson about one of Jesus' miracles, she ended up touching the heart and mind of someone many years later.* **Ask:** *What else accounts for the power of Mrs. Brennan's action?* (Possible answers: Christ himself, the miracle of the Good News)
- ▶ Have your child complete the activity independently and encourage him or her to put the idea into action in the coming days.

Respond: Page 69

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the directions and complete the crossword puzzle.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? Give your child time to complete the activity. **Say:** *When we serve as missionaries, we set an example for how others can follow Jesus' teachings.* Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.

Celebrating Advent and Christmas

Engage: Page 70

- ▶ Together make a list of items you would need for a family party. **Ask:** *How does preparing for the event make it more meaningful?* (Possible answer: The preparation raises our anticipation for the event.)
- ▶ Read aloud the title Celebrating Advent and Christmas and the sentences in the blue box. Discuss the questions. Then read aloud the page. **Ask:** *What can we do to prepare the way of the Lord?* (Possible answer: Proclaim the Gospel message.) *What is the Incarnation?* (God becoming man in the Person of Jesus) Display a liturgical calendar and point out the seasons of Advent and Christmas.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 71–72

- ▶ Discuss Advent traditions celebrated by your family and your parish. **Ask:** *How do these traditions help us prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth?* (Possible answers: They help us focus on the real meaning of the Advent and Christmas seasons. They encourage us to reflect on what Jesus' birth means to us today.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the article title A Time to Prepare and the first three paragraphs. **Ask:** *How was Advent first celebrated in the Church?* (Local communities followed various traditions to help prepare them to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.) Draw your child's attention to the word *apologists*. **Say:** *An apologist is anyone who defends the faith through his or her words and actions.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Catholic Character. **Say:** *In this case, doctor is an honorary title given to someone who has made significant contributions to our understanding of who God is.*
- ▶ Together read aloud O Antiphons on page 72. Point out that Catholic rituals include numerous antiphons, such as the antiphons used during the Liturgy of the Hours. **Say:** *This form of prayer includes Scripture readings, hymns, and writings from the early Fathers of the Church.* Read aloud the lyrics of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" and point out each of the O Antiphons.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Ready for Confirmation feature. Give your child writing supplies and then **say:** *Take a few moments to write questions you can use to help you reflect on who Jesus is and what his coming to earth means to you.*
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Explore: Pages 73–74

- ▶ Display various images of angels. **Say:** *Throughout history God has relied on angels to deliver messages to people. He also relies on heralds—all those who announce his Good News through their words and actions.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the article title God's Messengers and the first two paragraphs. Remind your child that the Christmas season begins with Mass on Christmas Eve and goes through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in early January.

Read aloud the story of the Annunciation. [Luke 1:26–38] **Ask:** *What message did the herald Gabriel deliver?* (that Mary was going to become Jesus' mother)

- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Art feature. **Ask:** *What are the townspeople doing to celebrate Jesus' birth?* (Possible answer: They are offering gifts to Jesus.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the sections Biblical Heralds and Sainly Heralds on page 74. Explain that we prepare the way of the Lord every time we perform acts that build up God's kingdom.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud We Are Heralds. Give him or her time to reflect silently on how to live out the virtues of simplicity, poverty, and humility.
- ▶ Read aloud the Our Catholic Character feature.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a review of the vocabulary terms and main idea of the article.

Reflect: Page 75

- ▶ Read aloud the title God's Greatest Gift and the paragraphs in the left column. Point out that the prayer on this page is a form of *lectio divina*, a reflective way of praying with Scripture.
- ▶ Lead your child in the prayer Who Do You Say That I Am? Pause as appropriate to give your child time to reflect on the Scripture passage and the questions. Conclude by praying together the closing prayer.
- ▶ Refer to the Where Do I Fit In? reflective essay to encourage your child to reflect on and recognize God's presence in his or her life. Ask your child to name his or her favorite childhood storybooks and share the memories associated with them. **Ask:** *Did the joy you experience come from the pages of the book itself or from somewhere else?* (Possible answer: It came from the pages of the book together with memories of reading it with a loved one.) **Say:** *The joy of God is the same. He is in the Gospel stories because Jesus is the Son of God.* Read aloud the introductory paragraph in Where Do I Fit In?
- ▶ Together read aloud Where's God? **Ask:** *How was God present even in the man's negative response?* (Possible answers: The comment caused the author to feel more strongly her own conviction that God is everywhere. It increased her desire to share this news with others. It led to the writing of this article.)
- ▶ Invite your child to complete the activity God Is Present independently.

Respond: Page 76

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the directions. Remind him or her to use the page references to help find the correct matches as he or she completes the activity independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? Allow time for your child to complete his or her prayer. **Say:** *Prayer is one way for us to prepare our minds and hearts for Jesus' coming.* Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.