

Building Family Faith



Chapter 1

ALL CREATION speaks of God’s love, beauty, and goodness, but human beings have a sacred relationship with God. Each one of us is made in the image of God, and we are called to do our part to take care of the world God has entrusted to us.

Reflect

“Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than birds!”

Luke 12:24

Discuss as a Family

- How does God take care of us?
- What are some ways that we can take care of one another?
- What are some ways that we can help take care of people around the world?

Pray

Thank you, Lord, for all your gifts.

Do

- At family mealtimes this week, ask each person to tell one thing he or she is grateful for.
- Show gratitude and respect for creation by picking up litter and teaching your child about conservation.
- Help your child see that everyone is created in the image of God by performing kind acts.
- Read a story or poem that evokes an appreciation for nature.

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Chapter 2

GOD SHOWS HIS LOVE for the human family by giving us his Son, Jesus. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice to make up for human sin. He offers himself to his Father with love. He offers himself for us. Jesus shows us how we can be happy every day and live with God forever.

Reflect

Jesus said, . . . “I am the way and the truth and the life.”

John 14:6

Discuss as a Family

- How does listening to Jesus’ words help us know God the Father better?
- How can we live out Jesus’ words in our daily lives?

Pray

Lord, I’m listening. Help me hear your Word.

Do

- At family mealtimes, invite your child to lead everyone in the Sign of the Cross and a prayer of grace.
- Take a nature walk and view how new life is all around us.
- Read Jesus’ parables from the Bible.

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Chapter 3

BAPTISM WELCOMES US into the family of Christ. As Christians, we are called to live in love, united with all the People of God, under the spiritual leadership of the pope and the bishops.

Reflect

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.

1 John 4:9

Discuss as a Family

- What do you think about when you hear the word *Baptism*?
- How are sharing and giving signs of our love for God and for others?
- How does the Church help us live in love?

Pray

Dear Jesus, help me grow in faith, hope, and love.

Do

- At family mealtimes this week, talk about the godparents of each family member and why they were chosen.
- Discuss how light sustains us physically and spiritually.
- Read a story about welcoming others.

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Chapter 5

GOD SATISFIES our deepest longings. Jesus shows us how to call on God in times of joy or sorrow. We show our gratitude for God's love by gathering in prayer as a family and a Christian community. There are different types of prayer, including praise, thanksgiving, and petition.

Reflect

Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another [in] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts.

Ephesians 5:18–19

Discuss as a Family

- How is praying a form of talking to God?
- What are some happy memories you have of Sunday Mass?
- What are some of your family rituals associated with Sunday Mass?

Pray

Dear Jesus, here's what happened today . . .

Do

- Invite your child to choose prayers to pray each morning, afternoon, and evening, such as the Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, and the Lord's Prayer.
- Make Sundays special by developing rituals around the Mass. Share a meal together before Mass or invite friends or relatives to come to church with you.
- At family mealtimes this week, show how songs can be a form of praise by singing a favorite church hymn or Christmas carol.

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Chapter 6

JESUS INVITES US to love others as he loves us. We love as Jesus does by being kind, helpful, thoughtful, and obedient. Jesus says whatever we do to others, we do to him.

Reflect

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.”

Matthew 25:35

Discuss as a Family

- What are ways we show that we care for one another?
- How can we support parish and community efforts to help those in need?

Pray

I offer you all that I am and all that I have, O Lord!

Do

- Read about and discuss incidents that show how the saints used their gifts to help others.
- As a family, help a local charity by volunteering or fundraising.
- At family mealtimes, invite each person to tell about how he or she helped someone recently.

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Chapter 7

WE FOLLOW CHRIST'S way of love when we are kind, respectful, honest, and truthful. Jesus helps us see what is good and true when we pray.

Reflect

Love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.

Romans 12:10

Discuss as a Family

- What are ways we show respect for others?
- How is telling the truth a sign of respect?
- Why is it important to take care of the people and things in our lives?

Pray

I thank you, Lord, for all I am and all that I have.

Do

- Encourage family members when they show kindness, helpfulness, respect, honesty, or truthfulness. Express how proud you are of them.
- At bedtime, remember to tell your child that you love him or her. This encourages everyone's expression of love and affection.
- Invite your child to decorate a card to send to a friend or relative.

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Chapter 9

NO MATTER WHAT we do, Jesus is always ready to be our friend. Through Jesus, we see that God calls us to receive his forgiveness and peace when we have sinned. Jesus invites us to a change of heart.

Reflect

When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.”

Luke 19:5

Discuss as a Family

- Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his home. How do we welcome Jesus into our home?
- How do we ask for and offer forgiveness in our family?

Pray

O my God, help me welcome you into my heart.

Do

- Go to your local library for books about nature or visit a natural history museum. Share how things you see speak of God’s greatness.
- At family mealtimes this week, talk about God’s gifts.
- Take turns praying grace and thanking God for particular gifts.
- Pray with your child the Act of Contrition.

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Chapter 10

JESUS CONTINUALLY CALLS us who have sinned to reconciliation. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, he gives the Father's forgiveness and leads us to greater peace.

Reflect

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

John 20:19

Discuss as a Family

- How does saying we are sorry when we are wrong help heal a broken relationship?
- Discuss how in the Sacrament of Reconciliation the priest forgives us in Jesus' name, brings us God's peace, and helps us know what we can do to be more loving.

Pray

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Do

- Talk about times you needed to be forgiven. When you asked for and received forgiveness, how did it help you be more loving?
- Show your child the reconciliation room or confessional in your church.

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Chapter 11

THE HOLY SPIRIT is with us always and helps us see when we are being loving and when we are not. Because of the Holy Spirit, our lives can be filled with love, peace, and joy.

Reflect

“The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you.”

John 14:26

Discuss as a Family

- Discuss the importance of taking time each day to listen to the Holy Spirit.
- How do we know that the Holy Spirit is inviting us to do something good?
- How do we show that we are following the Holy Spirit’s guidance?

Pray

Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love.

Do

- Talk to your child about a time you experienced the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- Help your child form the habit of looking into his or her heart each day to recognize acts of love or failures to show love.
- When your child quarrels with a friend, gently reflect together on the reasons for the quarrel and discuss ways to handle future situations.

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Chapter 12

THROUGH THE SACRAMENT of Reconciliation, God forgives us when we confess our sins and express our desire to be more faithful to the teachings and examples of Jesus.

Reflect

“Go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:24

Discuss as a Family

- When we accept signs of love from those who ask forgiveness, we change sad and heavy hearts to ones of joy.
- How can our concern for others often be the most precious gift we can give?
- Why is it important to be able to say “I’m sorry” to others and really mean it?

Pray

Jesus, I am sorry for the times I failed to follow your ways.

Do

- Talk to your child about experiences of forgiving others and asking for forgiveness.
- Encourage your child to apologize when it’s called for. Set an example by saying you are sorry when you do something wrong.
- Discuss how to express sorrow and do penance.

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Chapter 13

OUR GOOD GOD forgives us over and over. Each time we experience the wonder of his mercy, we are moved to respond with thanks and praise.

Reflect

A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.

Psalm 51:12

Discuss as a Family

- How can a person make up for a sin?
- God longs to forgive us no matter what we do.
- Why is it important to tell God that we are sorry when we sin?

Pray

Lord, your mercy endures forever.

Do

- Practice forgiving your child with a generous heart in order to model God's bountiful mercy.
- Pray the Act of Contrition with your child.
- Review the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your child. Make sure he or she can discuss the sacrament with confidence.

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Chapter 15

THE FOOD AND THE DRINK of the Eucharist is Jesus. He is the living bread, broken and shared to give God's life and love to the world.

Reflect

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever."

John 6:51

Discuss as a Family

- Recall favorite meals (elaborate or simple) that you have enjoyed with family and friends.
- How do your family meals relate to the celebration of the Eucharist?
- When we say "Amen" before receiving the Eucharist, it shows that we believe what Jesus says and that we want to obey God.

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of yourself.

Do

- Talk about why we come together for Sunday Mass—to worship and thank our Father with, through, and in Jesus.
- Read John 6:51 with your child. Discuss how bread gives life and nourishment. Then pray the Lord's Prayer together.

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Chapter 16

THE EUCHARIST is the heart and summit of the Church's life. It is both a sacred meal and a gift that helps us remember and celebrate God's love. Jesus gives himself to the Father for us. We pray and offer ourselves. Christ joins our own offerings to his.

Reflect

"This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me."

Luke 22:19

Discuss as a Family

- How do we offer the moments of our lives to God at Mass?
- When we eat together as a family, we are fed physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. How is the same true when we gather at the table of the altar?

Pray

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

Do

- At family mealtimes this week, invite each person to share a thought, a word, or an act of the day that he or she offered to God.
- Ask your child to tell you about Passover. Talk about how God saved his people from slavery.
- When you help your child put on his or her socks or shoes, recall how Jesus washed the feet of his Apostles as a sign of his love and service to them.

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Chapter 17

WHEN WE GATHER at Mass, we enter into a sacred time. By praising God in song and prayer and asking forgiveness, the Holy Spirit prepares us to be fully present before God.

Reflect

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your
great glory.

Discuss as a Family

- How do we prepare our minds and hearts before going to Mass?
- Singing is a form of prayer. What is your favorite hymn to sing at church?

Pray

Glory to God in the highest!

Do

- Pray the Glory to God with your child until he or she can join in with everyone at Mass.
- Help your child see that our actions carry messages about what is in our hearts. Talk about how dressing appropriately for Mass, being on time, and looking at the priest and readers when they speak show our love for Jesus and our respect for others.
- Encourage family members when they use words of praise.

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Chapter 18

AT MASS, WE HEAR the Word of God proclaimed, and we respond with silent reflection and singing. The Homily relates God's Word to our lives. We profess our faith when we pray the Nicene Creed.

Reflect

Thanks be to God.

Discuss as a Family

- Explain that Scripture can speak in a special way to our hearts. At Mass, we listen with our minds and hearts to the readings and the Gospel.
- After Mass, discuss the ideas and themes you heard in the Homily.

Pray

Your Word, O Lord, is eternal.

Do

- Make bookmarks with your child to use in the family Bible. Decorate them in ways that show respect for God's Word.
- Invite family members to name a favorite Bible story. Act out each story and see who can guess which story it is.
- Look around your church and find symbols and characters from the Bible. Talk about them with your child.

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Chapter 19

THE GIFTS of bread and wine we bring to the altar during Mass are a sign of God's goodness and a sign of ourselves. All that we have comes from and belongs to God.

Reflect

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God
of hosts.

Heaven and earth are full of
your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in
the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Discuss as a Family

- What are some favorite gifts you've received? How does it feel to share gifts you've been given with others?
- What are some ways we contribute to the life of the parish? Why do we choose to support our local parish with our time, talent, and treasure?

Pray

Blessed be God for ever.

Do

- Make a family banner to celebrate your child's First Holy Communion.
- Volunteer to carry the gifts at Sunday Mass
- At bedtime, read to your child a storybook about giving.

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Chapter 20

WE JOIN CHRIST in praising and thanking the Father in the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. We unite our daily sacrifices with Christ's perfect sacrifice to the Father.

Reflect

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Discuss as a Family

- Why do we appreciate giving gifts more when we put something of ourselves into the giving?
- Why is it important to show reverence during the consecration of the Mass?

Pray

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Do

- At Mass, quietly remind your child when it is time for the Great Amen so that he or she can respond with the community.
- Help your child learn the Memorial Acclamations.
- Offer words of encouragement and praise when you see your child acting kindly, being patient with others, or sharing.

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Chapter 21

AT MASS, we come together as God's family to remember that Jesus died for us. We prepare to receive Jesus' Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

Reflect

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

John 6:51

Discuss as a Family

- How does each family member pray during the time after Holy Communion?
- How can we thank Jesus for coming to us in the Eucharist?
- What gifts are we grateful for? What are we most grateful for today?

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for giving us yourself in Holy Communion.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Do

- After dinner or at bedtime, read the story of the healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5–13.
- Practice with your child how to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

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Chapter 23

THE CHURCH IS the Body of Christ, bringing Jesus' love to others and doing his work in the world. We all have a part in this work because we are all members of the Church.

Reflect

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quicktempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoings but rejoices with the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:4–6

Discuss as a Family

- A domestic family is one complete body too. How can we do our part in this work because we are all members of a family?
- How are we able to accomplish things together that we could not do alone?

Pray

Bless your Church, Lord. Protect it. Make it strong.

Do

- At family mealtimes or bedtime, pray regularly for the needs of others.
- Invite family members to share something they or someone else did that brought them closer to God.
- Together, decide how your family can help those in need.

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Chapter 24

JESUS LOVES US with the love of a friend. He called his followers friends. He called the little children of Galilee his friends too. That means that everyone in our family is a friend of Jesus. He is always with us. He is generous and wants the best for us. We can talk to him as we would talk to a good friend.

Reflect

“Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

Luke 1:42

Discuss as a Family

- How do members of our family help one another?
- How can our Mother Mary help our family?

Pray

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

Do

- Pray the Rosary as a family.
- Locate a nearby shelter and involve your family in donating food or household items they may need.