

Building Family Faith



Chapter 1

WE BELIEVE GOD created us out of love, and we come to know God through creation, his words and deeds, and most especially his Son, Jesus. We respond to God's love with faith.

Reflect

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.

John 3:16

Discuss as a Family

- How does God reveal himself through nature, other people, the Church, and his Son, Jesus?
- Talk about how your family can grow in faith.

Pray

Lord, help us grow strong in our faith.

Do

- Notice what amazes or delights you at a park, in your neighborhood, or even in your own backyard. Realize that these things are signs of God.
- At mealtime, name one person, place, thing, or experience that helped you realize God's love.
- Find a parish activity that your family can do together.

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Chapter 2

SACRED SCRIPTURE IS the written Word of God. Its most important message is love. Christians who grow in love and respect for the Bible reverently listen to and proclaim God's Word.

Reflect

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

Discuss as a Family

- What is your favorite Scripture story or Scripture passage?
- How can remembering the stories of the Bible help you during the day?
- What can you do to make the Bible part of your family life?

Pray

Your Word is spirit and life, O Lord.

Do

- Offer your child the gift of a Bible appropriate for his or her age group. Inscribe it with a message of encouragement and love.
- After Sunday Mass, discuss the readings and how you can apply them during the week.
- Take to heart one passage from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Pray one passage as your morning prayer and the other as your evening prayer for several weeks. Continue this practice throughout the year.

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Chapter 3

THE CHURCH TEACHES in Jesus' name, guided by the Holy Spirit. We must pray for and respect the Church and its leaders.

Reflect

“Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

Luke 10:16

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about what Jesus wants the Church and its leaders to teach about his life and mission.
- How can you help the Church continue its mission to teach?
- Why is it important to belong to the Church?

Pray

Holy Spirit, inspire and guide our leaders.

Do

- Explore the Vatican website, www.vatican.va.
- At mealtime, discuss current issues about which the Church has served as a teacher.
- Read and discuss Matthew 28:18–20, and then pray a prayer for our church leaders.

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Chapter 5

THE GOSPELS SHOW Jesus curing people who are sick, forgiving sins, praying, and teaching people how to live in his love. As Jesus' followers, we share his concern for others and forgive those who have hurt us.

Reflect

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. . . . They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men.

Mark 2:1,3

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about how loving acceptance and forgiveness are the greatest gifts we can share with friends and family.
- Talk about times that you forgave someone who hurt you and how you worked through your anger, sadness, or pain.

Pray

Jesus, open our eyes to the needs of others.

Do

- Plan a family help day. Volunteer for a parish outreach effort; or, clean out closets, bookshelves, and toy boxes, and donate gently used items to a charity.
- Make a pact that you will work through any arguments or hurt feelings and not ignore them.
- Think globally, act locally. Study problems of poverty and hunger in the world and learn what you can do in your community to help a family in need.

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Chapter 6

OUR CONSCIENCES HELP us make good choices. Celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation regularly helps us form our consciences and grow stronger in God's love.

Reflect

He straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."

John 8:7

Discuss as a Family

If your family is not familiar with this Gospel account, first read John 8:1–11.

- Why did Jesus tell the one without sin to throw the first stone?
- What might the woman have been thinking when she was brought to Jesus?
- Talk about how she may have felt when Jesus told her to go and sin no more.

Pray

Help us, O God, to know and do your will.

Do

- Tell your child about a time you chose to do the right thing in a difficult situation and were glad you did.
- Discuss the choices a character in a book or TV show made. Consider the options and reasons for the choices.
- Talk about the great gift that God gave us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Have the family celebrate the sacrament at church, then afterward share a meal or fun activity together.

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Chapter 7

WORSHIP OF GOD includes prayer and service. We can worship God in all our actions throughout the day.

Reflect

Oh, that today you would hear his voice:

Do not harden your hearts.

Psalm 95:8

Discuss as a Family

- What are some ways your family loves and serves God?
- Discuss how when we help others or others help us, God is pleased and present in our lives.

Pray

God, help us love you in all that we do and say.

Do

- Put a copy of the Morning Offering prayer where everyone can see it and pray it at the start of each day.
- When you're all together this week, have your child tell you the story of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton or Saint John Bosco.
- Put an empty bowl on a table with a cup of small candies next to it. Every time a family member makes a sacrifice for another family member, classmate, coworker, or friend, he or she puts a candy in the bowl. At the end of the week, the family can enjoy the treats.

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Chapter 8

BECAUSE GOD LOVES US, he gave the Ten Commandments as a fatherly instruction that leads to eternal life. The commandments call us to love God and love our neighbor.

Reflect

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Deuteronomy 5:6

Discuss as a Family

- How is living according to the commandments choosing to belong to God?
- Talk about the commandments that call us to love God.
- Talk about the commandments that tell us how to love our neighbor and ourselves.

Pray

You have placed your law in our hearts, O God.

Do

- Take turns as a family listing one of the commandments until you have all 10 listed. This is a way to reinforce learning the commandments by heart.
- Rent the movie *The Ten Commandments* and watch it as a family. Discuss any questions your child may have after viewing it.
- Make a replica of the two tablets given to Moses and work with your child to decorate them, either with the words of the commandments or with images depicting the ways we love God and others.

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Chapter 10

GOD IS REVEALED as the Trinity, the one true God in Three Persons. Sometimes we let that which is not God take his place in our lives. God calls us into a right relationship with him—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Reflect

Everything the LORD has said, we will do.

Exodus 19:8

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about some of the other gods that might lead us away from the true God.
- What happens when people put that which is not God into the place that only God can fill?
- What does God promise to those who keep his commandments?

Pray

My God, I love and adore you above all things.

Do

- Review the five kinds of prayer—adoration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession. At dinner this week, have each family member mention one thing he or she adores or praises God for, one thing he or she is grateful for, one thing he or she is asking God for, and one thing he or she is asking God to do for someone else.
- Plan time to bake cookies. Make cookies in the shape of the symbols for faith †, hope ⚓, and charity (love) ♥. Decorate them as you wish. Remind family members to ask God to help them grow in these virtues.

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Chapter 11

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED to give special respect to people, places, and things related to God. We should especially revere God's name and not use it carelessly or in anger.

Reflect

"You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain."

Exodus 20:7

Discuss as a Family

- What are some ways people misuse God's name? What can you do when you hear God's name being misused?
- Talk about how to handle anger and frustration constructively.
- How do we give proper respect to holy things at home, school, and church?

Pray

You are holy, Lord. Blessed be your holy name.

Do

- Talk about the importance of people's names. Share any special meanings of family members' names, and discuss what your names or nicknames say about you.
- Name the sacramentals you have in your house. Talk about how you use and show respect for them.
- Sing "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" or another song that shows reverence for God.

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Chapter 12

CHRISTIANS SET ASIDE SUNDAY as a special day to worship God, participate in the Eucharist, rest and spend time with family, and perform acts of service. We do this to honor the Third Commandment and celebrate Jesus' Resurrection.

Reflect

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

The Third Commandment

Discuss as a Family

- Why is it important to take time to rest and relax with family and friends?
- How does your family observe Sunday?
- How do you celebrate other holy days of the Church?

Pray

Thank you, Lord, for the great gift of Sunday.

Do

Plan something special for the family to do together on Sundays.

- Prepare for Sunday Mass by reading the Gospel together the night before. Talk about the reading as a family and discuss again after Mass.
- Spend some time on Sunday with fellow parishioners. Mingle with them after Mass. Invite another family for a Sunday meal or to join in parish outreach.
- Spend time with extended family or visit elderly family members whom you do not see regularly.

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Chapter 14

CHRISTIANS RESPECT AND OBEY those in authority. Children love, respect, and obey their parents. Everyone should respect those who lead our country and our Church. In these ways, we keep the Fourth Commandment.

Reflect

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD, your God, has commanded you, that you may have a long life and prosperity in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you.

Deuteronomy 5:16

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about how everyone in the family respects and obeys those in authority.
- Share the ways children honor their parents.
- Consider the reasons why respect for authority is important for your whole family.

Pray

Father, bless our family. Show us how to love and honor one another.

Do

- Discuss your family's history. Draw a family tree. View pictures of your ancestors and tell stories about them. Find out how your ancestors came to the United States.
- Ask each person to share an experience that made him or her happy to be a member of the family.
- Draw names. In the coming week, do something special for the person whose name you drew.

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Chapter 15

ALL LIFE IS SACRED and belongs to God. The Fifth Commandment calls us to respect and protect all life at all stages and ages. We show our appreciation for the gift of life by taking good care of ourselves and by protecting and cherishing others, especially those who are vulnerable.

Reflect

You formed my inmost being:
you knit me in my mother's
womb.

I praise you because I am
wonderfully made;

wonderful are your works!

Psalm 139:13–14

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about how you care for one another when someone is sick or in need.
- Name people in your neighborhood who need help. How can you help them?
- Share how you can take good care of yourselves.

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving us life. Keep us safe and strong. Show us how to care for others.

Do

- Determine ways to avoid things that endanger us, such as smoking, taking drugs, poor eating habits, and risky behavior.
- Prepare healthy meals and snacks for the family.
- Identify someone who is in need, such as an older person who has trouble getting around or a parishioner or neighbor who is ill and help that person.

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Chapter 16

WE HAVE A SPECIAL dignity because we are made in the image and likeness of God. We honor God and ourselves when we take good care of ourselves and are faithful to our promises to one another.

Reflect

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you? . . . Therefore, glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Discuss as a Family

- Name ways we give honor to God by how we use and care for our bodies.
- How have we been faithful to friends through hard times?
- What does it mean to be a good friend?

Pray

Jesus, help me be true to myself, others, and you.

Do

- Review the TV series and movies your family watches. Choose to watch those that show proper respect and reverence for people.
- Write letters to streaming services encouraging them to offer more appropriate programming.

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Chapter 17

WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT to share in the goodness of the earth's resources, own property, and receive just compensation for our work. We should be satisfied with what we have and respect the property and rights of others.

Reflect

You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:15

Discuss as a Family

- Which of our possessions are most important to us? Why?
- How do we take care of the things we have?
- How do we show respect for the possessions of others—in our family, at school, and among our friends?

Pray

I will listen to what God, the LORD, has to say;

surely he will speak of peace.

Psalms 85:9

Do

- As a family, learn more about one of the upcoming second collections at Mass. Have your child set aside some of the money he or she has earned for this collection.
- Participate as a family in a community beautification or conservation project.
- At dinner or bedtime, pray prayers of thanks for God's generosity to your family.

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Chapter 18

GOD CREATED A WORLD rich in beauty, resources, and wealth. He expects us to use these resources wisely and care for them responsibly.

Reflect

The land will yield its fruit.

Leviticus 25:19

Discuss as a Family

- How does our family benefit from the natural abundance of the earth?
- How does the labor of others serve us?
- How do we waste resources, and what might we do about it?
- How can we conserve and care for the good things of the earth?

Pray

Give us this day our daily bread.

Do

- Plan a day to work together as a family on organizing things in your house and/or taking care of your yard or garden.
- As you do so, think about how your work is a form of caring for God's creation.

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Chapter 19

IT IS IMPORTANT to speak the truth and keep our promises. We do this in imitation of God, who loves truth and who commands us to always say what is true, good, and loving.

Reflect

Speak the truth to one another; judge with honesty.

Zechariah 8:16

Discuss as a Family

- What are the consequences of lying?
- What are some ways to correct someone we know is lying?
- How is keeping promises a form of speaking the truth?

Pray

Jesus, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Give me the strength to be truthful.

Do

- Make an agreement as a family to be truthful with one another.
- Come up with some strategies for being truthful when it may be uncomfortable or embarrassing to do so.

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Chapter 21

MUCH OF JESUS' TEACHING is found in the Beatitudes. The first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," reminds us that true happiness arises out of our relationship with God.

Reflect

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

Matthew 6:25

Discuss as a Family

- How does God provide for our family's needs? Read Matthew 6:25–34.
- How do we take care of one another's needs in our family?
- How can we avoid worrying about how our needs will be met?

Pray

Father, you care for us. Show us how to care for others.

Do

- Ask each family member to complete the sentence, "Happiness is . . ." Discuss the answers.
- Have family members list as many blessings from God as they can in two minutes. Discuss each person's list.
- Regularly pray prayers of thanksgiving to God for the resources your family has.

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Chapter 22

SUFFERING IS PART OF our daily life. We accept it and look to God for the strength to bear and learn from our suffering.

Reflect

“Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.”

Matthew 5:4–5

Discuss as a family

- Share a recent difficulty or frustration your family experienced. What was something positive that arose from this experience?
- How has God used us or someone we know to bring comfort to sorrowing people?

Pray

Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Fill them with your love.

Do

- Help alleviate pressures and difficulties people in your family are experiencing right now.
- Pray for someone you know who is suffering.

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Chapter 23

WE ARE CALLED TO be pure and holy so that we may share in the joy God intends for us. This means putting God first. We follow and imitate Jesus. We also imitate Mary and the saints.

Reflect

“Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.”

Matthew 5:8

Discuss as a Family

- Who is a person you would consider holy? What makes this person holy?
- Have each family member name a quality of Jesus he or she is moved to want to imitate right now. Discuss how having that quality would help you grow closer to God.

Pray

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

Do

- Read aloud as a family about Saint Aloysius. Discuss the kind of person he was and how you can be like him.
- As you view a movie or show together as a family, identify an example of purity of heart in one of the characters.

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Chapter 24

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD leads us to bring love, peace, and mercy to others. We do this through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and by striving to be like Jesus.

Reflect

“Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.”

Matthew 5:9

Discuss as a Family

- How did Jesus teach us to show mercy to others? Think about the parable of the good Samaritan and Jesus’ miracles.
- Share about any disagreements you’ve seen settled peacefully. What made the difference?
- What is an issue at home or at school that needs to be resolved?

Pray

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Do

- Make the prayer of Saint Francis your family’s prayer.
- Take advantage of opportunities to bring peace to all, hope to those in despair, and joy to those who are sad.
- Decide as a family on some shows or movies to stream that provide examples of people making peace with one another.