

Guide  
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26th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
through the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time  
September 25, 2011, through November 13, 2011  
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# Promise

# Teaching Guide

## Unit 1: We Are the Church

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**Pflaum**  **Gospel Weeklies**  
FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM


Supplement to the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*

# Connecting Gospel and Doctrine

The Christian message centers on Jesus Christ. The Gospels are our primary source for knowing and adhering to Jesus Christ in faith. The *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* put Jesus Christ at the center of catechesis by building lessons around the Sunday Gospels of the liturgical year.

Catechesis must be centered in the Gospels. “Because the Gospels narrate the life of Jesus and the mystery of our redemption after Christ and the Reign of God that he proclaimed, catechesis will also be centered on Christ if the Gospels occupy a pivotal place within it.” Catechesis aims at putting “people... in communion... with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 426).

## Connecting the Weekly Issue of *Promise* to the *What the Church Believes and Teaches Handbook*

 As you look through this *Teaching Guide*, you will sometimes see a Chi-rho in the margin. This icon is your signal to look at the reference to a section in the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook (WCBT) which came with your subscription to *Promise*. The citation directs you to pages in the handbook that underscore and expand the doctrinal content of the *Promise* issue. You can incorporate the WCBT pages into your lesson, use them as a review of the doctrinal content, or call them to parents' attention as something to explore with their children at home.

### 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows... the liturgy is the privileged place for catechizing the People of God (*National Directory for Catechesis* #33). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #27.

### 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Especially in his parables, Christ invited his listeners to a whole new manner of life sustained by faith in God, encouraged by hope in the kingdom, and animated by love for God and neighbor (*National Directory for Catechesis* #28.2). We must protect human life and care for God's creation as we advance authentic human freedom and foster human rights and solidarity. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, for God's love knows no boundaries or borders (*NDC*#20.F). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #287.

### 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, catechesis for the Eucharist recognizes it as the heart of Christian life for the whole Church, for dioceses and parishes, and for each individual Christian (*National Directory for Catechesis* #36.3). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #781.

### 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Church teaches that Catholics are to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity to participate in building the culture of life. In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation (*National Directory for Catechesis* 10.B). Since the earliest times, Baptism has been administered to children, for it is a grace and a gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit; children are baptized in the faith of the Church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1282). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1877.

### 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dioceses and parishes should ensure that catechesis presents the double commandment of love of God and neighbor as the centerpiece of Jesus' moral teaching, summing up the Decalogue and lived in the Spirit of the Beatitudes (*National Directory for Catechesis* #25.H). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1970-72.

### 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Catechesis is enriched when the word of God shines forth in the life of the Church, especially in the lives of the saints and in the Christian witness of the faithful (*National Directory for Catechesis* #18). Catechesis aims to bring about in the believer an ever more mature faith in Jesus Christ, a deeper knowledge and love of his person and message, and a firm commitment to follow him. With God's grace, catechesis develops initial faith, nourishes the Christian life, and continually unfolds the mystery of Christ until the believer willingly becomes his disciple (*National Directory for Catechesis* #19.A). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1822-23.

### 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Catechesis for school-age children presents Jesus' teaching, his ministry and major events of his life. Children can begin to appreciate the parables of Jesus and catch glimpses of the Kingdom of God (*National Directory for Catechesis* #40.E.2). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1732-34.

### 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus consistently used the ordinary human experiences of daily life to form his disciples, to point to the end of time, and to show the transcendent dimension of all of life and of God's eternal presence in it. Because the eternal Word assumed human nature, human experience is the locus for the manifestation and realization of salvation in him (*National Directory for Catechesis* #29.A). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1996-99.

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## Teaching Guide

Ezekiel 18.25-28; Philippians 2.1-11; Matthew 21.28-32

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: I make choices

Welcome to *Promise*! Each week *Promise* invites young children to meet Jesus in the Sunday Gospels and the Sunday assembly. The story and cover activity in each weekly lesson prepare the children to hear the Gospel message. The other activities in *Promise* and in this guide help the children understand how the Gospel relates to their own lives.

This Sunday Jesus tells the story of two sons—one who tells his father he will help, but doesn't; one who refuses to help, but later regrets his refusal and decides to help after all. *Promise* explores how children make choices.

Be sure to study the guide each week and make the story and the Gospel your own. They are the key to a successful *Promise* lesson.

**Materials:** Pencils, coins, and name tags.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**NAME TAGS** Provide name tags for the children so you can welcome them and they can get to know each other. Put the name tags in a basket or on a bulletin board. The children find their tag when they come into the room. Any tags left will alert you to children who are missing.

**GATHER AND SING** Begin *Promise* class by gathering in a prayer circle. If you have purchased the *Promise* CD, *Children of God*, play one of the gathering songs and let the children sing along until they know it. Or, use any other song the children know or you feel confident to teach them. The following words fit to the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?"

We gather here together, together, together.  
 We gather here together to show we love God.  
 To hear Jesus' stories, to clap, pray, and sing.  
 We gather here together to show we love God.

Have the children clap on the word *clap*. Conclude with a short prayer asking God's blessing on your time together.

**OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to stand quietly while you say the following prayer or use one of your own making. They respond "Amen."

*Loving God, thank you for bringing us to this Promise class. We are happy to learn about Jesus and to learn how we can be like him. We will try to respect each other and care for each other because we are all your children.*

**Objective:** The children will recognize they belong to a church community.

**COVER ACTIVITY: I have a church family.** Have the children sit in a circle. Distribute *Promise*. Ask them to describe the cover illustration. They will be sure to point out the hidden children first; there are five of them. Have them identify the priest, altar servers, choir and song leader, usher with the basket, and the people in the pews. Ask: How is this church family like their own families? *Possible answers: see the same people every week, everyone has a different job, sing together, share food, listen together to Jesus' Good News and talk about it, care about the children and have classes like this Promise class for them.* Conclude by singing "We Gather Here Together" again and then move to the work area, where each child can draw himself or herself in the picture.

**Objective:** The children will recognize their ability to make and change their choices.

**STORY: Just Five Minutes More!** Move to the story circle. Tell the children you know some boys and girls who had to make choices. Ask them to put down their *Promise* copies and listen to what the choices were.

*Jenny and Paul were watching videos when Dad came in and said, "Bedtime!" "Oh, Dad," the children said, "just five minutes more!" Dad left the room. Later, when Jenny and Paul were ready for bed, they said, "Dad, please tell us a story." "Not tonight," Dad said. "You used your story time watching videos." Then he kissed them good night and turned out the light.*

Ask: What choice did the children make? Do you think they will make the same choice tomorrow night?

*Hector's dad called, "Hurry, Hector. It's time to get up. You will be late for school." Hector turned over in bed and muttered, "Just five minutes more." The next time his dad came to check on Hector, it was too late to catch the bus. Hector's dad had to drive him to school and Hector didn't have time to bring his hamster along for show and tell time.*

What choice did Hector make? What happened because of his choice?

*Mandy and Steph were playing basketball. "Supper is ready," Mom called. "Just five minutes more," said the girls. When they came in, Mom was eating by herself. Mandy and Steph sat down. "My supper is cold," said Mandy. Mom said, "It was hot five minutes ago." Steph took his plate over to the microwave.*

What choice did Mandy and Steph make? How did their choice make Mom feel?

Ask if the children can change their choices. Our parents, and God, always let us try again. That is good news.

**STRETCH AND SING** Have the children leave their *Promise* copies at their work tables and gather in a circle in your open area. Most children know “If You’re Happy and You Know It” and enjoy the movements and noise. On the last verse, motion for them to follow you, pick up their *Promise* copies and gather in the place you have reserved for Gospel storytelling.

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (*clap, clap*).  
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (*clap, clap*).  
If you’re happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,  
If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands (*clap, clap*).

...stomp your feet.      ...turn around.  
...wave your arms.      ...shout “Hello!”      ...follow me.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**GOSPEL RITUAL** If at all possible, set aside an area of your classroom or meeting space where you can enthrone a Bible and display *Promise*. When the children gather here, they know they will hear the Word of God. Use a ritual which you repeat each week to prepare the children to hear the Gospel. The *Promise* CD has such a song. If you do not have the CD, teach the children the following rhyme and model gestures for them.

Two little ears to hear God’s Word.  
Two little eyes to see God’s love.  
Two little hands to work each day.  
Alleluia! Hear me pray.

**Objective: The children will recognize the Gospel at Mass is about Jesus and his teaching.**

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: The Two Sons** Tell the children Jesus told his friends a story about two brothers—a story they will hear in church this Sunday. Have them put their *Promise* copies on the floor in front of them and listen.

*Jesus said, “Once there was a man who had two sons. He said to his first son, ‘Son, will you help me in our vineyard?’ ‘No, I won’t,’ the son said and walked away. But later he was sorry, and he went to the vineyard anyway.” When the father saw his other son, he said to him, ‘Will you help me hoe around the grapevines in our vineyard?’ ‘Yes, I will,’ the son said, but then he decided to take a nap. Then Jesus asked, “Which of the two sons did what the father wanted?”*

Ask the children what they think. Emphasize that the first son changed his mind and made a better choice. The children in the stories probably made better choices the next time, too. Have the children turn to *Promise*, page 4 and describe the illustrations to you. Read the voice balloons aloud together. Talk about the three questions. Conclude that Jesus told this story to remind us that saying “Yes, I will,” isn’t enough. We need to make our actions match our words. This is Jesus’ message to us today.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective: The children will identify people in their church community.**

**GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Jesus gathers his friends (pages 2-3)** Return to the work area. Show the children how to spread out their copies of *Promise* on their work space so pages 2-3 are showing. Ask them to keep their hands still and their eyes open and to describe the pages to you. *It is a game like Candyland, with some empty spaces and some spaces with pictures of people on them.* Read the name of the game together: Jesus gathers his friends. Have the children find Jesus on the START square. Have them take turns identifying the people Jesus is gathering. *Altar server, boy, girl, priest, little child, grandpa, religion teacher, lots of children, a mom or another lady at church.* Call attention to the score cards. Notice that the same people are on the score cards. Now ask the children to get up from their work places and gather around you. Tell them you will show them how to play the game; then they can play with each other. Read the directions aloud and follow them, explaining to the children what you are doing. You do not need to make your marker go all the way. Decide if your class is better off playing alone or with partners. Distribute pencils and coins. Give the children time for one game. Discuss how they enjoyed it. If there is time, play a second game, or tell the children to show their families how to play at home.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Gather in the prayer circle. Ask the children if there is anyone or anything they wish to pray about. Lead them in the response: *God hears our prayers.* Bless them with the Sign of the Cross to conclude.

**WCBT, page 15, The Sign of the Cross** Direct the children to this page in their *What the Church Believes and Teaches handbook*. Read the page aloud. Practice making the Sign of the Cross. Give the children time to connect the dots.



## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**CHURCH VISIT** Take the children to your parish church so they can see everything up close. Invite the pastor to greet them and lead the tour. When you return to the classroom, provide large sheets of paper and crayons. Ask the children to draw one thing they saw in church. When they are finished, assemble their drawings on a large bulletin board. Admire them all, then ask, “What is missing?” Perhaps it is the baptismal font or the lectern. Draw, or have one of the children draw the missing pieces and add them to the bulletin board.

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: God cares for creation.

Sunday's Gospel continues with the vineyard imagery begun last week. The story begins with a man who carefully plants a vineyard and then looks for help in tending it. The people he hires rebel against him and come to an unhappy end.

Matthew uses this parable to point out the failure of Jesus' own people to accept him. *Promise* does not use this part of the parable, but concentrates instead on God's care for all creation and our part in caring for it, too.

**Materials:** Scissors, crayons or markers, paste or tape. Separate pages 1-2 of *Promise* from pages 3-4 before class.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHERING RITUAL** Use a song from the *Promise* CD for your gathering ritual, or use a song the children know. Have them stand quietly after the song while you offer a brief prayer. The children answer "Amen."

**Objective: The children will appreciate God's gift of creation.**

**COVER ACTIVITY: God cares for all creation.** Gather in a story circle. Hold up your copy of *Promise*, pages 1-2, read aloud the title, and have the children identify all the things God is caring for—*children, apple tree, corn, squirrel, oak tree (far left) and oak seedling*. The children may not be able to identify the two plants underneath the apple tree. Distribute pages 1-2; have the children place page 2 face up on the floor in front of them, and fold and crease on the dotted line at the bottom of the page. Turn the page over and show them how to reverse the fold to show what is happening under the ground. The children will now be able to identify the two green plants as potatoes and carrots.

**Objective: The children will identify concrete ways in which they can care for creation.**

**STORY: Flowers Aren't for Walking On (page 2)** Have the children put *Promise* down while you tell this story.

*Sister Maureen came to the first grade room to teach science. "This is October," she said. "Now is the time to plant bulbs." She taught them that bulbs are different from seeds. Bulbs store food inside them, so they can bloom early in spring without waiting for the ground to warm up and give them food. Sister Maureen gave the first graders tulip bulbs to plant. Sheila and Danny helped dig up the ground by the front steps of the school. They made holes in the dirt for their bulbs, planted them, and covered them with dirt. They watered the*

*ground, so the bulbs could put down roots and store up food for blooming in the spring.*

*During the fall and winter the tulip bulbs lay asleep in the ground. Snow covered the ground. Children from other grades walked over the place where the tulips were planted when they came to school in the morning and after recess. Christmas came and went; then spring rains and mud. One day the first graders came in from recess very angry. "Some of the big kids stepped on our flowers," Sheila said. Sister Maureen went outside with the first graders. There beside the school the tulips were coming up. Two of the green spikes had been smushed by kids' feet. "We need a fence," said Danny. "And a sign," said Sheila. The next day Danny's father brought pieces of fence to school. The first graders made a sign that said, "Flowers aren't for walking on." They watched their tulips every day and watered them when the ground was dry. In April their tulips bloomed for everyone in the school to enjoy.*

Have the children take *Promise* to their work area and use the drawings on page 2 to retell the story to a partner. Conclude by stressing how the first graders came to care about the flowers because they all helped plant and water them.

**STRETCH AND SING** Move to an area where the children can stretch out their arms and not touch another child. Lead them in this version of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?" which uses large muscle movements.

Did you ever see a lassie  
go this way and that way,  
go this way and that way?  
Did you ever see a lassie  
go this way and that?

Suggested motions:

- Touch toes
- Swing arms wide
- Kick one leg, then the other
- Squat and get up fast
- Bend to one side, then the other
- Hop or skip

Lead the children hopping and skipping to the area you have set aside for the proclamation of the Gospel.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**GOSPEL RITUAL** Use the ritual you taught the children last week or use the *Promise* CD. Be sure to display a copy of *Promise* along with the Bible or lectionary. The children will gradually realize that the Gospel they hear in *Promise* class is the same one everyone hears at Mass.

**Objective:** The children will understand that Jesus uses stories about creation to tell us about God’s love for us.

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: A Man and His Vineyard** Tell this simple version of the Gospel story:

*Once Jesus told this story to his friends. “There was a man who had a field,” Jesus said. “He decided to grow sweet, delicious grapes in his field. The man loosened the ground with his shovel. He picked up big rocks and carried them to the side of the field. He dug holes in the dirt and planted grape vines. Then he used the rocks he had carried to make a wall around his grape vines so wild animals couldn’t get in and so people wouldn’t step on his vines. After all that, the man was tired. He decided to hire someone to help him take care of his vines. What do you think he asked the people he hired to do?”*

Let children speculate about the job description for the hired help—keep the wall fixed, water the vines, keep birds and animals away from the grapes, pick the grapes when they are ready, give the grapes to the vineyard owner. Conclude this discussion by explaining that the owner cared about his vines just as the children cared about their tulips.


Ask children to turn to the cover picture again and read the words printed there—God cares for all creation. Take a minute for them to give examples of how God cares for them as the owner cared for his vines and the children for the tulips.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will identify concrete ways in which they can help and care for others and for creation.

**ACTIVITY: Who is helping? (page 3)** Gather in the work area and distribute pages 3-4. Recall the story of the 1st graders who worked together to make their school yard beautiful. Ask: What are the children in the illustration doing to make their yard beautiful? Point out the child behind the fence. Ask: What is this child thinking? What will she do to help? Stress that helping is part of belonging to a class or a family. Have the students color the children in the drawing who are helping or want to help.

**ACTIVITY: We care for creation (page 4)** Call attention to page 4. Ask volunteers to describe each of the small illustrations. Distribute scissors and tape or paste. Let the children snip off the four small illustrations at the bottom and tape or paste them in the blank spaces to complete the pictures. When everyone is finished, discuss how the children are caring for creation.

 **WCBT, page 7, God Shows His Love** Summarize this week’s lesson with this activity.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Ask the children to stand and follow your gestures in this prayer.

**Teacher:** Dear God, thank you for our beautiful world.

**Children:** Thank you, God. (*hold hands out waist high*)

**Teacher:** Dear God, thank you for our families and friends.

**Children:** Thank you, God. (*raise palms to shoulder height*)

**Teacher:** Dear God, thank you for loving us and caring for us.

**Children:** Thank you, God, thank you. (*raise hands over head*)

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**PLANTING BULBS** Children love to imitate the stories they read. You will need to plan ahead to have soil and tulip bulbs ready for planting near your school or church. Create a sign telling passersby the date on which the *Promise* class planted bulbs and the date they can look forward to green shoots. This will likely happen right around Easter next spring.

**NATURE WALK** Go on a walk to find beautiful things in creation. Invite each child to bring home one thing that he or she finds. This is a good time to teach the rules of enjoying nature—don’t destroy anything, don’t pick flowers, take only things that are loose such as leaves, acorns, stones, feathers. If the children each bring back a colored leaf, you will have a beautiful decoration for your Gospel area.

**TAKING CARE OF OUR SPACE** Help the children understand that taking care of God’s creation includes taking care of the spaces and places we use every day. Develop a routine by which they gather the materials you have used during class and put everything back where it belongs. Teach the children the following words to the tune of “Jingle Bells.” When you begin to sing it or intone it on a piano or other instrument, they will know it is time to clean up.

Tidy up! Tidy up!

Put your things away.

Gather scraps and bits of yarn.

We’re cleaning up today. Hey!

Tidy up! Tidy up!

Everyone can help.

It’s fun to work together

To make our room look neat.

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## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus invites us to his table.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells about a king who keeps inviting guests for his son's wedding feast until he fills the hall. Matthew dwells on the fate of the guests who refused the king's invitation. *Promise* stresses instead the desire of the king to share his happiness with everyone around him. *Promise* builds on the children's experiences of birthday celebrations to help them recognize that Jesus invites all people to belong to the family of God.

**Materials:** Crayons, pencils, stapler.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHER AND SING** Choose a song the children know from church to begin this class. It can be a simple Alleluia or the refrain of a popular song such as "Eagle's Wings." After singing it, ask the children when they have sung this song in church and what they think it means. You will be rewarded with lots of interesting answers. Sing again, and then ask the children to stand or sit quietly while you pray the following prayer or one of your own making.

**OPENING PRAYER** The children will respond "Amen."  
*Jesus, you give us the Mass so we can be part of you and you can be part of us. Thank you for giving us this gift. Bless us today so we can learn more about you and become better members of your church.*

**COVER: I am invited** Gather the children at their work tables. Ask them to think of special days or events that they have been invited to celebrate—*holidays, birthdays, weddings*. Have them describe the celebrations—*special food, games, prizes, gifts, clothes*. Ask what their feelings are about these events—*love, excitement, happiness, sharing, belonging*. Distribute *Promise*. Have the children identify the different events shown in the cover photos, events to which they are typically invited: *Sunday Mass, a playtime with friends, a birthday party, a special treat*.

Have the children open *Promise*, so they can see pages 1 and 4 side by side. Have them identify which objects on page 4 they would take to an event on page 1 and draw a line from the object to the right photo. *Mass book for church, present for birthday party, SORRY game for playtime, plates and forks for watermelon*.

**Objective: The children will explore their experiences of going to birthday parties.**

**STORYTELLING: Steve's Birthday Party** Gather the children in a story circle and tell the following story:

*Steve's mom promised him that he could have a party on his seventh birthday and invite three friends. Steve helped his mom plan the food, the games, and the prizes. He made three invitations that said: Come to my party this Saturday, 1 p.m. Steve gave one invitation to John, one to Dan, and one to Mary. On Tuesday at school Mike and Terry said to Steve, "Are you having a birthday party? Can we come, too?" Steve said, "Yes." That night he made two more invitations and gave them to Mike and Terry on Wednesday. On Thursday Mark and Samantha ran up to Steve on the playground. "Can we come to your party?" they asked. "Okay," said Steve. He made two more invitations and gave them to Mark and Samantha on Friday.*

*On Saturday morning Steve helped get ready for the birthday party. He set eight places at the table. "Steve," said his mom, "you have set too many places." Steve looked at his mom and said, "Mark, Samantha, Mike, and Terry wanted to come, too, so I invited them." His mother laughed. "It's a good thing I baked a big cake and bought extra hats and prizes. We have room for all of your friends, Steve. Next time please tell me how many guests you have invited." Then she gave Steve a big hug and said, "Happy birthday."*

Ask: What kind of friend is Steve? Would you have invited all the children to your party? What kind of person is Steve's mother? What is the most fun about a birthday party—the games, the cake, the hats, the ice cream, the friends?

**STRETCH AND MOVE** The children need a little physical activity to settle them for the Gospel proclamation. Have them leave their copies of *Promise* at their worktables and gather in a circle in the open area, holding hands. Have them take two steps back and then drop hands. Lead them in this stretching activity.

Stretch, stretch your hands up high.

Now let your fingers fly.

Stamp your feet, both left and right, left and right.

Now stretch up tall and reach your height.

Repeat the verse and movements, then motion for the children to follow you to the Gospel area.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective: The children will recognize that Jesus invites all people to belong to the family of God.**

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: The Wedding Banquet** Explain that once Jesus told a story about a king who wanted to give a wedding party for his son.

The king's problem was just the opposite of Steve's; the king couldn't get anyone to come to his party. The king sent his servants to invite guests to the wedding banquet. But none of the guests would come. The king sent his servants to other people and told them to say: "Come to the king's party for his son. A wonderful dinner is all ready." But these guests had other things to do. They had to take care of business and plant their farms. So the king sent his servants out a third time, saying: "Go to the streets and roads. Invite anyone you find." This time the servants brought back guests to fill the whole hall.

Explain that the king is like Jesus' Father, who wants people to belong to the family of God and keeps inviting more and more guests. The children on the cover who are at church have come to God's party. Turn your copy of *Promise* to page 4, hold it up in front of the children, and have them read the words with your help, "God says, 'Come to my house; bring a friend.'" Have the children return to their work area and trace over the words with a crayon or marker.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will plan a party that celebrates their friendships.

**ACTIVITY: I celebrate with my friends (pages 2-3)** Open *Promise* to the inside pages. Read the words at the bottom of the page aloud. Have the children count the number of friends and the number of balloons. Have them identify the special foods and circle those they would have at a party. Instruct them to draw in the faces of friends they would like at their party and print the names of their guests on the balloons.

When the children finish coloring, show them how to make cone-shaped hats.

- 1) Place *Promise* flat on their desks with the inside party pages face up; then fold the bottom corners of the pages so that the word *Come* shows.
- 2) Hold the upper corner of each page and bring the right corner over the left to form a cone.
- 3) Staple the cone to fit each child's head.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Have the children gather in a prayer circle, wearing their hats. Ask them to think about the people from their families and neighborhood and class with whom they go to God's party on Sundays. Have them choose one name they want to say as part of the prayer.

**Teacher:** God says, "Come to my party. Bring a friend."

**Child:** I will come with \_\_\_\_\_.  
Repeat as above. End class with a treat.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**THE OUR FATHER** We sometimes assume that all the children know the common prayers of the Church—the Our Father, Hail Mary, Sign of the Cross. It is a good practice to review these regularly to save children who don't know the prayers from the embarrassment of pretending.

The Our Father is the prayer at Mass that gets us ready to receive communion. Take it line by line, giving the children opportunity to ask questions and check out difficult words.

*Our Father, who art in heaven  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil. Amen.*

**WCBT, page 29, the Our Father** Review the Sign of the Cross, which you practiced in the first lesson, and read the words of the Our Father with the children.



**PARTS OF THE MASS** Any extra time you have will be well spent learning what your *Promise* children understand about the structure of the Mass and what misconceptions they may have. Plan to spend any extra minutes introducing one or more parts of the Eucharist and asking for questions. Make simple drawings to hold up or put on the bulletin board. Some suggestions:

Part of Mass	Visual
Opening song and prayer	notes of music
Sprinkling rite (if your parish does this)	drops of water
Reading: Old testament	book shape, Old Testament on it
Reading: New Testament	book with New Testament on it
Reading from the Gospels	book with Gospel in middle and Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the corners
Preparation of the Gifts	a dish of hosts and cruet of wine
Consecration	hands lifting up host
<i>Our Father</i>	people figures with hands joined
Sign of peace	handshake, words: Peace be with you
Communion	host with cross on it; words: Body of Christ
Final prayer and song	notes of music



## Teaching Guide

Isaiah 45.1,4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1.1-5; Matthew 22.15-21

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: We belong to God.

The Pharisees in Sunday's Gospel want to trap Jesus into taking sides on the controversial question of paying Roman taxes. They hold that accepting Roman rule in their country means they are not loyal to God and God's rules. Jesus' answer, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's," calls them and us to obey both civil and religious laws and to examine our allegiances when the two conflict. This is one of those Gospels that is like a seed planted in young children. They are too little to understand its ramifications, but just the right age to learn about Jesus as a fair authority figure, one who will not be baited into a rigid position.

*Promise* focuses on the important concept of belonging, building on the children's own experience of belonging to a family, to a Church, to a country, and to organizations.

**Materials:** Scissors, used envelopes.

**Note:** If your children are not good at cutting or if your time is short, you may wish to cut out the seven pieces on pages 3-4 and place them in envelopes to distribute to the children in the activity part of the lesson.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHER AND SING** Use any of the gathering songs that work for you in getting the children settled and into a receptive mood for their *Promise* session. "The Whole World Is in God's Hands" has a melody most children know. Its lyrics can easily be adapted to fit your church, school, and neighborhood and lend themselves to movements and gestures.

The whole world is in God's hands.  
 The whole world is in God's hands.  
 The whole world is in God's hands.  
 The whole world's in God's hands.

Demonstrate for the children how to make an earth-shaped gesture in front of their bodies for the first part of each verse, then lift their arms high to signify God, and bring them down, cupped, in front of them. Take your time doing this and simplify it if you need. Some suggestions for additional verses:

- The little bitty baby
- You and me, sister and/or you and me, brother
- Our whole school (or church)
- Our *Promise* class

**OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to sit in a prayer circle and listen quietly as you pray this prayer or one of your own making. They respond "Amen."

*Loving God, we are all safe in your hands. We know you love each of us very much. We want to learn more about you and become better members of your family here on earth. Send your Holy Spirit to be with us today.*

**Objective:** The children will recognize groups to which they belong.

**COVER ACTIVITY: Where do I belong?** Stay in the story circle. Ask the children what it means to belong. *Having people to do things with, people to care about you, friends to have fun with.* Distribute *Promise*. Have the children study the cover illustration closely to discover the different groups to which the girl belongs. *Family picture; skates, skating group; baseball bat and cap, team; Brownie shirt and cap; ballet slippers, dance group; flag, USA; sweat shirt, St. Mary's, School; books, public library user; crucifix, Christian.*

Give each child an opportunity to tell one group to which he or she belongs. Keep the answers short.

**STORY: Where is Betsey?** Get the children ready for this story by asking who has a pet. Ask for volunteers to tell how they got their pets. After a few volunteers have spoken, tell the children you know a story about a boy who didn't have a pet and a dog who didn't have a family to belong to. Ask: Do you think the story will have a happy ending? Listen carefully to find out.

*Jacob was a happy little boy. He belonged to a family who loved and cared for him. He belonged to St. Patrick's Church, where he and his family went to Mass each week. One day on his way home from school Jacob saw a skinny little dog. Jacob tried to pet the dog, but it was frightened and ran away. So Jacob walked on home, and the dog followed him at a distance. The dog came into Jacob's yard and hid under the bushes. Jacob ran inside and told his mom about the skinny little dog. Jacob prepared a dish of food and a bowl of water. He set them outside near the bushes, but the dog would not go near them. Jacob went inside and watched. The dog came and ate a little. Day after day Jacob put food and water out by the bushes for the dog. One day he stayed outside on the steps instead of going in the house. The dog looked at him but decided to come out and eat. A few days later Jacob stayed quietly beside the dishes of food and water. The dog came slowly toward Jacob and let him pet her head. "I'm going to name you Betsey," Jacob said. "You belong to our family now. You have a name and a home." Betsey wagged her tail and licked Jacob's nose. Jacob took care of Betsey every day. His dad took care of Betsey when Jacob went to camp. His mother took care of Betsey when Jacob played little league games. Betsey became a happy little dog in her new family.*

Discuss the story. Ask: How did Jacob show the dog that she could belong to their family? How did his parents help take care of Betsey?

**STRETCH AND SING** Move to the open area to give the children an opportunity to work off some energy before they continue with the lesson. Do any large muscle activity they like. “Simon Says” is a non-musical way to keep children involved in stretching and moving. Use the following commands, mixing them up so the children don’t know what to expect next.

- Touch your toes
- Bend to the right
- Stomp your feet, one, two, three
- Bend to the left
- Crouch down and jump up
- Zoom like a bird
- Stretch up high
- Twirl around
- Make wings like a chicken
- Fall asleep like a baby
- Get up and tiptoe to the Gospel area.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: We belong to God** Bring the children to the area you set aside for the Gospel proclamation. Use the ritual recommended in the first lesson of this unit to get the children ready. Have them sit with their copies of *Promise* in front of them.

Prepare the children for the Gospel by asking if they know what taxes are. *Money grown-ups pay to the government to build roads and schools and hire teachers and firefighters and police.* What does the money people use to pay taxes look like? Have a dollar bill handy. The children may recognize the first President, George Washington. When Jesus was living, the man whose picture was on the money was named Caesar. He was the father of the Roman Empire just as George Washington was the founder of our country. Begin the Gospel story.

*One day some people tried to get Jesus to take sides in an argument. “Jesus,” they said, “do you think we should pay taxes to the Romans who are running our country or should we withhold our taxes?” They knew the religious leaders would be mad at Jesus if he said to pay the taxes and the Romans would be mad at him if he said not to pay. Jesus said to them, “Show me the coin you need to pay your taxes. Whose picture is on it?” One of the people took a coin out of his pocket and looked at it. “This coin has Caesar’s picture on it,” he said. Jesus said, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God.” No one knew what to say back to him, so they all went away.*

Have the children retell the story to you, so you can check their comprehension. Conclude by saying there is one thing Jesus wants us to learn from this story: we can love God and love our country, too. We belong to both our church and school and our country.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will understand that by Baptism they belong to God’s family.

**CARTOON STORY: Carlos tells about a Baptism (page 2)** Stay in the story area. Ask the children to open *Promise* to page 2 and look at the cartoon story for a moment; then read the story aloud as a group. Ask the children to tell what Carlos saw and heard at the Baptism. *Signing of the baby, promises from parents, water and the priest’s words, white dress, lighted candle.* Give the children time to tell about baptisms they have witnessed lately and what they saw. Conclude by saying Maria’s parents wanted her to be part of the Church and to follow Jesus. Baptism gets her started, just like it got all of us started.

**GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Baptism brings us into God’s family (page 3)** Move to the work area. Distribute scissors for cutting or the envelopes with the pre-cut pieces. When everyone is ready, let each child use the pieces to tell about a baptism, identify first the people involved (parents, godparents, baby, priest or deacon) and the elements of water, white garment, and baptism candle. Don’t let the children criticize each other for getting the parts of baptism out of order. Make it a positive experience of playing with the pieces to solidify the learning of the lesson. Notice that the cutouts of the adults have parents on one side and godparents on the other.

**WCBT, page 13, Baptism** This activity summarizes the catechesis on Baptism in this lesson.



**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Have the children stand and repeat this prayer after you.

**Teacher:** I belong to God. *Children repeat.*

**Teacher:** I belong to God’s family. *Children repeat.*

**Teacher:** I was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Children repeat.*

**Teacher:** Thank you, God. *Children repeat.*  
Make the Sign of the Cross to conclude.

## Teaching Guide

*Exodus 22.20-26; 1 Thessalonians 1.5-10; Matthew 22.34-40*

## OVERVIEW

**Gospel Theme: Jesus' great commandment is love.**

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus teaches us that there are two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. In his life, death, and resurrection Jesus shows us in action our own value as human beings and the importance of treating others with the respect and love they deserve.

Young children are not capable of selfless love; they are too busy gaining a sense of self to be able to think of the welfare of others. However, they learn from stories and from practicing loving actions. In this lesson *Promise* explores actions children can do to show love of God and other people.

**Materials:** Coins

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**Objective: The children will recognize how friends care for and help each other.**

**GATHER AND SING** The theme of this lesson is love and friendship, understood in the light of Jesus' love and friendship for us. Use one of the gathering songs the children already know or teach them the following words to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

God made you and God made me (*point to another, then to self*).

We are all one family.

God made you and God made me (*repeat gestures*).

We are all one family.

Verse 2: God loves you and God loves me.

Verse 3: It's good for you and good for me  
To be in one big family.

**OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to sit in the prayer circle as you say the following prayer. They respond "Amen."

*Jesus, thank you for coming to live in our world. You had friends to play with just like us. Teach us how to be good friends to each other and to our brothers and sisters. We want to be like you.*

**REBUS STORY: What are friends for? (page 4)** Stay in the circle. Tell the children you have a question and you want to know what they think. The question is: What are friends for? Accept all answers. *Friends are to play with, help, listen to you, go to school with, share treats with, and so on.* Keep the discussion brief.

Distribute *Promise* and have the children turn to page 4. Read the story title aloud. Identify the two characters in the story—Tina and Jason. Then read the story aloud together. Talk about what kind of friends Tina and Jason are. *Tina*

*trusts Jason with her fish. Jason listens to Tina and learns how to take care of the fish. Will Jason ask Tina to help him some time? Divide your group into pairs, and have the children read the story together.*

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**GOSPEL RITUAL** Have the children bring their copies of *Promise* to the Gospel area. Have your own copy displayed there. Use the ritual you have developed to prepare the children to hear the Gospel, then ask them to sit in a circle and look at the *Promise* cover illustration.

**Objective: The children learn Jesus' great commandments.**

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus teaches about love**

**(Cover)** Explain that Jesus taught people many wonderful things. Have the children find Jesus in the illustration. *He has the heart.* Explain that when he lived on earth with us, Jesus answered everybody's questions about God.

*One day a man asked Jesus what the absolutely most important rule in the whole world was. Jesus said, "There are two important rules. Rule 1 is that you should love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. Rule 2 is that you should love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. All the other rules are little rules next to these two big ones."*

Tell the children to find in the cover illustration ways people are showing love to God and to each other.

- 1) Man in bottom center is praying using the typical posture of prayer of Jews and early Christians; praying is a way of loving God. Ask what the children think the man might be saying to God.
- 2) Man at bottom left is hoeing his vines to earn a living for his family.
- 3) Woman at bottom right is taking care of a child.
- 4) Girl at top left is helping a smaller child over a fence.

Summarize your discussion of the illustration by asking children what Jesus says are the two most important rules: *Love God and love other people.* Decide as a class how you will show love for God and for each other today.

**STRETCH AND MOVE** Gather the children in pairs or threes in the open area. Ask them to pantomime some things friends do together.

You are jumping rope together.

You are playing catch with a football

You are playing soccer together.

You take turns shooting baskets.

You play follow the leader

You push little kids in swings.

You get on your ponies and ride to our work area.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will play a game that recognizes loving (and a few unloving) choices they make.

## **GOSPEL ACTIVITY:** What does Jesus want us to do?

(pages 2-3) When the children have ridden their ponies to the work area, have them open *Promise* on their work tables to pages 2-3. You and your *Promise* class played a board game like this in the first lesson on this unit. Take your time getting them acquainted with the page so they all start out on the same foot.

1. Read the title aloud together. Find Jesus at the bottom of page 2 and read the voice balloon conversation he has with the children.
2. Find START on the game board. Ask for volunteers to tell one at a time what is happening in the picture squares in the bottom row.
3. Read the direction that goes with the third picture square, "Go back to Start." What would a child who landed on that square do?
4. Move to the second row and read the printed directions on the first two squares, making sure the children understand what to do if they land on those squares.
5. Call the children's attention to the numbered directions in the columns. Tell them you will ask a volunteer to play part of a game with you to illustrate how the directions work.
6. Play two lines with a volunteer while the children watch. Then have the children pair off and distribute one coin to each pair. Let them begin playing the game while you walk around the room listening in on their interactions.

When all the pairs have played at least one round of the game, gather as a group and ask what the game taught them about Jesus' law of love.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Make today's prayer time a thank you to God for all the people who love us. Begin the prayer yourself by naming someone. Invite the children to add names. If there is time, let them each write a name in a heart shape you draw on the chalkboard or on construction paper. Conclude by thanking God for making all these people and putting them in our lives.

 **WCBT, page 21, Jesus teaches us** This activity page gives the children practice in applying Jesus' law of love.

**SNACK** Have a snack ready that incorporates heart shapes—cookies, gelatin, or cream cheese on crackers. Compliment the children when they let others go first, say please and thank you, and use other polite and loving words and gestures.

# EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**CLASSROOM RULES** This may be a good time to review the rules you have for your *Promise* classroom.

- Listen to each other.
- Be respectful.
- Clean up after yourself.
- Share your thoughts and ideas.

Let the children help you make a list of all the rules they recognize and then pick three that they consider very important. Write these rules on the chalkboard or a big piece of paper. Make a point of referring to them at least once during each class and commending children who keep the rules.

**LOVE** Write the word *love* in very large outline letters on a sheet of paper. Duplicate it so each child has a copy. Talk together about how we know God loves us. *God gave us a beautiful world to live in, parents and other adults to take care of us, friends and siblings to play with and be friends with, all our senses so we can learn and enjoy the world.* Suggest to the children to fill in the outline letters with pictures of some of these things. This is a good project to have around for a few lessons, so they have time to come back to it.

## Teaching Guide

*Malachi 1.14—2.2, 8-10; 1 Thessalonians 2.7-9, 13; Matthew 23.1-12*

## OVERVIEW

**Gospel Theme: The greatest person is the one who serves others.**

The lesson builds on last Sunday's Gospel, in which Jesus teaches his two great commandments—to love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbors as ourselves. In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus warns his friends about the Pharisees. Pharisees were the respected teachers of the Mosaic Law in Jesus' time. Jesus acknowledges their place in the Jewish community, but criticizes them for not practicing the love and humility they preach.

Instead, Jesus gives us a new rule about being important. The person who is important in Jesus' eyes is the one who serves other people. Jesus not only gave us this teaching in words; he showed it in his life. At his Last Supper, Jesus knelt down and washed the feet of his disciples. Then he said, "What I have done you also should do." Jesus' whole life, not just his death, was an outpouring of himself for those he loved.

*Promise* recognizes that young children consider their own wants and needs before those of others, but they can develop habits of helping others. They need many experiences of being helpful and giving in order to consider it a necessary part of life. The activities in this lesson help children recognize concrete, loving actions they can do to follow Jesus' example of friendship and love.

**Materials:** Scissors, pencils or markers, tape or paste.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a circle in the open area, holding hands. Lead them in singing the following words to the tune of "Skip to My Lou" and doing the movement.

Jesus says, "Love your friends,"  
*Move to the right.*

Jesus says, "Help them out."  
*Move to the left.*

Jesus says, "We are all  
*Move to the center.*

one big family." Yay!  
*Raise joined hands high.*

We all say, "Thank you, God."

We all say, "Thank you, God."

We all say, "Thank you, God,  
for this family." Yay!

**OPENING PRAYER** The children stand quietly in the circle while you pray the opening prayer. They respond "Amen."

*Dear Jesus, we are happy to be here today to learn more about you. Thank you for teaching us how to be happy and how to love another and love God. Please bless us today.*

**Objective: The children will recognize the loving actions they can do.**

**COVER ACTIVITY: I do loving actions.** Have the children sit in the story circle. Ask if anyone knows what a loving action is. *Something you can do that helps another person.* Ask for a few examples. Tell the children *Promise* has a picture today that has children doing many loving actions. We will divide into groups and see how many we can find.

Divide the class into six groups by numbering off. Have the groups gather and sit in a circle slightly apart from the others, so the children can tell which group they are in. Show all the groups the cover on your copy of *Promise* and tell them this is a picture of six blocks of a town. Each group will take one block and find the loving actions children and other people are doing. Distribute *Promise* to each group and point out their block. Give the groups a few minutes to talk about what is happening on their block. Then gather the groups back together and let them tell the loving actions stories they have found. They will see much more than you or than the editors, so give them free rein.

**STORY: The Love Bug Meets the Terribles** In honor of Halloween, *Promise* has two stories this week. Tell this story as children are seated at their tables in the work area.

*Peggy was invited to a Halloween party. For one whole week she thought about her costume. She couldn't decide what to wear. Then on Tuesday Peggy found her idea. Miss Erbes, her teacher, said loving actions help people change. She said sometimes it is like the love bug bites them. That was when Peggy got her idea of being a love bug. Peggy could hardly wait to tell her mom. "A love bug," said her mom. "That is something different." She helped Peggy make her costume. She made a love bug robe out of a pink sheet, stapled cardboard wings on the back, and hung black legs from the sleeves. Peggy made antennae out of foil for her head. At the party the other children loved her costume and wanted to know all about the love bug. Peggy explained that when the love bug touches a person or an animal, the person or the animal becomes happy and giving. A fierce, growling bear said, "Touch me." Peggy touched the bear, and it grinned and meowed like a cat. A dinosaur came. The love bug touched the dinosaur, and he began to laugh and give children rides on his back. A sad pumpkin was sitting on a chair all alone. The love bug touched him; he jumped up and smiled and joined in a game children were playing on the floor. The love bug touched all the terrible, scary creatures at the party, one by one, even the*

monster, and filled the room with happy Halloween creatures. When Peggy came home from the party, her mother asked, "Did the love bug have a good time?" "The love bug was very busy," said Peggy. Then she gave her mom a big hug and kiss. "The love bug says thanks for helping make me."


Discuss the story. Ask the children to retell what the love bug did for each of the scary creatures at the party.

**STRETCH AND SING** The children have been concentrating for a while and need active play. This game builds on the friendship activity they just completed. Choose a circle area as "home" and gather the children inside it. Or, just have the group gather at one end of the open area, where there is plenty of space for them to move. Choose a child to go away from the group. The children in the circle call out, "Friend, friend from over the way. I wonder who is coming to play." The child says his or her name. For instance, "It's Michael." The children in the circle chant, "Michael, Michael, from over the way. What would you like to play today?" Michael chooses an action such as jumping jacks, pretend swimming, running in place, or crouching down and popping up. The children inside the circle copy his actions. Then Michael chooses a new child to go outside the circle and the game continues.

**Objective: The children will meet St. Martin de Porres.**

**SAINT STORY: Brother Martin and the Mice (page 2)** St. Martin de Porres is to Latin Americans what St. Francis is to Europeans. He is very beloved. His reputation as a healer in 16th century Lima, Peru, has lasted for four centuries. Martin's care for the poor and unloved extended also to unloved animals like mice. You can find many children's books about St. Martin. Have them available if possible for the children to take home.

Read the text aloud to the children. Give them time to comment on the illustrations. The church in the first illustration is the Spanish cathedral in Lima. Martin lived nearby. The poor people Martin feeds are wearing Peruvian country dress. The monks and Martin both have the tonsure, a way to cut your hair so only a rim is left. They are Dominican priests and brothers. When you have read and commented on the illustrations together, give the children time to read the story aloud together in pairs. Discuss the two questions.

 **WCBT, page 24, Saints to Pray for Us** Prepare the children for All Saints and All Souls Day as they are celebrated in your school or parish.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective: The children will appreciate Jesus' law of love and service.**

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus tells us to help others** Gather in the Gospel area. After you have performed your Gospel ritual, ask the children if they remember last week's Gospel. *Somebody asked Jesus what the most important rule was. Jesus said their were two rules: Love God and love your neighbor.* Here's what Jesus says today.

*There are many people in important jobs. Sometimes they make up so many rules, no one can keep them all. Remember that I am the real Teacher. I teach my friends to help others. The people who are greatest in my eyes and in God's eyes are the ones who help each other and share with each other.*

Conclude your Gospel time by repeating the song and gestures you used at the beginning of class.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective: The children will show love and service by giving gifts of themselves.**

**ACTIVITY: I Can Give Gifts (pages 3-4)** Direct the children's attention to page 3. Ask when they have last received a gift. When did they last give a gift? What does it mean when we give a present? We give gifts to special people, such as family or classmates, on special occasions, on religious holidays like Christmas and Easter, as a thank you. Ask the children to think of three people—parents, teachers, family members, friends—to whom they want to give a gift. Turn to page 4 of *Promise*. Have them write the names on the tags of the three gift boxes, and cut the boxes out. Depending on the time available for this activity, the children may complete it in one of two ways:

1. Have the children draw on the three smaller squares on page 3 the gifts they want to give, then paste the gift box over the drawing so the box is hinged at the top and the children can lift up the box to see the gift they have drawn. Stress that the gift does not have to be a thing but can be a loving action such as helping at home, playing with a sibling, calling a sick friend on the phone.

2. If you do not have much time for this activity, simply have the children paste the three boxes in the empty squares and tell about the gifts these boxes represent.

To conclude this activity, have the children write Jesus' name on the name tag of the large gift and draw inside the box a loving action they will do as a gift to Jesus.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Turn to page 4. Have the children examine the illustrations as you read the *Our Father* to them. Then have them stand and practice the actions and say the words along with you. Conclude class with this prayer and encourage the children to take their issues home and teach the gestures to their families.

## Teaching Guide

Wisdom 6.12-16; 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18; Matthew 25.1-13

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: God wants us to make choices.

The last Sundays of the Church year and the First Sunday of Advent have a common theme—being ready for Jesus' second coming. The first generations of Christians expected Jesus to return in their lifetimes. When they remembered stories he had told, stories such as the one we hear this Sunday about the wise and foolish girls, they heard the call to be ready to stay with Jesus at his return. But, like the wedding party in the Gospel, Jesus' coming is delayed. The early Christians had to learn how to meet Jesus as he came in their daily lives.

*Promise* interprets Sunday's parable as a call to the children to participate fully in the life around them and to recognize making choices—sometimes good, sometimes not so good—is the human condition. They praise God by being the human persons they were created to be.

**Materials:** Scissors, tape, pencils or tongue depressors.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHER AND SING** Choose one of the songs the children enjoy for your opening ritual.

**OPENING PRAYER** Gather the children in a prayer circle. Pray this prayer, asking for their responses as noted.

*Loving God, today we want to thank you one by one for giving us life. I am (name). Thank you, God, for giving me life. Children take turns saying these sentences; then continue. Please bless us today as we learn about Jesus. Amen.*

**Objective: The children will recognize choices that they make.**

**COVER ACTIVITY: I make choices.** Stay in the prayer circle. Ask the children how they chose the clothes they are wearing today. Give all a chance to answer. Explain many of the choices we make are about what we like best—a favorite shirt or favorite story. Distribute *Promise*. Look together at the pictures on the cover. Identify each picture in the first row—*book, electronic game, board game*. Distribute pencils or crayons and have each child circle the activity he or she likes best. Do the same with the other three rows. Summarize that all the choices are good choices.

**STORY: Peggy and the Surprise Kitten (page 2)** Ask the children when they have made unloving choices such as not taking care of a pet or not doing a chore. Ask them to listen carefully for the choices a girl named Peggy makes.

*"Is this the day Dad comes home?" Peggy asked her mom on Tuesday morning. "Yes," her mom said, "he'll be home by*

*four o'clock." Peggy could hardly wait. Whenever he came home from his trips, Dad always coughed up a surprise from deep inside his coat. Once he had coughed up a red ball, another time a bag of candy.*

*When her dad pulled up in the driveway that afternoon, Peggy raced to greet him. "Hi, Dad, I missed you!" "I missed you, too," Dad said. "Have you been good and helpful while I was gone?" Peggy nodded yes. Her dad knelt down face to face with Peggy and began to cough and cough. Peggy giggled and jumped on her tiptoes. Her dad coughed again and pulled a yellow kitten out of his coat. Peggy hugged her dad, then ran inside to show her mom. Her mother told her that she would have to feed the kitten, play with it, and clean its litter box.*

*For two days Peggy took good care of her kitty. She showed it to her friends. On Friday Peggy stayed over with a friend and didn't think about the kitty. On Saturday morning she said to her mom, "I can't find my kitty." "When did you last feed her?" asked Mom. Peggy hung her head. "I don't remember." Peggy ran outside calling, "Here Kitty, Kitty. Here Kitty, Kitty." She hunted up and down the street. She heard sounds from the house next door. She looked around the side of the house. A boy and girl were playing with her kitty. "That is my kitty," Peggy said. "We thought it was lost," they said. "She was hungry and sad, so we fed her and played with her." Peggy thanked them for taking care of her kitty. She carried her kitty home. "I found my kitty!" she told her mom. "I will take very good care of her from now on." And she did.*

Ask: What choices does Peggy make about taking care of her kitty on Wednesday and Thursday? On Friday and Saturday? What were the consequences of her choices? Have the children retell the story with you by using the illustrations on page two. Have them identify which of Peggy's choices were happy and loving, which unloving.

**STRETCH AND MOVE** This song shows some of the talents children use at home. Sing it to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush." Children make scrubbing movements.

*This is the way we wash the dishes,  
Wash the dishes, wash the dishes.  
This is the way we wash the dishes.  
Everyone helps at home (or school).*

Continue with as many verses as you can think of.

- Sweep the floor
- Pick up clothes
- Put away toys
- Rock the baby
- Clean our brushes
- Feed the fish
- Gather our scraps

# LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will appreciate that Jesus wants us to be ready for his coming.

## **GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Ten Girls Go to a Wedding**

Tell this version of Sunday's Gospel to the children.

Once Jesus told a story about ten girls who were invited to a wedding. On the wedding day the groom had to talk to the bride's parents for quite a while before they would let their daughter be married to him. The guests, including the girls, all fell asleep, and their lamps went out. Then someone said, "The bridegroom is coming! Let's all go to the wedding!" The ten girls woke up. Five of the girls had brought extra oil. They put more oil in their lamps and joined the wedding procession. The other five girls didn't have any extra oil. They had to go to the store and buy some. When they finally got back, it was too late to go to the wedding. Jesus told his friends they should always be ready and waiting for him to come.

**CREATIVE DRAMA** Retell the Gospel story by having all the children take the part of the ten girls who were invited to the wedding. They all fall asleep, then all wake up. How did the girls with oil in their lamps feel when they woke up? How did the other girls feel? Have all the children be girls with oil in their lamps and join you in a circle dance. Move five steps to the right, stop and clap. Move five steps to the left. Stop and clap again.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will explore wise and foolish choices in a folk tale.

**STORYTELLING: The Little Red Hen (pages 3-4)** This is a simple retelling of an old classic. Children love the repetition and will tell you what they think of friends who do not help each other or forgive each other. Read the following text or tell the story in your own words.

One day the little red hen decided to make some bread. She took milk from her refrigerator and salt and yeast from her cupboard. She got out the big bread bowl from the bottom cupboard and her cookbook from the shelf. She put on an apron so she wouldn't get her feathers dirty. "Now I am ready to begin," said the little red hen. She opened the cookbook to the bread section. The first word she saw was flour. "Of course!" said the little red hen. "I need flour to make my bread." But there was no flour in the flour container or in the cupboard or in the big bin on the back porch. "Well," said the little red hen, "I will have to take some wheat to the mill and ask the miller to grind it into flour."

The little red hen was walking down the road with her big bag of wheat in a blue wheelbarrow when she met a cat. "Cat, cat, will you help me push the wheelbarrow?" said the little red hen. "Not I," said the cat. "I have to lay in the sun and wash my paws." "Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And so she did.

Farther down the road, the little red hen saw some nasty crows standing in the road. She knew they would love to eat her wheat, so she called to a goat munching grass in the ditch, "Goat, goat, would you b-a-a-a-h at the crows so they will fly away and not bother me?" "Not I," said the goat. "I am too busy eating." "Then I'll do it myself," said the little red hen. And so she did. She fluffed up her feathers and ran toward the crows. She squawked so loud and shook her wings so hard that the crows were scared and flew way off to the next county.

Finally the little red hen got to the mill. The miller was sitting in a lawn chair in the shade. "Miller, miller, will you help me lift my sack out of the wheelbarrow and pour it in the grinder?" said the little red hen. "Not I," said the miller. "It's my lunch hour. You'll have to come back in an hour." "I want to bake bread for my own lunch," said the little red hen, "so I'll do it myself." And so she did.

In just a few minutes the little red hen had nice brown flour in the sack where the wheat kernels had been. She put the sack of flour in her wheelbarrow and hurried home. Soon her bread was baking. It smelled delicious! The cat and the goat and the miller all smelled the bread baking. They gathered outside the little red hen's kitchen door. The little red hen poked her head out the window and said, "Who will help me eat my bread?" "I will!" said the cat. "I will!" said the goat. "I will!" said the miller. "No, you won't!" said the little red hen, "I'll eat it myself." And so she did.

Ask the children to tell you what happened in the story. Many will side with the hen for not feeding those who wouldn't help her. Others may think the cat, goat, and miller had good reasons for not helping, and the hen should forgive them. Let children express their opinions. As a summary have the children imagine how the hen felt eating her bread all by herself when her friends outside were hungry. Did that feel good to the hen? What would make her feel better? Summarize by saying friends usually help friends when they can and friends forgive friends and make up with them.

**CREATIVE DRAMA** Ask one child to be the little red hen and three other children to be the cat, goat, and miller. The rest of the children can be the scary crows. Establish a road for the little red hen and place the characters along the way. Then let the children act out the story, or retell it briefly yourself as they pantomime.

**STORY PUPPETS** Cut out the puppet shapes on pages 3-4. If your time is short, you may have them ready for the children to use. Divide the children into groups of four to tell the story. Encourage the children to use the puppets to tell the story to their families.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Gather in a prayer circle. Ask the children if there is anything or anyone they wish to pray for. After each child tells a concern, lead the children in responding: *God hears our prayers.* Conclude by blessing them with the Sign of the Cross.

**WCBT, page 28, Jesus Makes Promises** Conclude your prayer time with this activity page. Or, send a note home asking the parents to read and discuss this page with their children.



## Teaching Guide

Proverbs 31.10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5.1-6; Matthew 25.14-30

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: God gives us talents.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the talents to teach us to recognize our gifts and to share them with others. *Promise* helps preschool children recognize their talents and find ways to share them with others. The sense-involving activities in this lesson help children learn the way they learn best—by using their whole selves, bodies and minds.

**Materials:** Crayons or markers, scissors, hats or boxes, plain envelopes.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**GATHER AND SING** Choose one of the songs the children enjoy for your opening ritual.

**Objective: The children will recognize talents they possess.**

**WARMUP ACTIVITY: Everyone has talent.** Introduce the theme of this lesson by asking the children to tell you what a talent is. Most children have heard of a talent show. They will define talent as some public activity a person is good at—singing, dancing, doing math, spelling. Get the children to expand their idea of talent by asking the following questions and accepting answers from two children per question.

- Ralph can spell *Mississippi* and Joan can draw on a computer. Does Ralph have a talent? Does Joan have a talent?
- Yvonne can get her baby brother to drink his bottle and Valerie can tap dance. Does Yvonne have a talent? Does Valerie have a talent?
- Mary can help her grandma make braided rugs and Pat can make his grandpa laugh. Does Mary have a talent? Does Pat have a talent?

Give more examples if you wish. Conclude by telling the children a talent is anything good a person can do. God wants us all to use our talents to help each other, to get along with each other, and to have fun.

**Objective: The children will identify concrete ways to share their talents with others.**

**STORY: Friends share with each other.** Ask the children what it takes to be a good friend. What do friends do with each other and for each other? Give them plenty of time to answer. They will surely mention sharing food and games and being loyal, not letting each other down. Tell the children you know a story about two friends, Mary and Martin.

*Mary and Martin live in San Francisco where it rains a lot. One day Mary was over at Martin's house playing in his backyard. They noticed the sky was getting dark but they were having so much fun seeing how fast they could slide down the slide and climb through the fort and scale the climbing wall that they didn't notice the raindrops until they came hard and fast. "Let's go!" Martin yelled and he took off. Mary followed right behind. By the time they slammed through the back door, Mary's hair was wet and Martin's shirt was sticking to his back. "We just made it!" Mary said. Martin's mother made hot chocolate for them. They watched the rain run down the windows as they drank the chocolate. "My mom said I should be home by 4:30," Mary said. "How can I walk home in the rain?" Martin laughed. "I know how you can get home," he said. "I will be right back." Mary heard Martin talking to his mother. Then she heard cupboards opening and closing. What is Martin doing? she wondered. Then Martin appeared. He had a yellow raincoat and a yellow hat and a big red and yellow umbrella in his hand. "I can walk you home," Martin said. "The coat and hat will keep me dry and the umbrella will keep the rain off you." Mary smiled. "Good idea!" she said. The two friends walked down the block to Mary's house.*

Ask: Can anyone tell about a time when a friend helped you out? Listen to two or three stories, then conclude by telling the children that friendship is a talent, too. It is something God gave us which we can practice and get really good at.

Have the children return to the work area and color the pictures of Mary and Martin on the cover. If your class time is short, they can color the illustration at home.

**I CAN SHARE (page 2)** Gather the children in the work area. Explain that God has given each of us special talents for doing things. Have the children name the special talents the drawings around the picture frame on page 2 illustrate. Ask the children to tell about one of these talents they can do. Talk together about other things they like to do very much. Direct them to write a sentence about something they like to do. Then draw a picture of themselves doing that activity or a picture of something they use in the activity.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**GOSPEL STORYTELLING: The Three Servants** Gather the children in a story circle. Tell them that our talents are gifts from God. God asks us to use these talents and share them with others. Tell them Jesus once told a story about three servants whose master was going on a trip.

*The master asked the servants to take care of his money while he was gone. The first servant got five thousand dollars. The second servant got two thousand dollars. The third servant got one thousand dollars. When the master came home, the first servant said, "I used your five thousand dollars*

to make ten thousand dollars." The master said, "Great, you can do more jobs for me." The second servant said, "I used your two thousand dollars to make four thousand dollars." The master said, "Great, you can do more jobs for me, too." The third servant said, "I was so scared I might lose your money that I hid it. Here is the same money you gave me."

Which servants made the master happy? Which made the master unhappy? Conclude that using our talents can help us bring happiness to ourselves and to others.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**GOSPEL ACTIVITY: Hide It! A Game of Sharing (pages 3-4)** *Hide It!* is a game of sharing talents. Have the children look at all the picture cards on pages 3 and 4. Explain that each of these shows a special talent. Read the words on each card with the children. Explain that the *Hide It!* card will be used in the game. Have the children cut out the cards, then form groups of 2, 3, or 4. Have the children in each group put all their cards in a box or hat. Players take turns drawing a card, choosing one of the two activities pictured (the one on

the front or on the back), and pantomiming it so the other players can guess what it is. Demonstrate that pantomiming means doing an action without sound. When other players guess the activity, the player pantomiming may keep the card. A player who draws the *Hide It!* card must return all of his or her cards to the hat. The player with the most cards when all the cards have been drawn or when time is up, is the winner.

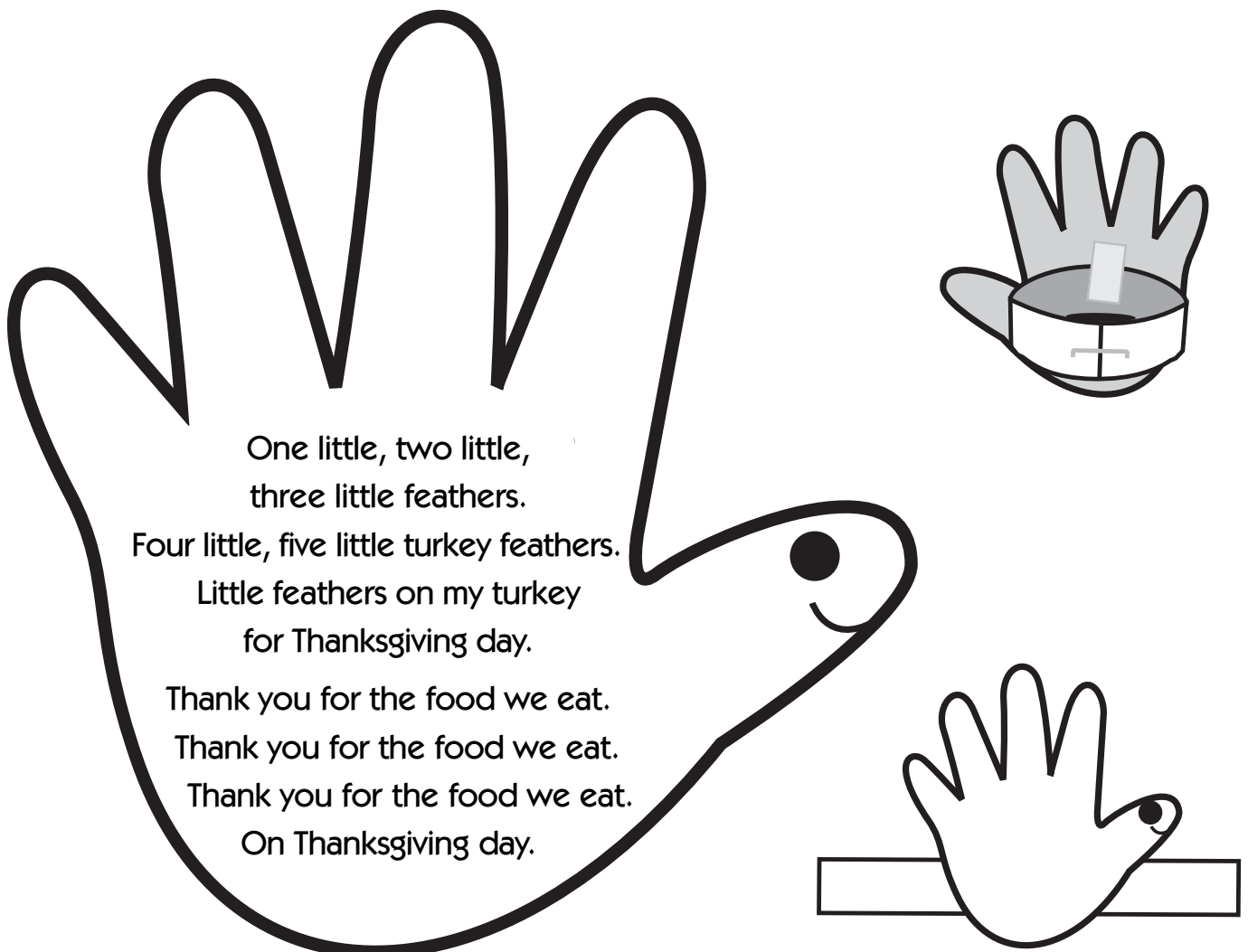
Provide envelopes so the children can take their games home and play with their families.

**CONCLUDING PRAYER** Form a prayer circle, and end class with the following prayer:

*God gives us many talents. We thank God for these special gifts. We will try our best always to share. Amen.*

**WCBT, page 30, Morning Prayer** Teach the children this short morning prayer. Consider using it to begin your *Promise* classes so they get used to intentionally dedicating their day to God. ✝

**THANKSGIVING ACTIVITY** Cut a 8 1/2" x 1 1/2" band for each child. The children decorate and cut out the turkey shape. Attach the band to the back of the turkey as indicated. Staple or tape the end of the band when it is wrapped around a child's hand. The children can make their turkey puppet move as they sing the Thanksgiving song.



# How Does a Young Child Learn?

**B**aby books usually stop at recording first steps and first words. They don't go on to record how children's thinking and their ability to make symbols develop during the early years of schooling. But like the unfolding physical abilities that families watch as children learn to creep, then crawl, then walk, children's brains also evolve. They advance from simply taking in sensations to thinking concretely and then to thinking abstractly.

The *Promise* level of the *Pf Baum Gospel Weeklies* is for children in kindergarten and first grade. Children's faith development builds on their physical, emotional, and psychological development.

**T**he Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget studied children's development extensively and identified three stages in the development of children's thinking ability. Before the ages of six and seven, children think intuitively. Piaget calls this the preoperational stage. Children can reproduce mental images that they take in through their senses, but they cannot remember sustained sequences of events or reverse the order of their perceptions to identify causes.

At about six or seven, children begin developing their concrete operations. Just as they first take a few halting steps and then learn to walk well, children become able first to remember events and put them in sequence. All the storytelling, reading, and language arts in the elementary school years help them refine their abilities to think concretely and use stories to interpret their experience.

*Promise* children who are kindergartners are building readiness to move from their intuitive thinking to concrete thinking. They absorb the world around them through their senses and learn to name it. Therefore, early childhood learning activities emphasize physical development, eye-hand coordination, general body coordination, and balance, as well as naming activities.

The world of younger children buzzes and hums with feelings, activities, and people that they can perceive only in unconnected episodes. "And then, and then, and then," the young child says enthusiastically connecting unrelated sense impressions.

*Why* questions abound for children of this age. "Where does the wind go when it's not blowing?" "Why are we driving over the wind?" "Who is your mother's mother's mother's mother?" They ask long strings of *why* questions which no answer can satisfy because they are not really asking cause and effect questions yet.

*Promise* suits its Gospel concepts to the needs of prereaders who need sense-involving ways to experience as well as hear stories. Puppets, illustrations, real objects, show-and-tell—these concrete approaches to telling stories and talking about our world enable young children to experience Gospel stories, too.

Young children learn from hearing these stories in a warm and loving atmosphere. They are too young really to try to imitate Jesus' ways but can recognize he is a loving person who loves them. Catechists and religion teachers can wind up moralizing if they try to lead younger children beyond their intuitions of who Jesus is.

**T**he seven-year-old recognizes cause and effect. With this discovery he or she can put experience in some order. Around the age of seven the word *because* makes the world make more sense.

A teacher sees a child eating a lot at lunch. The first grader explains it is because her mom is having a baby. Catechists and teachers need to ask youngsters to explain when their concrete thinking seems nonsensical. These children can and are thinking logically: "My mother is going to the hospital to have a baby and my dad can't cook very well, so I have to eat now so I don't get hungry then."

The first grader begins to recognize and recall sequence. With the ability to recall sequence, the narrative or story becomes a primary way for children to put experiences together. Stories can answer the wonderful *why* questions they ask of themselves and of adults. First graders will benefit from using illustrations in *Promise* to retell stories on their own.

Seven-year-olds depend on their five senses in their concrete learning. When we as adults think back to our early religious experience, we remember the grate in the aisle of the church, the smell of incense, the gilded rosettes on the altar, the bald head of the man who always sat a pew ahead of the family. These memories can help catechists understand the concrete way in which children learn.

Children learn concretely also by doing, by dramatizing feelings and stories with their bodies, by cutting and pasting, by handling objects, by seeing pictures, by hearing stories. Children learn through experience—to pray by praying, to worship by worshiping, to share by sharing, to cooperate by cooperating, to love by loving and being loved.

# UNIT 1

## We Are the church

**T**o tell the good news of Jesus Christ is the Catholic Church's mission. As teachers and catechists, we hand on this good news, the Gospel, to the next generation.

To catechize means to instruct. Literally, the word *catechesis* means to *teach face to face orally*. Jesus' story is preserved in the Bible in words. His teachings are preserved in our Church tradition. When we tell this good news face to face, we pass on our own faith, too.

Every Christian makes known and visible Jesus' teaching by how he or she lives the Gospel. Our

baptism calls each of us to put on and embody Christ. Together we form the body of Christ in the world.

In this unit of *Promise*, the children celebrate belonging to the Christian community. The first lesson gives them opportunity to share what their church family is like. Through playing a board game, they recognize that Jesus' community includes anyone who wishes to follow him. The second lesson builds on the meaning of Jesus' kingdom.

Lesson three and four get to the core of Christian identity: our likeness to Jesus in Baptism and our nourishing by him in the Eucharist. The children's

response to this inclusive love is to practice following the two great rules Jesus gave us: love God and love your neighbor. They will learn much more about the Christian practice of love by how we treat them than by the lesson itself.

As the end of the liturgical year approaches, the Sunday Gospels are parables about readiness for Jesus' coming. Young children explore how they make both wise and foolish choices in everyday life. They will recognize and appreciate their own talents to grow, learn, enjoy life, serve others, and delight in creation.

Date	Sunday Gospels	1 Profession of Faith	2 Sacraments/Liturgy	3 Christian Life	4 Christian Prayer
September 25, 2011 26th Sunday	Matthew 21.28-32 God's Will	God makes us free to choose (#1799-1800)	Celebrating as a community	Being part of church community	Singing our prayer
October 2, 2011 27th Sunday	Matthew 21.33-43 God's Vineyard	God cares for creation (#287, 315)	Gospel ritual	Caring for creation	Prayer of thanksgiving
October 9, 2011 28th Sunday	Matthew 22.1-14 Wedding Feast	Jesus invites us to his table (#804-05)	Eucharistic meal	Sharing with others	Sunday Eucharist
October 16, 2011 29th Sunday	Matthew 22.15-21 Caesar and God	Baptism welcomes us to God's family (#265, 985)	Baptism	Baptized into Jesus' family	Baptismal promise Sign of the Cross
October 23, 2011 30th Sunday	Matthew 22.34-40 Great Commandments	Jesus' two great commandments (#1970-72, 1985)	All Saints/All Souls	Loving and unloving actions	Prayer for others
October 30, 2011 31st Sunday	Matthew 23.1-12 The Greatest Serve Others	We serve like Jesus (#561, 1822-23)	Christian community	Learning about saints	Our Father
November 6, 2011 32rd Sunday	Matthew 25.1-13 Wise and Foolish	God lets us choose (#1732-34)	The Church is a community	Making choices	Prayer of petition
November 13, 2011 33rd Sunday	Matthew 25.14-30 Talents	God gives us talents (#941)		Using talents	Morning Prayer