

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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Preschool

# Seeds

## 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. The Gospels are pivotal to catechesis because Jesus Christ is the center of the Gospels.

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 *Seeds* 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 *Seeds*. The citation directs you to pages in the handbook that underscore and expand the doctrinal content of the *Seeds* 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* #1190, 1193.

### 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). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #356-58.

### 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* #775-76.

### 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood (*National Directory for Catechesis* #85). 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* 1223-4, 1229, 1277-78, 1280.

### 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* #2055.

### 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

God's love is communicated to young children primarily through parents. They have shared the gift of human life with their children and, through Baptism, have enriched them with a share in God's own life. Their faith, their attitude toward other human beings, and their trust in a loving God strongly influence the development of the child's faith (*National Directory for Catechesis* #48.E).

### 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* #1731.

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[www.pflaum.com/pgwguides](http://www.pflaum.com/pgwguides)

## Teaching Guide

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

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus teaches us.

*Seeds* is a lectionary-based curriculum. Each lesson is built around the theme of the Sunday Gospel. The children hear the Sunday Gospel in their *Seeds* class, use the illustration to retell it, and explore through stories and activities how they can live the Gospel in their families and communities in ways appropriate to their age.

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. The children will explore the choices they make and rejoice in the capacity God has given them to be loving, choosing, followers of Jesus.

You will be a successful teacher of young children if you enjoy them and if you use this guide. The guide shows how to make a one-hour lesson that fits the attention span of young children. They will look forward to the story and the Gospel story, so practice until you can tell them rather than read them. Don't skip the singing and stretching. Enjoy yourself and the children will enjoy themselves, too.

**Materials:** Crayons, *Seeds* CD.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING** Provide name tags for the children. Use the name tags to take attendance each week. Post them on a bulletin board. As the children enter the room, they remove their tag from the board and give it to you. You greet them each by name by reading from the tag. The tags left on the board are a record of the children not in attendance.

**2. SINGING** *Seeds* has a wonderful CD with easy-to-learn songs that relate to the Gospel themes throughout the year. The *Seeds* signature song is about the seeds of God's love, as we learn about it through Jesus, growing in the children's hearts. Children easily learn this song (the first one on the CD) and love putting gestures to it. Have the CD playing as the children gather and sing it along with them until they learn the words. Or sing the following song.

### Gathering With Jesus

to "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, (cup one ear)  
to clap, pray and sing. (clap hands)

We gather here together  
to show we love God.

**3. OPENING PRAYER** Begin each *Seeds* session with a simple prayer, asking a blessing on your group. Plan to close the session with prayers of petition and thanks. If possible, make a special corner in your teaching space where you can gather for prayer and, later on in the lesson, for the proclamation of the Gospel.

**Objective: The children will explore their daily choices.**

**4. WARM-UP ACTIVITY: Choosing** Each *Seeds* lesson begins by exploring the children's own experience. Begin this week's lesson with a game about choosing. Move to the open area where the children can spread out. Have ready any or all of the following pairs:

- An orange and an apple
- Two different-colored markers or crayons
- Two different toys, for instance, a ball and a toy car or truck
- Two different picture books
- Juices or milk you will serve for the snack
- Pictures of different pets—dog, cat, fish, bird, hamster.

Hold up the orange and the apple. Ask for a volunteer to tell you which he or she would choose. Do the same with the other pairs, giving each child a chance to make a choice. Use a puppet to ask the questions if your children are reluctant to speak. Children who are shy with you will often talk to a puppet.

**5. STORYTELLING: Michael Makes Choices** Tell the children you know a story about a boy named Michael who couldn't decide what to wear to visit his grandma. Ask them to listen carefully to how Michael got ready.

*It was Saturday morning and Michael's family was getting ready to go to Grandma's house. Michael's mom was packing a picnic lunch in the kitchen. Michael's dad was checking the oil in the car engine. "Michael, where are you?" Mom called. "I'm here," Michael said. Mom looked up. There was Michael, looking like a roly-poly clown. He had so many clothes on, Mom could hardly tell who he was.*

*"What are you wearing, Michael?" Mom asked. Michael pointed to the logo on his jacket. "My Colorado Rockies jacket that Uncle Dave gave me," he said. "It might rain and Uncle Dave said this jacket is waterproof." Michael unzipped the jacket. Underneath he had on a blue and gold Notre Dame sweatshirt. "This is the sweatshirt Dad won at church," Michael said. "I want to show it to Grandma." Mom pointed to the red cuffs peeking out of Michael's sleeve. "What is this?" Mom asked. Michael pulled up the sweatshirt to show Mom the red turtleneck with Groveland Cardinals written on it in white. "It's my t-ball shirt," Michael said. "Dad said we could practice in Grandma's back yard." "I see one more shirt," said Mom. Michael*

pulled up the red turtleneck to show Mom a faded yellow t-shirt. "That's so I can play in Grandma's barn and get as dirty as I want," said Michael.

Mom laughed. "You made a lot of choices, Michael, but you are ready for everything. Dad and I are ready too. Let's go to Grandma's."

Ask the children to tell you what shirts Michael chose. They can pretend to take the jacket off, then the sweatshirt and turtleneck. Ask volunteers to tell how they chose what shirt or shoes to wear today.

**6. STRETCH AND SING** Move to the large open space and ask the children to follow you in this familiar song and stretching exercise. This song is on the *Seeds* CD.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap twice)

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap twice)

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 twice)

Repeat twice, changing the words to *stamp your feet* and *shake my hand*.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**7. GOSPEL RITUAL** Move to the area you have designated for the Gospel storytelling. Display your copy of *Seeds* on a lovely piece of cloth. Have the children sit in a circle. Sing "Two Little Ears" from the *Seeds* CD as an introduction to the Gospel. Have the children add simple gestures. If you do not have the CD, have them simply repeat each line after you and add gestures.

Two little ears to hear God's word, (hands cupping ears)

Two little eyes to see God's love, (pointing to eyes)

Two little hands to work each day, (holding out hands)

Alleluia! Hear me pray. (folding hands in prayer)

**Objective: The children will recognize Jesus told stories to teach us about God.**

**8. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus teaches us by telling a story** Tell the children that every Sunday we hear a story about Jesus or a story that Jesus told his friends a long time ago. When we hear these stories it is as if Jesus were teaching us now. Ask them to listen carefully to see what Jesus is teaching in this Sunday's story.

Jesus said, "Once there was a man who had two sons. He said to the first son, "Will you help me in our vineyard?" "No, I won't," the son said and walked away. Then he was sorry and he went to the vineyard later and helped his father.

Meanwhile, the father said to his second son, "Will you help me in our vineyard?" "Yes, I will," the second son said, but on his way he saw a fish jumping in the pond and he decided to go fishing. Jesus asked the people listening to his story, "Which of the two sons did what their father wanted?"

Ask the children what they think the answer was. The first son did go to the vineyard, but they will probably tell you the second son went also, after a while. This story teaches us that if we make not-so-good choices, we can change our minds and make better choices.

**9. COVER ACTIVITY: Jesus teaches us** Almost every week, *Seeds* features Jesus on its cover, using a variety of artists. Distribute *Seeds*. Have the children retell the Gospel story to you by using the picture. Tell them to use it to tell the Gospel story to their families.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective: The children will explore their daily choices.**

**10. ACTIVITY: I can choose** Have the children bring their copies of *Seeds* to the work area. Have them open to pages 2-3. Read the head: *I can choose*. One by one, have the children describe to you what choices each child in the five illustrations makes. Be sure all children have a chance to talk. You will learn a lot about them by listening to the stories they make up about the five children. Summarize by saying all the choices are good choices because they are about what we like best.

**Objective: The children will celebrate the beginning of a year of learning about Jesus.**

**11. WELCOME TO SEEDS!** Page 4 is a welcoming activity. If your *Seeds* group meets during the Liturgy of the Word, the children can process holding this page high as they return to the assembly. If the parents come to pick up their children, make sure the child shares the welcome page with the parents and that they know you are the teacher who signed and dated the page. If you simply send *Seeds* home with the children, you might want to attach a note to the parents introducing yourself.

If the children in your group like to print their names, give them crayons. Move around the room helping those who need help and signing and dating the page.

**WCBT, page 6, We Go to Church** Use this page to reinforce the children's experience of belonging to a church community.



**12. CLOSING PRAYER** Gather the children back in the story circle for a final song and prayer. Ask: What or whom would you like our *Seeds* group to pray for today? Children usually have a lot on their minds and welcome this opportunity. Conclude by singing the *Seeds* song.

## Teaching Guide

Isaiah 5.1-7; Philippians 4.6-9; Matthew 21.33-43

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus wants us to grow.

Sunday's readings picture God as a caring vinegrower, who tenderly plants, tends, and protects growing vines. The reading from the prophet Isaiah sings the song of Yahweh, who dug a vineyard, planted and tended vines, only to suffer disappointment with wild vines and bitter fruit. This disappointment did not discourage our loving, faithful God from sending the Son to be one of us and work alongside us in the vineyard.

*Seeds* puts the Gospel within young children's reach by concentrating its lesson around growing things, the care they take, and the care children can give. The children will take home with them the image of Jesus as one who wants them to prosper and grow. They will know that God takes care of them as the landowner in the Gospel took care of his vines.

**Materials:** Scissors, crayons, colored pencils, or markers.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING** Use the name tags you made last week to take attendance and to help you learn the children's names. When everyone is present, play the roll-the-ball game. You roll the ball to a child saying, "I roll the ball to \_\_\_\_\_ and he rolls it back to me." As the children learn the names of their classmates, they can also roll the ball to each other.

**2. SINGING** Play the *Seeds* signature song from the CD and lead the children in singing along with it. Or teach the children this simple song. Add gestures and a clap.

**Gathering With Jesus**  
to "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, (cup one ear)  
to clap, pray and sing. (clap hands)

We gather here together  
to show we love God.

**3. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children remain standing while you say the following prayer. Children answer, "Amen."

*Dear Jesus, each day my body grows a little bigger and a little stronger. Help me to grow each day in loving you and in loving others.*

**Objective: The children will recognize how they change and grow.**

**4. STORY: Molly learns to ride a bike** Gather children in the listening area. Ask: How do you know that your body is

growing? *Getting taller, clothes don't fit, shoes too tight, can do physical things they could not do before.* Be sure each child has a chance to respond. Help the children understand that their minds are growing also as they learn more about the world about them, as they recognize letters, their names, and learn to count. Tell the following story:

*Every day Molly asked her dad the same question, "When will I be big enough to ride a bicycle?" Every day her dad answered, "When your legs are long enough to reach the pedals." Once a week Molly's dad measured her on the chart behind the kitchen door. Molly could tell she was growing. Her mom had to buy new shoes to fit her growing feet. Molly could get a drink at the park without any help. Best of all, she could run and play longer without getting tired. Molly hoped that soon she would get a bicycle to ride.*

*One day Molly's dad came home early from work. He asked Molly to come for a ride in the car with him. Imagine Molly's surprise when they stopped in front of the bike shop. "Molly, you are big enough for your own bicycle," said Dad. Molly was so excited. The store helper measured her. He found a pretty blue bike that was just the right size. It had training wheels to help Molly get started. Dad helped Molly learn how to ride. In a few weeks Molly could ride her beautiful blue bike all around the playground.*

Discuss the story. What are the signs Molly is getting big enough for a bicycle? Ask how many of the children have bicycles or are hoping they will be big enough soon.

**5. CREATIVE DRAMA** Ask the children to stand and spread out so they are not close to anyone else. Have them make believe that they each have a new bicycle. Pantomime taking it out of the garage, getting on it, riding all around the classroom. Tell them they are such good riders that no one will bump into anyone else. At a signal all the bikes come home and into the garage.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**6. GOSPEL RITUAL** To make this part of the lesson special, plan always to go to the same area for the Gospel storytelling. Display your copy of *Seeds* on a lovely piece of cloth. Bring fresh flowers if possible. Have the children sit in a circle. You will not need to distribute *Seeds* to them until after the storytelling. Then they use the cover illustration to retell the story.

Sing "Two Little Ears" from the *Seeds* music CD as an introduction to the Gospel. Have the children add simple gestures. If you do not have the CD, have them simply repeat each line after you and add gestures.

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 how they change and grow.**

## 7. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: The Beautiful Vineyard

Read the following Gospel story to the children or tell it in your own words.

*Jesus grew up in the country, where people grow wheat to make bread, and grapes to make wine, and tend herds of goats so they can drink milk and make cheese. One day when Jesus was teaching people he told them a story about someone who owned a big vineyard.*

*"Once there was a landowner who planted some little grape vines. He dug the big rocks out of the soil and put them all around his field to keep his grape vines safe. He hired someone to shoo people and animals away so they would not step on the vines and hurt them. The rain and the sun made the vines grow. When the grapes were ripe everyone enjoyed eating them and drinking the wine made from them."*

*Jesus' friends liked this story. They knew God takes care of them, just as the landowner takes care of the vines.*

Ask the children to retell the story. Ask: What did the landowner do to make the vines grow so well? *He built a wall to keep them safe from people and animals.* What did God do to make the vines grow? *Rain, sun, the fertile soil.*

Distribute *Seeds*. Ask children to tell you what they see in the cover illustration. *A man helping a child reach for an apple, vines and grapes, pumpkins growing in a field in the background.* List all the things that are growing in the picture, including the children. Tell the children that in the same way as God took care of the vineyard, God takes care of all the living things in our world. God also takes good care of us and helps us to grow. Read the sentence on the cover. Tell the children that the artist painted that picture of Jesus helping the child because Jesus, who is God's Son, loves us and wants us to grow and get strong.

**8. STRETCHING ACTIVITY** Have the children curl up like a little seed in the ground. Play the song "Everything's Growing" from the *Seeds* CD. The children slowly uncurl and grow up tall, stretching and stretching. If there is time, one child can be the sun moving around the plants, other children can be the rain.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective: The children will appreciate that God delights in their life and growth and takes cares of them always.**

## 9. GROWING, GROWING, GROWING!

Gather the children in the work area. Have them open *Seeds*

to pages 2-3. Have them identify the three pictures across the top, the stages of growth of the pumpkin which was on the cover. Review the growing stage of the plant by referring to the vineyard and the stretching exercise. Then direct the children's attention to the three pictures at the bottom of the page. How are the children different in each of the pictures? How do we know the child is growing? The children will enjoy the evolution in drinking cups which the child can use. Direct the children to circle the picture that shows how they drank when they were babies and then the one that shows how they drink now.

**10. WHAT HELPS ME GROW?** Have the children turn to page 4 and look at the four illustrations on the right hand side. Read the words across the top. Remind them that their job as children is to grow healthy and strong so they can be well and happy. Discuss each picture with the children, asking them if the object or activity is something that will help their minds and bodies grow. If it is, have them put a big X in the box by that illustration.

**11. I AM GROWING** Have the children look at the growing child on the left side of page 4. Read the words: *I am growing*. Have them put their finger on each word as you read it. Have the children print their names or do so for them. Distribute scissors and demonstrate how to cut on the heavy vertical line on page 4. Have the children place their figure flat on the surface in front of them and follow you step by step in the folding as illustrated on page 3. *With the illustration side down, fold the figure in two and then fold back on the other dotted line. Turn the figure face up and bring the bottom dotted line fold up to just above the words I am growing. Open and close that fold to show how to make the child grow.* Tell the children to take the figure home and show their parents the note on the back.

**WCBT, pages 20-21, God Made Everything!** This coloring page depicts the children and their families in the midst of God's created world. ✖

**12. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather in the prayer circle and sing the *Seeds* song to conclude your session. Pray the following prayer:

*Thank you, God, for helping me to grow in my body and in my loving actions. Help me to take good care of my body so that I can always love you and others. Amen.*

**13. SNACK** Pass out healthful treats. Tell the children these treats will help their bodies grow big and strong.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**14. WATCH IT GROW** Plant seeds in paper cups so the children can watch them grow. Be sure the children print their names on the cups so they can find their own plants next week.



For free at-home activities, visit us at [www.pflaum.com/familypages](http://www.pflaum.com/familypages)

## Teaching Guide

## OVERVIEW

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

We hear another of Jesus' parables this Sunday. Jesus tells about a king who wants to celebrate his son's wedding in the most festive way possible. When the invited guests refuse his invitation, he calls in the poor and outcast. He is that determined to have a party!

Matthew dwells on the fate of the guests who refused the king's invitation. *Seeds* stresses instead the desire of the king to share his happiness with everyone around him.

Children of three and four are just beginning to acquire social skills. Sharing is not easy for them. They need many experiences of learning to be thoughtful, to think of others, and to share with others.

**Materials:** Crayons, colored pencils, or markers.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING** Begin class by gathering the children in a circle holding hands and singing the *Seeds* song from the music CD. Or, use the following song.

### Gathering With Jesus

to "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.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to stand as you say the following prayer. They answer "Amen."

*Dear Jesus, Help me to be like you, kind to others and ready to share with everyone.*

**Objective: The children will identify ways they invite and welcome their friends.**

**3. STORY: Stephanie's Party** Gather the children in a circle on the floor so they can spread out their copies of *Seeds*. Ask these questions.

- What makes a party?
- What kinds of parties have you been to?
- What kinds of things happen at parties?

Then tell this story.

*There was a little girl named Stephanie. She was almost four years old. Stephanie's birthday was coming. She really wanted to have a party. She asked her mom and her mom said yes. "Since you will be four, you may invite four friends," Stephanie's mom said. Stephanie had lots of friends, but she*

*Isaiah 25.6-10; Philippians 4.12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22.1-14*

*finally decided which four to invite: Tammy, Sandy, Joey, and Louann.*

*Stephanie was very excited because this was her first birthday party. Each day she would count the days. Just two more days, just one more day. The morning of the party Stephanie woke up early to help her mom get the party ready.*

*As they were blowing up red and white balloons, the telephone rang. It was Tammy's mother. "Tammy got sick last night," she said. "She won't be able to come to the birthday party." Stephanie felt bad because Tammy was a good friend. Then the doorbell rang. When Stephanie opened the door, Sandy was standing there. "I can't come to your party," Sandy said. "My dad is taking us to see my grandma who is sick." Just as Stephanie closed the door, the phone rang again. It was Joey's mother saying Joey had the chicken pox. Then Louann's parents stopped on their way to take Louann to the emergency room at the hospital.*

*Stephanie was very sad that no one could come to her party. Her mom sat down and explained that these things can happen. They are called emergencies. But they could still have a party. They called Mary Ann, the lady across the street, and invited her and her grandson, Joshua. Then they called the twins, Ron and Stephen, next door. They were only three years old. They were all happy to come. They all had a fun time.*

Distribute *Seeds* and ask the children to look at the back page. Have them tell you about the pictures of things that help make a party. After talking about the pictures, ask the children to complete the line connecting the circles. Conclude the activity by asking them, "If you were going to a party, which part would you like the best?"

**4. STRETCHING ACTIVITY** Play from the *Seeds* CD the "Follow Me" song. Have the children march, hop, jump, and run as the verses say.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL RITUAL** Move to the area you have designated for the Gospel storytelling. Display your copy of *Seeds* on a lovely piece of cloth. Have the children sit in a circle and put their copies of *Seeds* on the floor in front of them so they will not be distracted during the Gospel storytelling.

Sing "Two Little Ears" from the *Seeds* music CD as an introduction to the Gospel. Have the children add simple gestures. If you do not have the tape, have them simply repeat each line after you.

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.

**6. GOSPEL STORYTELLING:** Jesus says, "Come to my party" Introduce this Gospel story by telling the children that Jesus liked to tell stories to his friends. Here is a story about a party.

*Once there was a king whose son was going to be married. The king decided to have a big party to celebrate. He sent his messengers to invite all his friends. "Come and celebrate!" the messengers said. "The king invites you to a great banquet for his son who is getting married."*

*But no one wanted to come to the king's party. "I am too busy," said the man who ran the grocery store. "Who will pick my corn if I go to the king's party?" said the farmer. "Quit talking about this silly party," other people said. "We don't want to come."*

*When the messengers told the king that no one would come to the party, the king was very sad. But then he said, "I am going to have a party anyway. Go out and invite everyone you see—rich people, poor people, children, boys and girls—everybody! I want this to be the biggest party ever." So the messengers went all over the country and invited people. They all came, and the king had a great party for his son's wedding after all.*

Lead a brief discussion by asking the children questions to help them review the story.

- What was the story about?
- How did the king feel when no one would come?
- What did the king do then?
- How did the king feel at the party?
- Did they have fun after all?


Have the children look at the cover. Jesus is saying, "Come to my party." He has food on the table and is asking the children to come. How is Jesus like the king in the story? Are the children happy to come to Jesus' party? How does that make Jesus feel? Will Jesus tell the children a story after they eat lunch? What about? Conclude by saying that God sent Jesus, God's son, to live with us and keep reminding us that God wants us to grow and be happy. Jesus invites us to come to God's party for us each Sunday at church.

**7. GOSPEL CREATIVE DRAMA** Have the children stand. Invite them to act out as a group Jesus' gathering actions on the cover. Have them mime Jesus putting food on the table; then Jesus gesturing for children to come and join him for a meal; then Jesus passing food to the children. Finally, have them show Jesus and the children dancing together in a circle holding hands.

# BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will recognize that Jesus' community, the Church, gathers in Jesus' name.

**8. WHO COMES TO JESUS' PARTY?** Gather the children in the work area with pages 2-3 open before them. Ask what they see. *A neighborhood with houses, stores, a church, streets, cars, people.* Point to a house on one of the children's *Seeds* and say, "This is your house and you want to go to church. How do you get there? Do you walk? Do you go in a car?" Invite the children to share how they go to church and how their neighbors go to church. Take your finger and trace the car out of the garage, go down the street to the parking lot, and park your car in the parking lot. Then get out and walk. Look at all those other people coming to church. What's the name of your church? Conclude by saying that Jesus invites us to his party and celebration every Sunday at his house, the church.

**WCBT, page 10, Who Leads Our Church Family?** Tell the children this is the inside of the church in the activity. Note  the table in front of the priest. What will be on the table? Mass is the banquet of the people of God.

**9. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather in a circle, standing. Sing the *Seeds* song, adding the gestures and movement the words suggest. Then ask children to stand quietly while you pray. They answer, "Amen."

*Thank you, Jesus, for inviting us to your party. We will come. We love you and want to be with you.*

**10. SNACK** Have party food, maybe around a theme or color. The food need not be sweets. Orange slices with cherries on them are as festive as bakery cake.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**11. PLANNING A PARTY** Practice inviting people by planning for a guest to come to your *Seeds* class. Prepare an invitation for your principal or custodian or bus driver. Help the children plan and prepare a song and snack and a gift they make themselves that shows the whole group is giving this party.

Extra copies of these teaching guides are available free online in English and Spanish at [www.pflaum.com/pgwguides](http://www.pflaum.com/pgwguides)

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus teaches we are God's children.

Matthew's account of Jesus' conflicts with the religious leaders of his time continues in Sunday's Gospel. The scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus a trick question, hoping to get him to commit himself on the political issue of Roman taxation. Jesus challenges them instead to look at their own lives and decide how they live both as citizens of this world and of God's kingdom.

The story and activities in *Seeds* give children the opportunity to experience Baptism as the beginning of our belonging to God's family. When they were born, they were special to their birth family. When they were baptized, they became special to God's family. Some children may have been at a Baptism recently. These children can share their experiences with the group.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored pencils, scissors. Separate pages 3-4 of *Seeds* from pages 1-2 before class.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHER AND SING** Gather the children in a circle for the opening song. Use the *Seeds* signature song from the CD, the "Gathering With Jesus" song suggested last week, or some other song the children know.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to repeat each line of the following prayer after you.

*Dear God,  
We are glad to be here.  
You are with us in all that we do,  
when we laugh and talk,  
when we work and play.  
We love you, God.  
Thank you for loving us.  
Amen.*

**Objective:**The children will understand the Church welcomes them into God's family through Baptism.

**3. STORY: Derek is baptized** Gather in a story circle. Ask: Does anyone remember when they were baptized? Some children may have been baptized recently. Most probably were baptized as infants. Give the children time to talk about Baptisms they have witnessed, maybe even the Baptism of a brother or sister. Ask if they got to be part of the Baptism in any way. After this discussion, read or tell this story about a boy their age.

*My name is Derek. I was only six weeks old when I was baptized. It was at Sunday Mass in our church. My mom and dad asked Uncle Roger to be my godfather. They asked my*

*mom's best friend, Sandy, to be my godmother. Godparents are like an extra set of parents. You are their godchild. They make sure you grow up to be a good member of God's family.*

*We have pictures of my Baptism, so I know what happened. Our family got to sit in the front pews at Mass. All my grandmas and grandpas were there. First Dad and Mom, and Uncle Roger and Sandy, promised they believed in God and would teach me about God. Then Dad held me over the Baptismal font and the priest poured water on my head. I guess I cried a little when the water was poured on my head. It was such a surprise! The priest said, "Derek, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

*Next, Sandy gave the priest a white shirt with a cross on it. Sandy made it just for me. We still have it at home. The priest put the little shirt on me. Then he lit a candle from the big Easter candle in church and gave it to my mom to hold.*

*Finally, the priest asked my dad to hold me up high so everyone in church could see me. Uncle Roger said all the people at Mass clapped and clapped and clapped for me. I wish I could remember that! After church we all went home and had breakfast together.*

Distribute *Seeds* and ask the children to turn to page 2. Have them retell Derek's Baptism by using the three illustrations. Ask them to point to the godparents, the Baptism garment, the candle. Conclude by asking if they have pictures of their Baptism and what stories they know about it.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Play the song "Everything's Growing" from the *Seeds* CD. Add the following movements and gestures.

Growing, growing,  
Everything's growing.  
Growing up, growing strong,  
(Children start from crouching position and gradually stand up tall.)  
I'm growing, too.  
(Children point to themselves with both hands.)

Flowers and dandelions,  
(Children sway gently.)  
Bluebirds and butterflies.  
(Flap wings)

Growing up, growing strong,  
I'm growing, too.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL RITUAL** Display your copy of *Seeds*. Have the children sit in a circle with their copies of *Seeds* on the floor in front of them.

Sing “Two Little Ears” from the *Seeds* music CD as an introduction to the Gospel. Have the children add simple gestures.

**6. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus teaches us we belong to God** Ask the children if they know what praise is. After they give their ideas summarize by saying to praise means to show our approval or to show that we think someone is great. Ask if the children have ever been praised for doing something good. How did it make them feel? Ask if they have ever praised or complimented someone else. Was the person happy?

Today’s Gospel story is about people who asked Jesus a question about what was important. Read the version of the Gospel below or tell the story in your own words.

*One day some of the leaders of the people came to Jesus with a question. “How should we act?” they asked. “Should we be busy taking care of our city and world or should we spend our time with God?” Jesus said, “You can do both. God wants you to be all that you can be.” The leaders went away to think about Jesus’ answer.*

Ask the children to look at the cover illustration of *Seeds*. Read the sentence and ask them to describe the picture. Tell the children that it is much like you teaching them to praise God. What are some ways that we can show praise? *Prayer, song, by being respectful, thoughtful and showing love.* What do you think Jesus is telling the people in the picture?

**7. STRETCH AND DANCE** Instruct the children to stand and hold one another’s hands. They will take two steps inward, while raising their joined hands. Two steps backwards, while lowering their hands. Move around in the circle to the right, then move in the circle to the left. Repeat the sequence of steps several times.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**8. PARTS OF BAPTISM** Gather in the work area and have the children turn to page 4. Identify the items. *Child in long dress, pitcher with water, white garment with cross, candle with wavy water painted on it.* Distribute scissors and

have the children cut out the items on the heavy dark lines. Have them make the child look like themselves. Then ask, how did the priest use the water pitcher in Derek’s Baptism? The white garment with the cross? The candle? Help each child print his or her name on the garment.

Have the children lay out their four pieces on the table to one side. Call out their names, “Jake is going to be baptized.” Jake then brings his child to the front of this desk. Continue until all the children have their figures ready. Then direct them to take their pitchers and pretend to pour water on the child’s head while they repeat after you, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Then have them pick up the white garment and place it on the child. Finally have them put the candle near the child’s hand. Allow the children to repeat this for each other a few times. They will enjoy knowing the words of the sacrament and making the gestures.

**WCBT, page 13, What Is Baptism?** Use this page to summarize today’s lesson.



### 9. CONCLUDING PRAYER AND SONG

Gather standing in a prayer circle. Show the children how to make the Sign of the Cross if they do not already know it. Make sure they notice the words are the same ones the priest uses when he baptizes people. Use the “One Family” song to conclude.

**10. SNACK** Have ice water available at snack time. Have the children tell you ways water is important. What do they do with water besides drink it? *Wash bodies, clothes, dishes; play in pools, oceans, and lakes; use it in cooking.*

## EXTENDING ACTIVITY

**11. BAPTISMAL FONT** Take the children to church to see the Baptismal font. Ask the priest to be there to show them the font. Have available a baptismal gown, a candle, and the water so the children can see them. Repeat the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” while Father pours the water.

## OVERVIEW

### Gospel Theme: Jesus has two rules for us.

This Sunday Jesus gives us his Great Commandments—to love God above all things and to love others as we love ourselves. In keeping these two laws we keep all the other Commandments.

Young children have many rules in their lives. Some are for the good of the family and school; some are for their own safety. Some they impose on themselves and on each other. *Seeds* will help the children recognize these rules and why they are needed.

Follow up on last week's concept of living lives that praise God by praising the children. Cut out a generous quantity of paper hearts. Begin your *Seeds* session by calling up each child by name, giving him or her a heart, and saying, "(name), God loves you. You are special." Continue distributing hearts during the session. You will be a living sign of the overflowing love God has for us.

**Materials:** Scissors, crayons or colored pencils, tape. You may wish to cut out the part of page 3-4 which has the prayer card activity before your group meets.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING AND SINGING** You may wish to change the opening song. Rather than sing the *Seeds* signature song, you may choose "One Family," which is also found on the *Seeds* CD. It is sung to the tune of the first verse of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

God loves you and God loves me.  
We are all one family.  
God loves you and God loves me.  
We are all one family.

Add the gestures of hugging oneself for the first line and reaching out for the second line. On the fourth line have all the children clasp hands and make a circle.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** The children remain standing while you say the following prayer. They answer "Amen."

*Jesus, thank you for bringing us together today. You teach us how to love God and how to love each other. Thank you, Jesus, for being our teacher and friend.*

**Objective:** The children will identify rules they follow at home.

**3. EVERYONE NEEDS RULES** Gather in the story circle. Ask the children if they have any rules they must follow at home. Each child says just one rule. After they have identified home rules, ask them why the rules are important.

Consider using a puppet to ask questions. Puppets can serve as a prop for a shy child or can help someone overcome a speech problem. Children who do not respond to a question from you may well answer when the puppet asks. A puppet can make stories come alive by taking one of the parts in the story. Use one regularly to introduce concepts, to ask questions, and stimulate discussion.

Help the children to understand that rules help them stay safe and help them to love one another. Next have the children discuss classroom rules: picking up, putting the toys away, using materials correctly, hanging up jackets. Do the same with playground and bus rules. Ask what happens when people do not keep the rules. *They can get hurt or quarrel and act mean to each other.*

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Ask the children to move to the open area. Tell the children that we will sing a song that shows how we feel when we follow our rules. With the children standing in a circle sing the following song.

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 your feelings want to show it  
If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (*clap, clap*)  
Repeat two more times singing: stamp your feet; jump up high.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL RITUAL** To make this part of the lesson special, plan always to go to the same area for the Gospel storytelling. Display your copy of *Seeds* on a lovely piece of cloth. Bring fresh flowers if possible. Have the children sit in a circle. You will not need to distribute *Seeds* to the children until after the storytelling. Then they use the cover illustration to retell the story.

Sing "Two Little Ears" from the *Seeds* music CD as an introduction to the Gospel. Have the children add simple gestures. If you do not have the tape, have them simply repeat each line after you.

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 Jesus' two great commandments.

**6. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus has two rules for us** Gather the children in the listening area. Tell the children

that in today's Gospel story Jesus tells his friends that he has just two important rules they must follow.

*One day Jesus was teaching in the Temple. A man said to him, "Jesus, there are so many rules. Tell us which is the most important one."*

*Jesus answered, "Here is the most important rule: Love God with your whole heart and your whole soul and your whole mind."*

*The man said, "I will try to do that. Are there any other rules?"*

*Jesus said, "Just one more. You must love other people the same way you love yourself. Try to keep these two rules."*

Distribute *Seeds* and have the children describe what is happening in the cover illustration. *Jesus is holding a lot of hearts in his arms; a child is praying before lunch; two children are playing together; an older sibling is amusing his younger brother or sister; a boy is bringing a glass of water to an older woman, maybe a guest.* Read the sentence: Jesus has two rules for us. Ask the children what they think the two rules are. They just heard this in the Gospel storytelling, but they may have forgotten. Jesus' two rules are to love God and to love one another. Decide which rule is being followed in each small illustration: *child praying is loving God, the other children are showing love for others.* Ask the children why they think you gave them hearts all during the session. *Possible answers: when they did a loving action, when they kept a rule, when they joined in the prayer and singing.*

Ask the children to gather in the work area with their crayons. Give a heart to those who go quietly.

 **WCBT, page 15, The Golden Rule**

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will recognize ways they show love.

**7. WHAT'S WRONG?** Ask the children to open *Seeds* wide to pages 2 and 3. Tell them that this picture has a lot of things wrong with it. Ask them to put a big X with their crayon on each thing they see wrong in this picture. Give them plenty of time to enjoy the illustration, then discuss what they have found. Some of the things that are wrong are just silly, like the cat in the refrigerator, the upside-down jack-o-lantern, the frog in the sink. Others are wrong because the children are not keeping family rules—standing on the chair to pour the milk, leaving the ice cream out and the refrigerator door open, drawing on the cupboards. Children never feel to blame when they personally break a rule, but they will be glad to tell you how wrong these children are being.

**8. SING AND STRETCH** Use the song "God Gave Me Hands" on the *Seeds* CD for a stretch break. The children will enjoy making the sounds.

**Objective:** The children will create a family prayer card.

**9. FAMILY PRAYER CARD** You may have already cut the strip with the prayer card activity from the rest of the page. If not, ask the children to cut apart *Seeds* on the heavy black line on page 3. Have them turn it face up on their desks and listen as you read the words to them. Read them again and this time ask the children to point to one of the three hearts on the page each time you say the word "love." Tell them this will be a card they can keep in their home to remind them of the two rules of Jesus: love God and love each other.

Go to each child and cut around the dark heavy line around the top of the heart on page 4 with sharp scissors. Then step by step show the children how to make the folds. Help each child tape the bottom flaps together.

**10. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather the children sitting in the prayer circle with their heart prayer cards in front of them. Have a puppet praise the children for the wonderful way they followed the classroom rules by listening and cleaning up the room. Ask them to follow as you read the prayer again.

End with the "One Family" song or with the *Seeds* version of "The More We Get Together."

The more we love each other, each other, each other,  
The more we love each other, like Jesus we'll be.  
For Jesus is your friend,  
and Jesus is my friend,  
The more we love each other, like Jesus we'll be.

**11. SNACK** Serve heart-shaped cookies or sandwiches. Praise the children for following the rules of respect for others, sharing, and cleaning up.

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**12. CREATIVE PLAY** Have the children act out scenes where they are keeping classroom and playground rules and scenes where they are breaking the rules.

**13. CLASSROOM RULES** Make a list of the classroom rules on poster paper. Have the children read them with you. Leave room for them to decorate around the outside of the poster. Hang it in the classroom and refer to it when necessary.

**14. GROUP PICTURE** Make a class poster by drawing ovals, representing heads, for each child in your class and for yourself. Let the children take turns making one of the ovals look like them.



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## 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.**

In 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 Christian 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 was a sacrifice of himself for those he loved.

Preschool children are capable only of considering their own wants and needs. But they are not too young to develop habits of helping others. They need many experiences of being helpful in order to consider it a necessary part of life. *Seeds* provides stories and activities that illustrate ways young children can help at home and with friends.

**Materials:** Scissors, paste or glue, crayons or colored pencils, used envelopes.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING** Begin your *Seeds* session by gathering the children in a circle holding hands. Sing the *Seeds* song from the music CD or "Gathering With Jesus," to the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?"

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Have the children hold hands and stand quietly while you say the following prayer. They answer, "Amen."

*Dear Jesus, we are a circle of friends. We love and care about each other. Be with us today as we learn more about friends and more about you.*

### **3. STORY: When Susie was just the right size**

Gather in the story circle. The following is an adapted version of a story by Louise Woodcock published in *Read Me Another Story* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1943). It is used here with permission of the publisher.

*Once there was a girl named Susie who always seemed to be the wrong size. When she wanted to ride in her baby brother's stroller her mom said, "Susie, you are too big to ride in that stroller." And when she tried to ride her big brother Pat's bicycle and fell into the tulips her brother yelled, "Leave my bike alone. You are too little to ride a bike." When Susie started to cry, her dad called out the window, "Susie, you are*

*too big to cry." And so it went. Susie always seemed to be too big or too little.*

*Until one day when Susie was just the right size. This is how it happened. One weekend Susie's mom and dad announced they were all going on a picnic. They would drive to the lake and have the picnic there. They would row around the lake in a boat and cook hamburgers on the grill, and even sleep overnight in the little cabin there. Everyone packed pajamas and toothbrushes in the big suitcase. Mom packed hamburger and eggs and lettuce and oranges and milk in a cooler. They packed the car, climbed in, and before they knew it, they saw the lake and the little cabin beside it.*

*When the car stopped beside the cabin Susie and Pat jumped out. Susie's dad got out of the car, stretched, and reached in his pocket for the key to the cabin door. Then his face got a funny look. "I have forgotten the key," he said. "It must be on the table at home."*

*"Maybe a window is open," Pat said. They walked all around the cabin. All the windows and doors were locked tight except for a little high window. Susie's dad shoved it open. "Someone could climb through this little window, go through the cabin, and open the front door," he said.*

*"Let me do it," said Pat. "No, you're too big, you couldn't get in," said Dad. "Me, me," said Susie's baby brother. Everybody laughed. "You are too little," Mom said.*

*"I think Susie could do it," said Dad. "Would you be afraid?" he asked her. "No," said Susie bravely. Dad smiled. "Then listen carefully. I will lift you up to the window. When you crawl through you will be on the big counter inside. Use the little ladder next to the counter to climb down. Then go to the front door, turn the lock, and let us in. Can you do all that?" Susie said, "Yes."*

*Dad picked Susie up and held her high. Mom steered her feet in backward through the window. There was just enough room for all of her to get through—her feet, her knees, her arms and shoulders. Last of all Susie pulled in her head. It was a little dark inside, but she could see the step stool. She climbed down carefully and then walked very fast through the cabin to the front door. Susie had to stand on her tiptoes to reach the lock. She turned it around as hard as she could. "Erk!" said the lock. Then it said "Click" and the door was unlocked! Dad pushed it open very slowly so as not to bump Susie. "Good girl, Susie," Dad said, and gave her a hug. Susie went out on the sunshiny porch. Mom gave her a hug, too. "Nice job," Pat said. Susie's baby brother just gurgled. Susie smiled. "You know what, Mom?" she said. "What?" her mom answered. "Sometimes I am too little to do things," Susie said, "and sometimes I am too big. But today I was just the right size." And everyone agreed.*

Give the children time to react to the story, telling you what they liked. Summarize the discussion by pointing out that Susie was the only person who could help the family on that day.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Use one of the songs on the *Seeds* CD or a stretching or activity rhyme.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will understand Jesus asks us to help others.

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus says people who help are important** Use the Gospel ritual you have established to get children ready for listening to this week's Gospel story. Have a puppet get the children talking about people who are important. Have the puppet ask:

- Do you know anyone important? Who? *Be sure children name parents and other caregivers as well as famous figures.*
- What makes these people important? *Stress the people they have named who serve others.*

Continue this Gospel warmup by asking the puppet if any important people are in this room. The puppet will respond, "Oh, yes. I see a lot of important boys and girls in this room!" and the puppet will name each child making up sentences like "I see a boy in a blue shirt named \_\_\_\_\_. I see a girl with a red sweater named \_\_\_\_\_." You ask: "Why do you think these children are important?" The puppet says, "Well, I see them helping each other doing things in the classroom and on the playground. You know when we do that we are very important. We are VIPs!!" Say, "What is a VIP?" The puppet answers, "VIP stands for Very Important Person." Tell the puppet and the children you know a story about being VIPs.

*One day Jesus' friends were talking about which one of them was most important. Jesus heard them talking so he made a rule for them about that. Jesus said, "Listen, now. Here is my rule about being important. When you help other people, you are important. When you pick up your toys so your mom doesn't have to do it, you are important. When you feed your pet, you are important. Whenever you help, you are important."*

*Jesus' friends got busy finding ways to help. That made them feel happy and important, just as Jesus said.*

Distribute *Seeds* and have children examine the cover illustration. Talk about who is helping. *Jesus is holding the leaf bag open so a child can fill it. Another child is raking and one is pushing her baby brother or sister. They are all doing exactly what Jesus said.* Ask: Have you helped in the yard when mom or dad is working outside? Do you help in the house? Do you help take care of brothers or sisters or grandmas?

**6. GOSPEL CREATIVE PLAY** Have the children pretend to rake leaves, fill leaf bags, or push the stroller. Or have them show Susie being too big to fit in the stroller, too little to ride her brother's bike, but just the right size to open the door.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will identify ways they help at home.

**7. I CAN HELP** Gather in the work area. Have the children open *Seeds* to pages 2-3. Identify the three areas—kitchen, garage, bedroom and play area. Ask how boys and girls help in each of these areas. Have the children cut the picture strip from page 3 and cut the strip into six little pictures. Have them show how they can help by placing the pictures in one of the rooms. *Pillow on bed, car in toy box, book on shelf, pajamas in drawer, rake on wall, dishes on table or counter.* If the children turn the pictures over and put them in numerical sequence, 1,2,3,4, they spell *help*. You may wish to paste or tape the pictures in place or put them in envelopes for the children to take home.

**Objective:** The children will appreciate that friends help each other.

**8. FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS** Have the children turn to the back page of *Seeds* and tell you about the picture. Read the sentence to them. Ask them to name ways the friends are helping each other. Give children time to complete the illustrations.

**9. ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS DAY** If you use this week's *Seeds* before the feast of All Saints and All Souls, take a moment to tell the children what these feast days are about. All Saints celebrates all the people who lived like Jesus and are dead and with God. Ask the children if they have friends or relatives who have died. As a child calls out a name, say, "\_\_\_\_\_ is with God." All Souls is a day to pray for people who have recently died. We believe they will be with God, too, but they are fresher in our thoughts so we have a special day for them.

**WCBT, page 8, Saints and Angels** Conclude with this page, or send a note home asking the parents to read and discuss the page with their children. ✖

**10. CLOSING PRAYER** Ask the children to repeat the words and gestures of this prayer after you.

*I am important (point to self).*

*You are important (point to another).*

*Everyone is important (sweep arms all around).*

*We all belong to God's family (hold hands in a circle).*

*Amen.*

**11. SNACK** As you serve and eat the snack, praise the children for helping you prepare and clean up.

## Teaching Guide

### OVERVIEW

**Gospel Theme: We want to be ready for God all the time.**

The last Sundays of the Church year and the First Sunday of Advent have a common theme—being ready for Jesus' second coming. When the early Christians remembered stories Jesus 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 stand with Jesus at his return. The first generation of Christians expected Jesus to return in their lifetimes. But, like the wedding party in the Gospel, Jesus' coming is delayed. The early Christians had to learn how to meet Jesus instead as he came to them in their daily lives. This week's *Seeds* helps children experience how sometimes they, too, miss out on the fun and life around them.

*Seeds* interprets Sunday's parable as a call to the children to enjoy the life around them and to participate fully in it. Many research studies link contemporary problems ranging from obesity in children to lack of civic participation by adults to our increasingly couch-bound and cocooning habits. The best gift any parent or other adult can give to children is not another video but an experience of God's goodness in creation, especially the goodness of this particular child. Children of three and four are not creatures of decision as much as they are creatures of habit. *Seeds* encourages them to develop the habit of participating in the world around them.

Young children are naturally curious and will respond favorably to an adult who promotes and helps develop their curiosity. But preschoolers need guidance to appreciate the world around them. Their questions should be encouraged and their alertness challenged.

**Materials:** Crayons or colored pencils, glue, scissors, pencil.

### SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. GATHERING** Use one of the songs you have learned to gather the group together.

**2. PRAYER** Remind the children to be quiet and remain standing as you pray the opening prayer. The children repeat each line after you.

*Thank you, God,  
for all that I am.  
I am a person.  
I am part of a family.  
I am a friend.  
I am a follower of Jesus.  
Thank you, God,  
for all that I am.  
Amen.*

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

**Objective: The children will be encouraged to be alert to everything going on around them.**

**3. STORY: Mia's Bad Day** Direct the children to sit in a story circle. Read or tell the following story:

*For no particular reason, except "just because," Mia didn't want to put her shoes on one day. "Mia," Mom said, "it is a beautiful day. The sun is shining. The squirrel is running up and down the tree. Put on your shoes so you can go outside and play."*

*Mia only replied, "I don't want to put on my shoes." When Mom asked, "Why?" Mia said, "Just because."*

*Mom said, "I will help you with your shoes." But Mia answered, "I don't want you to help me." Finally Mom left Mia alone in her room with her shoes beside her.*

*Mia sat on the floor by her shoes. A bird was singing a song for her baby birds in the tree outside Mia's window. But Mia couldn't see the nest unless she went outside. Mia counted the toes on her left foot. "One, two, three, four, five," she counted. Then Mia counted the toes on her right foot. "One, two, three, four, five." Then, just as Mia was starting to count the toes on her left foot again, she heard music. It was the ice cream truck! Spot from next door was running to the truck. "If I put on my shoes, I can get an ice cream cone," said Mia aloud. But as she was trying to make up her mind if she should get chocolate or strawberry ice cream, the truck drove away. Mia was still in her room with her shoes beside her.*

*Mia was very bored. She slipped her hands into her shoes and clapped the bottoms of the shoes together to make a loud noise. Clap! Clap! Clap! Her mom heard the clapping and came to the door. "Are you ready to put your shoes on, Mia?" her mother asked. "No," said Mia. "I don't want to."*

*Mia's mom brought her a sandwich and milk at lunch time. Mia read her books and played her tape of marching songs. Then she heard children talking and laughing. Mia looked out the window. It was Eric and Jennifer from next door and Spot. Mia knew they were going to the park because they had a ball. "If I put on my shoes, I could go outside and play with my friends," Mia said to herself. And she took her left shoe and slipped it on her left foot. Then Mia took her right shoe and slipped it on her right foot.*

*That's when Mia's mom walked into the room. "Mia," her mom said, "since you have your shoes on, would you like to go to the park for a picnic supper?" Mia jumped up and gave her mom a hug. "Yes, I want to!" Mia said. "I missed watching the squirrel play and I missed the baby birds in the tree and I missed the ice cream truck and I missed playing with Eric and Jennifer and Spot. I don't want to miss the picnic!" Mia combed her hair and said, "I am ready." They went to the park and had a wonderful time.*

**4. STRETCH AND SING** The children will stand to sing the song “God Gave Me Hands” from the *Seeds* music CD. Encourage everyone to join in doing the claps, taps, blinks, and hugs.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**Objective:** The children will recognize Jesus wants them to be alert.

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Jesus says, “Don’t miss out”** Gather in the Gospel storytelling area and lead the children in the ritual you have established for this part of the lesson. Sing “Two Little Ears” from the *Seeds* music CD and then ask children to sit in a story circle. Ask: Have you ever been invited to a wedding? Whose wedding was it? Were you excited about going? What was fun? Did you get tired? Did the wedding and the party last a long time?

After this brief discussion, tell the children Jesus went to weddings of his friends and relatives, too. One day he told his friends this story about a wedding.

*Ten girls were going to a wedding. The bride and groom were late. The girls got tired and fell asleep. When the bride and groom finally came, their friends woke the girls up. “Hurry,” they said, “the wedding is starting.” Five of the girls got right up. The other five went back to sleep for a while. Then Jesus said, “Guess what? When those five girls woke up again, the wedding was all over, and they missed it.” A boy said, “They should have gone to bed early the night before, so they wouldn’t be so tired.” A girl said, “They should have listened to their friends when they woke them up.” Jesus said, “There are lots of wonderful things to see and do. You have to be ready and alert so you can enjoy them.”*

 **WCBT, page 17, God Loves You!** Use this activity as a summary of the Gospel theme.

**6. CREATIVE PLAY** Choose two people to join hands in the middle, while the others move in a circle around them. The outside ring should walk and count five steps to the right, stop, and clap. Then walk five steps to the left, stop, and clap. Repeat. Allow everyone to have a turn in the center of the circle.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Objective:** The children will recognize things in life that make people happy.

**7. MIA’S BAD DAY** Have the children study the picture on page 3. Picture squares at the bottom of the page show a dog, bird, squirrel, and Mia. These are missing from the picture above. Demonstrate how to cut out the four picture squares and glue them in place to complete the big picture. The children then use pages 2-3 to retell Mia’s story to each other. Encourage them to tell the story to their families at home, also.

As a wrap-up for this activity, ask the children to name all the things they can find in the pictures that they are thankful for. *The children are having fun and are happy together. They are experiencing the beauty of the day by enjoying a friend, a pet, and other animals.*

**8. WHERE ARE MY SHOES?** Direct the children to turn to the last page, and ask them if they can tell what each person is wearing. Talk about each costume: a ballerina, a cowboy, a fire fighter, and a person dressed for inline skating. Next, discuss the four pairs of shoes and which costume they match. They are to draw a line from the person in costume to the shoes that are needed to complete the costume. The children should be given time to share their own experience of wearing a costume or uniform. How did it make them feel? What type of costume did the children wear?

**9. CONCLUDING PRAYER** The children will return to their story circle for the closing prayer and song. As everyone stands, repeat the song and actions to “God Gave Me Hands.” Then ask the children to stand quietly while you say the following prayer, or one of your own. They answer, “Amen.”

*Loving God, thank you for all the gifts you give us. Thank you for our families and friends. Thank you for birds and pets. Thank you for hands and arms that hug us and do good things for us.*

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**10. A SHOE BOX** Collect and bring to class a large box filled with many pairs of shoes. The children will have fun trying the shoes on their feet and matching them. This may also be an activity that you want to suggest to parents to do at home with their children.

**11. CLEAN UP** The song “Tidy Up,” makes putting away supplies, washing table, and throwing away scraps of paper a fun and enjoyable time. Teach the children the following words to the tune of “Jingle Bells.”

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.

## Teaching Guide

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

## OVERVIEW

**Gospel Theme: God gives and sustains life.**

This Sunday's Gospel parable is about an employer who goes off on a journey. He calls in three of his workers, gives them money, and asks them to use it while he is away. When he returns, the employer finds that two of the workers have doubled his money but one has simply buried it. The employer is irate and the message is clear: Use what gifts you have been given to the fullest extent.

The word *talent*, although it refers in the Gospel to an amount of money, is the same word in English that refers to our personal abilities and gifts—to all our natural endowments and the qualities our families nurture in us. The double meaning of the word *talent* urges us who hear the parable to identify the money amounts with all that God entrusts to us.

Young children cannot relate this parable to their own experience. *Seeds* provides instead a version of Jesus' story that has children helping each other recognize they have talents they can try to use. The sense-involving activities which build on the story help children learn the way they learn best—by using their whole selves, bodies and minds.

**Materials:** Scissors, envelopes to take home game pieces.

## SHARING LIFE STORIES

**1. SINGING** Gather the children in the story circle and sing "This Little Light of Mine" from the *Seeds* music CD. Most children know this song. As they sing "I'm gonna let it shine," they raise their hands up high and sway side to side.

**2. OPENING PRAYER** Ask the children to stand holding hands in a circle as you say the following prayer. They answer, "Amen."

*Dear God, thank you for making each of us special. Thank you for making us members of this special group. Help us learn more about you today.*

**Objective: The children will identify the special talents God has given each of them.**

**3. EVERYONE HAS TALENTS** Use a puppet for this introductory activity about talents. Have a piece of paper or slips of paper with talents the children in your group have. The puppet will read a talent, for instance, "Draws very good pictures of cats," and the children will answer with the name of a classmate. Word the talents so each child will be given as the answer once. To conclude have the puppet marvel at what a talented class this is.

**4. STRETCH AND SING** Ask the children to gather standing in a circle and follow you in this familiar and very enjoyable song.

*You put your right hand in.  
You put your right hand out.  
You put your right hand in  
And you shake it all about.  
You do the hokey pokey  
And you turn yourself around.  
And that's what it's all about!*

Continue with left hand, right foot, left foot, head, whole self. On the line "You do the hokey pokey," children stretch their hands out to their sides, shoulder high, and rock from side to side.

## LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

**5. GOSPEL STORYTELLING: Everyone has talents**

Gather children in the story circle. Distribute *Seeds* and ask them to describe the cover illustration to you. Comment on the happiness of the children—how they are all playing together; how they are sharing the ball; how each child is using arms, legs, and hands to catch and throw the ball. Ask the children to put their copy of *Seeds* on the floor in front of them as they listen to the story about Jesus. This version of Sunday's Gospel makes the point for preschool children that the parable itself makes for adults.

*Jesus liked children very much. One day he told a story about three children—Trish, Oscar, and Paula. Trish and Oscar were coloring with their big crayons. "Come and color with us," they said to Paula. "I don't like to color," said Paula. "I can't stay inside the lines good enough." Oscar said, "Then let's play blocks. You can build the castle." Paula said, "I can't play blocks very well. My castle might fall over." "Then let's go to the playground and play kickball," said Trish. Paula said, "I don't know that game." So Trish and Oscar skipped away. Paula was sad that they left her alone. Mrs. Rooney saw Paula and said, "Tell me why you are sad, Paula." Paula said that when she wouldn't try to color or play blocks or go to the playground, Trish and Oscar had gone away. Mrs. Rooney said, "Don't be afraid, Paula. You can do these things if you try. Let's walk to the playground together and find Trish and Oscar. They will teach you how to play kickball." Oscar and Trish and Paula played all afternoon.*

Ask the children: Why was Paula afraid? Could she really do these things? Was she afraid she wasn't good enough? Ask if they are sometimes afraid to try things. Tell them that God has given each of them special gifts. We call these talents. And God wants us to use them. Have the children

talk about different talents they possess and that they recognized in their classmates and told the puppet about.

**\* WCBT, page 16, We Have Things to Share** Use this activity to summarize the Gospel theme of sharing.

## BUILDING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**6. WHAT CAN I BE?** Ask the children to open *Seeds* to page two. Read the caption: What Can I Be? Tell the children that the special talents God gives us help us to decide what we want to be when we grow up. Identify the possible choices on page 2. Ask what makes each one special. Next have the children put their copy of *Seeds* at their place at the work table and then move to the open area. Ask what things a firefighter does. Then have the children become firefighters, showing you one thing a firefighter does. Continue with the teacher, artist, doctor, astronaut.

Conclude by asking, what does a teacher do? Could you do that? Accept only yes as an answer. Ask the same questions about the firefighter, astronaut, doctor, and artist. Add any other occupations your children bring up.

**Objective: The children will play games using their talents.**

**7. MY SPECIAL TALENTS** Gather back in the work area and ask the children to open *Seeds* to page 3. Look at each picture and identify what the children are doing. *Left column, beginning at top: clap hands, do a duck walk, hop on one foot. Right column: touch toes, turn around, do a somersault.* Have two or three children volunteer to demonstrate the action in each picture. Be sure all the children have a chance to do an action. Talk about the talent it takes to do each of these activities. Emphasize that all the children have some of these talents.

Turn to page 4. Identify the animals. *Cat, pig, rooster, sheep, dog, cow.* Name the animals again, this time having the children make the sound the animal makes. Comment on the talent it takes to make animal sounds.

**8. THE TALENT GAME** Distribute scissors. Have the children cut the six animal pictures apart on the heavy black lines. When they finish they will have six pictures with an animal on one side and a child doing an activity on the other side.

Give each child an envelope for the cards. Gather the children in the open area, sitting in a circle with their envelope of cards. The beginning child pulls a card out of his/her envelope without looking at it and hands it to the child on his or her right. That child must either make the sound of the animal or do the motion. Then the child returns the card to the first child and takes a card from his or her envelope and continues the game.

There are many varieties of this game you can try. If your group is shy or overly active you may wish to distribute the cards yourself. You will then have control of the game and be able to select cards appropriate to specific children.

**9. CLOSING PRAYER AND SONG** Gather up the cards and put in the envelopes to take home and play. Children gather in the prayer circle for the following prayer and song.

*God, we thank you for the special talents you have given us. We can use our bodies and our voices. We can be kind to each other.* Ask the children if there is anyone or anything they wish to pray about. After they have surfaced their concerns, gather them in a prayer of thanks for these children who care about others.

Sing “God Made the Animals” or “God Gave Me Hands” from the *Seeds* music CD to conclude class.

**10. SNACK** Serve animal crackers and milk for a snack. Have the children try out their talents for serving others and saying “Please” and “Thank you.”

## EXTENDING ACTIVITIES

**11. TALENT SCRAP BOOK** Bring magazines to class so children can make a scrap book or bulletin board of people with special talents—sports figures, artists, musicians, scientists, persons in government. Be sure they include people of all ages.

**12. TALENT SHOW** Use the activities on the talent cards to have a talent show. Children individually, in pairs, or in groups share with another class or with a parent the talents they have.

**13. THANK YOU, GOD** The U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving is November 24. Go to the Pflaum website for activities that celebrate this holiday.

# What Children Can't Do . . . Yet

by Dan Hodgins

When working with children keep in mind what they are ready for and what they are not; what they can do and what they are unable to do...yet.

## **I can't share.**

Children use possession of objects as a device to understand autonomy. Just as babbling comes before talking, so owning comes before sharing. To share fully, a child must first fully possess.

## **I can't say, "I'm sorry," and mean it.**

Saying "I'm sorry" has little meaning to the young child. To say "I'm sorry" and understand what you are saying, you must also be able to understand how the other person feels.

## **I can't remember what you told me.**

Most children remember only what is important to them. A child may not remember that you just told them to walk, and not run, while indoors. Adults often forget that children have trouble remembering.

## **I can't focus on more than one task at a time.**

"Pick up your toys, put on your shoes, and wash your face; we are going out to play." This command has three more tasks than a young child is able to focus on. Most young children will remember the last task or the task most important to them. With the above command, all the child may focus on is that he or she is going out to play.

## **I can't understand negative commands.**

If a child reaches to put his or her finger in an electric wall outlet and you say, "Don't," the child is confused because he or she doesn't

know how to reverse the action.

Saying, "Pull your hand back, that's dangerous" gives the child a positive action to take.

## **I can't measure.**

When you want a child to pour a glass of milk or juice and you hand him or her a full pitcher, expect the child to pour all the milk into the glass, even if it pours all over the floor or table. Young children do not understand that all of the milk will not fit into the glass and so keep pouring until it's too late.

## **I can't tell you the truth when you set me up.**

If you see a child do something inappropriate, and you ask if he or she has done it, the child will probably deny it. Don't ask the child if you know what happened. That only sets him or her up for failure.

## **I can't sit still for very long.**

Young children are often told to sit still, while their bodies are telling them to move. When the large muscles in a preschooler's arms and legs are growing rapidly, they cry out for exercise. As a result, preschoolers feel a need to move about.

## **I can't play with other children until I'm ready.**

Children go through different stages of social interaction. If allowed to grow at their own pace, they will begin to interact with other children when they are ready.

## **I can't tell the difference between reality and fantasy.**

When a child has a bad dream, it is very real to him or her. Telling a child not to be a "baby" does not help. Playing fantasy is real for the child and very important for control and development.

## **I can't express myself in words very well.**

Children resort to physical means of communication because they often don't have the verbal skills to express frustration and other feelings. You can help by giving the child words to use.

## **I can't wait.**

Try not to put children in situations where they have to wait for long periods of time. Waiting often makes taking turns difficult.

## **I don't understand right and wrong.**

Because young children don't understand cause-and-effect relationships, they can't fully understand right and wrong. A young child does not understand intentional versus unintentional actions, can only see issues from his or her own perspective, and views issues as black and white.

## **I can't be ready until I'm ready.**

Children all grow and develop at different rates. Don't compare children or force them to do things before they are ready.

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# UNIT 1

## We Are the Church

**E**ach week *Seeds* engages preschool children in a process that moves from story to Gospel to actions that build Christian community. Each *Seeds* lesson begins with singing and prayer, moves to stories based on children's real experiences, tells the Sunday Gospel story in a way children can understand and enjoy, and concludes with activities that invite the children to live the Gospel in their lives.

Jesus' story forms the heart of every *Seeds* lesson. Each lesson is built around the Sunday

**Gospel** Every week the children hear Jesus speaking and see him acting. The stories and activities in *Seeds* draw on the children's own experiences both to prepare them to hear Jesus' story and to give them practice in putting his teaching to work in their own families and circles of friends.

In this first unit of *Seeds*, the children celebrate the many communities of which they are part—families, preschool or day care, church, neighborhood, friends. They explore the

sacrament of Baptism and practice different ways to respond to God in prayer.

Make every effort to involve parents in their children's exploration of the mysteries of our Christian faith. Each week *Seeds* provides a Parent Note which tells in brief the Gospel story. It also suggests activities parents can do with their children to extend the *Seeds* lesson into the home.

Blessings on this year of grace for you and the children you teach.

	1 Profession of Faith		2 Sacraments/Liturgy		3 Christian Life		4 Christian Prayer	
Date	Sunday Gospels							
September 25, 2011 26th Sunday	Matthew 21.28-32 God's Will	Jesus teaches us with stories (#561)	Celebrating as a community	We are free to choose	Singing our prayer			
October 2, 2011 27th Sunday	Matthew 21.33-43 God's Vineyard	God wants us to grow (#44)	Gathering as a community	Appreciating God's love for us	Prayers of thanks			
October 9, 2011 28th Sunday	Matthew 22.1-14 Wedding Feast	Jesus invites us to his table (#181)	Sunday Eucharist	Belonging to a parish community	Eucharistic prayer			
October 16, 2011 29th Sunday	Matthew 22.15-21 Caesar and God	Baptism welcomes us to God's family (#265, 985)	Sacrament of Baptism	Remembering our Baptisms	Sign of the cross			
October 23, 2011 30th Sunday	Matthew 22.34-40 Great Commandments	Jesus rule is love (#228, 592)	Praying as a family	Doing loving actions	Singing our prayer			
October 30, 2011 31st Sunday	Matthew 23.1-12 The Greatest Serve Others	Jesus shows us how to serve (#561)	Learning about saints	Serving others	Praying for Christian dead			
November 6, 2011 32rd Sunday	Matthew 25.1-13 Wise and Foolish	God is always with us (#319)		Valuing family and friends	Prayers of thanks			
November 13, 2011 33rd Sunday	Matthew 25.14-30 Talents	God gives and sustains life (#315)	Celebrating community	Using our talents	Prayers of petition			