

## The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Newsletter: October 2006

In October, the Gospels tell the stories of those who seek to follow Jesus—the disciples James and John, a rich man, a blind man, and little children who want to be near Jesus. This month's *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* teach children about belonging to a church family, making and keeping friends, keeping the Ten Commandments, and following Jesus. *Seeds*, *Promise*, and *Good News* children will all learn that Jesus thought little children were important and that he wanted to spend time with them. *Good News* children will learn that welcoming and including others is an expression of God's love for them. *Venture* and *Visions* students will explore ways to follow Jesus and make a difference in their classes, schools, communities, and in the world.

This month's issue features ideas for October 1, the 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, through October 29, the 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.

### This Month's Features

- **Saints of the Month** – In October, *Venture* students learn about the life of Thomas More, a saint whose personal integrity cost him his life. They will also learn the story of St. Teresa of Avila, a spirited teenager who became a controversial writer and Doctor of the Church.
- **We All Belong** – This month, make belonging and teamwork the themes for your religion classes and religious education sessions. Choose from the activities and developmentally appropriate service projects in this newsletter to carry out these themes.
- **Teacher Tips** – Knowing what to expect at different ages and stages of development, setting realistic expectations, and avoiding problem behavior will help you to be more successful in your teaching.
- **Student Activities** – *Seeds* children will pretend to take a road trip and make a trail mix snack to share on their trip. *Promise* children can act out the story of blind Bartimaeus and use their sense of sight to see God's goodness around them. *Good News* children will review ways to keep the Ten Commandments and learn that honoring others is an expression of God's love. *Venture* students will explore what the lives of saints can teach us about living our own lives. *Visions* students will discuss ways in which they can be followers of Jesus by serving others and by working to eliminate injustices they see around them. They can select a service project to carry out with their class or group.
- **Parent Tips** – The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Family Pages offer activities and resources that parents can use at home to help their families grow in faith! Go to the Family Pages at [www.pflaum.com/families](http://www.pflaum.com/families) and choose pages to send home with students or suggest pages for parents to download and print.

## Saints of the Month

### Saint Thomas More

*Venture* students will get a lesson in English history and the history of the Church while learning about the life of St. Thomas More. They can learn about ethical dilemmas and the importance of taking responsibility for personal choices. Thomas More is the patron saint of lawyers. His feast day is June 22. For background information, visit this website: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14689c.htm> At [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org), click on “Saint of the Day” and then “By Name.”

- Before they read the story of Thomas More on page 8 of *Venture* for October 15, 2006, have students locate London, England, on a world map. If possible, display portraits of King Henry VIII and Sir Thomas More.
- Introduce the words *sacred, dilemma, oath, and condemned*. After reading page 8, discuss why the king started the Church of England. Ask: How do you think the pope felt about the king’s decision to divorce his wife, Katherine of Aragon, and marry Anne Boleyn? How do you think the people of England felt about the king making his own rules? What did Thomas More think about divorce? (*He believed marriage is sacred.*) Ask: What was Thomas More’s dilemma? (*On one hand, the king wanted Thomas to sign an oath to acknowledge the king as the head of the Church, but, on the other hand, Thomas was faithful to the pope and the teachings of the Church.*)
- Continue the discussion. Ask: What happened to Thomas More? (*He was locked in the Tower of London for more than a year and eventually beheaded for not signing an oath acknowledging the king as head of the Church.*) Ask: Why do you think the King had his friend killed? (*Answers will vary.*)
- After this introduction to King Henry VIII, students may wish to do additional research online to learn about the king. Encourage them to present their findings in a skit. Students may be surprised to learn that Henry had six wives and beheaded two of them!
- Ask: Have you ever been asked to do something that was popular or easy, but that was not right? Have students share their dilemmas if they wish and tell what they decided to do. Ask: How do we show others what our values are? What does it mean to be true to your values? What would you do to stand up for your beliefs?
- St. Thomas More is the patron saint of lawyers. Invite a lawyer to speak to students about his or her profession and about some of the difficult choices that are involved in the work of a lawyer.

### Saint Teresa of Avila

Teresa of Avila, the daughter of Spanish nobles, was born in 1515. She grew up hearing about the lives of saints from her parents, and by the time she was seven years old, she was determined to become one. When Teresa was just entering her teen years, her mother died, and she was sent to be educated by the nuns of Avila. However, she became ill and had to leave the nuns and live with her father and various relatives. At seventeen, and without her father’s consent, she ran away to become a Carmelite nun. She became ill again soon after

taking her vows. A very determined and outspoken person, Teresa worked to reform the Carmelites, urging them to return to observance of the rule of their order. Although she remained frail all of her life, she became known as the “Roving Nun.” She traveled all over Spain and established reformed convents. She also wrote extensively about her visions and prayers. Her writings about spirituality and prayer were so important to the Church that she was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI.

- Before they read about St. Teresa on page 8 of *Venture* for October 15, 2006, ask students to find Avila, Spain, on a world map. Introduce the words *martyrs*, *Carmelite*, *visions*, *endurance*, and *Doctor of the Church*.
- At age seven, Teresa wanted to become a saint. Ask students why a child might want to be a saint. Explain that saints are the superheroes of the Church. Ask: Which superhero would you want to be like? Why? Ask: Which saint would you want to be like? Why?
- After reading page 8, ask students: What do you think St. Teresa meant when she wrote, “Patient endurance accomplishes everything”? Ask: When have you needed patience to accomplish a task?
- St. Teresa is the patron saint of sick people. Ask: What effect do you think her health problems had on her? Do you think her ill health taught her to be patient and to persevere? From her story, how do you know that St. Teresa was determined to do God’s will?
- St. Teresa is often portrayed as a Carmelite nun with a book and a quill pen, receiving a message from a dove. If possible, provide a quill pen or a feather and a bottle of ink so that students can practice writing as St. Teresa did.

## We All Belong

- Children need to feel that they belong—to a family, to a class, to a community, to the Church. Older students may wish to design a logo to display on T-shirts or create a special greeting to say when they gather with their groups to hear the Gospel lessons. Or, they may wish to create and wear friendship bracelets that identify their group. Check out your local craft store for inexpensive colored foam sheets and fabric pens for this project. Younger children can string beads on yarn and add foam shapes to create nametags to be worn when they meet for the Gospel lessons.
- Young children will like to look at photos of their group that are taken throughout the year. Keep a disposable camera handy and ask a helper—a parent or older student—to take photos of the children at work and at prayer. Display these on a bulletin board and change the photos often. Or use a three-ring binder and clear plastic page protectors to create a photo album. Store the album in a backpack, along with a Bible storybook. If you like, designate a stuffed-animal the group’s mascot and add the animal to the backpack. Children will enjoy taking turns carrying the bag home and sharing its contents with their families.

- Children can help create a birthday bulletin board, decorated with paper cupcakes and individual photos of the children in your class. Create a template for children to trace and cut out paper cupcake shapes from pink construction paper. Allow children to sponge paint white tempera paint “frosting” on top. Label each cupcake with the child’s birthday. Cover your bulletin board with dark blue background paper. Staple the cupcakes on the board. Mount the photos, one on each cupcake, and add a “We Are Growing Up with Christ” title to the board. Cut out a supply of birthday candles from pastel paper. As a child celebrates a birthday, allow the child to color a candle cutout and pin it to his or her cupcake. Young children will learn classmates’ names and anticipate upcoming birthday celebrations.
- Children will bond when they join with others as a group to support a cause. Why not learn about other cultures while collecting pennies, dimes, and quarters for an end-to-hunger Heifer project? The Heifer mission is ending hunger and caring for the Earth. Go to [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) for information on how to purchase a goat, a cow, or other Heifer livestock for needy families from Appalachia to Zambia. Did you know that \$20.00 will buy chicks that as hens can lay 200 eggs each year?
- Older children can work with their group to provide Care Bags 4 Kids to children who are in need. They might also want to join with other classes. See “Christian Leaders” in *Visions* for October 1, 2006. Go to [www.carebags4kids.org](http://www.carebags4kids.org) to learn more.
- To encourage inclusion and tolerance of differences with older children, plan for your class or group to help at a soup kitchen or food bank. If you have middle school students who are in cliques, remember that this is normal behavior for this age. Provide opportunities to pair children to share their talents, to complete a project, to build team spirit, and to bond with each other.

## Teacher Tips

- In the Gospel for October 8, the 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus tells his disciples to let the children come to him because the kingdom of God belongs to children and those who are as open and trusting as children. *Seeds* children will like to hear that Jesus thought little children were important and that he spent time with them. Preschool children want to feel “big” and independent and able to help. Encourage children to help their parents with tasks such as setting the table for meals or caring for pets. When asking questions of children of this age, remember that four-year-olds are big talkers and will want to share tall tales. Be prepared for stories of road trips and excellent family adventures. Allow children to share if they wish and direct them back to the topic with flannelboard shapes or other pictures and props.
- *Promise* children are beginning to understand the ways they learn about Jesus. They will be able to remember the Gospel story about Jesus healing the blind man when they hear it again in church. If it is possible, getting them outside for a nature walk will get the wiggles out. They will appreciate their sense of sight and look for signs of God’s goodness all around.

- *Good News* children need opportunities to review the Ten Commandments since many of them will be celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. They can understand that keeping the commandments is keeping our covenant with God. They can understand that the word *honor* means “to respect.” The Fourth Commandment asks them to honor other people, especially parents. They will also be able to understand that to honor someone is more personal and serious than the attention we pay to popular singers, movie stars, athletes, and other public figures.
- *Venture* students will get a lesson in English history and the history of the Church while learning about the life of St. Thomas More. They will learn about patience and perseverance from the story of St. Teresa of Avila.
- *Visions* students understand that they are part of the outreach of the Church. They like to work as a group to establish goals and this can be directed to helping the needy. They can choose a service project and accept responsibility for seeing it through. Leaders will emerge, and teamwork within their groups will be enhanced.

## Student Activities

### Preschool: “Hooray for Jamie!” October 8, 2006

The Gospel for this Sunday teaches that Jesus loves children and welcomes them. *Seeds* children can welcome one another with a song to help them learn one another’s names. Repeat the song for each child.

Good morning to you. Good morning to you.  
 We’re all in our places with bright, happy faces.  
 Good morning to \_\_\_ (child’s name) \_\_\_\_ .  
 Good morning to \_\_\_\_\_ .

Then have your *Seeds* children role-play taking a road trip in the family car. Children this age can express their feelings about being in a family and follow directions to make trail mix. Children should be able to:

- recognize that they belong to a family
- recognize that they are each unique
- role-play the experience of taking a road trip by car
- follow a simple recipe to make trail mix

**Materials:** Colored construction paper, Velcro® dots, a picnic basket, cooler, keys, road map, suitcase, spray bottle with bleach solution, paper towels, several pairs of plastic gloves, a large mixing bowl, a half-cup measuring cup, the ingredients below, and a copy of the trail mix recipe copied on chart paper. In addition, for each child: a copy of *Seeds* for October 8, 2006, and a zippered plastic sandwich bag.

## Trail Mix Recipe

- 4 cups small pretzels
- 2 cups raisins
- 4 cups bite-size cereal
- 1 large bag of M&M's®

Directions: Wash hands. Put on gloves. Put all the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Mix with hands. Put mix in small plastic bags.

**Preparation:** Copy and cut out shapes of the car, boat, and cabin in “Hurray for Jamie!” and attach Velcro® dots to make these shapes into flannelboard pieces. Sanitize tables for food preparation with bleach solution and paper towels. Put the trail mix ingredients in easy-to-handle plastic bags or containers. Arrange chairs and props in an open area to resemble the inside of a large van.

## Procedure

1. Use a flannelboard and cutout shapes of the car, boat, and cabin to tell the story “Hooray for Jamie!” from the *Seeds Teaching Guide* for October 8, 2006. Then ask children: Where was the family going? (*They were going to the cabin.*) Ask: How did Mother feel when she forgot the keys to the cabin? How was Jamie able help his family? (*He climbed through the window.*) Ask: How do you think that made Jamie feel? How did everyone in Jamie’s family help get ready for the trip? Explain that every one in the family can help. Ask: What jobs do you do to help at home?
2. Show the road map. Ask: When would you need a road map? Where have you traveled on vacation? Tell children that they will pretend to go on the trip in a big van. Ask: Where would you like to go in our play van? What should we pack for the trip? (*Small children can identify suitcases, picnic basket, cooler, videos or CDs and maps, as well as toys, games, and snacks.*)
3. Tell children that they are going to make a special snack called trail mix to share on a make-believe road trip. Share the recipe on the chart paper. Allow children to put on the gloves to add and mix each ingredient in order.
4. Give each child a small zippered plastic bag and help each to fill his or her bag with ½ cup of the trail mix.
5. Have children take seats in the “van.” Sing “The Wheels on the Bus” or sing along to a favorite children’s CD and enjoy the snack on the “road trip.” Ask: How does the trail mix taste? What tastes salty? What tastes sweet? What is crunchy? Allow children to act out the rest of the story.

## Grades K-1: “Jesus makes a blind man see.” October 29, 2006

Children this age can appreciate their sense of sight and Jesus’ love for them. They can recognize that they belong to a Church family that hears a Gospel story each Sunday. Children this age should be able to:

- role-play the Gospel story of the blind man called Bartimaeus
- recognize the story when they hear the Gospel read on Sunday
- see God’s goodness in the world

**Materials:** A pair of novelty sunglasses for each child, a piece of fabric or old tablecloth to use as the blind man’s cloak, a copy of the *Promise Teaching Guide* for October 29, 2006

## Procedure

1. Tell children that Jesus was on walking on a dirt road near a town called Jericho when this Gospel story happened. Before reading the Gospel lesson from the Teaching Guide, introduce the words *blind*, *beggar*, *scolded*, and *healed*.
2. Ask children to close their eyes and visualize what is happening as you read the Gospel story of Jesus and blind Bartimaeus.
3. Ask: What sounds would you hear if you were Bartimaeus? How would you know that Jesus was coming?
4. Ask: What happened when the Bartimaeus called out to Jesus? What did the people in the crowd say to Bartimaeus? Why did Jesus help blind Bartimaeus?
5. Ask: How do you think Bartimaeus felt when he was healed? How do you think the people in the crowd reacted?
6. Tell children they will pretend to be in the crowd when Jesus helps Bartimaeus. Have several children role-play the story, having Bartimaeus listen for the sound of Jesus’ footsteps, call out for Jesus, and ask to be healed. When Jesus says, “You can see!” have Bartimaeus throw down his cloak, jump up, tell everyone that he can see, and follow Jesus.
7. Ask: How can we follow Jesus? Explain that we can show that we believe in him and look for God’s goodness everywhere.
8. Show the sunglasses. Ask: Why do we wear sunglasses? Tell children they will each get a pair of sunglasses to wear when they go outside to look for signs of God’s goodness. Provide each child with sunglasses. If possible, take children on a nature walk. Stop along the way for children to point out signs of God’s goodness. If a nature walk is not possible, allow children to take their glasses home to use to find signs of God’s goodness wherever they see it—on their way to and from school and church, in their own backyards and neighborhoods. Or, suggest that parents take their children on brief nature walks where they can use their special new sunglasses that help them to see God’s goodness.

## Grades 2-3: “The Ten Commandments” October 8, 2006—October 29, 2006

Your *Good News* students can review the Ten Commandments all month in preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Children should be able to:

- paraphrase the Ten Commandments
- remember the Third Commandment—Keep Sunday Holy
- remember the Fourth Commandment—Honor your fathers and mothers
- identify ways they can keep the Ten Commandments
- create a visual aid to help them memorize the commandments

**Materials:** Rolls of adding machine tape, scissors, lined chart paper, black marker, copies of *Good News* for October 8-29, 2006, one set for each child

**Preparation:** Write the Ten Commandments with black marker on chart paper. (For wording, see page 4 of *Good News* for October 15.)

### Procedure

1. When you use *Good News* for October 8, 2006, introduce the Third Commandment and the word *Sabbath*. After reading page 4, discuss ways to keep Sunday holy. Ask: What might prevent us from going to church? What could tempt us not to rest on Sunday? Then have each child choose a way that he or she will keep Sunday holy and write this on a strip of adding machine tape or a long strip of paper. Have each child roll up his or her piece of paper and take it home as a reminder.
2. When you use *Good News* for October 15, 2006, have each child cut out the ten tablets on page 4, and use glue sticks to paste the tablets on a strip of adding machine tape or on a long strip of paper. Have children roll their papers up and take them home. Suggest that they show their papers to their parents so their parents can help them to review the Ten Commandments.
3. When you use *Good News* for October 22, 2006, point out the definition of the word *honor* that is given on page 2. Ask: Whom do you respect or look up to? Why? How do we show gratitude or obedience? Have children share examples of respect, gratitude, or obedience. Then read the Fourth Commandment on page 3 in *Good News*. Help children to create a list of things their parents do for them. Write the list on chart paper. Use the list to write a poem to parents. Duplicate the poem on pastel paper for students to give to their parents to honor them. Or, choose to honor parents by inviting them to class and sharing a treat with them. Help children plan the event, create invitations, and welcome their parents.
4. When you use *Good News* for October 29, 2006, introduce the Fifth Commandment—you shall not kill. Explain that this commandment forbids us not just from taking a life, but also from using violence against other people and the earth. Have children tell where they see violence in the world. Discuss acts of violence in the world, the community, on the playground, in the classroom, and in the family. Have children draw

pictures of what they fear most and allow time for them to share their fears. Introduce the word *respect* as it is defined on page 4. Children may not recognize that they have rights too. After completing the exercise on respect, work with the children to create a list of children's rights. (*Every child has a right to feel safe and loved, to make mistakes, to have an education.*)

### Grades 4-6: "Thomas More" October 8, 2006, and "Teresa of Avila, Teacher and Writer, October 15, 2006

Student Activities for *Venture* students are outlined in [Saints of the Month](#).

### Grades 7 & 8: "Jesus Calls a Rich Young Man" October 15, 2006

*Visions* students can understand the idea that sometimes we can become preoccupied with material possessions. Jesus says possessions make it difficult for us to enter heaven. Students should be able to:

- examine the ways they spend money
- recognize that no matter how desirable they may be, material possessions may not be satisfying
- create a collage to show the power that possessions, or the desire to have them, can have over people

**Materials:** Magazines, white glue, glue sticks, or masking tape, scissors, photos of camels, camel caravans, and city gates, copies of *Visions* for October 15, 2006, one copy for each student

#### Procedure

1. After reading "Jesus Calls a rich Young Man" on page 4, provide magazines and scissors. Have students cut out pictures of items that our society says we must spend our money on. Have students tape the pictures on a wall to form a collage. Discuss why we are constantly being bombarded with images of cars, clothing, music, technology, and food. (*Companies want us to feel that we "need" these things in order to be happy.*)
2. Ask: How do we feel when we first get some material item that we have been wanting? How long does this feeling last? Accept all responses. Ask: How do we feel when we have done something worthwhile for another person? Accept all responses. Help students to see that making room for God and service to others provides more lasting satisfaction than a new possession.

### Grades 7 & 8 - "What is the greatest injustice you see around you?" October 29, 2006

*Visions* students can understand the idea that faith helps us to "see" others more clearly—to see the common humanity and values that we share, as well as our individual qualities and potential. Students should be able to:

- learn the definition of the word *injustice*
- practice observation skills
- describe an injustice they see
- identify ways they can alleviate injustices

**Materials:** Roll of adding machine tape, markers, 3" x 5" index cards, pencils, masking tape, copies of *Visions* for October 29, 2006, one for each student

## Procedure

1. Before reading "What is the greatest injustice you see around you?" on page 8, write the word *injustice* on the board. Ask: What is an injustice? (*An injustice is violation of another's rights, an unjust act.*)
2. Read, or have students take turns reading, the comments on page 8. Ask: Where do you see injustice? (*Emphasize that to see injustice, we must be aware of the rights of others. We must be objective observers of society who are so not centered on our own needs that we cannot recognize the needs of others.*)
3. Provide each student with an index card and a pencil. Ask: What do you think is the greatest injustice you have seen? Allow students to write their thoughts on the index cards. Collect the cards. Divide the class into small groups and then pass the cards out randomly. As students share the injustices written on the cards in their small groups, ask them to think of ways they can work to alleviate each injustice.
4. Give each student a length of adding machine tape and a colored marker. Have each student write a sentence on the tape that explains what we can do to correct one injustice. Tape the paper strips to the wall.

## Parent Tips

- Go to the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Family Pages at [www.pflaum.com/familypages](http://www.pflaum.com/familypages) and log in to check out the activities and resources available there. Choose pages to print and send home with students or send notes home suggesting pages for parents to download and print. Parents can use the engaging and age-appropriate At-Home Activities to share their faith with their children during the upcoming weeks of Ordinary Time. The family prayer, the stories about the saints the Church will honor, and the descriptions of the feasts the Church will celebrate—all can provide a good beginning for family devotions and discussions.

The Family Pages are a free service available to all families in schools and parishes that use the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*.