

*Pflaum*  *Gospel Weeklies*  
FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

# What the Church Believes and Teaches

2011•2012

**Good News** for Children

TEACHING STRATEGIES

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The Subcommittee on the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found the doctrinal content of this manual, copyright 2010, to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

*Nihil Obstat*: Reverend Thomas L. Knoebel, Ph.D., *Censor Librorum*, June 29, 2009

*Imprimatur*: † Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan, Bishop of Milwaukee, July 13, 2009

Where appropriate, this text reflects the language of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

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# What the Church Believes and Teaches

## Good News for Children

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## Welcome to the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* Faith Formation Program: *What the Church Believes and Teaches*

The sacred duty and the joy of each succeeding generation of Christian believers has been to hand on the deposit of faith that was first entrusted to the apostles by Christ himself. We have received this gift, the deposit of faith—we have not conceived it. It is the heritage of the whole Church. It is our privilege and our responsibility to preserve the memory of Christ's words and the words themselves and to teach future generations of believers to carry out all that Christ commanded his apostles.

*National Directory for Catechesis, #26*

For over a quarter century, the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* have provided schools and parish religion programs with a basic catechesis on the Sunday Gospels. These widely acclaimed magazines offer the finest in up-to-the-minute catechetical reflections, exercises, and activities based on the words of Jesus Christ and on his Gospel as celebrated weekly in the Sunday assembly. The *Weeklies* have formed several generations of young people and helped bring faith to their lives and bring their lives to the Catholic faith.

The basic teachings of the Catholic faith are seeded generously throughout each level of the *Weeklies*. These basic teachings are documented in an annual Scope and Sequence. Nonetheless, because of the very nature of a lectionary-based resource, the basic teachings do not occur in exactly the same way each year in the 32 issues of each level of the *Weeklies*.

Therefore, Pflaum Publishing Group has undertaken to make part of each year's subscription to the *Weeklies* a student's handbook of those elements of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that have been judged necessary and appropriate for the age group served by each level. *What the Church Believes and Teaches* is a new component for the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*. At the beginning of each year—with the first shipment of the *Weeklies*—every child will receive his or her own book of basic Church teachings. The content for this book is based on protocols established for the teachings to be learned and mastered at each level of elementary-age catechesis. This handbook gathers under one cover the Church teachings presented in the 32 issues of the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies*. *Teaching Strategies* provide you ways to help children master these teachings. In addition, the guide that accompanies each issue of the *Weeklies* will point you to the handbook and to those teachings that are reflected in that issue. *What the Church Believes and Teaches*, together with the *Weeklies*, can also be of great help to parents who want to take an active role in the faith formation of their children.

The handbook provides, in one convenient publication, all the teachings that must be mastered. The weekly issues provide the stories, exercises, activities, reflections, prayers, and challenges that show how a faithful Catholic can live out these teachings, celebrate them in the liturgy, and share them at home, at school, and with friends.

### Learning by Heart

Much of what you find in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* can be learned by heart. From earliest times, catechesis has used the formulations of the Creed, the sacraments, the Commandments, and prayers (especially the Lord's Prayer) to transmit the faith. The handbook affords you the opportunity to help your students learn by heart the principal expressions of the faith, basic prayers, key biblical themes, personalities, and language. Such learning is not mere rote. Memorization is an effective form of catechesis that nourishes the human heart and helps form the human spirit in Christ.

### Conclusion

It is our hope that this new and exciting addition to the wondrous experience of the *Pflaum Gospel Weeklies* will assist you in your ministry. It is our prayer that *What the Church Believes and Teaches* will give you the added assurance that you are indeed cultivating in your students the good soil in which the seed of the Catholic faith can take root and bring forth a lifetime of good fruit.

### Tips for Teaching Young Catholics

Know your audience! That's good advice for many professionals, but certainly for catechists and teachers. Here are some things to keep in mind about the second and third graders who are your audience.

- *Good News* kids are enthusiastic helpers, and they love to please. Ask for a volunteer to take something to the office, for example, and many hands will go up. That makes this a good time to involve them in service projects, such as straightening up the hymnals in the church pews after Mass or carrying donated food to the food pantry.
- They are becoming more aware of the needs of others. They are willing to help another child who drops something or can't find something. They can be sensitive to children with special needs. This is not to say that they are always kind. But they are developing the capacity to understand what another child is experiencing.
- Children of this age are still easily distracted. The actions of one child can disrupt the whole group. Their attention span is getting longer, however. They can stick with a task or activity for twenty to thirty minutes. Have a change of pace ready to implement if you see that you are losing them sooner. You can always come back to the original activity later.
- These children are also social. Most of them love to share stories—what happened at home, what they are going to do for their birthday. Give them many opportunities to

share. For example, if you are studying the Fourth Commandment, begin by letting everyone take turns telling about their families. If you have children in your group who are shy about sharing, try breaking the ice by asking them a couple of leading questions, or let them pass.

- They want things to be fair. They follow the rules and think everyone should have the same rules. This can lead to tattling, more so in second than in third grade. Acknowledge their concern without recrimination, but don't encourage the "telling on others" to continue. Make classroom rules clear and be consistent in following and applying them.
- Because they are afraid of getting in trouble, children this age may deny having done something wrong. They need to know that it is normal to make mistakes and that everyone is wrong sometimes. They need to learn to be truthful with themselves and others. This is especially important as they prepare to celebrate Reconciliation.
- They are capable of sin. They can understand, with practice and examples, the difference between mistakes, accidents, and sin. They are ready to acknowledge and take responsibility for actions that are wrong because they disobey God. They can appreciate the importance of saying "I'm sorry" and making things right again.
- They want to be part of a group. This tendency plays in your favor when you discuss the Sacraments of Initiation and belonging to the Church. It also means that they are happy to work in small groups, as long as the task is clear and simple. But they can also form cliques. Remind them often that all are welcome and treated with respect in your class and in the Church.

## LESSON PLANS

### Receive and Share the Good News! *page 4*

To introduce this book and their weekly lessons, announce that you have some good news. Be enthusiastic so the children will respond with delight and eagerness. Engage in a short discussion about how they feel about good news. Conclude that good news is exciting. We want to tell it and we want to hear it.

Share your good news, which can be something like a treat at the end of class, or a game to be played outside, or an invited guest. Invite children to share other good news they have heard or told lately.

Be sure the children understand that the word *Gospel* means "Good News." Help them to find the Gospels in the Bible and to learn the names of the evangelists in the order that their Gospels appear in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Knowing the order will help them locate the Gospel they are looking for more quickly.

## BELIEVE

### What Does It Mean to Believe? *page 5*

Invite children to give other examples from everyday life of when they have to trust or believe someone. Did they believe your good news? Why? Help them see that everything depends on the trustworthiness of the person making the promise.

Let each child tell a story (true or made up) about

- a parent
- a coach
- a teacher
- a person on TV
- a sports figure

Does the rest of the class believe the story? Why or why not?

Play a game of "telephone." Sit in a circle or line with the children. Whisper your good news to the child sitting beside you. Let each in turn pass along the good news. The last child in line will announce the good news. Did the good news survive intact?

Point out that the Apostles passed on the Good News of Jesus. They had to be careful to tell it correctly and to be faithful to the teaching of Jesus. The Church, too, has passed on and continues to pass on the Good News of Jesus. The Church is faithful to preserving the whole truth of Jesus.

## What the Church Believes and Teaches

### The Apostles' Creed, *page 6*

There are several strategies you can use to help children learn prayers such as the Apostles' Creed.

- The best is repetition. So begin by praying the Apostles' Creed as a group during each class meeting. At first, let the children look at the prayer in their books. When the prayer becomes more familiar, have them try it without the books.
- Study the prayer with the children. Help them see that there are three sections: one dedicated to God the Father, one to God the Son, and one to the Holy Spirit.
  1. The first section is very short and acknowledges God as Father and Creator.
  2. The second section follows the life of Jesus—conception, birth, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.
  3. The third section tells about the Holy Spirit's action through the Church today and in the future.
- Ask children to memorize the prayer one section at a time.
- Use sentence cards. Make flash cards with one sentence of the prayer on each card. You could make one set for each child or several sets for small group work.

1. Challenge the children to put the cards in order and to see which group can complete the task first.
  2. Give each child one card. Ask children to line up in order of the prayer. (Each child needs to find the children whose sentences precede and follow his or her own sentence.) When they are lined up in the correct order, have each child read his or her sentence.
- Make copies of the prayer, substituting blank lines for some key words. Ask the children to write in the correct words.

### The Holy Trinity, page 7

Present the Holy Trinity as a relationship of love. The closest human comparison is a family. Use pictures to help children grasp the concept—actual photographs, photographs from a family magazine, flannel board people, illustrations from the Internet. A man and woman get married because they love each other. Their love is a living and active love, flowing between them. Their love for each other brings forth another person, a child. Without losing their love for each other, the husband and wife love their child and their child loves each of them. Together, they are a family. They are three persons in one family.

Print the word *GOD* on the chalkboard or on newsprint. There are three different letters, but together they are one word. The letters are not the same, but they are all necessary parts of the word *GOD*. Erase one of the letters. Is it the same? Without any one of the letters, the word would not be *GOD*. There are three letters in one word. There are Three Persons in one God.

### Almighty, page 7

Explain that when we call God the Almighty, we are saying there are no limits on God. God always uses his power for good.

Tell children that God is also:

- Eternal—God has no beginning and no end. God is not created. God always was and always will be.
- Omnipresent—God is present everywhere all the time. God is equally in the past, present, and future.

Have children draw their own pictures of God, the Almighty. They may focus on one or more qualities of God. When they finish, gather the children to share their images. Invite each to explain his or her picture, and tell how God would use this quality for good.

### Creation, page 8

Take children on a nature walk. Before you go outdoors, ask them to be looking and listening for things God created, or made. Because they will need to keep their eyes and ears open, they will not be talking during the walk. Ask them to remember what they see and hear because they will help you make a list when you return to the classroom or meeting area.

Lead the children on a short walk. Include an area of the church grounds that is familiar to them and, if possible,

some place where they normally don't go. Check out your route ahead of time, looking for special things like a bird's nest or an unusual tree or flower.

Keep the walk short so children can retain the details. When you return to your classroom or meeting area, help them list what they saw and heard. If they are forgetting or overlooking obvious things, such as a blue sky or clouds, ask leading questions like, Did anyone look up? You may also ask about some things they could feel: wind, a breeze, warm air. Or, things they could smell: freshly cut grass or flowers. You will also have to help them sort out things that were not created by God.

### Heaven, page 8

The concepts of angels and Heaven are fascinating to children. They live very much in a concrete world, so it is difficult for them to imagine creatures that are entirely spiritual. Explain that angels are like us in some ways and unlike us in other ways. Unlike us, they have no bodies. Like us, they were created by God. They can love and serve God, they can communicate, and they can make choices. Because they don't have bodies to weigh them down, they can move instantly from one place to another. That's probably why artists often picture angels with wings.

Read aloud these Bible stories that show how the archangels served God.

- Michael, God's warrior—Revelation 12:7-9
- Raphael, God's healer—Tobit 12:11-18
- Gabriel, God's messenger—Luke 1:26-38

Direct the children to the Prayer to My Guardian Angel on page 49. Have them copy the prayer onto a piece of card stock. Let them decorate the card, too. When they finish, say the prayer together. Encourage them to take their prayer card home and put it where it will remind them to pray daily to their guardian angel.

### Jesus Christ, Our Lord, page 9

Help children find examples in the Gospels of how Jesus taught. You might begin by asking children to share their favorite story or time in the life of Jesus. What does that story or incident teach us?

Talk about the names of Jesus.

- *Jesus* means "God saves." An angel told Joseph to give this name to Mary's child. (Matthew 1:20-21).
- *Christ* is not Jesus' last name. It is a title that means "Anointed One." We are anointed in Baptism, so we are "Christs" or Christians.
- *Lord* is a title that means we believe Jesus is God.
- *Emmanuel* means "God with us."
- *Messiah* means the "one sent by God to save us."

The children will enjoy the names given in Isaiah 9:6—Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Let them make up their own names for Jesus.

Challenge children to list as many other names or titles for Jesus as they can. Possibilities include Good Shepherd, Savior, Redeemer, Bread of Life, Light of the World, and Word of God.

### **Mary Is the Mother of Jesus, page 9**

Read the story of the Annunciation in Luke 1:26-38. Help children discover that the greeting of the angel is the beginning of the Hail Mary prayer.

Direct them to Luke 1:42 to find out where we get the next part of the prayer. Who first said those words to Mary? (*her cousin Elizabeth*)

Be sure children know that *Hail* is a greeting, much like “Hello.” *Fruit of your womb* means “your child.”

### **Jesus Became Man, page 10**

Have a sturdy nativity set available. Let children assemble the scene to help them review the events and the theological truths surrounding the birth of Jesus.

Tell children that Christmas is the celebration of God coming into the world. Christmas celebrates the mystery of the Incarnation—the reality that the Word became flesh. God’s Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, took on human nature. Christmas is a happy time for us not only because Jesus came into our world, but also because he became human to save the world and its people.

### **The Holy Family, page 10**

The Gospels don’t tell us much about Jesus’ life when he was growing up—when he was the age of the children in your class. But what the Gospels do tell us is important.

Jesus lived in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. Jesus had to learn many things, and his parents taught him. Jesus was known as the carpenter’s son. Joseph probably taught Jesus how to work with wood and stone and tools. Mary and Joseph were holy people who loved God, and so they taught Jesus to pray and obey God’s law. They observed the holy days and religious customs of their people. They were very much like other families in Nazareth, and they were very much what all families should be. They loved one another, took care of one another in many ways every day, and helped relatives and neighbors during good and bad times.

- Role-play scenes from daily life of the Holy Family, using imagination and simple costumes.
- Help children research life in first-century Galilee. If your parish has put on a vacation Bible school program on life in Bible times, those materials could be very helpful. Have each child give a short report on topics such as: how people dressed, what they ate, what their houses were like, what a carpenter made, common occupations, how children learned, games children played, their religious and community life.

### **He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, page 10**

Take children to your parish church to look at the Stations of the Cross. They can find descriptions of the stations on pages 41 and 42.

Talk about why Jesus was willing to suffer and die for us. Point out that details in the story, such as the heavy stone that was put in the entrance of the tomb, are included to prove that Jesus was really dead.

### **He descended into hell, page 10**

Ask children to name some of the good people who died before Jesus did. Answers include Old Testament figures such as Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Joseph, David, and Daniel, as well as Joseph, Jesus’ foster father, and John the Baptist, his cousin. Point out that their long time of waiting for salvation is part of what we remember during the season of Advent, when we are waiting for Jesus to come again.

### **On the third day he rose again from the dead, page 11**

Be sure children know that Jesus’ rising from the dead is known as the Resurrection. We celebrate the Resurrection at Easter.

### **He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, page 11**

Jesus’ return to his Father is known as the Ascension. This took place forty days after the Resurrection. This event can be celebrated on Ascension Thursday or on the following Sunday.

### **He will come again to judge the living and the dead, page 11**

The Church teaches that each person will encounter Christ soon after death and experience particular, or individual, judgment. Depending on how we have lived our lives, we will be ready for Heaven, Purgatory, or hell.

At the end of the world, there will be a general or final judgment, when the deeds of all people will be revealed.

Present this information not to instill fear in the children, but as a reality check. Our good deeds and thoughts will not go unnoticed and unrewarded. But we will need to repent for bad deeds and thoughts so that we can be forgiven.

Present Heaven as everlasting and perfect happiness with God, hell as everlasting separation from God, Purgatory as making up for sin in order to enter Heaven. If a person is in Purgatory, he or she is guaranteed Heaven eventually. Our prayers and sacrifices can help persons in Purgatory attain Heaven.

Give children Mass books. Help them find the part in the Eucharistic Prayer when we pray for people who have died.

### ***I believe in the Holy Spirit, page 12***

Review the concept of the Holy Trinity on page 7. Have children make the Sign of the Cross to reinforce the names of the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity.

Ask children to consider this scenario. Suppose your parents are going away for a weekend. Your parents would make plans to have someone take care of you. Perhaps Grandma would come to stay with you. Let children share their experiences of being left in someone's care. Stress that their parents would choose the best person possible to care for them.

Remind children that before Jesus returned to the Father in Heaven, he made a promise to his friends. He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to stay with them. The Holy Spirit continues to guide the Church.

Ask, How does the Holy Spirit help the Church? As you mention these answers, write them on the chalkboard or on newsprint. The Holy Spirit guides, teaches the truth, gives strength and courage, keeps the Church holy.

### ***The holy catholic Church , page 12***

Remind the children that during his time on earth, Jesus taught in many ways—through his words and actions, and through his stories and miracles. Talk about how the Church continues the work of Jesus. Give children two or three issues of your church bulletin. Help them find examples of how your parish does the work of Jesus.

Show children some materials from Maryknoll, Columban Fathers, Glenmary, or another missionary organization. Help the children to realize that the Church is not just their parish or diocese. It is worldwide.

If you have a priest or priests in your parish or diocese from foreign countries, point out that these priests are missionaries. They have come here to help Catholics in the United States celebrate Eucharist and other sacraments. If a foreign priest is serving in your parish, invite him to talk to the children about his country, what it was like for him when he was their age, and when and how he decided to become a mission priest. Or, you may send a thank-you card from your group to a mission priest who is serving in a parish in your diocese.

Tell the story of a Catholic missionary, if possible a person who is presently working in the missions. Invite children to write postcards to the missionary, asking about their work, and promising to pray and make a small sacrifice for them. Bundle the cards and send them to the missionary.

Tell the stories of saints from a variety of countries.

Ask for a volunteer to serve as the model for a human body that you are about to draw. Have the volunteer lie down on a long piece of butcher paper. Trace the volunteer's body and cut out the human form. On the head, print *Jesus*.

Have each of the children write his or her name somewhere else on the body. Then have children brainstorm for the names of everyone they know who belongs to the Body of Christ. Let them write the names of parents and godparents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, other relatives, your pastor, the pope, friends, neighbors—anyone they can think of who is Catholic.

### ***The communion of saints, page 13***

Tell children that November 1 is the feast of All Saints. This includes the canonized saints, the people that the Church has declared are saints.

But All Saints' Day also celebrates all of those holy people who loved God and followed Jesus, who are in Heaven now, but have not been declared saints. Tell them that God wants us all to be saints.

After reading the description of a saint, ask children to think about how they could become a saint. Have children imagine themselves as saints. Ask each to draw a self-portrait and print their name underneath with the title *Saint*. Then ask them to write two or three sentences about how they follow Jesus.

Share the stories of some of the saints of the month or some of the saints for whom children in the class are named. Strive to present a variety of stories to make the point that there are many ways to serve God and to build up the Body of Christ.

The children may be interested in the connection between Halloween and All Saints' Day. Point out that Halloween (October 31) is the day before All Saints' Day (November 1). The original name of Halloween was All Hallows' Eve. *Hallow* means "holy." In the Lord's Prayer, we pray "hallowed be thy name." We mean, "May your name be made holy, or kept holy." So *All Hallows* were "all holy ones," or all saints. *Eve* is used as in Christmas Eve. It is the evening before a big day. So *Halloween* means "All Saints' Day Eve."

### ***The forgiveness of sins, page 13***

Invite children to talk about their Baptism. Remind them that this sacrament is the first sacrament for the forgiveness of sins.

Children are preparing for or have recently experienced the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. In the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation, sins committed after Baptism are forgiven.

Review with children the steps of the Rite of Reconciliation on page 23 of their books and the Act of Contrition on page 46.

### ***The resurrection of the body, page 14***

After reading this section, invite children to use their imaginations to paint pictures of what their resurrected bodies will look like.

### And life everlasting, page 14

Give children an opportunity to talk about their experiences with death. Many of them will have experienced the death of a pet. Some will have experienced the death of family members or friends. What is it like when a friend or family member dies? Let them know that it is okay to talk about how they feel and how much they miss a loved one. We (the Church) support one another in times of loss and sorrow. Introduce All Souls' Day, which is November 2. On this day we remember and pray for our friends and family who have died. You may celebrate with the Hispanic tradition of *Día de los Muertos*, with the altar, decorations, and food to enjoy.

Be sure to discuss eternal life. This is our hope and consolation in the face of death. This is one of the truths of our faith. Jesus told us that he came to bring us eternal life. Assure children that God wants all of us to return to our real home—heaven—where we will be happy forever, and where we will join our loved ones who have died before us.

Someone will likely raise the question about whether pets go to heaven. One approach that is appropriate for children is to say that they (the children) will be perfectly happy in heaven. If they need their pets to be perfectly happy, then their pets will be there.

### Amen, page 14

Talk about the meaning of the word *Amen*. Why is it a good word to say after prayers? Before Holy Communion? The Great Amen ends the Eucharistic prayer. When we sing that *Amen*, it means that we are not just listening to the priest pray, we are praying, too.

### Say What You See, page 15

The solution: I believe in God the Father, and in Jesus, the Son of God, and in the Holy Spirit. Amen

### The Good News Bulletin, page 16

#### The Good K.I.D. Award

This activity should help the children see that they have the capacity to be heroic in the area of being kind to others.

#### Today's Word Search

F	A	I	T	H	C	L	Q	L
C	R	E	E	D	H	L	H	A
X	Y	R	N	K	R	B	E	N
N	L	P	I	Q	I	W	A	G
R	O	I	V	A	S	E	V	E
F	H	C	I	V	T	C	E	L
F	T	R	D	F	H	A	N	H
T	I	R	I	P	S	R	K	C
N	K	A	M	E	N	G	M	K

### Help Wanted

This activity should help the children understand that they are called to be disciples now, and to recognize that they have opportunities to do so.

## PRAISE AND CELEBRATE

### Celebrate What You Believe, page 17

Give each child a ballot with the following days listed: Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, My Birthday. If possible, put a little icon or illustration beside each to help with identification.

Have children cast their secret votes for their favorite day of the year. Count the votes. Ask children who voted for the "winner" to tell why they voted for that day. Invite others to defend their choice. See if they can tell you what we celebrate on each of these days. Help children understand what makes some days special.

Finally, show the children a year-at-a-glance calendar, where all twelve months are shown. With their help, circle the holidays listed on this page, as well as all of their birthdays.

### The Church Celebrates Special Days and Seasons, pages 18 and 19

Direct children's attention to the liturgical calendar on the inside back cover of their books. Explain that this is a different kind of calendar. Ask children to look for differences.

- It doesn't start with January and end with December
- It isn't arranged in months.
- It is oval or round instead of square.

Tell children that this is a liturgical calendar—the calendar of the Church year. It is arranged in seasons and lists feasts. Ask them to figure out which days from the list on page 17 are also on this calendar. (*Christmas and Easter*)

Be sure children understand that the liturgical year helps us to remember and celebrate the times and events in Jesus' life. Ask them to point to the correct section on the liturgical calendar as you read the names of the seasons and feasts in order.

Identify the current liturgical season. Read the description for that season. Ask children if they remember what color the priest's vestments were last Sunday. Help children learn the liturgical colors that change with the feasts and seasons.

Explain that each liturgical season and feast has its own color. Advent's color is violet. Christmas is white. Ordinary Time is green. Lent is violet. Easter is white. Pentecost is red. Briefly explain why these colors are used.

- White is a color that shows joy and celebration.
- Violet
  - In Advent, violet is for waiting and hoping.
  - In Lent, violet is for penance and sacrifice.

- Green is the color for life and growth. In Ordinary Time, God’s grace and love grows in our hearts and in our world.
- Red is the color of the fire of the Holy Spirit. Red is also worn on the feasts of martyrs, saints who died for their faith.

Gather church supply catalogs from your parish office or pastor. Have each child make an illustrated chart of the liturgical year by cutting out chasubles of different colors and labeling each with the appropriate liturgical season.

Return to these pages throughout the year as the liturgical seasons change. Relate the information of Church seasons and feasts to what is happening in the children’s lives. Help them look for the reasons behind familiar traditions and activities: lighting an Advent wreath, decorating with candles and Christmas lights, giving Christmas presents, setting up a nativity set, being signed with ashes on Ash Wednesday, giving up something for Lent, finding Easter eggs, and so on.

### Sunday, page 20

Draw from children’s life experience what makes Sunday a special day for their families. What special things do children and their families do on Sunday?

Be sure children understand that the most important way to observe Sunday is by gathering to celebrate the Eucharist, or Mass. We remember what Jesus did for us at every Mass—his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

Talk about how the Mass really doesn’t end when we leave church. We have received the Body of Christ. We take Jesus out into the whole world. We have become the Body of Christ. Now we do the work of Jesus in the world. Ask the children for ideas about how they could do Christ’s work on Sunday and every day of the week.

Many families have a special meal together on Sunday. Talk about how a family meal reflects the Mass.

## Sacraments

### Baptism, page 21

Encourage children to find out more about their own Baptism and to share that information with the class. Mark the children’s baptismal days on a classroom calendar and recognize them as they occur.

Talk about why water is a good sign of what happens in Baptism—it cleanses and gives life. Tell children that we remember our Baptism when we go into church and bless ourselves with holy water.

Discuss what it means to be a member of a particular community. Help children list the communities to which they belong—family, class at school, class at church, Church, teams, clubs, and so on. List the communities on the chalkboard or on newsprint as they are mentioned.

When the list is complete, ask these questions about several of the communities.

- How did you become a member of this community?
- What does it mean to belong to this community?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the responsibilities?

### Eucharist, page 22

To help children understand the phrase “the sacrifice of the Mass,” talk about the idea of sacrifice. Give children examples of sacrifice found in their daily lives. For example, ask what kinds of sacrifices parents make for the good of their children. What sacrifices did Jesus make to save us?

Help children make connections between the Last Supper and the Mass. Read aloud Luke 22:17-20. Tell children that we celebrate Mass because Jesus told us: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

You might want to bring out those church supply catalogs again. Have each child use pictures from the catalogs to make an illustrated chart of the items used for Mass: chalice, paten, ciborium, cruets, communion cups, decanter, wine, hosts.

Review Mass responses and parts of the Mass. Make cards with the greetings and the responses. Have the children match them up.

Make cards with the names of parts of the Mass and simple descriptions. Have children match the names with the descriptions. Finally, give each child one card with the name of a part of the Mass and help children to line up in the order of the Mass.

### Penance and Reconciliation, page 23

Demonstrate the effects of sin and the Sacrament of Reconciliation on our relationship with Jesus. Ask for two volunteers. Have them hold the opposite ends of a three-foot length of rope. Explain that one person represents Jesus and the other represents all of us. The rope represents the friendship that Jesus shares with us.

Provide an example of a venial sin, like being late for Mass. What does a venial sin do to the friendship with Jesus? Cut into the rope with a scissors, but not all the way through. Ask children if the friendship can be repaired. Tie a big knot where the cut is. Then provide an example of a mortal sin, like intentionally missing Mass. Cut the rope all the way through. Ask children if the friendship can still be repaired. Tie the rope back together.

Explain that the Sacrament of Reconciliation repairs our relationship with Jesus when we sin. The sacrament can make the relationship stronger than before and bring us closer to Jesus. Review the steps of Reconciliation on page 23 and the Act of Contrition on page 46.

Talk about the importance of forgiveness in daily life. What is the mood like at home when you are not getting along with your brother or sister? How do you go about making things right again?

### Liturgy, page 24

Ask children to share some activity that their whole family does together. Explain that liturgy is like that in some ways. The Church is the family of God. Jesus is the Head of the Church and we are all members. Together, Jesus the Head and we the members, celebrate liturgy.

Help children make a list on the chalkboard or on newsprint of all the reasons they have to praise and thank God. Challenge them to keep thinking until you have a good, long list, without repetitions. Then, on a sheet of poster board, outline the letters PRAISE and THANKS in wide, chunky letters. Give children scraps of construction paper in a variety of colors. Direct them to cut small irregular pieces, about ½ to 1 inch. (To save time, you could have the pieces already cut.) Let children fit and then glue the pieces of colored paper into the letters to make a mosaic. Then divide up the list of reasons to praise and thank God. Let each child use a colored marker to print one reason on the poster surrounding the words *Praise* and *Thanks*. Display the poster board where other children and parishioners can see and enjoy it.

### Let's Find Out! page 25

The celebrations that are on the same date every year are:

- The Assumption of Mary—August 15
- The feast of St. Francis of Assisi—October 4
- Christmas Day—December 25
- The Birthday of Mary—September 8
- Your birthday

The celebrations that are on different dates from year to year are:

- The First Sunday of Advent—November 27 in 2011
- Epiphany (The traditional date for Epiphany is January 6, but we now celebrate it on the 2nd Sunday after Christmas—January 8 in 2012)
- Ash Wednesday—February 22 in 2012
- Easter—April 8 in 2012
- Pentecost—May 27 in 2012

### The Sacraments of Initiation, page 26

- The sign of Baptism is water.
- The sign of Confirmation is fire.
- The signs of Eucharist are bread and a chalice, or cup, of wine.

## FOLLOW JESUS

### You Make Choices Every Day, page 27

Give each child an index card, and ask children to write their own endings to the story. Have the children form groups of two or three to share their endings. Then have each group choose an ending to act out for the whole class.

Discuss the story.

- Why did Sabrina cut one piece of cake bigger than the other?
- Why did Molly say that Sam could choose the piece he wanted?
- What would you do if you were Sam?

### You Can Choose, page 28

Review the difference between sin, mistakes, and accidents.

- Accident—when something happens that we didn't intend.
- Mistake—when we make a wrong choice or give a wrong answer because we didn't know the right choice or right answer.
- Sin—when we do something that we know goes against God's will.

Ask children to decide whether these situations involve an accident, mistake, or sin.

- You say you will push your friend on the swing. But you're not paying attention as your friend gets on the swing. Before your friend is settled on the seat, you give the swing a big push. Your friend is knocked to the ground. Accident, mistake, or sin?
- Your teacher asks you to collect the pictures your classmates have drawn. You drop one and step on it. It gets all messed up. Accident, mistake, or sin?
- You tell your coach that you will bring snacks for half time. But you forget to tell your mom. You show up at the game without the snack you promised. Accident, mistake, or sin?
- You see your big sister's homework on the table. You are mad at your sister. You take a marker and scribble all over her homework paper. Accident, mistake, or sin?
- You take the dog for a walk. When you get home, you are really thirsty. You leave the dog in the back yard and go into the kitchen to get a drink. When you go back out, the dog is gone. Accident, mistake, or sin?
- At dinner you kick your brother under the table. He kicks back. You yell and say your brother kicked you. Accident, mistake, or sin?

Emphasize that Jesus teaches us to do the right thing, not just to avoid doing the wrong thing. Ask for examples of how children their age do the right thing. Go over each of the scenarios again. What would be the right thing for a child to do?

### Making the Right Choices, page 29

Play "Red Light, Green Light." Cut three 12-inch circles out of construction paper—one red, one green, and one yellow. Place the three circles in a row on the floor—red, yellow, green—with about six inches between them.

Explain that when making a moral choice, we may need to stop and think before we go ahead and do something.

Have a volunteer stand up. Pose a moral dilemma such as the one in this story. No one wants J.R. to be on their team at recess because he is not a very good player. You know he feels left out. You want to let J.R. play on your team, but you are afraid of what the other kids will say. What should you do?

Ask a volunteer to stand on the red circle. Then ask the other children to tell you what that means. Have the child move to the yellow circle. Discuss with the class the questions the volunteer should ask or think about before he or she makes a decision about J.R. When the volunteer is ready, he or she should move to the green circle and tell everyone what he or she has decided to do.

Play “Jesus Says,” based on “Simon Says.” Prepare statements ahead of time so you can keep up a quick pace. Everything that Jesus says should be good, such as, “Jesus says, “Say your prayers.” The others are bad choices, such as, “Tell a lie.” Children can respond to the statements with a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down.

### **Virtues, page 30**

Ask children to define the word *habit*. What are some examples of good habits? What are some examples of bad habits? Explain that there is another kind of habit—moral habits. These habits are morally good or morally bad. Good moral habits are called virtues. Some examples of virtues are kindness, truthfulness, generosity. Bad moral habits are called vices. Some examples of vices are cheating, disobeying, selfishness.

Tell children that the word *virtue* comes from a Latin word that means strong. Ask them to find and underline the word *strong* on page 30. Read aloud the sentences in which *strong* is used.

Then ask each child to make up his or her own superhero. The power of the superhero is virtue. Children can choose any virtue they want their hero to show. Give examples to get children started: Temperance Man, Justice Girl. Distribute art paper and markers. When everyone is finished drawing, take time to share the results. Discuss how they can imitate their hero's virtue.

## **God's Law**

### **The Ten Commandments, page 31**

Go through the Ten Commandments, reading what each requires. Ask for examples of how children can keep each Commandment. You may need to make clear that fighting, getting angry, and hurting someone's feelings are all sins against the Fifth Commandment.

Discuss with children what it means for a person to examine his or her conscience. Help children write their own examination of conscience based on their discussion of the Ten Commandments. Give them lined paper to write out questions for each Commandment. Encourage children

to go through these questions honestly every night before they go to sleep. They can end with the Act of Contrition, and try to do better the next day.

### **The Great Commandments, page 32**

Help children see that the Great Commandments sum up the Ten Commandments. The first three Commandments tell us how to love God. The other seven Commandments tell us how to love others. The Great Commandments tell us how to love God and to love others as we love ourselves.

### **The New Commandment—The Law of Love, page 32**

Read the text aloud. Ask children for examples of how Jesus' law of love can help them learn how to love one another.

### **The Good News, page 32**

Point out that this list summarizes what it means to be a Christian. Tell children that you will read each item. Invite them to respond after each by saying, That is good news! Read each item slowly and with expression. Wait for their response before going on.

### **What Would You Do? page 33**

Answers:

1. Fourth Commandment
2. Seventh Commandment
3. Fifth Commandment

### **Keep My Commandments, page 34**

Suggest that children look up the Scripture passage to check their answer.

Answer:

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

If children enjoy this puzzle, challenge them to make up their own puzzles using the same picture code. Each can exchange his or her new puzzle with another child, and they can try to solve one another's puzzles.

## **PRAY**

### **The Bible Is a Great Prayer Book, page 35**

Invite children to look through the Book of Psalms with you. Explain that there are prayers here for every human feeling. Have the children find Psalm 23. Read it together, alternating verses between boys and girls.

Then find Psalm 104:1-9. As you read, ask children to use their imaginations to let the words suggest pictures. What are their reactions to what they imagine?

Invite children to write a short psalm of praise, similar in tone to Psalm 104. Encourage them to use their imagination and come up with vivid images. When they have finished, help them make corrections. Have them read their work aloud to see if it they like the way it sounds.

When they are ready, let them copy their psalm verses onto good paper and illustrate them.

Display their work. Take one prayer down at each class to be part of your prayer. Do this until all of the psalms have been used.

Help children to think about the prayers of faith, hope, and love. Ask, What could make you feel faith, hope, and love like this? Ask children to write their own prayers of faith, hope, and love, preceded by a sentence or two to show what led to their prayers. Invite those who wish to share one of their prayers.

### **What Is Prayer?** *page 36*

Talk about friends and how they stay friends. Help children understand that the same things they do to be friends with one another will help them to be friends with Jesus. For example, talking to Jesus every day will help them to grow closer to Jesus.

### **When Should We Pray?** *page 36*

### **Where Should We Pray?** *page 37*

After reading the text under these headings, ask children to think of when and where they could pray every day. Have them draw pictures of themselves praying in their chosen place and time. Encourage them to make their pictures come true.

Remind children that there are many prayer actions. Ask volunteers to demonstrate the proper way to do each of these actions. Then have the whole class do them.

- Kneel
- Fold hands
- Make the Sign of the Cross
- Bow
- Genuflect
- Stand

Ask children to tell when they do each of these actions at Mass.

### **How Should We Pray?** *page 37*

Give children opportunities throughout the year to practice each kind of prayer. They may be surprised to hear that they have to learn, not just prayers, but how to pray. They can learn different ways of praying through practice. Just like they need to practice making a soccer goal, they need to practice praying.

Remind the children that all of the saints were great pray-ers. They can give us some good advice about praying.

- St. Teresa said that prayer “is a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us.”
- St. John Vianney noticed an old man who would often come into church and sit quietly in front of the taberna- cle. The priest asked the man about his prayer. The man explained, “I look at him and he looks at me.”

If possible, take children to the church or chapel to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Ask them to spend five quiet minutes with Jesus.

### **Why Should We Pray?** *page 38*

Help children understand these five forms of prayer with examples of statements from their daily lives.

- Blessing—Molly, it was so nice of you to give me your game.
- Petition—Dad, will you get us tickets to the football game? Please?
- Intercession—Mom, can I have Jake over to play? His mom and dad are going shopping.
- Thanksgiving—Thanks for making chili tonight, Dad!
- Praise—You’re the greatest, Mom!

Ask children to suggest additional examples of statements from their own experience. Thanksgiving and petition will be the easy ones for them. If they get stuck, have them read the descriptions again.

To help children understand prayers of intercession, point out that we pray intercessions (during the Prayer of the Faithful) at Mass. We pray for:

- the Church
- world and national needs
- people who are in need because of poverty, illness, and so on
- someone we know who needs our prayers

Have children work in pairs to write intercessions for the Church, the world, and the needs of others. Then have everyone write a personal intercession.

Gather in your prayer area. Read the intercessions. After each, ask children to respond, “Lord, hear our prayer” or another response of your choice. The children may then read their personal intercessions, with all responding.

### **Disappointments,** *page 39*

Ask children if anyone wants to share an experience of being distracted or disappointed in prayer. Be ready to offer one or two observations of your own.

Then talk about the solutions for dealing with distractions. Reassure children that everyone faces distractions sometimes. Ask, Do you think any of these suggestions will work? Can you think of some solutions of your own? You may wish to suggest a word they can keep in mind: FOCUS.

Read aloud the three important things to remember about prayer. Then ask children to write their own prayers, asking for God’s help to have faith in his love and care.

### **The Lord’s Prayer,** *page 40*

Most of the children will know the words to this prayer, but it will be helpful for them to spend some time think- ing about the words. Ask children to think about how they could make the Lord’s Prayer into a picture prayer. It will

be a combination of words and pictures. For example, Our [picture of a father] who [picture of framed art] in [an image that represents heaven], and so on.

Provide large pieces of art paper, colored pencils, markers, crayons, magazines, glue sticks, and scissors. Tell children they may draw their own pictures or find them in magazines. They may print the words or cut words out of the magazines. Allow time for children to share their work with the class. If possible, visit a kindergarten or first grade class with your picture prayers. Have each child pair up with a younger child and help the younger child to read the picture prayer.

### **One More Thing, page 40**

Review the Communion of Saints with the children. See page 13. Pray the Hail Mary or a decade of the Rosary for all of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

### **A Path to Prayer, pages 41 and 42**

If possible, take the children to the church and walk the Stations of the Cross there. Allow time for children to reflect on each station, comparing the station in the church to the station in their books and finally writing short prayers of their own for each station.

### **Prayer Promises, page 43**

Challenge children to figure out as many of the scrambled words as possible on their own. However, assure them that if they need help, they can check the Gospels for the answers.

- Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- Which one of you would give a stone when your child asks for bread? If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him!
- Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified.
- When you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

## **TREASURES OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH**

A feeling of belonging is very important to children. They gain security and confidence from belonging to a loving family and extended family. Part of the security of belonging comes from understanding and feeling comfortable with what family members say and do.

Children gain the same kind of security and confidence from belonging to their Church family. And part of that security of belonging comes from understanding and feeling comfortable with the words they hear and the actions they see in Church. That's why *What the Church Believes and Teaches for Good News* includes "Things to Remember," "Prayers to Know," and "Words to Know."

### **Things to Remember, pages 44 and 45**

The Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the names of the sacraments, the dates of the holy days of obligation—children will be able to refer to these and other important facts about their faith in "Things to Remember."

Encourage children to memorize at least some of these important facts over the course of the year. You may wish to begin with the Ten Commandments.

### **Prayers to Know, pages 46-49**

By repeating them throughout the year, children will also become familiar and comfortable with "Prayers to Know." The goal is for children eventually to learn these important Catholic prayers by heart so they can participate more fully in the prayer of the community.

You can help children to learn some of these prayers by choosing them to open and close your meetings throughout the year.

With children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, you may wish to focus on the Act of Contrition and the Apostles' Creed. Help them to learn these prayers by saying a line and asking them to repeat that line after you. You may also wish to share this hint with parents.

Children who have already received the sacraments will be ready to learn more "grown-up" prayers like the Rosary.

### **Words to Know, pages 50-56**

Children will become familiar and comfortable with the vocabulary of their faith from hearing "Words to Know" throughout this year. One or two of the words will be part of each lesson. Children can become more sure of the meaning of the words by referring to this section of their handbooks.

"Words to Know" can be repeated and reviewed throughout the year. Pause and bring the definition back to mind. Who knows what this word means? Where did you hear it before? Is this a word you hear in church?