Building Family Faith

GRADE 1

Chapter 1

JESUS LOVES US and wants to be our friend. He called his followers friends. He called the little children of Galilee his friends too. That means that everyone in our family is a friend of Jesus. He is always with us. He is generous to us. He wants the best for us. We can talk to him as we would talk to a good friend.

Reflect

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mark 10:14

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about the good things that God has given our family.
- Since Jesus is a friend of our family, what would you like to tell him?

Pray

Pray the Sign of the Cross—the sign that Jesus loves us and shows we are part of his family.

Do

Pray the Sign of the Cross with your child at meals and at bedtime. Remind your child that this sign shows that Jesus loves us and we are his friends.

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Building Family Faith

GRADE 1

Chapter 2

GOD CREATED EVERYTHING. The world is full of wonderful and beautiful people and things that show God's goodness. God wants us to care for all creation so that people everywhere can enjoy his gifts. God, who is active in our world and in the life of our family, invites us to do this important work with him.

Reflect

God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

Genesis 1:31

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about how you see the goodness of God in nature, in the people we know, and in the things our family enjoys together.
- Talk about how our family takes care of God's people and the things he has made.

Pray

Give thanks to the LORD, who is good,
whose love endures forever.

1 Chronicles 16:34

Do

- Point out the things your child is caring for: possessions, a pet, schoolwork, and tasks at home. Talk about how he or she is caring for what God has made.
- At bedtime, thank God for his creation.

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Chapter 3

JESUS TAUGHT his followers that God was his Father in heaven. He taught that God is our Father too. God the Father cares for us, provides us with what we need, teaches us, and calls us to be like him. Each of us—adults as well as children—can be secure in this loving relationship with God our Father.

Reflect

"So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' . . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."

Matthew 6:31–33

Discuss as a Family

Talk about how parents care for their children. These are a glimpse of the great love that our Father has for us.

Pray

Pray the Lord's Prayer.

Do

In the evening, talk about what God has given every member of the family that day. Say a prayer of thanksgiving.

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Chapter 4

GOD IS HOLY, so everything about him is holy, including our churches. Our church buildiings are sacred spaces where we can experience joy, support, and strength in God's friendship. Jesus is present in church in a special way in the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. Our family comes to church every Sunday with our parish to celebrate Mass.

Reflect

But I, through the abundance of your mercy,
will enter into your house.
I will bow down toward your holy sanctuary . . . .

Psalm 5:8

Discuss as a Family

- Why do we go to Mass? What have we experienced there?
- What else do we do at our parish?

Pray

Pray the Glory Be to the Father.

Do

Talk about the holy objects in your home: a crucifix, a Bible, a rosary, and/or prayer books. Explain what they are for and their significance.

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Chapter 5

BAPTISM IS THE BEGINNING of our life as God's children. In Baptism, God forgives sins and shares his very life with us. We become members of the church family and are born into life in the Spirit.

Reflect

In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.

1 John 4:9

Discuss as a Family

- How do we love one another in our family?
- How do we show love for other people—our friends, neighbors, and people at church?

Pray

Lord Jesus, send your Spirit of love to us. Show us how to love one another as you love us.

Do

Talk about your child's Baptism. Share pictures of it. At the next family gathering, ask family members who were there to talk to your child about that day.

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Chapter 6

GOD IS PRESENT TO US. He is not remote or silent. God speaks to us in many ways—through the Bible, in the teaching and worship of the Church, in the wonders of our world. God also speaks to children through the words and actions of those who care for them. All of us can learn to listen to the voice of God speaking in the silence of our hearts.

Reflect

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."

Matthew 7:24

Discuss as a Family

- When have we heard God speaking to us?
- What do we say to God in reply?

Pray

"'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'"

1 Samuel 3:9

Do

Show your child a Bible. Explain that this is an important way that God speaks to us. Read a few of your favorite verses to your child.

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Chapter 7

PRAYER TIMES ARE specially set aside for opening ourselves to God. We thank God for the gifts he has given us. We ask him for what we need and to care for the needs of others. In prayer we can talk directly to God and share our deepest thoughts and desires with him.

Reflect

"But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you."

Matthew 6:6

Discuss as a Family

- What are your favorite times of day to pray?
- Share ideas about finding quiet times when we can talk to God.

Pray

Your words, O God, bring joy to my heart.

Do

At mealtime prayer, thank God for the people who have shown their love toward you this day.

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Chapter 9

GOD CREATED HUMANS to share his life and to live in peace and tranquility. Adam and Eve's disobedience disrupted God's plan. In order to restore his plan, God promised to send a Savior. Jesus, his Son, came to earth to heal us from the effects of sin.

Reflect

He was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

1 John 3:5

Discuss as a Family

- Why do we sometimes feel unhappy?
- How can we bring happiness to our family members?

Pray

Come, Lord Jesus. Be here with us.

Do

Pray the Lord's Prayer. Then give one another a sign of peace and love.

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Chapter 10

GOD KEPT HIS PROMISE to send a Savior. Jesus, God's Son, became man and lived among us. God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus, and he chose Joseph to be Jesus' foster father. Both Mary and Joseph agreed to be part of God's plan. We, too, can do the work God has for us when we open our hearts to Christ's coming.

Reflect

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Luke 1:38

Discuss as a Family

- Mary said yes to God. What opportunities do we have to say yes to God?
- What can our family do to celebrate Christ's coming at Christmas?

Pray

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, bless our family.

Do

Help your child learn the Hail Mary. Pray it every day as a family.

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Chapter 11

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, WAS BORN in Bethlehem, bringing about God's plan to save the human race and heal us from the effects of sin. Jesus was a human being like us in all things except sin. That means that God experienced the things that we experience. The angels, the shepherds, and the Wise Men received the news of Jesus' birth with great joy. We are glad and joyful at Christmas too.

Reflect

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

"Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:13–14

Discuss as a Family

- What makes us joyful? How do we react when we feel joy?
- Read the Christmas story together. Talk about your favorite parts.

Pray

Glory to you, O God. You are the Savior of the world.

Do

Sing some Christmas carols together as a family—or sing them with friends and neighbors!

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Chapter 13

JESUS CALLED THE 12 APOSTLES to help spread the Gospel and continue his saving work. He also called many other people to follow him and help him. Jesus continues to call people, including us. Each of us, children as well as adults, are called to share in Jesus' work of bringing peace and joy to the world.

Reflect

Jesus sent disciples to do his work with these words: "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way."

Luke 10:2

Discuss as a Family

- Share times when you felt the Lord calling you to do something.
- How can our family, school, and neighborhood spread Jesus' peace?

Pray

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Do

At bedtime, regularly pray for the needs of others. Ask God to show your family ways you can bring his love to others.

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Chapter 14

JESUS HELPED PEOPLE in need. He healed the sick, forgave sinners, and gave food to the hungry. He had a special love for those who were poor. Jesus calls us to do likewise because we are his followers. All Christians have many opportunities to do good works like Jesus did.

Reflect

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me."

Matthew 25:34–36

Discuss as a Family

- If Jesus came to our neighborhood and our parish, where would he find people in need?
- What can we do to help those in need?

Pray

You listen, LORD, to the needs
of the poor;
strengthen their heart and
incline your ear.

Psalm 10:17

Do

Reach out to an elderly neighbor, a family member who is sick, or someone else who is in need.

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GRADE 1

Chapter 15

JESUS TAUGHT US to love God with all our heart. This means that we love him with everything we have; we don't hold anything back. It also means that everything we do can become a way to love God.

Reflect

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Matthew 22:36–37

Discuss as a Family

- How do the members of our family love God through the things we already do?
- What else can we do to show our love for God?

Pray

God, our Father, I offer you today all that I think and do and say.
I offer it with what was done on earth
by Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

Do

Your child learned the Morning Prayer above. Pray it with your child before school.

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Chapter 16

JESUS' PARABLES TEACH us many important lessons, such as helping others. The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that everyone is our neighbor—not just people we like or who are like us. The story of the poor widow in the Temple teaches us that God is pleased even when we have only a small amount to offer.

Reflect

"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

Mark 12:43–44

Discuss as a Family

- What makes each of us unique? How is this a gift from God?
- What acts of kindness and generosity can we offer to God?

Pray

The LORD protects the resident alien,
comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow,
but thwarts the way of the wicked.

Psalm 146:9

Do

Guide your child to understand that even small acts of kindness and generosity are important.

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Chapter 17

YOUR CHILD IS learning about forgiveness by studying Jesus' role as the Good Shepherd. A shepherd makes sure that the sheep do not wander away. If some sheep do stray, he finds them and returns them to the flock. Likewise, Jesus is concerned about us when we do wrong. We can depend on him to forgive us when we sin and to restore our friendship with him.

Reflect

The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
In green pastures he makes me lie down;
to still waters he leads me;
he restores my soul.
He guides me along right paths
for the sake of his name.

Psalm 23:1–3

Discuss as a Family

- How has God shown care for our family?
- Why is it important to put things right after we have done something wrong?

Pray

Jesus, shepherd of our family, protect us from evil. Make us secure in your love.

Do

Pray Psalm 23 together.

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Chapter 19

JESUS CONTINUES TO be present to us today. He is present in a special way at Mass. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave his Body and Blood to his friends. At Mass we receive Jesus Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. At each Mass, Jesus offers himself to the Father, just as he did on Good Friday. We give thanks and praise to Jesus in the Mass. It is a time of great celebration.

Reflect

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you."

Luke 22:19–20

Discuss as a Family

- Why is it important to go to Mass?
- How is the Mass like a family meal?

Pray

O Christ, by your holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.

Do

Make plans to attend the Holy Thursday Mass as a family.

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Chapter 20

YOUR CHILD IS learning about Jesus' Resurrection and the ways that Jesus is still with us. Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday and appeared to many of his disciples, including the apostle Thomas, who doubted that he had risen. Jesus is present in his Church and her sacraments, most especially the Eucharist, and in the heart of his disciples.

Reflect

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

Luke 24:30–31

Discuss as a Family

Share ideas about the many ways that we are reminded of Jesus' presence—at home, in school, in our community, among our friends, in the parish, and at work.

Pray

Lord Jesus, open my eyes to see you.

Do

Make family preparations for an Easter celebration to honor the risen Jesus.

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Chapter 21

GOD IS PRESENT in our lives and acts in the world through the Holy Spirit. After he went to be with the Father, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to his Apostles. The Holy Spirit has been with us ever since. We receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism. Through the Spirit, we know the Father and the Son. The Spirit is present in our family, our parish, and our Church.

Reflect

[Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit."

John 20:21–22

Discuss as a Family

- We cannot see the Holy Spirit. Talk about other important things that are real, but that we cannot see.
- Discuss times when we thought God was giving us special help to deal with difficult situations.

Pray

Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with your love.

Do

At bedtime, pray together the Sign of the Cross. Remind your child that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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Chapter 22

YOUR CHILD IS learning about the Church—the family of faith that carries the Good News of Jesus to the world. Your child is part of this worldwide body. People of all races, cultures, and languages belong to the Church. We are all one body, united by our love for Christ and our desire to do his work. The visible sign of our unity is the pope, the head of the Church.

Reflect

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Matthew 28:19–20

Discuss as a Family

Talk about your experiences of the larger Church: images and articles about the pope, other church leaders, and Christians in other countries.

Pray

Bless your Church, Lord. Protect it. Make it strong.

Do

Do a family project on the pope. Find pictures of him. Find out what he said at recent celebrations and discuss his words.

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Chapter 23

MARY HAS A special place of honor in the Church. Because she is the mother of Jesus, she is the Mother of the Church, which carries on Jesus' work. This means she is the spiritual mother for your child and for all who share in Jesus' life through Baptism. Mary cares for us as a mother. We can turn to her in prayer. We can ask her to pray for us in times of need.

Reflect

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

John 19:26–27

Discuss as a Family

- What does a mother do for her family?
- What problems can Mary, our Mother in Heaven, help us with?

Pray

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

Do

At bedtime, ask your child to mention a special need he or she has. Pray three Hail Marys for this intention.

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Chapter 24

THE MOST IMPORTANT work of the Church is spreading the Good News of God's love for people everywhere. The Holy Spirit makes this possible. We share the Gospel primarily by acts of love. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the first Christians were known as people who loved one another. The Holy Spirit is with us today, guiding the Church and her members. Catholics are called to be people of loving hearts, loving words, and loving deeds.

Reflect

"Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Matthew 5:16

Discuss as a Family

- How have people in your family acted lovingly toward one another?
- How has your family helped others—in the neighborhood, in your extended family, at school, in the parish, or in volunteer work?

Pray

Lord, show us how to love.

Do

Review what your family has been doing to help others. Ask if there is more that the Lord wants you to do.

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