

Building Family Faith



Chapter 1

GOD CALLS US TO take part in his plan of salvation. He promises to help and bless all those who trustingly respond to his call. Abraham and Ruth are models of faith. They show us that having faith means listening for and obeying what God asks. They exemplify how faithfulness to God is good and proper and leads to a fuller, richer life.

Reflect

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name: you are mine.

Isaiah 43:1

Discuss as a Family

- What does this reading tell us about God's love?
- What good things can you name that God has given your family?
- How do you show your faithfulness to God in the way you live as a family?

Pray

I have called you by name:
you are mine.

Do

- Learn the meaning of each family member's name.
- Make a photo collage of your family. Write the words of Isaiah 43:1 around it.
- Ask your child to tell you the stories of Abraham and Ruth answering God's call.
- Make a connection between these stories and your family's experiences.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 2

EACH PERSON FULFILLS GOD'S plan differently. To aid us in doing his will, God gave us the necessary gifts and talents. He calls us to develop them as best we can and to use them for his praise and glory, our own good, and the good of others.

Reflect

“‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master’s joy.’”

Matthew 25:21

Discuss as a Family

- Have each family member identify the talents of the other family members.
- How can family members use their talents inside the home? Outside the home?

Pray

God, I offer you all that I am and all that I have.

Do

- Find a volunteer organization that can use your talents to help people in your community.
- Tell your children what you know about their ancestors’ interests and talents.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 3

GOD THE FATHER CALLS us to be his holy people. He gives us his Son, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus became man to show us how to live a holy life in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to lead, strengthen, and form us into a holy people under the guidance of the Church.

Reflect

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

Discuss as a Family

- What are some ways we can know what God is like?
- Name some saints. How do they help us become holy?
- Do you know anyone who is holy? Why do you think that person is holy?

Pray

Holy Family, help our family be holy.

Do

- Take turns describing something you know about Jesus.
- Read the Bible as a family for a few minutes each day or at some special time each week.
- Ask your child to share the story of Saint Francis.
- Decide as a family to make a donation to a charity that, like Saint Francis, helps people who are poor.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 4

AT THE ANNUNCIATION, MARY was asked to be the mother of Jesus, God's Son. When she said yes, she became our spiritual mother—the Mother of the Church and of all people. We follow Mary's example by responding to God's call willingly and promptly, as she did. We honor her in a special way by praying the Rosary.

Reflect

"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

- What makes Mary such a good spiritual role model for us?
- How can we answer God's call to us as Mary did?
- When did God call you today, and how did you answer?

Pray

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

Do

- Display an image or statue of Mary prominently in your home.
- Make a rosary out of beads or seeds, nuts, corn, or flowers.
- When you begin a long trip, pray the Rosary together as a family.
- At mealtimes, sing a song honoring Mary.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 6

THE PRINCIPAL TRUTHS OF the Catholic faith are found in the Creed. The central mystery of our faith is the Trinity, one God in Three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One important truth children learned is that God is faithful to us. He keeps his promises.

Reflect

Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

John 11:25–26

Discuss as a Family

- Choose one of the statements of belief in the Apostles’ Creed (page 47). Discuss what it means.
- Talk about a time when someone kept a promise he or she had made to you. How did you feel when the promise was kept? What did you say to the person?
- How do we respond to God, who we know keeps his promises?

Pray

I will sing of your mercy forever, LORD.

Psalms 89:2

Do

Pray the Apostles’ Creed together.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 7

GOD SAVED HIS PEOPLE from oppression, fed them when they were hungry, and made a covenant of love with them. We recall these deeds when we receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Reflect

In your love you led the people you redeemed; in your strength you guided them to your holy dwelling.

Exodus 15:13

Discuss as a Family

- We have many agreements with one another, with friends, and with teachers. Which are the hardest ones to keep? Which are the easiest?
- What is God's part in the covenant we have with him? What is our part?
- How is our covenant with God like the agreements we make with one another in our family?

Pray

Praise the LORD, for he is good;
for his mercy endures forever.

Psalms 136:1

Do

Make a written agreement—a covenant—with a family member to exchange services or acts of kindness this coming week. Each evening, check in as to how each person has kept his or her part of the bargain.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 8

GOD IS ALL-HOLY and all-powerful. He knows all things. Yet this mighty and holy God loves us with a father's love. He is present in our world, in our family, and in each of our hearts.

Reflect

LORD, you have probed me, you know me:
you know when I sit and stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.

Psalm 139:1–2

Discuss as a Family

- When do we feel closest to God?
- Ask each family member to choose a favorite prayer. Talk about why he or she chose it.
- When have we felt the power and majesty of God?

Pray

Holy God, you are our loving Father. Make us holy as you are holy.

Do

Visit a church when it is quiet. Open yourselves to the peace and grandeur of God.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 10

THE SIN OF ADAM and Eve weakened human nature and changed humans' relationship with God. Jesus redeemed us from sin, but we still must struggle against evil.

Reflect

Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:2

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about a time when you saw something that was wrong and did something about it.
- Discuss your understanding of sin.
- Have you ever known the right thing to do and wanted to do it but found it difficult? Discuss.

Pray

Come into our hearts, Lord Jesus. Give us the courage to do what is right.

Do

Have your child make a list of people with whom he or she has had disagreements. Pray for them at bedtime.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 11

GOD BECAME MAN IN the person of Jesus. Jesus lived a fully human life. We can learn from him, imitate him, and follow him to heaven. Jesus is the Light of the World.

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

- Jesus was part of a family. What would his parents have done for him? What would he have done for his parents?
- The angels sang with joy when Jesus came. How do we praise and honor Jesus?
- How is Jesus living among us today?

Pray

Thank you, Jesus, for becoming human like us. Show us how to become more like you.

Do

As part of your family’s celebration of Christmas, place a candle on the dinner table as a symbol of the light of Christ. Talk about how this light burns brightly in your family.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 12

THE KINGDOM OF GOD arrived in our world when Jesus was born. We help spread this kingdom through our efforts to love and serve God and our fellow human beings.

Reflect

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”

Matthew 13:45–46

Discuss as a Family

- How does our family love and serve others? What more could we do?
- What are the most difficult things we do? Why do we do them? How are they worth the sacrifice?
- Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is something we can't live without. What is our most precious possession?

Pray

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

Do

As a family, choose something you can do together to love and serve others.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 13

JESUS CURED PEOPLE AND brought them back to life as a sign of the new life he brings to us. When we take care of others in need, we are a sign of Jesus' healing work.

Reflect

"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them."

Luke 7:22

Discuss as a Family

- Jesus wants to heal what is broken in our minds, hearts, and bodies. What do we need to have healed as individuals? What needs to be healed in our family?
- What needs to be healed in the lives of people outside our family—our neighbors, other children at school, or people in our parish?

Pray

Lord Jesus, strengthen us. Heal us. Send new life to our family.

Do

Ask each family member to do one thoughtful or generous thing this week for someone who is sad or lonely. Consider what that person would like best and what each family member is best able to do.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 15

BY SUFFERING AND DYING, Jesus broke the power of evil in our world. His Death was also a lesson in how to love. When we suffer, we can remember and imitate Jesus' love.

Reflect

"This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

John 15:12–13

Discuss as a Family

- Discuss Jesus' suffering and Death as acts of love. How do we experience Jesus' love through these acts?
- What burdens is our family carrying now? How can we give one another comfort?

Pray

O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured. Amen.

Do

As a family, pray a decade of the Rosary for friends, family, and neighbors who are suffering.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 16

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD. His Resurrection has opened the gates of heaven to us. Because Jesus conquered death, we too can look forward to eternal life in heaven.

Reflect

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

Romans 6:8–9

Discuss as a Family

- Jesus' first words to his disciples after his Resurrection were "Peace be with you." (John 20:21) Where do we need peace in our family?
- Jesus' Resurrection means that he is present in our lives. How is Jesus present to us? Where do we see him in our family?

Pray

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving us new life. Help us see you in all things.

Do

Plan how your family can help bring peace to people in distress. If possible, choose a situation close at hand, such as family members or friends who are ill or suffering.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 17

THE RISEN JESUS IS Lord and King of all creation. One day he will come in glory to judge all people. We honor our king by acting kindly and generously toward others.

Reflect

“Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘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

- Why is it important to reach out to others with love?
- Together as a family, read the passage above from Matthew. Discuss how the loving actions described by the king in Jesus’ parable take place within your family.

Pray

Lord Jesus, the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Do

Ask each family member to describe a need that he or she has. Decide together how you will meet each need.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 18

AFTER HE RETURNED to the Father, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to those who followed him. This same Holy Spirit comes to us at Baptism and enables us to do the work of Christ.

Reflect

And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

Ephesians 4:30–32

Discuss as a Family

- When did you have a hard time doing the right thing but did it anyway? How were you able to do it?
- At school and at work, how are we challenged to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving?

Pray

V. Come, Holy Spirit, and fill the hearts of your faithful,

R. And kindle in them the fire of your love.

V. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created,

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Do

Pray this Prayer to the Holy Spirit with your child at his or her bedtime.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 20

IN BAPTISM, WE RECEIVE new life in Christ and the Holy Spirit. We grow in grace through praying, participating at Mass, receiving the sacraments, and sharing Christ's love with others.

Reflect

"I have baptized you with water;
[the one coming after me] will
baptize you with the holy Spirit."

Mark 1:8

Pray

You visit the earth and water it,
make it abundantly fertile.
God's stream is filled with water.

Psalms 65:10

Discuss as a Family

- Share family stories about Baptism. Describe the day of your child's Baptism. If you have witnessed the Baptism of adults and/or teens at the Easter Vigil, describe what you saw and heard.
- Baptism brings us into a new family, the Church. How is the church family like our family?

Do

Plan a small family party on or near the anniversary of your child's Baptism. Share family photos of the event. Serve your child's favorite treats.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 21

JESUS SENT THE HOLY SPIRIT to help us. The Spirit comes to us at Baptism and is present in us throughout our lives, showing us how to become more like Jesus.

Reflect

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit.

Acts of the Apostles 2:3–4

Discuss as a Family

- The Holy Spirit is our helper. Tell about a recent time when you felt the need for the Holy Spirit's help.
- Describe a time when you asked God for help and received it. How did it feel to ask for help?
- How can we help one another in our family?

Pray

Verse. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Response. And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Do

At bedtime, pray a prayer to the Holy Spirit. Suggest that your child ask the Holy Spirit's help for a particular need.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 22

SIN SEPARATES US from God and other people. But God is always ready to forgive us and restore us to his friendship.

Reflect

[Jesus] said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

Luke 7:48

Discuss as a Family

- As a family, read the four Gospel stories about forgiveness found on pages 154–155 of your child’s book. Which is your favorite? Why?
- In the story of the woman at Simon’s house, Jesus taught that the more we are forgiven, the more we love. How have you found yourself being more loving knowing that you are forgiven?

Pray

My God, I am sorry for all my sins with all my heart.

Do

Encourage your child to make an examination of conscience. See page 198 in his or her book.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 23

JESUS RESTORES US to friendship with God in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. In this sacrament, we express our sorrow for sin and receive forgiveness.

Reflect

“But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.”

Luke 15:32

Discuss as a Family

- Talk about experiences of forgiving family members and of being forgiven by them.
- Discuss any anxiety you might feel about talking to the priest when you go to confession. Some nervousness is normal, but it will go away quickly.

Pray

Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Do

Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a family.

Building Family Faith



Chapter 24

THE MASS IS the great meal we share as God's family. We hear and understand Jesus' Word in the Scripture readings and the Homily. Then we receive the risen Jesus' Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

Reflect

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Matthew 26:26

Discuss as a Family

- The Mass is a meal. How is it similar to and different from the meals we eat together as a family?
- Discuss things for which we are grateful. What are we grateful for today?
- How can we show our gratitude to Jesus for the Eucharist?

Pray

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for giving us the gift of yourself in the Eucharist.

Do

Prepare for Sunday Mass by reading the Gospel together as a family.