



6

God's Family

God, our loving Father,
thank you for all the ways you bless me.
Help me to be aware that every person,
place, and adventure I experience is an
opportunity to love you more.
Fill me with a desire to change and to grow,
and give me the grace to become
the-best-version-of-myself in
every moment of every day.

Amen.

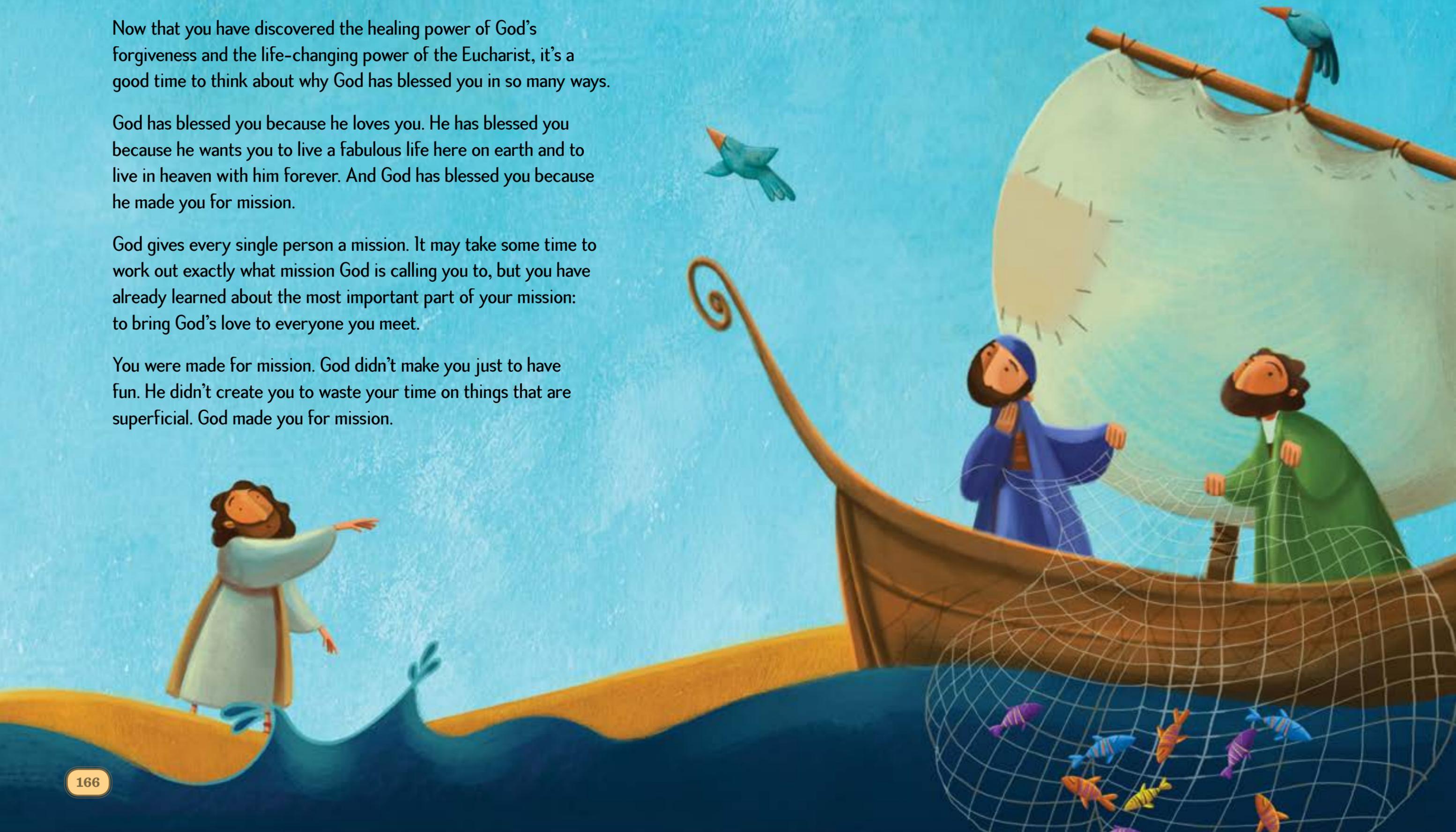
Made for Mission

Now that you have discovered the healing power of God's forgiveness and the life-changing power of the Eucharist, it's a good time to think about why God has blessed you in so many ways.

God has blessed you because he loves you. He has blessed you because he wants you to live a fabulous life here on earth and to live in heaven with him forever. And God has blessed you because he made you for mission.

God gives every single person a mission. It may take some time to work out exactly what mission God is calling you to, but you have already learned about the most important part of your mission: to bring God's love to everyone you meet.

You were made for mission. God didn't make you just to have fun. He didn't create you to waste your time on things that are superficial. God made you for mission.



Your Parish Family

Did you know you belong to the most famous family in the world? That's right. You are blessed to be a member of the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church is the most famous family in the world.

In almost every place around the world you can find a Catholic Church. You experience the Church through your local parish. Your parish is made up of men, women, and children just like you, who are all trying to become the-best-version-of-themselves and live holy lives.

When you were a baby your family took care of you. They fed you, cleaned you, and made sure you had what you needed to grow healthy

and strong. Your parish feeds your soul. Your parish makes sure you have what you need to grow spiritually. Your parish helped you prepare for your First Reconciliation and your First Communion, so that you can be ready for the great mission God dreamed for you.

Throughout your life, there are going to be moments of great joy and moments of disappointment, failure, and sadness. All these experiences are part of life. We all experience them. But our spiritual family, our parish, is there for us through it all to comfort and care for us.





You are blessed! The Catholic Church is the greatest force for good in the world. Every day your Catholic family feeds millions of people all around the world. Through your generosity and mine together, we are able to give housing to the homeless and clothing for those who have none and take care of sick people in every country around the world.

Do you know why the Catholic Church does all this?

We do it because we are all God's children. We are one big family. We have been given the mission to bring God's love to every person on earth. And families take care of one another. The Catholic Church is the biggest family in the world, and you are a part of it.

You are blessed to be Catholic.

Your parish is blessed to have you. I am excited to see the ways you use your talents to serve your parish. You see, your parish needs you. Without you, there would be a big hole in your parish. Your parish is helping you become the-best-version-of-yourself, but it also needs you to help it become the-best-version-of-itself.

That's right, God needs every parish in the world to be the-best-version-of-itself so that together they can powerfully serve every single person on earth. That's a big mission, isn't it?

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he said to his disciples, "Go out into the world and share my love and my message with every person in every country" (Matthew 28:19). He gives this same mission to you and me today. He wants us to share his love and his message with the world.

Go Make a Difference

Once upon a time, there was a boy who lived by the ocean. Every afternoon he would walk along the beach. One day he noticed that as the tide had gone out it had left hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand. He realized the starfish would die if they were left there, so he started to pick them up one by one and throw them back into the water.

As the boy got to the other end of the beach, an old man came walking from the other direction. He saw what the boy was doing and said, "What are you doing, boy? You'll never make a difference. Why don't you just enjoy your walk?"

The boy ignored the old man and continued to pick the starfish up, one at a time, and throw them back into the water. But as the old man got closer, he came up to the boy and said, "You're wasting your time, boy. There are hundreds of them, maybe thousands. And there will be more tomorrow. You'll never make a difference."

The boy smiled, reached down in the sand, picked up one more starfish from the sand, and threw it as far as he could out into the ocean. Then he turned to the old man and said, "I made a difference for that one!"



You may be a great football player or a fabulous singer, but your greatest talent is your ability to make a difference in other people's lives. You will be amazed how you can bring joy to others by using this talent.

As disciples of Jesus we should always be looking for ways to make a difference in other people's lives. This is one of the ways we live out the mission that God has given us to bring his love to the world.

Just like the old man in the story, there will be people who try to discourage you. But the Holy Spirit is constantly encouraging you, saying, "You can do it!" "You're amazing!" "You can make a difference!" "You've got what it takes!"

There will be times when you cannot do everything. For example, there are millions of hungry people in the world. You cannot feed them all, but you might be able to help feed one. Don't let what you can't do interfere with what you can do. Do your little bit. If everyone does their own little bit, we will change the world.

Jesus has given himself to you in the Eucharist. Now Jesus is sending you out into the world on a mission. There is a song we sing at church sometimes that perfectly summarizes this mission. It is called "Go Make a Difference." Here are some of the lyrics:

**Go make a difference; we can make a difference
Go make a difference in the world
Go make a difference; you can make a difference
Go make a difference in the world.**



The Power of Prayer

Another powerful way for us to make a difference is by praying for other people. Prayer is powerful. Prayer makes a difference.

Perhaps you hear about a tornado on the other side of the world that has destroyed homes and fields, and now the people are hungry and homeless. You cannot go there and help them, and you may have no money to send them. But you can always pray for them.

Each day our prayer should be a great adventure that takes us all around the world. The adventure of prayer may begin in your own home, praying for your family; then perhaps you pray for your grandparents in California, or New York, or Florida; then you pray for a friend who moved to a new city; then you pray for the pope, in Rome; then you pray for the hungry children in Africa, and the people who were hurt in an earthquake in China. Prayer is a chance to travel all around the world.

And our prayer is not even limited to this world. We also pray for the souls in purgatory. Imagine being in purgatory and having nobody to pray for you. That would be quite sad, so we should each take a moment every day to pray for the souls in purgatory.

Prayer is a powerful way to make a difference. We can and should pray for ourselves, thanking God for all the ways he has blessed us and asking him to give us what we need to fulfill the mission he has given us here on earth. And we can and should pray for other people every day of our lives.

You are blessed, and you can bless others by praying for them.



From the Bible: I Will Be With You Always

On Good Friday when Jesus was hanging on the cross, the disciples were sad and confused. They had placed all their hope in Jesus and now he was dead.

The disciples loved Jesus. He had been their teacher and their friend. They'd had great expectations that he would be the one sent from God to save them, just like they had read about in the Scriptures. But now he was gone and they felt deserted and alone.

Imagine how long Friday night was for them. They probably couldn't sleep, thinking about everything that had happened, wondering what would happen next. They were probably afraid that the people who had killed Jesus might try to kill them too.

I wonder what they did on Saturday. I wonder what they thought and what they said to each other. That Friday and Saturday were the worst days of their lives.

But on Sunday morning everything changed. Jesus rose from the dead. He had told them he would, but maybe they didn't understand, or maybe they forgot, or maybe they didn't believe!

When Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples, you can imagine how amazed and excited they were.

Over the next forty days Jesus appeared to many people, to encourage them in their mission and remind them of his great love.

When it was time for Jesus to ascend into heaven, he had a very important message for us all. He said to the disciples, "I am going now to be with my Father in heaven, but wherever you are in this world, I will always be with you at your side."

Adapted from Matthew 28:20



Jesus has been keeping this promise for two thousand years. He is waiting for you to get out of bed when you wake up in the morning. He rides with you to school. He is there in class and on the playground. He cheers for you at soccer and baseball. And he tucks you into bed at night and kisses you on your forehead.

Jesus loves you and he wants to be with you.

He is also with us always in the Eucharist. Every time you visit a church and see that little red light on beside the tabernacle, Jesus is there with you in a very special way.

Life is difficult, and we often have to make big decisions. When I have to make a decision, I like to stop by church and sit with Jesus in the tabernacle and talk to him. I talk to him about the decision I need to make, and I ask him for his advice. Then I sit quietly and let him speak to my heart.

Jesus wants you to remember that he is always there for you. Whatever challenges come your way in life, you are never alone; Jesus is at your side. He is your friend and your teacher.

You are blessed!





Trusting God

Our God is a God of purpose. He does things on purpose and he made you for a purpose.

As you journey through life, look for the purpose in things. Eating is fun and pleasurable, but the purpose of food is to fuel the body. Going to school and seeing your friends is great, but the purpose of school is to learn new things. Winning at soccer is exciting, but the purpose of sports is to help us grow strong and stay healthy.

By realizing that God has a purpose for everything, we learn to trust him and the beautiful plans he has for our lives. Keep your eye on the purpose of things. If you are ever confused, ask God, “What is the purpose of . . . ?”

The Bible tells us that there is a time for everything. There is a time to laugh and a time to cry, a time to sow and a time to reap, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to rejoice and a time to mourn, a time to speak and a time to listen. And it is always a good time to trust in God and the beautiful plans he has for your life (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

This is a time for you to celebrate. Your First Communion is one of the great moments in your life. The Eucharist will help you become the-best-version-of-yourself, grow in virtue, and live a holy life.



There may be times in your life when you feel like God is far away, but he is not. There may be times in your life when you feel that God has forgotten you, but he will never forget you. He is with you always, at your side.

Life is a wonderful journey. Anytime you feel lost or confused, turn to Jesus and ask him to guide you and comfort you. The Eucharist reminds us that God is with us and that he wants to take care of us.

There is a time for everything and a purpose for everything. Place your trust in God. Throughout the day, a very simple prayer to repeat is: Jesus, I trust in you.

Pray it over and over and over again. “Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you.”

It has been a pleasure joining you for this part of your journey. Everyone at Dynamic Catholic is praying for you every day. We hope the lessons you have learned preparing for your First Reconciliation and your First Communion will live with you forever.

You are blessed. Blessed to be Catholic, blessed to be alive, and blessed to be loved. Try to remind yourself of that each day. Each morning when you wake up, and each night when you go to bed, whisper quietly to yourself, “I am blessed.”

Closing Prayer

Explorers carry compasses so they don't get lost. A compass is a tool with a little arrow on it that always points North. Even if you have no idea where you are, your compass will help you find your way home.

Life is a great journey. You are an explorer and Jesus is your compass. There will be times when you don't know what to do next. Turn to Jesus during those times; he wants to help you live an amazing life.

And remember, you are not the first one to make this great journey, and you are not alone. Just as you are praying for other people, there are some great people praying for you. The angels and saints are in heaven cheering for you and praying for you. Every time you make a decision, they are praying you make a great choice and, with God's help, become the-best-version-of-yourself.

So, let's pray with the angels and saints to finish our time together:

**Loving Father, thank you for all the ways you bless me.
Inspire me to share your love
with everyone who crosses my path.
Never let me forget that you are always with me.**

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.
Saint Michael, the Archangel, pray for us.
Saint John the Baptist, pray for us.
Saint Joseph, pray for us.
Saint Peter, pray for us.
Saint Paul, pray for us.
Saint Matthew, pray for us.
Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for us.
Saint Anthony, pray for us.
Saint Francis, pray for us.
Saint Clare, pray for us.
Saint Catherine, pray for us.
All holy men and women of God, pray for us.**

Amen.

