

The Last Things

Preparation for the Session

Turn to Page 275,
the Family + Faith page.

Read the Consider This feature. What thoughts or reactions do you have to the opening question?

In this chapter you will cover the following objectives:

- Discuss Jesus' teaching on the Last Judgment, using Matthew 25
- Understand that at the time of death, each person will be judged and God will decide where he or she will spend eternity
- Identify how Christians prepare for eternal life by serving God and one another right now
- Relate the symbols used at a Mass of Christian Burial with our Baptism and Jesus' Resurrection

Parents, Consider This: *Scientists that study the brain tell us that there is evidence that rituals help us to deal with the anxiety and fear we experience in life. Among the greatest anxieties and fears we confront are death and the meaning of life. As Catholics, one of the most beautiful rituals we experience are the Funeral Rites. From the prayers at the funeral home to the prayers at the cemetery, we are reminded that life is not over—it changes. The Mass itself is filled with symbols of hope and resurrection. From the Easter candle that reminds us of Christ, the light who saved us from the darkness of sin, to the incense that surrounds the body as a sign of our being lifted up to God, we repeat over and over again, that this earthly life is not the end.*

Read these other sections on the Family + Faith Page.

- *Your Child Learned.* This highlights some of the content of Sacred Scripture and Tradition in the chapter.
- *Children At This Age.* This will help you to understand how your child processes and learns at this developmental level.



Let's Sing: These songs connect the session topics and can be downloaded from aliveinchrist.osv.com.

- I Know That My Redeemer Lives
- A Song of Farewell

INVITE: Encountering God in His Word

Turn to Page 267,
The Last Things

After gathering the supplies that you will need, find a quiet place to be with your child. This is a sacred time—a time when you will be present to each other and to the Lord. You may want to light a candle as you begin.



Let Us Pray Invite your child to make the Sign of the Cross. Read aloud the Psalm verse from the book. Help your child to respond.

Say: In today's Scripture, Jesus assures us that there is eternal life. We know that life forever in union with God is possible because Jesus died and rose from the dead. Listen to what God wants you to know about eternal life.



Guide your child through the Preparing for God's Word Ritual you learned in the Introduction Session or play Track 1 of the *Songs of Scripture* CD.

- Proclaim God's Word in the Parchment Paper box on the page.
- Maintain several moments of silence.
- Ask: What did you hear God say to you today?

Invite your child to respond and also share what you heard.

Now, look at the *What Do You Wonder?* box.

Say: God reminds Moses that he is the God of the living. Even those who have died, live forever. The Church prepares Christians for death by means of last rites. In the funeral liturgy, the Church proclaims the message of eternal life.

Invite your child to respond to the questions. Ask what else they might wonder about being alive for God.

DISCOVER: Learning God's Truth

Turn to Page 268,
Choosing Love and Life

Tell your child that you will be discussing what the Church teaches about life after death. They may have many questions. Answer their questions as honestly as you can and say, "I don't know, but I will find out," if you feel as if you do not have adequate knowledge or the ability to put the correct answer into words for your child.

Read aloud the text.

Ask how Christians "choose" eternal life in Heaven.



Direct your child to proclaim the Scripture passage. Have them listen for the acts of kindness that will separate the righteous from the others.

Ask: Based on this Scripture passage, and without reading the caption, can you tell me what is going on in the stained glass artwork on this page?

Help your child to understand that Jesus died to give us the gift of eternal happiness with God. We can have this, but only if we act according to God's will for us, which is always to do the loving thing.

Play the song “Least of my Brothers” from the *Songs of Scripture* CD, Track 16. The lyrics are available at aliveinchrist.osv.com. Ask your child to take two verses that he/she finds most important and, on a separate sheet of paper, illustrate a way he/she can do that action for others.

Parents, Consider This: *No matter how many times we experience death, we never become skilled at offering words of sympathy, because there simply are no words. Pain and loss leave us speechless. Teaching your child how to speak with actions as early as possible will help her/him know how to do this as an adult. Taking her/him with you to a funeral home to offer your sympathy and say a prayer for the deceased will help her/him learn how important it is to be present for those who are experiencing loss. Bringing food or mentioning weeks after the funeral that you went to visit someone makes visible the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Dying is part of living. How we deal with the loss speaks loudly and clearly regarding our belief about this world and the next.*

This would be a good time to share with your child an experience you’ve had in dealing with the death of a loved one. Be honest about the way that you felt.

Turn to Page 269,
Eternal Life

Invite your child to silently read the two paragraphs.

Review the definitions of the terms, **Heaven, Hell, eternal life, Purgatory,** and **Particular Judgment,** in the Catholics Faith Word box. Ask your child to retell the definitions to you in their own words.

Discuss how Christians prepare for eternal life in Heaven. For more information on this topic, have them turn to page 310 in the Our Catholic Tradition reference section of their books to read “Everlasting Life.” If you do not have an answer for any of their questions, tell them that you will find out and get back to them.

Turn to Page 270,
Establishing Hope

Read aloud the first two paragraphs.

Tell your child to listen for an explanation of why humans experience death. Emphasize that death is the consequence of sin but that, because of Jesus sacrifice, it can also be the start of a new life for us in Heaven with God.

Have your child read aloud the final paragraph. Read the definition of the highlighted word, **viaticum,** in the Catholic Faith Words box.

Ask which three Sacraments may be included in the last rites. Discuss the purpose of the rites.

Ask: Why do the last rites sometimes include the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation? *(The person may want to ask forgiveness for all that he/she has done that is sinful.)*

Turn to Page 271,
The Journey Home

Recall a time when you attended a Catholic funeral together. If your child hasn't attended a funeral, share with them what you remember about the funeral liturgy.

Alternate reading the paragraphs on the page.

Point out how the following three objects are used during a funeral Mass: holy water, the Paschal (Easter) Candle, and the white pall that covers the casket.

Activity

Have your child complete the Connect Your Faith activity.

LIVE: Living Our Faith

Turn to Page 272,
Our Catholic Life

Tell your child that this section will give both of you ideas on how to comfort people who are grieving.

Read aloud each of the steps or suggestions. As each step is read, ask your child for practical examples of how to carry it out.

Ask: What do you think is happening in the artwork on this page?



Complete the gold-star activity.

Turn to Page 273,
People of Faith

Read the paragraph about Saint Stephen.

- Share your reactions to the information.
- What do Christians know about death that gives them hope?

Turn to Page 275,
Family + Faith Page and
conclude with the Let's Pray
prayer on this page.

Parents, Consider This: *It's important to form our children in the common language of prayer. We encourage you to pray the Morning Prayer (see Page 323), during your morning prayer this week.*



To access and send an eAssessment to your child, go to the Student and Family section of aliveinchrist.osv.com.