



God, Our Creator and Father

Begin

Say: *The title of this book is Finding God.* **Ask:** *Who is God? (our Father and Creator) Where do we find him?* Discuss with your child where you each find God in your everyday life. Tell your child that you find God in him or her and in your love for him or her. Read aloud the unit title. **Say:** *Let's begin this book together by talking about God as our Father and Creator. God created everything that is. His creation shows his love for us.*

Introduce the Saint

Focus your child's attention on the picture. **Ask:** *Why do you think the artist shows a light around Saint Ignatius's head? (because he is holy)* **Say:** *Artists use a halo to show that someone is holy.*

Invite your child to read aloud the paragraph on page 1 about Saint Ignatius of Loyola. **Ask:** *Why do you think Ignatius recognized God in every living creature? (All living things are part of God's creation.)*

Turn to page 2. Read aloud the first paragraph. **Say:** *Ignatius's family was wealthy.* Ask your child to read aloud the second paragraph. **Say:** *A monastery is a place where some men live apart from the everyday world to give their lives to God.* Read aloud the last paragraph. **Ask:** *What did Ignatius say we should do if we want to know God? (We can start by taking care of the world around us.)*

Ask: *What are exercises? (doing something, practicing)* Tell your child that Saint Ignatius wrote *Spiritual Exercises* to help people practice their faith—talking to God, listening to God, loving God, and finding God in all things.

With your child add Ignatius's feast day, July 31, to your calendar. Plan an event together to celebrate the teachings of Saint Ignatius.

Created to Be Happy

Engage: Page 3

- ▶ Invite your child to join you for a walk around your neighborhood. Take turns pointing out the beauty and goodness of God's creation.
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's response. Point out the picture. **Ask:** *What can this child do to care for God's creation? (water the vegetables) How can we care for God's creation? (pick up litter, water plants, take care of animals) In this session we will learn about the wonders of God's creation and how we are called to take care of it.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about what you saw on your walk and the goodness of God's creation. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 4–5

- ▶ On a sheet of paper, take turns with your child writing statements about things you believe, such as *I believe family is important* and *I believe in my child*.
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud page 4. **Ask:** *What is an apostle? (a special follower of Jesus') What is a creed? (a statement that tells what people believe) What is the Apostles' Creed? (a statement of what the apostles and Catholics believe)* Read aloud the first three lines of the Apostles' Creed. Then say the three lines of the Apostles' Creed without looking at the page, alternating lines with your child.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *We find God in his creation.*
- ▶ Read aloud the heading and the first paragraph on page 5. **Say:** *A psalm is a prayer in the form of a poem or song that uses colorful language to praise God.* Invite your child to read aloud the adapted psalm with you.
- ▶ Discuss beautiful things you saw this week. Read aloud Your Own Song of Praise and invite your child to write his or her own song of praise. Write your own song and share it with your child.

Art Exploration: Page 227

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a garden with flowers, leaves, and birds.
- ▶ **Say:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the colors, flowers, plants, animals, and sky.

- ▶ **Say:** *Each of these things was created by God and can tell us about him. For example, the different beautiful flowers tell us that God gives us life and gives us a variety of beautiful living things to enjoy and care for.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 227. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud God's Wonders. **Ask:** *How can we give glory to God for his creation? (through prayer, by taking care of his creation)*
- ▶ Read aloud Small Wonders. **Ask:** *What does the word wonders mean? (something different, special)* Discuss other small wonders you and your child have noticed.
Say: *All the wonderful things in nature, even the tiniest of wonders, reflect the beauty of God's creation. God must love us very much to have given us all these beautiful things.*
- ▶ Take a walk with your child or look out the window, and have your child complete the activity I Spy a Small Natural Wonder.
- ▶ Consider playing I Spy with your child, such as "I spy something that is green and has three round leaves." Use clues to guide your child to see the small natural wonders of creation.
- ▶ With your child use watercolor paints, crayons, markers, or colored pencils to make garden scenes of your own. Include in your pictures both big and small wonders from God, as well as your family enjoying God's gifts.

Reflect: Pages 6–7

- ▶ Together look at page 6. **Ask:** *What do you think the child in the picture is feeling?*
Say: *Prayer is a special time to be aware of God's presence.*
- ▶ Read aloud the heading and first paragraph. Invite your child to read the prayer with you. Read aloud the last paragraph. Invite your child to spend a few moments in silence, using his or her own words, thoughts, and feelings to talk to God. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the heading on page 7. **Ask:** *How do we get to know one another? (through our words and actions)*
- ▶ Read aloud the paragraph. **Ask:** *Why did God create all things? (because of his love)*
How can we know God? (by reading the Bible)
- ▶ Read Loving God's Creation and have your child complete the activity. Ask your child to tell what he or she loves in God's creation and explain each drawing.

Respond: Page 8

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can be kind to people, animals, and all of God's creation.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

Created to Be Together

Engage: Page 9

- ▶ Discuss helpers in your community, such as police officers or crossing guards.
Ask: *Who are helpers in our Church community?* (altar servers, catechists, lectors)
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's response. **Say:** *In this session we will learn how to give praise to God and how to share God's love with others and help people in need.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about the people who help others at church. **Ask:** *How can you serve your Church community?* (help with a service activity, such as a food drive) Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 10–11

- ▶ With your child talk about your own experiences praying. **Ask:** *When do you like to pray? Is it quiet? Do you tell God about your day?*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud page 10. **Ask:** *Who are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity?* (God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) Point to the symbol that represents the Trinity. **Say:** *The hand represents God, the cross represents Jesus, and the dove represents the Holy Spirit. Let's think of the Trinity as we pray the Sign of the Cross together.* Pray the prayer together.
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. **Say:** *Praying together the Sign of the Cross unites our Church community.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud page 11. **Ask:** *What does the Glory Be to the Father help us remember about God?* (He created us; he is with us now and always will be.) *What do the Sign of the Cross and the Glory Be to the Father have in common?* (They praise God as the Trinity.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *John wrote several letters to his friends about the importance of spreading God's love. We can read his letters in the Bible. Together find the verse in your Bible.*

Art Exploration: Page 228

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Saint Elizabeth spinning wool.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including Saint Elizabeth's appearance, clothing, and actions.

- ▶ **Say:** *Although Elizabeth appears young, she had the power and the courage to change her world because she believed she was an instrument of God's love.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 228. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph of Sharing God's Love. **Say:** *Elizabeth's family was wealthy.* **Ask:** *How did she help others?* (started a hospital, cared for people who were sick or poor)
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the adaptation from John. **Ask:** *How do we bring God's love to life?* (by loving one another)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Showing Your Love and then complete the activity. Remind your child to begin with small actions and words to spread God's love.
- ▶ Ask your child to consider the painting of Saint Elizabeth and to recall his or her idea about showing love to a friend. Invite your child to use watercolor paints to make a self-portrait featuring his or her idea for sharing God's love. Display the picture in your home.

Reflect: Pages 12–13

- ▶ Together look at page 12. **Ask:** *Where is the girl in the picture?* (in a forest) Remind your child to take several deep breaths before he or she prays. Read aloud the heading and the first paragraph. **Say:** *Now we'll pray our special prayer of praise to the Trinity.*
- ▶ **Say:** *I'll read parts of the prayer and then I'll pause so you can imagine what I describe.* After praying *Amen*, read aloud the last paragraph. Invite your child to spend a few minutes in silence to thank God. Pray aloud *Amen*.
- ▶ Read aloud the heading and the first paragraph on page 13. **Say:** *We have heard many Bible stories about Jesus.* **Ask:** *How does Jesus act in these stories?* (kind, loving, understanding) Read aloud *What Would Jesus Say?* Have your child complete the activity and discuss the answers. Ask your child if he or she has heard these sentences at school, on the playground, or in your home.
- ▶ Read aloud *Kindness Counts*. Give your child crayons or markers to complete the drawing activity. Discuss your child's picture.

Respond: Page 14

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud *Ways of Being Like Jesus*. Ask your child to suggest specific ways he or she can respond to people who are sick or poor as Jesus did.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the *With My Family* suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

God Is Our Father

Engage: Page 15

- ▶ Point out the picture. **Ask:** *What is this girl doing? (praying)* **Say:** *Jesus taught us how to pray to God.*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Discuss your child's responses. Talk about why we pray. Share this easy recall for ways of prayer. Please: prayers for oneself or another person; Thanks: prayers of gratitude; Ow!: prayers for forgiveness and sorrow; Wow!: prayers of adoration and praise. **Say:** *In this session we are going to learn about a special way in which Jesus taught us to pray.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think of an example of each type of prayer. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 16–17

- ▶ Ask your child to describe his or her friends. **Ask:** *How are they alike? How are they different?* **Say:** *Even though you and your friends have different backgrounds, you are able to play together.*
- ▶ Read aloud page 16. **Ask:** *What does reveals mean? (making known what was not known before)* Point out the vocabulary word, *Abba*, in dark type. **Say:** *This is how Jesus referred to God, just as some children refer to their fathers as Dad. God our Father loves and cares for us just as our families and friends love and care for us.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. **Say:** *In the Lord's Prayer, we praise God. We ask him to give us what we need, and we ask for his forgiveness.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 17. **Say:** *When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are telling God we love him.* Pray the Lord's Prayer together slowly.
- ▶ Read aloud Forgive Each Other. Invite your child to complete the activity and share your experiences together.
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Demonstrate the *orans* position. **Say:** *The priest uses this position when praying the Lord's Prayer and when giving the Final Blessing at Mass.*

Art Exploration: Page 229

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of children making peace with one another.

- ▶ **Say:** *Whom do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail. **Ask:** *What do you think happened? What can you tell about the children's feelings?*
- ▶ **Say:** *God wants us to know that we will always be loved, even when we sin. He wants us to love others even when we're angry or disappointed with them.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 229. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Caring Friends. **Ask:** *How can we care for one another? (by listening to and helping one another) What do we ask for in the Lord's Prayer? (to forgive us as we forgive others)*
- ▶ Read aloud the directions for What Would You Do? Give your child time to answer the questions and then discuss them.
- ▶ Ask your child to reflect on a situation when he or she was hurt by someone and then how it felt to make peace. Direct your child to draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. On one side have your child draw a picture showing how it felt to be hurt. On the other side, have your child draw how it felt when the problem was resolved. **Say:** *God's hands lifted away your heaviness.*

Reflect: Pages 18–19

- ▶ Together look at page 18. **Ask:** *What are the man and the boy doing? How would this setting make you feel?* Remind your child to picture having a conversation with Jesus before he or she begins praying.
- ▶ Read aloud page 18, pausing after each part of the Lord's Prayer. Then give your child time to talk to Jesus in his or her own words. Close the prayer by praying *Amen* and the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Read aloud the introduction and the activity What Would You Do? on page 19. Ask your child to write a response to each situation and then discuss each response. Give your child time to draw the scene for one of the answers. **Say:** *It is always better to forgive than to stay angry and hold a grudge.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *God helps us and shows us mercy. He wants us to help others and forgive them and show mercy.*

Respond: Page 20

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to describe specific situations in which he or she can forgive someone.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

Jesus Is with Us

Engage: Page 21

- ▶ Discuss with your child any babies that you or your child knows. Invite your child to write short prayers for the special little ones in their life or write prayers for all babies. **Ask:** *How can you help care for a new baby? (sing to and play with the baby)*
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and the text in the blue box. Have your child imagine helping Mary and Joseph get ready for Jesus. Discuss your child's answers. **Say:** *In this session we will learn how God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us and to teach us how to live.*
- ▶ Ask your child to think about welcoming Jesus into his or her life and heart. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 22–23

- ▶ Discuss what it means to trust. **Ask:** *What are some things that you trust me to do for you?*
- ▶ Read aloud Trust in God on page 22. **Ask:** *What did the angel tell Joseph? (that Mary would have a baby through the Holy Spirit) What does the name Jesus mean? (God saves us.)* **Say:** *Joseph trusted God and knew God wanted the best for Joseph and his family.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. **Ask:** *Can you tell me three of the names for Jesus that are on this page? (Emmanuel, Savior, Son of God)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 23. Point out the vocabulary word. **Ask:** *How do you feel knowing that God sent his Son to be with you always? (secure, confident)* Invite your child to write about a time he or she trusted someone. Discuss your child's response.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Say:** *Trust that the Lord is always with you.*

Art Exploration: Page 230

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of angels.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, noting the angels' names, clothes, and faces.
- ▶ **Say:** *An angel is a messenger from God. Joseph trusted the angel who told him Mary would have a baby.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 230. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

- ▶ Read aloud the first two paragraphs. **Ask:** *What does Emmanuel mean?* (“God is with us.”) *What does Christ mean?* (“the anointed one”)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Our Names. Help your child find the meaning of his or her name in a book or on a Web site.
- ▶ Provide art materials and instruct your child to draw a self-portrait. Then mount the drawing on a sheet of construction paper and write your child’s full name on the sheet. Ask your child to write around the figure all the names to which he or she might answer, such as nicknames and names like *brother, daughter, niece, or friend.*

Reflect: Pages 24–25

- ▶ Together look at page 24. **Ask:** *What words would you use to describe how the girl in the picture feels?* **Say:** *She is opening her arms because she feels God’s love all around her.*
- ▶ Remind your child of the first phrase of the Apostles’ Creed that they learned in Session 1. Read aloud the first paragraph slowly. Together pray aloud the second sentence of the Apostles’ Creed. Then invite your child to read aloud the last paragraph. **Say:** *You can be close with Jesus at any time.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the first paragraph on page 25. **Ask:** *What are some ways that Jesus lived a good life and cared for others?* (He taught others about God, helped Mary and Joseph, healed sick people) *What are some ways that Joseph and Mary lived a good life?* (They took care of each other and Jesus, and they trusted in God.)
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph of Good Examples. Have your child complete the activity and explain the reasons for choosing the pictures he or she circled. **Say:** *Remember that one way to pray is to say a prayer of thanksgiving. This is the kind of prayer you will write in the next part of the activity.* Read aloud the second paragraph and give your child time to reflect and write. Invite your child to share his or her prayer.

Respond: Page 26

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest specific ways to help others he or she knows and meets.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.

Celebrating Ordinary Time

Engage: Page 27

- ▶ Look at a calendar together. **Ask:** *How many seasons are there? (four)* Discuss important holidays and celebrations we celebrate each season.
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and text. Discuss the picture. Then ask your child to turn to page 151 in his or her book and locate both periods of Ordinary Time on the liturgical calendar. **Ask:** *When do we celebrate Ordinary Time? (between Christmas and Ash Wednesday, and between Easter and the first Sunday of Advent)* **Say:** *In this session we will learn about Ordinary Time—the time of year when we learn to be grateful for our Church community.*
- ▶ Have your child make a time line that shows each month of the year. Encourage him or her to make Ordinary Time stand out. Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Page 28

- ▶ Talk about the community in which you live. **Ask:** *What makes up a community? (people sharing common interests) What is a Church community? (people serving Jesus together)*
- ▶ Read aloud the first two paragraphs. **Say:** *One way Church communities can be Christ to the world is by working in soup kitchens.* **Ask:** *What are some other ways they can be Christ to the world? (outreach programs, mission trips)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Be Like Christ. **Say:** *One way I can be more like Christ in my home and work is by being patient with others.* Invite your child to complete the activity and discuss his or her response.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. **Ask:** *How do you feel when someone tells you thank you? How do you think God feels when we remember to say thank you to him?*

Reflect: Page 29

- ▶ Together look at a recent parish bulletin. **Ask:** *What kind of information do you read in the parish bulletin?* Discuss the various items in your bulletin.
- ▶ Read aloud the heading and the first two paragraphs. **Ask:** *What do the activities found in a parish bulletin say about the Church community? (Parish members look to serve others in the community and around the world)*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud What We Experience. **Ask:** *How would Sunday Mass feel different if you attended alone?*
- ▶ Read aloud My Parish and have your child complete the activity. Discuss your child's answers.
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. **Say:** *A parish missal contains the information needed to participate in Mass and states the season or feast being celebrated that week.* Together look for that same information in your parish bulletin.

Art Exploration: Page 231

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a celebration of the Eucharist.
- ▶ **Ask:** *What do you see in this picture?* Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the Bread and Wine.
- ▶ **Say:** *Every Sunday during Mass, we acknowledge God's presence in our lives with the celebration of the Eucharist. When we gather at Mass, we are surrounded by the Church community.*
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 231. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud Rejoice and Be Glad. **Say:** *During Ordinary Time we celebrate our Church community.* **Ask:** *How does the Church community spread love?* (through religious education classes, parish activities, visiting those who are sick)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Give Thanks for Your Gifts and complete the activity. **Say:** *We will celebrate Ordinary Time by being aware of and thankful for that gift.*
- ▶ Ask your child to trace his or her hand on several sheets of paper. Then have him or her use markers to decorate the hands with symbols, words, and art representing the gifts he or she contributes to the community. Cut out the hands. Arrange them as a mural on a wall in your home as a reminder of how your child can help the community.

Respond: Page 30

- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Faith Summary. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest other ways he or she can spend time with someone in need.
- ▶ Read aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ Read aloud the With My Family suggestions. Invite your child to choose one or more to complete today.