

Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that he has come to redeem, not judge. He speaks of light and darkness, noting that those who live in the light are his followers.

Editor's Note: This Sunday is Laetare Sunday. *Laetare* refers to rejoicing. At Mass, we'll see the liturgical color rose, a sign of our joy. Christians rejoice in the salvation gained for us by Christ's suffering, Death, and Resurrection.

Share Experiences

Check off the boxes as you complete each part of the lesson.

- Pray together** "Dear God, thank you for forgiving us when we have done wrong. Help us forgive as you do. Amen."
- Activity • I can say I'm sorry. (page 2)** Point out the images around the family picture. **Ask:** Who is doing things they'll be sorry for? What will the children need to do to make things right again?
- Activity • Make-a-Sentence Maze (page 4)** Read the directions aloud. The completed activity spells: *I forgive.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • We can be children of the light. (page 1)** Together, look at the picture on the cover. Help your child identify Jesus as the man on the right. Tell this Gospel:

A man named Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus. Nicodemus was a religion teacher called a Pharisee. The Pharisees sometimes criticized Jesus, but Nicodemus believed that Jesus came from God. Nicodemus was afraid to talk to Jesus during the day. Instead, he came to visit Jesus at night. He wanted to understand why Jesus had come.

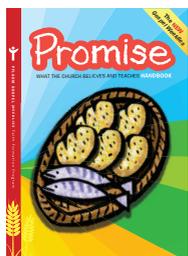
Jesus told him: "God loves the world so much that he gave his only Son to become one of us. Everyone who believes in him will live with God forever. God didn't send his Son to punish the world. God wants to save the world through his Son. People choose to believe in God's Son or not to believe in

him."

Jesus didn't tell Nicodemus that he is God's Son, but we know that he is. He talked to Nicodemus about light and darkness. Jesus said: "Some people like the darkness because they do bad things. They hate the light because the light shines on the bad things they do and everyone can see them. People who do what is good choose to live in the light. The light shows that they are obeying God."

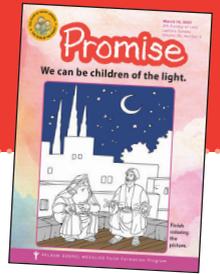
Later, after Jesus died on the Cross, Nicodemus helped bury him. This was done in the daytime when it was light. Nicodemus believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

Ask: Why did Nicodemus come to talk to Jesus when it was dark? What does Jesus want us to do—live in the dark or the light? We will live in the light by believing in Jesus and following him.



- Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 30. **Ask:** Does everyone live in the light (doing good things, saying yes to God) all the time? *No.* **Ask:** What do we need to do after we have done something bad? *Say we are sorry and work to make things right.*

Point out the Prayer of Sorrow near the bottom of the page. Explain that *sorrow* is a word that can mean feeling sad and being sorry. This is a prayer you can pray to Jesus when you need to tell him you're sorry.



Read the prayer aloud and have your child place a finger on the words as you say them. Have your child color the star next to this prayer.

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Promise, page 4.

- **Word of the Week • mercy (page 4)** Help your child locate the Word of the Week on page 4. Share this definition: *Mercy is being willing to forgive or help. It means treating others like God treats us.*

Live the Gospel

- **Activity • Who needs forgiveness? (pages 3-4)** Help your child cut out the forgiveness words and story squares on page 3. Explain that the story squares show times when children need to ask for and give forgiveness. Beginning with the square showing a girl falling on a sandcastle, tell the story of each square. (See stories below.) Invite your child to choose one blue and one green square with words the children can say to each other.

Story 1: Jade is building a sandcastle. Jade's sister Tanya and her friends are playing with a beach ball. Someone kicks the ball hard. Tanya runs to catch it. She falls on Jade's sandcastle and smashes it. **Ask:** How might Jade feel? How might Tanya feel? What can Tanya say? What can Jade say?

Story 2: Jade asks if Tanya's doll, Samantha, can come to a party on the porch. "Samantha can come if you take good care of her," Tanya tells Jade. After the tea party, Jade goes inside to watch TV. She doesn't hear it start to rain. When Tanya comes home, she finds a wet Samantha on the porch. **Ask:** How might Tanya feel? How might Jade feel? What can Jade say? What can Tanya say?

Story 3: Erin gets out her Mickey Mouse pencil. She opens her notebook with the Disney World stickers on it. She pushes up the sleeves of her Cinderella shirt. Then Erin hears a whisper behind her: "Erin is a show-off." Erin turns around. The whisperer is Jennifer. "You're always showing off about Disney World," Jennifer says. **Ask:** How might Erin feel? How might Jennifer feel? What can they say?

Story 4: Erin is one of the captains for Red Rover. When it's her turn to pick, Jennifer says, "Choose me!" Erin says, "You can't run fast enough." The other children laugh. **Ask:** How might Jennifer feel? How might Erin feel? What can Erin say? What can Jennifer say?

Story 5: Brett is drawing a dinosaur to give to his grandpa. "What are you drawing?" his brother Mikey asks. "Nothing," Brett says. "Can I see it?" asks Mikey. "Not until I am finished," Brett says. "I just want to look," Mikey says. Mikey grabs the paper and rips it. **Ask:** How might Brett feel? How might Mikey feel? What can Mikey say? What can Brett say?

Story 6: Brett's brother Mikey wants to swing. "Come and push me," Mikey asks. "I don't want to," says Brett. Mikey asks again, "Push me!" Brett gives Mikey such a hard push that Mikey falls out of the swing and starts to cry. **Ask:** How might Mikey feel? How might Brett feel? What can they say?

- **Closing Prayer** Pray: "Loving God, help us live in the light of your love, mercy, and forgiveness. Amen."



Parent Resources

For weekly videos, assessments, and more, scan this code or go to pflaumweeklies.com/family
Visit www.usccb.org/bible/readings to read this Sunday's Scripture