RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, we know there is a trinity because of Jesus’ revelation. This shows us that God must be love (that is what binds the trinity) and reveals all of Jesus’s actions within a familial relationship of God.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
There is only one God, we do not worship multiple gods, or seek God as a genie, but go to the one who created all things and shows us what love is.

Instructions for Using "The Way" Program

Follow the simple instructions below:
1. Watch Video on the website: .
2. Review the "relates to..." section to the left. This is helpful to understand what to convey to your child is important about this lesson. It will help make the lesson both an intellectual and a lived lesson.
3. Read through and familiarize yourself with the sample script.
4. Teach your child the lesson, either using your own words or the sample script.
5. Either discuss the questions with your child (best option), or have your child write out answers to the questions.
6. Have your child do the activities and/or do the activities with them.
7. If working with a parish return the appropriate material in the way they have requested.
Sample Script:
When we do the sign of the Cross we always say “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This reminds us that God is three persons. Yet, we do it as one action as the sign of the cross, so we remember that God is so unified, that He is only one God. This unity is the important thing.

So, while the Father is different from the Son, there is a unity that they share that is so great it is hard to tell the difference between them. Think of a mom and a dad or best friends that do everything together, or even a person and their pet. Sometimes we can look at those situations and think that the husband and wife, or friends, or person and pet are so close they act almost like each other. Sometimes a friend can finish the sentence of their friend, or they know where they want to eat, or what they want to play. God is kind of like that but so much more. It is different than just knowing what the other wants to do, or what their favorite color is, they are so close that those things are what they want to do, and are their favorite color. This closeness is so much that there is a third person of God, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only binds the Father and Son together in unity, but has that same unity.

We can think of it this way. You can’t just love yourself. Love has to be shared. Love is desiring what is the best for someone else. I love you; I desire what is best for you. I am sure you love me; and you desire what is best for me. When we love that way, are truly loving each other. That binds us in a certain way. If we loved perfectly than what I think is best for you, and what you think is best for you are the same thing. For God that is even more true. God cannot just love Himself, so there is the Son. Now we have the Father and the Son, their love is so perfect that every action they do is the same. The love that binds them, and is the fruit of their love is known as the Holy Spirit. The love the Holy Spirit has for the Father and the Son is equal to their love. Thus, every action done by the Father or the Son or the Holy Spirit is done at once individually, but also collectively as One because their love is so great.

So, while this is hard to understand it does teach us about our own lives. God created us in His image. He wants us to be a community. When we look at our family, or our church family, or all our friends we have, we need to think about how God wants us to love like He does. He wants us to care about what is best for the other. He wants us to love each other so much that we make the same best decisions for each other. When we talk about the Church someday, we will need to remember this because Jesus prayed that my followers “may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.” We are called to be a great community and that will teach us more about the Trinity.

Questions:
- What do we mean when we make the Sign of the Cross?
- Name one thing that unites the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?
- What is one thing you learned about how humans love?
- What is one thing you learned about how God loves?
- Please explain a couple of ways that you can be a role model of God for others by showing them that they are loved.

Activities:
Talk to your grandparents and parents separately about how they love each other (how Grandma loves Grandpa and separately how Mom loves Dad). What in their telling reminded you about how God loves you?

Together, as a family, discuss how you can serve your local community of your neighborhood and how you can be a witness of God to those around you.
God desires to be in union and relationship with all of us. He creates us so that we can share our lives with Him and with others. In sharing our lives with God, we come to know Him and learn a little bit about what He is like. Jesus has revealed the first person of the Trinity as the Father. Knowing this and sharing our lives with Him helps us to stay close to the Father as we realize that He is with us in a great many ways, accompanying us in our walk through life.

One thing we know about God the Father is that He is All-Loving. God is love, which means that all He can do is love. He can’t do anything else; He just can’t help Himself! When God creates, and when He especially creates humans, He loves us into being. With great purpose and intention and care, God creates us lovingly with a set of gifts and talents that put us on a mission to make Him known throughout our life. We

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus is one with the Father, and everything that God the Father is, so is Jesus. Knowing He is all-powerful, knowing, present, and loving helps us in our relationship with Jesus.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Knowing the attributes of God helps us know how to live our lives for Him.
need to recognize our dignity and worth that comes to us as children of God so that we can use and offer our gifts and talents in loving service to the Father and to our neighbor.

God the Father is also All-Knowing. God knows all as He is the Creator of all things. Just as mom and dad know so much about their children, being with them since the beginning of their lives, God even more so knows all about His children as He can see what is going on not only on the outside but on the inside as well. And it is for sure important to pray to God to tell Him what is on our mind and on our heart, but it is comforting realizing that the All-Knowing God is already working for you, on the case of hearing your prayer request.

God the Father is All-Powerful. We are always impressed by professional athletes. They can run faster, jump higher, make catches that seem unreal, hit or throw a ball further and more accurately then most, the list goes on. The power that these have is pretty amazing! Even more so with God... Think about it, God created the sun. God can calm a raging sea. God can change the heart of someone. God even conquered death. So, of course God can throw a football! The power of God is very mighty.

We know that God the Father is All-Present. God always has been, God always is, and God always will be. So, when you think about your life, there is never a time when God is close to you. He won’t force Himself into your life, but He always present waiting to be invited in. He is certainly always loving you and me and desires us to never be separated from Him. The ever-presence of God should provide us with a great sense of hope and comfort knowing that we are continually being watched over and cared for.

Our understanding of these divine attributes keep our loving God from feeling like a supreme being off in the distance who doesn’t much care about us. Rather, it shows yet again His caring and compassionate self that wants to be involved in every aspect of your life.

Questions:

- Discuss how God is close to us even if he is all-powerful, all knowing, all-loving, and all-present.
- Why would God be revealed as a loving Father?
- Why did God create us?
- What does it mean to be in relationship with God?
- Why does God want to be a part of your life?

Activities:

Draw God in the four attributes discussed in the lesson (all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present, all-loving).

Write a prayer to God speaking to Him as a Father.
Instruction for Using "The Way" Program

RELATES TO JESUS:
By coming to us in such a humble manner, Jesus shows us the importance of the family as the cornerstone in which faith is developed and fostered.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Jesus is the model of faith. Obedience to God’s commandments is the way to union with Him and the key to growth in holiness. Obedience to God, rather than being a burden, rather is life and abundance of joy.

Follow the simple instructions below:
1. Watch Video on the website:
2. Review the "relates to..." section to the left. This is helpful to understand what to convey to your child is important about this lesson. It will help make the lesson both an intellectual and a lived lesson.
3. Read through and familiarize yourself with the sample script.
4. Teach your child the lesson, either using your own words or the sample script.
5. Either discuss the questions with your child (best option), or have your child write out answers to the questions.
6. Have your child do the activities and/or do the activities with them.
7. If working with a parish return the appropriate material in the way they have requested.
Jesus, while fully God as the second person of the Trinity, entered our human history fully man as well. Jesus came to us just as we all do; namely being carried for nine months by His mother and born into a family. Jesus’ family consisted of His mother Mary and His adopted father Joseph. Joseph is called Jesus’ adopted father because Jesus, who is fully God, is first the Son of God the Father. Jesus became the son of Mary and Joseph so that He could show the blessing that exists in the family home and to help all people come to know the love and care that God has for each of us.

Throughout Jesus’ life, He was obedient to both God and His family. We are called to do the same. Jesus, once He was grown and began to teach about God, encouraged people to follow His example so that we each might come to know the love of God and become His children. In following Jesus’ example, an example that includes loving and worshiping God with our entire self, loving and caring for our brothers and sisters just as we love ourselves, and practicing a life of prayer and making good choices, we enter into and show the reality of the Kingdom of God.

In His life, Jesus was solely focused on doing the will of God. The will of God asks us each to be holy, which means to follow the commandments of God to love Him and love our neighbor, to listen to and be respectful of our parents, to treat friends and classmates with kindness, and help people in need. It is also important to do our best to pay attention at Mass and to pray every day to listen to what God is calling you to. Jesus, who is our example of living this way, carried the will of God out perfectly. We should ask Jesus to help us do the same.

To close, Jesus is a member of our human family and shows us the great love, respect, and kindness that families are called to support. Jesus learned to be obedient to God’s will from being obedient to His family. Entering His public ministry to proclaim the Kingdom of God’s love and mercy, Jesus showed the example of what it means to follow after God and to be His disciple. Let us pray to be a disciple of Jesus each day.

Questions:

- What are the names of Jesus’ Mom and Dad?
- Name some of the things Jesus learned from his parents?
- What are some things you notice about Jesus’s teaching and the Kingdom of God?
- What does the Kingdom of God look like?
- Describe what holiness looks like. How are you a disciple of Jesus?

Activities:

- Find a picture of a manger scene. What are some things you notice about it? Ask your mom and dad how Jesus’ birth compares with your birth.
- Draw a picture of yourself. Label the parts of your body (brain, heart, hands, feet, etc.) and mark how you can use each part to be a disciple.
The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. And while we speak of the three persons of the Trinity, we also rightly speak of the oneness of God. So, to put this in another way, we can say God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We believe in one God who eternally exists. Our one God is three persons who eternally operates as Love and desires all people to return love to Him and to live a life full of His love.

A popular image of the Holy Spirit looks like this; namely that God the Father loves God the Son and God the Son loves God the Father. This love between the Father and the Son is eternally communicated back and forth between them. This eternal communication is the Holy Spirit, eternally in love with the Father and the Son and desiring to communicate this love for all people to encounter, helps us, in some small way, to speak of our all-powerful God.
Jesus, during His time on earth, spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Advocate. While this word of advocate can have a couple different definitions, for our purposes the idea of seeing the Holy Spirit as Advocate or helper seems most appropriate. The Holy Spirit seeks to help us in journey through life. Life can sometimes be tough, and while we may be blessed to have our family and friends close to help us, it is comforting to know that the God of the universe, who created and has power over all things and who loves you very much, is near to help you and be with you during the times of your life. We need to remember this to reach out to the Holy Spirit and invite Him into the moments of our life, receiving this most wonderful advocacy.

A further dive into Scripture and we see a whole number of different images that show the presence of the Holy Spirit. We see Him as wind passing over the formless matter at the beginning of creation in the book of Genesis. We see Him as a dove hovering over the Lord Jesus at His baptism, in which God the Father says, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” in the 3rd chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. We see the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 descending upon Mary and the Apostles as tongues of fire which allowed these recipients to speak in many languages yet still be able to understand one another.

Today, the Holy Spirit is active all around us. He is active in our Church and He is calling people by name. And you know something that is pretty cool? He is calling you by name. He is loving you as the child of God that you are and is desiring to be invited into your life. He wants you to share with your family and friends the ways He has been seen in Scripture, while also sharing the personal ways you have encountered Him in your life.

Questions:

- Who is the Holy Spirit in relation to the Trinity?
- How does Jesus speak about the Holy Spirit and who He (the Holy Spirit) is?
- What passages in Scripture show us the presence of the Holy Spirit?
- Name some of the images that we see the Holy Spirit portrayed as.
- Why should we tell our loved ones about the Holy Spirit?

Activities:

As a family, explore the Acts of the Apostles to find some of the workings of the Holy Spirit. Share and discuss these stories and consider how these passages might be speaking to you individually and to your family.

As a family, share your stories of when you have encountered the Holy Spirit in your life. Practice sharing these stories and point out to each other the workings of the Holy Spirit.
In the first chapters of Genesis, we hear the story of God creating the universe and the world and all the plants and animals. Finally, He creates man and creates us very good. God created Adam and Eve to be in a harmonious relationship with Him and only asked that we do not disobey Him by eating from one tree in the Garden. Unfortunately, being persuaded by the devil disguised as a serpent, Adam and Eve eat from the tree which resulted in the original sin of disobedying God.

One of the results of this original sin is concupiscence, which is the disordered desire to choose sin over good. We can think of it this way, much like if there is a big red button that says do not touch, and we want to touch it, concupescence makes all temptations like that big red button. Because of this concupiscence which remains even after our baptism, we are tempted very easily to follow these disordered desires, making it too easy to fall into and commit sin in our daily lives. Like Adam and Eve, our relationship with God suffers, putting our disordered wants and desires ahead of His divine revelation.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus shared in our temptations to sin, but unlike us, he rejected every temptation and lived a life free from all sin.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Jesus told us, “You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Mt 5:48). He also said, “With man these things are not possible, but with God, all things are possible (Mt 19:6). Therefore, it is possible for me, as it was for every saint.
and disrupting the harmony that is intended to exist between Creator and creature. We know all of this through the revelation of God to us in His bible.

What are we to do then as Christians? We have a desire to be loved and to be filled with good things that we know can only find fulfillment in life with God but we also have concupiscence which puts us in a constant struggle of also desiring lesser things that don’t fill us up and pulls us away from God. As Christians, we need to be boys and girls, men and women, who learn to recognize the voice of God in our life so that we can choose the good over everything else.

How do we come to learn the voice of God? We need to be people to consistently reach out to God in prayer, asking for His help in times of temptation. We need to read the Bible often, coming to know His word, His stories, His voice so we can hear Him calling us to choose the good. We need to become familiar with the Church’s teachings the come to understand what God is asking of us. The Church approves the use of sacramentals, which afford us spiritual gifts to help us on our way and keep us close to God (i.e. holy water to bless us, the Rosary to seek Mary’s help and intercession, etc.). Staying close to Jesus by receiving Him in the Eucharist at Mass and asking mom and dad to take you to the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a frequent (once a month) schedule. These practices and others help to learn the voice of God and give us actual grace to assist us in the daily work of choosing God over anything else.

God certainly speaks to us and just as we have come to understand from the creation story in Genesis, He wants to be in relationship with you and me. So it is not just a one way street of we need to come to know God; God wants to come to know us so that we might have a companion through our life (and what a companion!). The Creator of the universe, who created you and everything else out of love, wants to be in relationship with you. The Bible is the written word of God, He inspired the authors to write down the thoughts and ideas He wants us to know. By reading the Bible and coming to know God’s Word, again we come to know who God is but we also hear Him speak to us, saying something personal that fits in our life that draws us closer to God. We hear in His teaching through the stories of the Scriptures how the lessons are important for you and me and we recognize that when we follow these teachings that good things often come forth, showing us the grace that exists for those that listen to the voice of God.

The more we come to know the voice of God and we put into practice what we hear from Him, we begin to build-up our life in virtue. Virtue is practicing and living the good that we are all called to, living a life that is balanced and ordered and focused on achieving the good. Living a virtuous life is supported by and always open to grace from God to keep us focused on our relationship with Him. Virtue also keeps us from falling into vice, or into a life of sin, that throws things off their order and prevents us from recognizing the voice of God in our lives. We need to be always practicing virtue, to practice the good in our life so that we can always remain in relationship with our loving God and rightly live the that we were originally intended to.
Questions:

- How does God speak to us?
- What is concupiscence?
- Why does God give us the Bible?
- What is the best way to hear God speaking to us?
- What are some ways that we can overcome temptations and be close to God?

Activities:

Draw an image of Adam and Eve being tempted, then draw an image of what you will use if you are tempted like Adam and Eve.

Read a story from the bible, then explain what you think the story means to someone in your family.
As humans created in the image and likeness of God, we know that we are created out of the love of the Father. Because of this, we are called to reflect God throughout our life by living in His love and sharing that love to all those that we encounter and meet. Life is to be respected and protected for each of us, whether the unborn baby or the 100 year old who is near death and every person and situation in-between, the sacredness of life is a shared duty for all of us to uphold. Our shared responsibility to respect all human life is truly foundational to what it means to be human, yet often it is something that seems to be a struggle for people.

What are some things that we can do in order to eliminate some of this struggle? You and I can make a great effort, each day and each moment, to be Christian just as Jesus calls us to be. Now, this can sound like a big task, and it is, but I think it is easy to look at it in words and actions that we do everyday that we might not think about too often. Let me share a couple of examples that are helpful to understand what I am saying. First, we learn from a very early age the importance of being kind to one another. This
kindness that we practice of speaking nicely to and about others, of sharing with and listening to others around us, and of helping people and their situations that are in need of attention is a fruit of the Holy Spirit that allows for the presence of God to be active in our lives. Kindness tells others they are worthy to be treated with much dignity and care and reminds others how God looks at them and desires Himself to be active in their lives.

Next, we need to be joyful, even when we don’t feel like being joyful, when spending time with those around us. When we are joyful in the presence of others, we allow others an opportunity to experience the joy that God has when He creates you and me. Joy tells the other person that they are respected and worthy of your best self and this leaves them fulfilled, knowing that they can participate in your experience of joy shared. Finally, we need to be loving towards others. Here, we mean a love that is respectful and shows concern for the other person no matter what is going on in their life. This general sense of love communicates the value of the other person and invites them into a community of self-giving by being themselves more aware of the other in their own lives.

Now, we are also called by God to have an appropriate love and respect for the created world around us. God gave us dominion over the animals and plants of the earth and desires that we respect these in appropriate ways. While we defend the invaluable reality of human life, we also care for and value the lives of animals by respecting their environments and such. We also recognize the order of humans over animals and how God gave us some animals for our nourishment and well-being and how often plants serve the same purpose for animals. This “circle of life” shows God’s order present in creation, how creation is to support one another, and thus gives us another reason for respecting creation at every level.

What does this lesson mean for us? You and I are loved and we are called to share this love. God created us and calls us to share in His creation through kindness, joyfulness, and authentic love. Our work with all of creation shows us the order in which God creates and assists us in experiencing Him throughout our life.

Questions:
- Why does God create us?
- What are some ways we can show kindness and joy to others?
- How should we treat all of the creation God has given to us?
- What lives are we supposed to respect?
- What are things we can do to live as Christians (like Christ)?

Activities:
List some of your favorite animals or plants of creation, talk with a family member about how they fit into God’s plan of creation.

Think of someone that has been mean to you, come up with a plan of how you can be kind to them.
When God created humans He set them above the rest of creation by creating them in His image and likeness. God gave the human race the ability to think (intellect), the ability to choose (free will), and an immortal soul.

God does not force his will upon us. Think of Adam and Eve in the garden. God told them not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but he didn’t set any guards around it or prevent them from approaching it. Out of love for God they could have chosen to be obedient. However, they freely chose to believe the lies of Satan and ate the fruit of that tree.

Our intellect gives us the ability to understand the natural world, and to understand God’s law, as given to Moses in the Ten Commandments and fulfilled in the life and teaching of Jesus, who said the greatest commandment was to love God above all things, and your neighbor as yourself. God offers us his friendship, his grace (his life within us) and teaches us how to be in relationship with him. He doesn’t force us to choose...
to live in that relationship. We are free to choose other things than God, and we call those choices sin.

If we truly honor the dignity with which we were created, we would also honor the dignity of other people. We would see each other as members of a family, since we all were created with the image of God stamped upon us. The parable of The Good Samaritan is a good example of that. When the priest and Levite come upon the man lying beaten in the road, they don’t see him as a brother or even a person. They see him as a problem, as an obstacle that would prevent them from going about their duties. The Samaritan, when he encounters the injured man, treats him as a brother, immediately tending to his wounds. The Samaritan’s actions are an example of understanding the shared bond of dignity that all humans have because of being created in God’s image.

Jesus revealed to us the nature of the one, true God, an eternal union of three persons: God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is an intimate and eternal exchange of love between each person of the Trinity. This love is poured upon us. God created us in love. Jesus died for our sins because of his love for the Father and for mankind. The love of the Father and Son spills upon us in the person of the Holy Spirit, who nurtures the seed of faith in our hearts.

We were created for relationship with God and with each other. The Trinity enables that relationship. The Catechism states that “Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him.” (CCC 259) The Son reveals the Father to us, and unites our prayer to His during the Mass. The Holy Spirit is like the spiritual blood that courses through our veins, preparing our hearts, making us holy, helping us to pray, to make good choices and to love God. The Trinity shapes our relationships with each other too. That is why God created the family as the basic building block of society. The dynamics of family life are an imperfect expression of the love the flows within the Trinity. The members of your family love you, and you love them in return. This love builds the shared life of the family. It also radiates out from the family in how the various members interact with their friends and coworkers.

Questions:

- Intellectual and free will are abilities that every human receives as a result of being created in God’s image and likeness
- Define intellect.
- Define Free will.
- What is the bond that unites the members of the Trinity?
- Why does the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity provide an example for how we should relate with other people?
- God the Holy Spirit helps us to pray, make good choices and love God. What is something you can ask the Holy Spirit to be better at in your faith?

Activities:

Create a list of ways that you are able to show the dignity God has created in each person by your actions.

Write a prayer thanking God for the love He has for you.
SIN
Third Grade

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus conquers sin and death and so is our source of refuge when we are tempted to sin. We must develop a constant prayer life so that we know the Good Shepherd’s voice over and above anything that would pull us away from Him.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Just like practice makes perfect, so too the practice of our spiritual life (reading the Bible, praying, helping others) allows to become second natured in living holy lives.

Sample Script:
We are human, and if there is one thing we know about being human, it is that we are not perfect. We make mistakes and sometimes, we make bad choices. We know that these bad choices can be sinful and thus harmful to our relationship with God and others.

Why aren’t we perfect? Why do we make bad choices, even knowing that these might be sinful? With the fall of Adam and Eve in the Original Sin, all of the created order was thrown off into a state of disorder. Created by love and order Himself, humanity turned from love and chose themselves over God. Here, we come to know one of the major effects of Original Sin, which is called concupiscence or the attraction that makes temptation and sin appealing (concupiscience can be explained like the desire to touch a red button when you are told not to touch it). The appeal of sin over love
has been something that has been a struggle for humanity since the fall of Adam and Eve. Wanting to do good and avoid evil, men and women throughout the ages have given into the lure of temptation and fallen into sin, separating themselves from God. Concupiscence (our tendency to commit sin) has a stronghold on the human scene.

Now, this all sounds pretty bad. However, we are blessed to be members of the Catholic Church. Not only do we know that God loves us, which in and of itself is pretty amazing, but we know that it is the mission of His Son Jesus Christ and that of the Church to save us from our sins and bring us into right relationship with God. God knows humanity and He knows what we are dealing with. His love for us is undying and continually calls us each personally to be united with Him. God wants you and me to stand above temptation and sin and through His grace, He gives us the tools to be the holy people that He has called us to be.

The gift of God’s grace, His blessing of His presence with His people, is powerful and is received in a number of ways. There are a few that come to mind that are helpful for us here. First, in order to assist us in not giving into temptations, we must be people of prayer. Prayer needs to be a daily habit and become something that is very familiar to us. We should pray often - when we wake up in the morning, when we eat our lunch, before we go to bed. Prayer should become a top priority because it allows us to grow in our relationship with God, who holds us as the top priority. If we have our relationship with God in the right place, it becomes easier to say no to temptations as they arise.

Certainly connected to prayer is reading the Bible. We hear in the Bible the very words of God speaking to us and calling us to be what we are called to be; sons and daughters of God. By coming to know God we come to know that sin has such a negative effect on our relationships and ultimately only does damage to ourselves. The stories of the Bible help to remind us that the life well lived is lived in communion with God.

We need to be regular attendees with the Sacraments, receiving Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist every Sunday at Mass to strengthen us against anything that would keep us from God. We need to be regular visitors to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which restores us back to God after we have sinned and willfully made our bad, sinful choices. God’s grace through the Sacraments affords us life with Him and assists us greatly in staying away from sin and all that would seek to separate us from the love of God.

Questions:
- Who is ultimately hurt when we sin?
- What does the Sacrament of Reconciliation allow us to do?
- How does daily prayer help us say no to temptations?
- How did we come to have Original Sin?
- What is concupiscence?

Activities:
Choose a new additional time for prayer this week. Use that prayer time to pray for God’s grace to make good choices.

Think about what tempts you and how that takes you further away from God when you fall for that temptation. Ask for God’s forgiveness.
RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The witness of Jesus for us is the witness that we need to share throughout our own relationships and interactions. The power of a life lived in witness of Jesus is an incredible evangelization tool.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Following Jesus assures us that we have the prime example of holiness that would serve as the best mold for our intellect.

Sample Script:
We all know that the choices we make often do not only have an effect on my life, but my choices often have an effect on another person’s life. I think we learn this very fast if we are blessed to have siblings. When I make a choice to watch a particular television show on the one television in the house, quite often this will be met with the comment, “I don’t want to watch that show”. A discussion should take place next to settle on this television show or work together on agreeing to watch a different one, however wrestling matches seem to be more common place resulting in nobody getting to watch television.
God has blessed each and every human with the gift of reason and an intellect to not only make choices but to think through our choices in terms of good or bad, right or wrong and consider the consequences of whatever decision it is that we make. We are called to use this gift well and to practice this in our day-to-day interactions. When we use the gifts of our mind appropriately we find that life is a little more peaceful, opening us to receive God’s blessing for being good stewards of what He has given to us.

Because God created us good and desires us to be like Him who is all good, He wants us to use our minds and hearts and bodies to always choose the good. God wants us to continue to grow each day in our understanding of what it means to be good, forming and shaping our minds and hearts to always have what is good right in front of us so we don’t fall off the path by making bad choices.

Bad choices, unfortunately, will be made. We don’t live in a perfect world and of course, each of us is not perfect in the choices we make. Sometimes bad choices will be made. We are blessed to have the same God who rejoices in choosing the good also rejoicing in the person who makes the bad choice and does their best to fix it. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24) gives us the familiar image of the father (to represent God) running out to meet his returning son (you and I) from his many bad choices, who wants to get back on the correct path.

So our good choices tend to keep us on the path that is put before us in God. This path is one that leads to holiness; it is a path that seeks the good of God in and through our life, building up and sustaining our relationship with Him and bringing us to where we are called to be. When we intentionally make and live in our bad choices we tend to stay stuck in a life centered on our own wants and desires, which is apart from God and our call to holiness, hurting our relationship with God. To choose the good is to choose God and to choose what is best for us. What is your choice?

Questions:
- Why did God give us an intellect and the ability to reason?
- What are some ways you can help train your intellect in recognizing the good?
- How does God deal with us after our bad choices?
- What about the Prodigal Son story stands out most to you?
- Why would a person want to deliberately make a bad choice?

Activities:
As a family, consider some ways that you can help one another in making good choices. Consider practicing and modeling praying before family decisions and discuss how this model can be used in individual decisions.

As a family, read the Prodigal Son passage together and discuss the traits you see in the characters of the story.
When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth as a little baby on that first Christmas night, He came with a sacred mission to save all of humanity from their sins. God became man so that man might return to God. Jesus took on all of our humanity and experienced everything that you and I experience except for sin. But even sin He took onto Himself at His passion and death when He was crucified on the Cross. God is so in love with us that He offered His own Son to take our burden on so that we might have life in which we don’t have to bear this burden alone.

So Jesus’ death on that first Good Friday was Jesus offering all of our sins, those offenses or bad choices that hurt God and hurt others, to God the Father. Jesus, being fully God and fully man, was able to, in perfect love and intention, offer the Father the most pleasing act of sacrifice and contrition so that all of humanity is able to have right relationship restored with God. By Jesus offering this total gift of Himself He successfully destroyed sin and death and offers each and every one of us the chance to choose life with Jesus or to remain frozen in our life of sin.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus is our savior. By conquering death and leading us to life in the Spirit, Jesus is not just a historical character but rather is alive in all souls who authentically proclaim His name.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Grace allows us to move and have our being. Grace is the fuel for the disciple, as it is this grace that allows one in thought, word, and deed to proclaim the Kerygma.
Further, with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and ascension into Heaven, He shows us the power of God to truly conquer all things, even death. Jesus shows us that humanity is made for relationship with God and that the power of sin and death cannot overcome the power of love and mercy that God has for all people. We are made for relationship with God and we are made to spend eternity with God in the presence of perfect love and harmony. The resurrection and the ascension show us our salvation is a gift from God that frees us from eternal death and rather allows us the chance to choose eternal life, participating in that reality now through life in the Church and sharing that life with all that we encounter.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to remain with us. The Holy Spirit lives in the Catholic Church and operates in the world around us to assist us with living this life in relationship with the Holy Trinity. We know the Holy Spirit is most evident and present through the Sacraments of the Church, which provide us with actual grace to live in relationship with God and to live the life of being a child of God.

So the question becomes how do we live out this grace that was won for you and I by Jesus’ saving mission? We need to be regular receivers of the Eucharist which gives us the grace of Jesus’ presence within our very self (no better role model right?!?!?) while also being regular with the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the times we do sin so that we can say sorry and restore our relationship with Jesus. We need to pray often, daily, as well and be regular readers of the Bible, so that we can talk to and listen to God and hear His mission for you and I.

**Questions:**

- Jesus shows us that God truly can conquer all things even _____.
- God sent us His only Son, Jesus, and when he ascended into heaven what did He send to remain with us?
- The Eucharist gives us the grace of ______.
- What did Jesus do on Good Friday that allows for all of humanity to have a right relationship with God?
- Besides praying and receiving the Eucharist, what else should we do to restore our relationship with Jesus?

**Activities:**

Draw a picture of a time when you made a good choice, like when you chose to help someone, and describe how it made you feel and other good things that came from the situation. How did this situation allow you to see God or learn something about God?

With your family, think of one way that you could reach out to a family member or friend and offer words of kindness or support. Discuss how attention towards others gives grace that allows God to be encountered in the lives of all involved.
FOREVER AND FOR ALL ETERNITY, THE HOLY TRINITY HAS AND WILL EXIST. THIS HOLY TRINITY OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT WHO WE CALL AND HAVE COME TO KNOW AS GOD, IS ENTIRELY LOVE AND FREELY CREATES AND SHARES THAT LOVE WITH HIS CREATION. HUMANS, THAT IS, MEN AND WOMEN, THROUGH THE AGES, ARE GIFTED WITH LIFE FROM GOD, BEING MADE IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS AND BLESSED WITH A RATIONAL SOUL THAT IS ABLE TO LOVE AND TO RECEIVE LOVE JUST AS GOD DOES. GOD AND HUMANITY ARE MEANT TO BE TIGHTLY LINKED IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER SO THAT WE MIGHT BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE.

UNFORTUNATELY, HUMANS FELL INTO SIN AND SEVERED OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE HARMONY AND JUSTICE AND EVEN THE LOVE WE EXPERIENCED BECAME DISJOINTED AND UNCONNECTED, CAUSING US TO RUN FROM AND HIDE FROM THE ONE OF WHOM WE WERE CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF. IN ORDER TO RESTORE THIS RELATIONSHIP, THAT IS NOT ONLY MAGNIFICENT BUT ALSO QUITE NECESSARY, A PERFECT ATONEMENT WAS NEEDED TO MAKE UP FOR HUMANKind’S SINFULNESS BEFORE GOD. SINCE ALL OF HUMANITY WAS BORN INTO THE ORIGINAL SIN OF OUR FIRST

MARY, OUR MOTHER

Third Grade

Sample Script:

FOREVER AND FOR ALL ETERNITY, THE HOLY TRINITY HAS AND WILL EXIST. THIS HOLY TRINITY OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT WHO WE CALL AND HAVE COME TO KNOW AS GOD, IS ENTIRELY LOVE AND FREELY CREATES AND SHARES THAT LOVE WITH HIS CREATION. HUMANS, THAT IS, MEN AND WOMEN, THROUGH THE AGES, ARE GIFTED WITH LIFE FROM GOD, BEING MADE IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS AND BLESSED WITH A RATIONAL SOUL THAT IS ABLE TO LOVE AND TO RECEIVE LOVE JUST AS GOD DOES. GOD AND HUMANITY ARE MEANT TO BE TIGHTLY LINKED IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER SO THAT WE MIGHT BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE.

UNFORTUNATELY, HUMANS FELL INTO SIN AND SEVERED OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THE HARMONY AND JUSTICE AND EVEN THE LOVE WE EXPERIENCED BECAME DISJOINTED AND UNCONNECTED, CAUSING US TO RUN FROM AND HIDE FROM THE ONE OF WHOM WE WERE CREATED IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF. IN ORDER TO RESTORE THIS RELATIONSHIP, THAT IS NOT ONLY MAGNIFICENT BUT ALSO QUITE NECESSARY, A PERFECT ATONEMENT WAS NEEDED TO MAKE UP FOR HUMANKind’S SINFULNESS BEFORE GOD. SINCE ALL OF HUMANITY WAS BORN INTO THE ORIGINAL SIN OF OUR FIRST
parents, and we continued to choose our own personal sins over the will of God, a perfect offering of one’s life was nowhere to be found, trapping us in our sin apart from God.

When the time was right, in what the Church calls the fullness of time, Jesus the second person of the Trinity, was sent to a woman Mary, betrothed or engaged to Joseph, to take on our human flesh (in the Incarnation, in which God put on the flesh of man) and begin the salvific or saving mission of bringing humanity back into relationship with God. There are a number of great blessings and graces in this whole scenario:

- Mary through her Immaculate Conception is kept free from sin, preparing her to be the holiest woman ever created by God to bring God through His Son Jesus into our human world.
- Jesus the Second Person of the Trinity, fully adhering to the Father’s will as the eternal Word of God, takes on mortal human flesh in the Incarnation.
- The Incarnation finds God becoming man so that Jesus Himself may make the perfect sacrifice for man, taking our sins and sacrificing these through Himself on the Cross as the perfect offering to the Father, showing God’s love for us and restoring and reuniting God and man.
- God entrusted a good and chaste man named Joseph as Jesus’ foster father, and although this was a call that Joseph never expected, in faithful obedience and adherence to the Father’s will for his family, Joseph listens to God’s plan and plays the role of protector and provider for Mary and Jesus so that God may act in and through Joseph to bring about his plan of salvation in Jesus.

God’s mission to restore the human family through the grace given to the Holy Family clearly shows God’s love for us and how, when we are willing to be led by the grace of God that is available to us in this life, we are blessed to do incredible things knowing that we are His children who find our fullness in Him.

Questions:

- What was Mary’s role in God’s plan of salvation?
- What special gifts did God give to Mary in order for Jesus to come to us through her as her baby?
- What is the Immaculate Conception?
- What is one of the prayers we say that asks for Mary’s intercession?
- Why do you think Mary was to be free from Original Sin?

Activities:

Ask your mom/dad, or someone in your family, or your parish priest if they have a few moments to share how they have experienced God’s Will in their life. Questions could include, but are not limited to: When was a time you sought God’s will for your life?, How did you know that you were following God’s will?, What challenges did you overcome in following God’s will with His grace?

Together, as a family, read the Gospel of Luke, chapters 1-2. How do the characters in these scenes receive God’s will? What is the fruit of following God’s will? What happens when we don’t submit to God’s will with faith? Discuss these and other answers that are brought forth.
Jesus’ mission was certainly a saving mission to tell everyone about God’s loving presence and to proclaim God’s desire for all to return to Him, but to make that return possible, He had to overcome the obstacle of sin which separated us from God. To overcome that separation, Jesus took on all of mankind’s sins and died on the cross for them, offering his life as a ransom (i.e. in place of ours) for these sins. Mankind deserved death as a punishment for our sins against God, but Jesus died instead for our sake so that we could have that loving relationship with the Father both now and forever in the life to come. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead showed that death no longer had the ultimate say for any one of us and that by uniting ourselves to Jesus, we can truly live the life that we are called to. Thus, Jesus’ passion (i.e., suffering), death, and resurrection opened the way to our salvation, but that was only the beginning.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus desires that you and I participate in the life of the Church. We participate by being holy daughters and sons by following God’s Commandments of love and mercy and respecting our parents and elders.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The Church guides us in being the children of God that we are called to be. We need to seek her direction in finding fulfillment in our life. That fulfillment can only be found in God through the graces of Christ dispensed through the ministry of the Church.

Sample Script:
By ascending into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to remain with us in the Church. The Holy Spirit reminds us of God’s continual loving presence among us each and every day. The Church exists and is guided by the Holy Spirit so that Jesus’ presence may be encountered, the Gospel message may be proclaimed, and that strength may be given through the Sacraments to guide us to that promise of new life that is participated in now and experienced in full in Heaven.

These gifts given by the Church to help us encounter and live with Jesus gives us both sanctifying grace in the sacraments, and actual grace to experience the presence of God and live the life of the disciples; which is to say that we are given the ability to choose Jesus and live the life of the Christian that tells all that we encounter that Jesus Christ is alive. This message of discipleship of proclaiming the presence of God in the Church and by our life is handed on down to the Church from Jesus, to the Apostles, and to the bishops in every time and place, even up to today.

Once Jesus ascended into Heaven and the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles, they were given the sufficient grace to be the leaders of the Church that they were called to be. The Apostles were the first bishops, with Peter being the first Pope as the leader of the bishops. Peter and the other Apostles taught and upheld the teachings of Jesus and proclaimed the truth of Christianity in a time when it wasn’t easy because of persecution by the Roman government. The Pope and the bishops do the same thing today as successors, or followers, of Peter and Apostles. One of the really cool things about the Catholic Church is the reality of apostolic succession, which is the handing on of the office of bishop from one bishop to the next. For example, our current bishop, Bishop Paul Bradley, can trace his succession to the bishop who ordained him; the bishop who ordained that bishop can do the same, so on and so forth. Well, Bishop Bradley can trace his ordination all the way back to, can you guess which Apostle? St. Peter! Pretty cool right?!?!

For you and me, it is pretty awesome to think of the history and connectedness that exists in the Catholic Church! Perhaps the most special thing to remember is the fact that the same God who created the universe, who became man to save us from our sins, who inspired the early Church, and who sent the Apostles out on mission is the same God who loves you, blesses you at baptism, that you receive in the Eucharist, who guides you throughout your life, and who sends men and women into your life to proclaim His name. Let us respond by doing the same and be a loving model of God’s grace to all that we meet.
Questions:

- What was Jesus’ saving mission and what did he have to do to make it possible and why?
- Why was it difficult for the apostles to proclaim the truth of Christianity during their time in history?
- What is the Holy Spirit’s role in the Church?
- What is apostolic succession?
- From which apostle did the office of our current bishop, Bishop Bradley, originally descend in succession?

Activities:

Together as a family, read Matthew 28:16-20. Jesus tells us that He will be with us always. As a family, share ways that you see Jesus with you and your family.

Ask your priest or deacon about the day that they were ordained. Ask them to tell you how their ordination connects them to Christ and the Church.
In Jesus’ salvific mission to save us from our sins and reunite us with God the Father, He fulfilled a part of God’s plan to be ever-present to His people. Through Jesus’ life of teaching and healing, leading to His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, He saved us from eternal death by opening for you and me the countless graces that God desires to dispose upon His people. With His ascension into Heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to remain with us in the Church to sanctify us through the Sacraments in the divine life of grace that allows us to live the Gospel message and to share this message with all of His people.

This divine life of Christ that is given you and me through the Sacraments is none other than the gift of grace which unites us to God and draws us into relationship with Him. Here we find one of the many reasons why we are called to frequent the Sacraments as these keep us closely connected to God. Our closeness to God makes it harder for us to fall into sin and keeps us on the narrow path that leads to happiness and peace in this life.
While all of the Sacraments confer or give grace, the Sacraments of baptism, penance, and anointing of the sick give what is called Sanctifying Grace. This grace is saving grace that washes away any imperfections or stains from sin and reunites us to God as His daughter or son. Sanctifying Grace destroys Original Sin within us at baptism, takes away all personal sin in Reconciliation, and prepares us for our heavenly homeland in the anointing of the sick.

The seven Sacraments again give us grace in living out the life Jesus wants for us; namely life with Him. We find fullness and purpose in our life with God for we know that God creates you and me in His image and likeness to live a life that is holy, just as God is holy. The Sacraments allow us to strive towards and live a holy life with divine assistance that aid you and I in becoming the saints that we are called to be. Sainthood or living a holy life is modeling ourselves after that of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the grace given us through the Sacraments.

A good question that we need to consider when discussing the Sacraments is, “there are only seven Sacraments, and most of these you can only receive once...how are we supposed to expect to live a holy life without more opportunities for grace?” While Eucharist and Reconciliation are a powerful combination of Sacraments that we should frequent as much as possible, the Church also has a great number of sacramentals available for the faithful to use. Sacramentals point us to Jesus Christ and keep us connected to His Church and nurture our faith life, offering momentary grace to think of the things of God. Some examples of sacramentals are holy water, which reminds us of our baptism; holy cards, which remind us of the lives of the saints and call us to pray for others and ourselves; Rosaries, which remind us of Mary and to seek her intercession in imitating her humbleness and purity. Sacramentals support the Sacraments and keep us all the more connected to God, who is present at each moment.

**Questions:**

- How is Jesus present to us today?
- What do we receive from the Sacraments?
- Specifically, what kind of grace do we receive in baptism, anointing of the sick, and reconciliation?
- Name some of the things that the Sacraments help us to do in life?
- What is a sacramental? Can you name three?

**Activities:**

Interview your catechist at the parish about the Sacraments. Which one is their favorite? What do they like about this particular Sacrament? How has Jesus spoken to him or her through this Sacrament? How do they see God’s grace working through this Sacrament?

Talk to your mom and dad about what their favorite sacramental is. Spend some time together daily/weekly praying with this sacramental.
Baptism is the foundation of our whole life as a Christian. When a new house is built, do you know what part of a house is built first? The builders first lay the foundation, the flat, strong surface that the house sits on top of. It is the basis of everything that comes after—the floor, the walls, and the roof, and the foundation makes it all possible! Similarly, Baptism is like our foundation—it is the beginning of our Christian life and makes it possible for us to receive other sacraments and special graces!

The foundation of a house is made out of cement. Cement is made of many different materials combined that make it very hard and strong. There are also many elements in Baptism that make us strong Christians! Firstly, when we receive the sacrament of baptism we are freed from sin. Every person since Adam and Eve is born with the guilt of original sin. Do you remember from the story of Adam and Eve what the first sin was? They disobeyed God by eating the fruit he told them not to eat. Their choice hurt their relationship with God and changed their life. They were no longer united with God, and it became more difficult for them to choose...
good and much easier to sin. This lack of harmony was passed on from Adam and Eve to all people, so all are also bound to sin, until God gave his only Son, Jesus, out of love for us. He restored our relationship with God and made new life available to us in heaven, and it begins with Baptism! This freedom from sin helps us to be strong Christians.

We are also made strong in Baptism by becoming a member of the Church! The Church is one big family, where each member takes care of another and celebrates together! This means that we are never alone. We always have people to look up to when we need help, or if we have questions about our faith. Being a member of our Church family also makes us strong Christians.

Not only do we become part of our Church family, in Baptism we also become God the Father’s adopted sons and daughters! The Son, Jesus, became man so that we could become divine sons and daughters! That means we share new life with God by the gift of sanctifying grace, and someday eternal life in heaven! And so we are also strong Christians because of the gift of sanctifying grace and becoming sons and daughters of God through Baptism!

Questions:
- Why is Baptism the foundation of our Christian life?
- What elements of Baptism help to make us strong Christians?
- What do we become when we are Baptized that Jesus made possible?
- God wanted harmony with all people so what did he do?
- Once we are baptized what else are we able to receive?

Activities:
With your family, think of ways you could become more integrated and help to build up your big Church family—meeting someone you haven’t met before, praying for someone you know that needs it, or reaching out to someone going through a difficult time to support them like a family does.

Ask about your baptism. What did the priest say and do.
Who is the most courageous person you can think of? Why are they the most courageous person you can think of? What do you think of when you think of courage? Usually we think of someone noble, someone who stands up for what is right despite adversity, or someone unafraid despite what they are facing. All of us want to be courageous, but we know how hard it can be. It is extremely hard to do something different from our friends, to care about someone that most people don’t like, or to stand up in front of others. Thankfully, we have a sacrament available to us that can help us to be more courageous when we strive to follow Christ, and that is the sacrament of Confirmation!

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus is the best example of courage, following the will of God fully in His life by praying and teaching, even ultimately sacrificing His life for the lives of us all.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Doing what God and the Church asks of you and me is not always easy but it is the path that leads to ultimate happiness and fullness in life. The grace of courage should be prayed for and practiced so that we can grow and live our lives as God wants us to.

Sample Script:
Who is the most courageous person you can think of? Why are they the most courageous person you can think of? What do you think of when you think of courage? Usually we think of someone noble, someone who stands up for what is right despite adversity, or someone unafraid despite what they are facing. All of us want to be courageous, but we know how hard it can be. It is extremely hard to do something different from our friends, to care about someone that most people don’t like, or to stand up in front of others. Thankfully, we have a sacrament available to us that can help us to be more courageous when we strive to follow Christ, and that is the sacrament of Confirmation!

Baptism is the beginning of our Christian life, and in Baptism we receive graces to become adopted sons and daughters of God. When we receive the sacrament of Confirmation, those graces are strengthened! Our familial bond between us and God grows deeper, and we are better equip to tackle the challenges that come our way! Think of someone who
lifts weights, and the muscles they gain through their exercise. Confirmation is like a strengthening of our spiritual muscles so that we can be strong enough to do something different from our friends if it’s the right thing to do, or to be more patient with our siblings, or resist the temptation to sin. This strength comes from the Holy Spirit himself! In Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way, in that he is poured into us and remains with us! Jesus promised that he would give the Holy Spirit to us when he told his apostles, “you will receive my power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

When we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, we also receive gifts from him to help us better imitate Jesus, to live and act like he did! There are 7 Gifts from the Holy Spirit, and they are Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Fortitude, Piety, Counsel, and Awe of the Lord. Each of these are given to us, almost as if adding to our tool belt what we need in order to complete a mission. These gifts, and the Holy Spirit himself give us the courage we need in order to live as Christians! This is something to look forward to, and we can always ask the Holy Spirit for help when we need him.

**Questions:**

- What sacrament strengthens the graces we received in Baptism and helps us to live like Jesus courageously?
- Who do we receive when we receive the sacrament of Confirmation?
- In what special way do we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation?
- What is something you would like the courage to do? Begin asking the Holy Spirit for that courage! He assists us always!
- How many gifts of the Holy Spirit are there?

**Activities:**

Make flash cards to memorize the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Call the most courageous person you know, and thank them for being a great role model for you!
When we make bad choices, our sins are what hurt our relationship with God. Like a sickness that keeps us from doing all of our favorite things that we are able to do when we are healthy, sin keeps us from being free.

When we receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, we are forgiven of all our sins, healed from them and our relationship with God is restored, and we are given the graces that help us better tackle future temptations to sin. With our goal as Christians to imitate Christ, Reconciliation is like medicine and a boost of energy! For this reason it is good to make a habit of going—once a month is a healthy goal to strive for.
Receiving Reconciliation is also important as preparation for receiving other sacraments, such as the Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Confirmation. If we receive Reconciliation right before one of these sacraments, we are in a state of grace and able to more fully receive the new graces that come with the sacraments! If we are in a state of mortal (grave) sin when we receive them, we won’t have the capacity to fruitfully receive the new graces.

Once we receive this awesome sacrament, we should practice forgiving and praying for people who have hurt us. When we pray for someone, or make sacrifices for the sake of another person, God hears us and grants us that what we do is of great help to that person! This sacrifice could be completing your chores without complaint, giving up dessert for a night, or doing something helpful for one of your family members. This is one big way that the sacrament of Reconciliation helps us choose to better imitate Jesus!

**Questions:**
- What are our sins comparable to?
- What do they keep us from?
- What are the effects of Reconciliation?
- Because of this what is a good habit of how often to receive the sacrament?
- How is Reconciliation a good preparation for receiving the other sacraments?
- When we are forgiven at Reconciliation, what does God expect of us?

**Activities:**

Who is a person you can think of in need of prayers? Choose a specific prayer to pray for that person, and one sacrifice that you can make today on their behalf. When you make a little prayer to God that you are going to do this sacrifice for that person, he will grant that it helps that person!

Sometimes it can be easy to feel afraid to go to Confession. If you are nervous, talk with your parents about it, or even to your parish priest! He will help you relax and remember that God is excited for us to receive this sacrament!
At the end of his earthly life, Jesus gave all of himself over to all people. "He loved his own who were in the world and he loved them to the end" (John 13:1). At the Last Supper, he took the bread from their meal and broke it. Giving it to each of the apostles he said, "Take and eat, this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and said, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:26-27). Do these words sound familiar? At the Last Supper Jesus gave himself, his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity to his apostles because he foresees his own death, where he will give all of Himself to all people.

Sample Script:

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus' Incarnation and abiding presence in the Eucharist shows His desire to remain with us always, "until the close of the age".

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The Catholic Church rightly professes to be the temple of God, as the Sacraments communicate the reality of the divine life of God present and available for her people.
Though Jesus died for us, resurrected and ascended into heaven, he wanted to remain close to us, and that is why he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. It is a memorial of his death—just as he gave us his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity on the cross, he gives us his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Jesus Himself? During Mass the bread transforms into Jesus when the priest or bishop says the words, “This is my body” and “This is my blood...” even though it still appears to be bread and wine.

Imagine a summit, the highest point of a mountain--the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. All other sacraments, our works and our prayers all point to the Eucharist because it is Christ Himself. We receive him in the Eucharist at Mass, but Jesus is also present inside the tabernacle. The Eucharist that no one receives during Mass is put safely in the tabernacle, which means that we can visit Jesus at church even when Mass is not happening. We also have opportunities to go to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which is a time when Jesus is presented in a monstrance, a beautiful case that displays him while we can sit, listen and talk to him in our hearts. In each of these places we can encounter Jesus, in the Eucharist at Mass, in the tabernacle or in the monstrance during Adoration, when he is fully present in the Eucharist.

Questions:

- When are the 2 instances Jesus gave all of Himself—his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity?
- Where can we encounter Jesus, fully present, now?
- Why did Jesus institute the Eucharist?
- Why is the Eucharist called “the summit” of the Christian life?
- Where can we encounter Jesus fully present in the Eucharist besides Mass?

Activities:

Read the account of the Last Supper from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 22:14-20) the night before you go to Mass. Pay attention to when the priest also reads the account of the Last Supper during Mass, and the prayers he says.

Were you excited to receive your First Communion? Do you remember that feeling? Do you still feel that way every Sunday at Mass? Why or why not?
What do you think is the difference between a place where people gather (think of your school, the soccer or baseball field, etc.), and our parish Church? They are all places where people from different locations and backgrounds gather for a specific event or activity, but they are very different. A Church is a very special building that has been blessed and dedicated to God. We call it “holy ground” because God is present there in a very special way. The Bible often talks about God’s dwelling place. For the Hebrew people during their 40 years in the desert, God’s special dwelling place was the Ark of the Covenant. It held the tablets of the Ten Commandments. After they entered the Promised Land the temple in Jerusalem became God’s special dwelling place. It was there that the sacrifices were made to God, and the covenant renewed between God and the Hebrew people. For us as Catholic Christians, our parish church represents God’s special dwelling place, because Jesus resides there in the tabernacle. When we celebrate the Mass we are celebrating Jesus’ establishing a new covenant though his death on the cross. The sanctuary, where we gather to worship God and celebrate the Mass, also

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus gave us the divine liturgy to represent His sacrifice on Calvary, allowing us to participate in Jesus’ salvific work historically, spiritually, and actually.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The Church makes it her primary Precept that we participate in Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation so that you and me might have the most intimate contact with the Son of God.
reminds us of God’s dwelling place in Heaven. When we are in the Church we act with reverence and respect, acknowledging that God is present there.

Think of miraculous event that happens at every Mass. The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus, and we are made present to the events of the Last Supper and Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. God suspends the rules of time and space for those precious moments, and we are united with the saints in heaven in giving praise to God. The Eucharist is truly the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus. It is not just a symbol. It IS really him, present to us in bodily form, even though it still looks and tastes like bread and wine. God is not outdone in his generosity and love for us! Jesus said “I am the Bread of Life.” What do you think he meant? He goes on to tell us more about what he means in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. Jesus says in John 6. 54-56: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my body and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.” Can you think of any time when Jesus was teaching that he said something and then said, oh that’s not what I meant. Jesus knew his words would challenge people, and some people walked away from him because they couldn’t accept this teaching. We experience the truth of this teaching every time we receive the Eucharist at Mass. Jesus gives us his body and blood as spiritual food so that we are united with him in a special way and he comes to live in our hearts. We call the Eucharist the source and summit of our faith, because the Mass is our most perfect prayer, and Jesus promises eternal life in heaven to those who believe in him and receive his body and blood.

The Mass is a very important part of our lives as Christians. Let’s talk about the parts of the Mass. (It would be helpful to have a missalette to assist you in reviewing the parts of the Mass). There is an order to our prayer, and each part teaches us about God and our relationship to Him. Can you tell me the two main parts of the Mass? The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Each of those can be divided into smaller parts.

Within the Liturgy of the Word are the Introductory Rites. These prayers draw us together so that we form one group out of all the individuals and families who have come from their various homes and life situations. Think of all the things you might be doing before we leave the house to come to Mass. Every person in the Church has left behind what they were doing to be there. But being physically present isn’t enough. We have to turn off thinking about the everyday things in our life and focus on why we are at Mass, to give worship and praise to God. So the Introductory Rites help us to do that. They help us to let go of what we had been doing or thinking about before coming to Church, and to focus on God. In doing that we become a community, the family of God, and not an accidental grouping of people.

Can you tell me what some of the things are that we do at the beginning of Mass? We usually start with a song, don’t we? Then we make the Sign of the Cross, which is how we start all our prayers. That action is also a prayer, which reminds us our baptism and the three persons of the Trinity. Then we pray the Penitential Rite. None of us are perfect, and we remember that as we come before God we have done things that have hurt other people and hurt our friendship with God. As we remember that we’ve done wrong we also ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness. Do you remember the words to those prayers? There are different choices, so we might pray, “Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.” Or we might pray “I confess to Almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do ...” Then we pray the Gloria, a great prayer of praise. It starts with the statement “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to
people of good will.” Who first spoke those words in Scripture? The angels when they appeared to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus! These prayers all help us to prepare our hearts to hear the Word of God when the readings are proclaimed.

The Liturgy of the Word continues with the readings. How many readings from the Bible do we have at Mass on Sunday? The first reading is from the Old Testament, and tells us about how God chose the Hebrew people to be his own. Then we pray the Psalm Response, which is one of the Psalms in the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament. The second reading is from the New Testament, like one of the letters St. Paul wrote to one of the early Christian communities. We hear about how the people who believed in Jesus lived, and that helps us to learn how to live our faith. Then we stand to hear a reading from one of the four Gospels which tell us about the life and teachings of Jesus. Then Father or the Deacon give the homily, helping us to understand what the readings teach us and how to live that out in our lives. Even though we are listening during the readings and the homily, we are actively involved by giving our full attention to God and what He is telling us.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Creed, the great prayer in which we state what we believe as Catholics. Then we pray the Prayer of the Faithful, during which we bring to God the needs of our world, the Church, and ourselves. What are some of the people or things we usually pray for? The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the second half of the Mass. It begins when the gifts are brought up to the altar. We call this the Offertory. What gifts are brought up? (bread and wine) Why do we offer God bread and wine? (because it will become the Body and Blood of Jesus.) We also offer ourselves to God, which is symbolized by the collection. The priest receives our gifts, and takes the bread and wine to the altar. He asks God to receive them as our sacrifice offered to him. We join ourselves to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Then the priest prays the Eucharistic prayer. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest, acting in the person of Jesus, prays over the bread and wine and speaks the words that Jesus spoke at the Last Supper. This is my body… this is my blood… Do this in memory of me. By the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine are changed into Body and Blood of Jesus. During Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus, and spend time in quiet prayer in thanksgiving for this great gift and privilege. At the end of Mass we pray the Concluding Rites. The priest prays a blessing over us, and we are sent forth to bring Christ to the world. The word Mass comes for the Latin word “missa”, which means sent. All the gifts and graces God gives us are not meant for us alone. We are to share them with all we meet, so that everyone knows about the gift of salvation and eternal life that Jesus won for us on the cross.

The Mass and receiving the Eucharist are so important to our lives as Christians that the Church says we have a duty to go to Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of obligation. It is so important to the health of our faith life that if we miss Mass without a good reason (like being sick, or needing to care for a sick
family member) it is a sin. Our relationship with God should be a priority in the activities of our weekend. Sunday is the Lord’s Day, the day that Jesus rose from the dead. At every Mass we celebrate the resurrection. In fact, Sunday is sometimes called “little Easter.” Our response to the resurrection should be one of joyful thanksgiving. We have a duty to spend time in prayer with the community giving praise and thanks to God. When you were baptized you became a child of God and a member of his body, the Church. The Mass isn’t a private prayer. It is the Church’s prayer, our most perfect way to give praise to God. It is one in which we join with all those present and unite our prayer to the prayer of Jesus. It is also an opportunity to receive a very personal gift, the Body and Blood of Jesus.

**Questions:**

- What would you say to a friend who says it is not necessary to attend Mass every Sunday?
- Name a couple of things that make a church such a special building.
- Why is the Eucharist such an important part of Mass?
- What are some things that are present within the Liturgy of the Word? Name 3 things.
- What are some of the things present within the Liturgy of the Eucharist? Name 3 things.

**Activities:**

After Mass, take a tour of your parish. What in the building tells you something about God? What are some of things that you notice that you didn’t notice before?

Choose one of the parts of Mass as discussed above. Make an effort to really focus in on this part of the Mass. How does this particular part of the Mass helps us to know God? What in this part of the Mass is helpful for your faith?
As we go to Mass throughout the year and learn about Jesus’ life, we get to walk with Jesus on His journey, and He gets to walk with us on ours. The liturgical year guides us along the entire life of Christ, reminding us to keep Him at the center of our lives and that there is no part of human life that Jesus does not want to make holy in you! As we walk this journey with Jesus, sometimes we need little exercises or practices to help us understand Jesus’ life better and to love Him more. Our Church has great practices called “devotionals.”

One example of a devotional is during the season of Lent, specifically on the first day of the season which is called Ash Wednesday. This day is mean to remind us that we are not perfect, that we are sinners, and that we all die someday. Because of these truths, we need the grace of Jesus which He won for us on the cross! To help us remember these things, on Ash Wednesday the
priest will mark people’s forehead with ashes in the shape of the cross. These markings are not necessary to receive, but many people like to receive them so they can better remember why we are entering into the season of Lent. It helps them to take the season seriously and guide our hearts and minds to reflection.

Another great example of a devotional is the psalms that we receive on Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday remembers the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem before He gave Himself up to die. The crowds knew Jesus was sent from God. They were so excited to receive Him into their city that they shouted out “Hosana!” Some of them used their shirts to make a pathway for Jesus. Others did the same thing with palm branches. We remember Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem with palm branches, to remind us that we need to welcome Jesus into our lives and hearts with excitement!

One of the most powerful devotions that our Church has is praying the rosary. The Blessed Mother is a very important person in all of our lives. Because she said yes to God and allowed herself to give birth to Jesus, we are able to be saved from our sins! Since she had such an important and special job, God gave her the gift of being born without any sin. She raised Jesus and loved Him with all her heart. When it was time for Him to go and preach to the people, she followed Him wherever He went and did whatever He asked her to do. Mary is the model of the perfect Christian life. She is closer to Jesus than anyone else.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He gave us His mother as a gift, so that she can take care of us. That is why when we need a teacher to show us how to be like Jesus or when we need help asking Jesus for something, Catholics turn to Mary to ask for her intercession. The rosary is the prayer Mary gave to the Church, so that we can ask for her help and grow in holiness. It doesn’t take long to say, it’s very simple, and allows us to reflect on Jesus’ whole life. It’s a great prayer you can say every day. Mary wants to take care of all her children, including you. She is a great blessing for the whole Church! When we pray the rosary throughout the year, it helps us to reflect on the different parts of Jesus’ ministry, so we can enter into the different celebrations with greater understanding and love of our Lord.

There are many other devotionals that take place throughout the liturgical year and there are many more that you can pray at any time of the year! Some devotionals you can look up are novenas, advent prayers, the blessing of the throats (on St. Blaise’s feast day), the divine mercy chaplet, and litanies. That’s just the tip of the iceberg! You don’t have to worry about knowing or doing all of them. There are simply too many. It’s actually a lot better just to do a few that really helps you to love our Lord more and use them as often as you can. By doing these small little practices, we can participate in the Mass and the liturgical year more easily and with greater love.
Questions:

- What is a devotional? How do devotionals help us? Do you have to practice all the devotionals?
- Why do we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday?
- Why do we receive palm branches on Palm Sunday?
- What role does the Blessed Mother play in our lives? Why is she special?
- What is so powerful about the rosary?

Activities:

Look up some devotionals that interest you (try for 3). Pick one that you would like to try and commit to it as a family for one week. See how it helps you to participate in the liturgy better.

Pick one night of the week to pray the rosary as a family. If you already pray the rosary together frequently together, offer up this rosary for the person who most needs to fall in love with Our Lady.
The Bible tells us that God created mankind “in His image and likeness.” Being created in God’s image and likeness is a great gift that no other creature on earth has. One of the biggest gifts that comes from being made in this awesome way is our free will.

The gift of our free will allows us to make the right choices even when it may be difficult. Free will means you have the freedom to make good choices or bad choices. Nobody can force you to do the wrong thing. You always have the power to do what’s right. Can you think of a time when you wanted to do something you shouldn’t, but you decided to do the right thing anyway? Maybe you did an extra chore your parents didn’t ask you to do. Maybe you said something nice to one of your siblings or your friends. Maybe you forgave somebody who hurt you. Maybe it was something as little as saying no to an extra piece of cake because you know it wouldn’t be good to eat too much. You were able to do all those good things because you have the gift of free will. This power lets us be heroes and lead amazing, inspiring lives.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus, as the Son of God, loves us and doesn’t do anything without our yes, respecting our free will to choose Him.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Man is meant to be free in his pursuit of fulfillment in this life. Being inspired by the Holy Spirit and listening to the promptings of his heart, he will be brought to fulfillment in life with the loving God.
Our free will also allow us to make wrong choices. When these choices hurt our relationship with God they are called sins. When we make wrong choices and commit sins, it affects our conscience, making it harder to know what the right thing to do is. When our conscience is in this state, it’s called concupiscence. Concupiscence makes it easier for us to be tempted to make the wrong choices. This can lead to repeated sinful acts which eventually creates bad habits. Habits are something we practice doing over and over until they become a part of who we are, almost like second nature.

When a sin becomes a habit, it’s called a vice. We can combat vice and concupiscence, however, by embracing God’s gift of grace and practicing good habits. We can embrace God’s grace by praying, reading the bible, practicing sacramentals, and participating in the Sacraments. Practicing good habits especially is something that helps us as well as those around us to be better. It simply means doing our best to follow God’s will. When we practice these good habits infused with God’s grace, they become virtues. Virtue means they have good qualities like being patient, caring about others more than we, and being strong in doing the right things through hard times.

God has given us an awesome power of free will since we are made in His image and likeness. We can use this power to do the wrong thing which can hurt our conscience and form concupiscence. By practicing virtue, relying on the grace of God and doing good works, we can overcome sin and vice. Jesus came to give us the power to live virtuously and He wants to work with us and through us to make us holy Saints!

Questions:

- What does making choices mean?
- What is a good choice? What is a bad choice?
- What does it mean to take responsibility for our choices?
- When we make bad choices, does that mean we become bad people? Why not?

Activities:

Make a list of some good habits you can work on to help you grow in virtue and fight off vice and concupiscence! Maybe you want to practice listening better so you can grow in patience. Maybe you want to try to be a little happier when you’re doing your chores, so you can show your parents that you love them. Ask God to help you with whatever you decide to work and to help you grow in virtue!

Ask someone older than you about a time they had to fight off concupiscence and choose to act virtuously. Take time this week to pray for your friends and family, so that all of you can grow in virtue together and break free of sin!
When God creates us, He creates us as individual people that are meant to live and experience life in relationship with others. Our points of relationship come at us in a number of different ways: we have a relationship with ourselves in that we learn how to use our body in rolling over, crawling, walking; discovering our hands and feet and how to use these, etc. We come to know and relate to the world around us by exploring our space and learning the rules of how to appropriately work in this area; don’t climb on this, might need to reach for that, etc. We learn how to relate to others by communicating to them with our bodies and words and actions, learning about ourselves as we learn about them. We learn how God relates to us through the love and kindness and joy we encounter and how these inspirations point us to the deeper reality of things.

The point is that we as humans are created for relationship; to lovingly encounter the other in love so that together we might experience community and live the life of the Trinity as a foretaste of the perfect unity with God that awaits us after our death. Our relationships that we have with one another are perhaps the best example of how we can show and imitate God’s love present among us.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus loves each of us, as His life details how He met people were they are at and guided them to finding wholeness in their situation.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Our Christian life calls us to love God and love neighbor, which fulfills all the Law and all the Scriptures.
How can we see God’s love present among us? One way that seems to be most helpful is the fruit that is kindness. St. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians, “Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (4:5-7). Kindness is that gift that is due to every person because it recognizes one of our deepest realities; namely that as people who are created in the image and likeness of God, we are created with a dignity that is written on our hearts. Kindness respects this dignity by showing forth the necessary care and attention that God Himself shows to us. We must treat one another with kindness!

Treating one another with kindness shows forth the love of God that He has for each of us. Kindness reminds the other that he or she is worth the respect that we hear about when at church. Kindness speaks to the heart of the other, bringing that gift of the “peace of God” St. Paul mentions in the 7th verse to the Philippians, and communicates the deeper truth that we are loved as a child of God and that this love calls to us throughout our lives.

So, your life and my life need to communicate kindness to all that we meet. We need to practice being kind to one another and realize that when we do even the smallest act of kindness, we are saying to the other person that they are loved and worth the time to be cared for in such a way. When we do this, we act as we are called to act and we reveal to both ourselves and the one that we are being kind to that God in the blessed Trinity is present as the cause of this loving act, calling us to be in greater relationship with Him.

Questions:

- What are some ways that you come to know God?
- How does our relationship with God help us to be friendly to our brothers and sisters?
- Name some of the things you learned about being kind.
- Why is it so important to be kind to one another?
- What are some ways that we can be kind to others? How does being kind to others remind us of God?

Activities:

Make a phone call or Zoom call to your grandparents or a family member who lives far away. Spend time talking with them, asking how they are doing and what they have been up to. Make sure you tell them that you love them when the conversation is over!

As a family, discuss ways that you can practice being more intentionally kind to one another around the house. Create a chart to track progress and to serve as a reminder for your goal to be kind.
Sometimes it isn’t easy to pray. Both adults and kids might often find themselves saying, “I don’t have time to pray” or “I don’t know when is a good time to pray.” The good news is, there is never a bad time to pray! Everything in your life can be a prayer whether it’s doing your schoolwork, playing a game, eating your food, or spending time with your friends. Sometimes we just feel called to pray at a time we didn’t even plan to pray. This is called “spontaneous prayer.” During this time, we just talk to God and open our hearts to Him, spending time with Him and sharing what we are going through. It doesn’t have to be long. It can be just a few seconds or can be a whole hour if you want. The most important part is that you try to pray often and focus on God.

We should never be afraid to pray, because whenever we pray, we are never alone. Even something as simple as saying a prayer can be hard and we need help. Our prayers are always meant to be inspired and strengthened by the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit who lives in us through our Baptism helps us to pray. He helps us to know what we should ask God for, the words we should use, and when we should be quiet and still. He is like a special teacher for our prayer life that we always have with us, who always wants to teach us, and who we can always ask questions to!

**Sample Script:**

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Listening to how the Holy Spirit guides you in prayer will always help you to pray better! The Spirit helps us to pray in the different kinds of prayer: giving thanks to God for the good things in our life, asking God for help with the things we need, adoring the pure goodness of God, asking for God’s forgiveness whenever we do something wrong, and just sitting and listening to what God has to say. These different kinds of prayer help to different parts of our relationship with God! The Holy Spirit always knows what kind of prayer we need most and what is the right thing to do. We can always ask the Holy Spirit to help us to pray.

If every part of our lives, we want to develop good “habits.” Habits are something we practice doing over and over until they become a part of who we are, almost like second nature! A good habit especially is something that helps us and those around us to be better. When we make prayer a good habit in our lives and practice it every day, our relationship with God is able to grow! Just like when you practice an instrument, a sport, or spend time with your friends, if you practice it every day, it gets better! There are many different ways to practice and exercise our prayer. We can spend time in silence, meditating and reflecting with God; we can read passages from the Bible; sing songs or listen to special music; we can also participate in praying morning and night prayer which are some of the official prayers of the Church! These different prayers help us to understand, speak, and listen to God in different ways, but they are all very good habits of prayer we can practice.

By giving God a little bit of time every day and inviting Him to spend time with us when we go to do the other parts of our day, God helps us to be better people and to figure out what His plan is for us. There is never a bad time to pray and if we need help, we always have the Holy Spirit there to guide us! Just spending a little time each day with God helps us to grow and create good habits. There are many awesome ways to pray and it’s worthwhile to try each one to see how they might help you!

**Questions:**

- When can you pray?
- What is spontaneous prayer like?
- How does the Holy Spirit help us to pray?
- What is a good habit? Why should prayer be a good habit?
- What are some different ways we can practice prayer?

**Activities:**

Try praying spontaneously at some time this week. Even if it’s just for a few seconds, invite God to spend time with you wherever you are! Whenever you pray this week, ask the Holy Spirit to help you!

With your child, try a different kind of prayer they haven’t experienced yet just once this week such as lectio divina, morning prayer, or silent contemplation. Walk them through the different parts of the prayer and why they are important. Talk to them about their experience afterwards and what they thought. See if they’re willing to try it again soon!
Right now, you have a special role in Mass to worship God by your movements, and by paying attention and praying actively. When you leave Mass, you have a role of imitating Christ, acting like him by loving others. When we get older, we will take on new roles which God will lead us to that we also get to choose.

Many people are called to married life. To be married means to choose a spouse and promise to love and take care of that person your whole life. You love them more than any other person, live with them, and raise children together. Marriage is a special role because a family, a Mom, Dad, and baby love each other like the love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The family is a beautiful picture of Trinitarian love.

An important role in the Church is the priesthood. Some men are called to be incredible leaders in the Church and distribute the Sacraments to people. Priests act “in persona Christi” which means “in the person of Christ” – this is more than acting like Christ, in persona Christi means that he truly represents Christ, and that it is Christ who is acting when the priests act. This is why the priest says during Mass, “This is my body given up for you” it is Christ who says these words and offers himself as sacrifice. Only a priest or bishop acts “in persona Christi.”
Another state in life to which someone may be called is the single life. This means that a person does not marry nor become a priest, but dedicates the time and gifts they have to building up the Church. Each person has specific gifts and a specific role, and their state as a single person enables them to focus on their specific calling. Another form of single life is becoming a religious brother or sister. A religious person takes vows to give their life freely and totally to God, not another person. The single life places an incredible focus on God that models how many of us can grow.

Remembering the role you have right now, it is also good to begin asking God in prayer what he wants to call you to! God calls us to a state that he knows we will be happiest in, and no matter where he calls us he will also be there to take care of us.

Questions:

- What is your role right now?
- Which state in life involves loving and taking care of your spouse for your whole life?
- Who is able to act “in persona Christi”?
- What does this mean?
- Which state takes a vow to God, and not to another person?

Activities:

Ask your parents or a married couple that you know the biggest blessing of being married.

Ask a priest you know the biggest blessing of being a priest.
A witness is someone who sees something important and shares it with others. A witness of the Catholic faith is someone who knows Jesus Christ and what He did for us by living, dying, and rising from the dead. The 12 Apostles were the first witness of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection! They lived with Him, knew that He died on the cross, and saw Him after He rose from the dead. When they experienced how much Jesus loved them and received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they were so filled with joy and passion that they had to go out and shared the Good News with everyone they met! They passed on this message to others, who decided to follow them and become disciples of Jesus. This same message was passed down for generations, until it was shared with your parents, and they shared it with you! Now you can be a witness to Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

There are many different ways to be a witness. Even simply going to Mass every Sunday is witnessing to your love of God by being willing to go and spend your time with Him. Doing small acts of great love show the love that Jesus has for us. You can do something nice for your family without them asking. You can say something kind. You can share something of yours with somebody.
Jesus loved us so much that He didn’t hold anything of Himself back, even His own life. We don’t have to give up our lives, but we should try and love the people around us without holding back just like Jesus did. We can also answer questions that someone might have about Jesus or about the faith the best that we can, and if we don’t know the answer, we can help them by looking it up. We can share stories from the Gospel or from the lives of Saints that inspire us to be better, so that we can inspire others to be better too. It doesn’t take much to be a witness. Just try and keep following Jesus and growing in your relationship with Him and don’t be afraid to show that to other people or to tell them about it.

Someone who lived not too long ago and was an awesome witness was a man named Pier Giorgio Fassati. He was a young man who lived in Italy and is on his way to becoming a Saint! He always shared his faith with his friends. He would often lead them to going to Church, read from the Bible, and pray the rosary. He spent much of his time caring for the sick and the needy. Even though he didn’t have a lot of money, he tried to give as much as he could to the poor. He also loved mountain climbing, the arts, and music. When he was just 24 years old, he got sick with a disease because he served the sick so much. At his funeral, the streets were filled with the sick and poor people he took care of. His family had no idea all the work that he had been doing and how many people he had taken care of! Blessed Pier Giorgio showed all the people around him the love of Christ by caring for them more than himself. Just like Blessed Pier Giorgio, we can show the people around us the love of Jesus by being witnesses!

Questions:

- What is a witness?
- Who were the first witnesses of Jesus?
- How can we be witnesses?
- How was Blessed Pier Giorgio a witness?
- Does it take a lot of wealth or time to share your faith?

Activities:

Take some time talking to your child about the different things Jesus did for the people around Him and why. Brainstorm with your child about ways both of you can be witnesses of Jesus to people around you this week.

Reflect on the beatitudes with your child. Think of ways you both can live out the beatitudes to witness to the faith to the people around you.

Think of someone you know who is a good witness, whether that person is someone you know personally or a Saint. Share that person’s story with your child.
When we learn about the lives of the Saints, it’s easy to think that they did amazing things with their lives all on their own without any help. We normally think this way because the older you get, the more things you want to be able to do on your own. As you grow, you learn more, grow stronger in your body and in your heart so that you are able to do more things! It’s really good to grow, to be independent, and to learn how to be your own person. No matter how old you get though, you will always need help. That won’t be because you are weak or because you’re doing anything wrong. It’s just because people aren’t made to do everything on their own. We need other people to help us do things that are too big for anyone to handle. Sometimes we don’t need help, but just having someone else to help us just make whatever we’re doing better! This is one of the reasons the Saints are such an awesome gift that we have. We can always ask them for help when we need it, so we know we’re never alone.

When we’re trying to follow Jesus and live the way He teaches us to live, we need more help than we do with anything else. This is because just like human beings aren’t made to do things without other people, we’re also not made to live our lives without God. God made us out of love which means He wants to have a relationship with us. He wants to live with us and help us with even the smallest things we do! He also wants to let us do amazing things with the gifts that He gives.
us. The Saints are awesome examples for us because they do amazing things, but they know they can’t do it without God’s help. The Saints rely on an amazing gift from God to help them called grace.

Nothing else in all of creation has the same closeness and love that God and mankind are able to share. Because we are made to be so close to God, we are able to receive the love of God in a special way called grace. Grace is a something God gives to us that helps to make us good and holy just as God created us to be. It’s something God gives us, almost like a superpower, but even better! It gives you the strength to do the right thing even when it’s hard and it helps you to know the right way to help people. These are gifts we can’t earn like a reward. God gives them to us out of pure love as a free gift. We should always ask for God to send us His grace. The Saints ask for God’s grace all the time because they know how much they need His help. The Saints love to receive help from God and God loves to help them.

Just like any other gift or present we receive during Christmas time or our birthdays; God doesn’t force us to take it. He doesn’t even force us to use it! We have to choose to accept God’s gift of grace and do good actions with His help. Because of our relationship with God, we are able to know His great love for us and also respond to that love, by doing little things every day that show God we love Him too. This doesn’t mean we need to do really big things all the time to become a Saint. Saint Therese of Lisieux became a Saint just by doing “little things with great love.” The most important thing is that you keep asking God for help, remembering how much He loves you, and looking for ways to love Him and the people He places in your life.

The Saints were not perfect, and they made mistakes just like we do, but they accepted God’s gift of grace so they could show God’s love to the people around them, and that’s what makes them so amazing.

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**Questions:**

- Why is it important to ask for help?
- Who can we get help from?
- What is grace?
- Do the Saints need to ask for help? How do the Saints ask for help?
- What makes the Saints so amazing?

**Activities:**

Talk with your child about one thing you need help with that you want to ask God’s grace for. Ask your child what they think they might need help with. This week, ask your child to pray for what you need help with and promise to pray for what they need help with.

Talk about a Saint’s life from the perspective of how much he or she needed help. Good examples might be St. Francis of Assisi who went through a huge conversion through grace or St. Joan of Arc who received incredible gifts through grace to do what no one else could do.

Find something to do together where you can take note of how doing the work together makes the activity so much better. It can simply be doing a craft, playing a game, or working together to prepare a meal, etc. Reflect together on how that experience parallels how much better our lives are when we work together with God and invite Him into our daily tasks.