EXISTENCE OF GOD

Fourth Grade

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus shows us the Trinity, He is the visible image of God. It is His love that we copy here. This relationship with Him will help us to understand how to love each other.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
As we know that God exists and that He loves us, we can feel that love and share it with others. It is only through knowing the love of God that we are able to share that love.

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:

You might have heard it said before, either at Mass or by your parents or perhaps even here in Catechism class, that our Trinitarian God is a mystery. This is true; God is a mystery in that we don’t have the whole and complete understanding of who God is. However, what we do know is most telling. We know God is one, look at the 10 Commandments. We know that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Jesus has revealed the three persons of the Trinity. We know He is love and that this love is freely shared with His creation. Look again here at Jesus and what writers like John have to say about the love of God.

Staying with the reality that God is love, it is important to draw out what this means for us. We hear all the time and probably even do this ourselves, that we love this thing or that thing. “I love my new pair of shoes” is something we probably have all said at one point or another. Now, the shoes might be liked and highly valued and truly appreciated for giving us feelings of comfort and cushion and maybe even enjoyment. To love, and looking at the definition of love that calls love the selfless gift of yourself for the good of the other, not expecting anything in return, seems to be an overuse when describing the shoes. The shoes don’t care one way or the other if they are worn or not, they certainly can’t return love to the person wearing the shoe. The use of the word love here is certainly not the love God has for us.

Love has a much better and truer application when it is used to describe a relationship between two people. A husband to a wife, a child to a father, even a friend to a friend; for one of these to say to the other that “I love you” is appropriate because love here is not just a one way street. Rather, love when given to another individual can be received and then given back, is truly the lifeline of relationship that allows life to be fully realized. In loving, and in being loved, we realize what we are made for and who we are made for.

Love reaches its climax in our relationship with God. For while love between humans is a gift and is quite powerful, it is ultimately imperfect for we can’t love as completely as God can love, who is love Himself. Our loving relationships with others point us to God. For just as we experience love and harmony in this life, these experiences can sometimes go through ups and downs where we don’t feel as loving or a certain situation is thrown into disharmony. God, however, is love and harmony Himself and our relationship with Him bring us to a place in which we recognize what we need to model to be His Christian witnesses so that others can experience His love for themselves.

Questions:

- How many God’s do we believe in?
- Can you explain to me what Trinity means?
- Who did Jesus reveal were the three persons of the Trinity?
- What are some ways we can kind of understand the Trinity?
- The Trinity is three persons that love each other so much they act as one, what does that mean about God’s love for us?

Activities:

Have your child draw a cross on a piece of paper, then have them label the cross, as if they were doing the sign of the cross, with the names of the three persons of God.

Draw a picture of what the three persons of God are like and draw them in a way that shows that they are one.
Since the very beginning of our creation, God the Father has had a plan for us to live in loving relationship with Him and with one another. This is why the first person of the Trinity is revealed as God the Father, because he wants a relationship with us, as friend but even more importantly as Father. The plan, which the Father had, has been distorted and made unclear for humans through man’s fall into sin, put God on a mission to seek out His people and bring us back into His loving care. There are a great number of instances in the Old Testament that show God reaching out to bring His people back. Let’s take a look at a couple of instances.

In the book of Exodus, in the 33rd chapter, we see God and Moses discussing the people of Israel. God is frustrated with the people for their impatience and lack of faith. Moses is tasked with leading the people
to the land promised to them by God but needs the Father’s accompanying presence. “Moses said to the LORD, ‘You, indeed, are telling me to lead this people on; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘You are my intimate friend,’ and also, ‘You have found favor with me.’

Now, if I have found favor with you, do let me know your ways so that, in knowing you, I may continue to find favor with you. Then, too, this nation is, after all, your own people.’ ... The LORD said to Moses, ‘This request, too, which you have just made, I will carry out, because you have found favor with me and you are my intimate friend.’” (Exodus 33:12–13, 17). God assures Moses that He will be with him, right by his side, as a very close friend to support Moses in the mission he has been given. God won’t leave us alone in the tasks He has planned for us. The example of Moses of communicating with God and telling Him what is on his heart shows us that God wants to have that same closeness of relationship with Him.

In the book of Deuteronomy, in chapter 6 verses 4–7, we hear the great Shema prayer, a centerpiece to Jewish prayer that reminds us of the oneness of God and the call for us to never forget His loving presence. "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest.”

God wants to be our intimate friend and to have a personal relationship with you. We need to do our part to remember Him and His love for us at each moment as we live our life.

Looking at the Psalms, we see a number of instances pointing to the relationship of God with His people as seen through His servant David. David was king of Israel and had a profound and loving friendship with God, which David shows so wonderfully through the Psalms as there author. Psalm 23 portrays the loving guidance that God offers His people, wanting to be in relationship with them in all the moments of their life. Verse 4 states that “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me”. Having a relationship with God allows us to know that God is always with us, even through the difficult and tough times of our life. This is a great source of comfort and something that we should never forget!

There are many more instances in the Old Testament, but these few examples should show us the enduring love and presence of our God who calls us to be in intimate relationship with Him.

Questions:

- What type of relationship does God want to have with us?
- What does it mean for God to be called the Father?
- How can we be friends with God the Father?
- Why do we not clearly see the relationship God the Father wants with us?
- How can we ask God to guide us and be close to us?

Activities:

Draw a picture, make a collage, use clay to make a sculpture or do some other artistic medium to depict God with Moses based on Exodus 33:12-13,17.

Write out what attributes you like in a friend, and in a parent. Then explain how those attributes are found in God.
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RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus wants us to be one with Him. When we hear His voice in the Scriptures, when we meet Him in the Sacrament, when we see Him in the face of others; Jesus is offering us an opportunity to listen, experience and encounter a loving relationship as intimate as the first disciples.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
An active prayer life invites us and allows us to come to a greater place of clarity in hearing the voice of God. Our minds and hearts become landing spots to more richly receive instruction from above so that we might live our faith here below.
Sample Script:
In a number of encounters with Jesus throughout the Gospels, we hear a common theme for being a disciple includes turning in one’s current state of life, repenting for past sin and omission, and following the Lord Jesus Christ. These particular moments in the life of the disciple are important to consider.

When Matthew the tax collector heard the Lord’s call to follow Him (MT 9:9), Matthew promptly got up and followed Him. When Jesus calls us, we need to be ready to respond. So when we feel the urge to pray while we are playing soccer, as an example, we should not ignore the urge or say I’ll get to this later, but rather should offer Jesus a brief prayer of thanks and mention what is on our heart and mind.

When asking forgiveness for our sins (that which is hurtful towards God and others) and our omissions (not doing the good that we ought to do), we acknowledge that we are following a way that is not Jesus’ way, and thus not being the disciple He wants us to be. Thankfully, our returning to Jesus to receive His love and mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation restores our friendship with Jesus and puts us back on the path He has for us.

Following Jesus is also not always easy. There are tough times and challenges to work through, but we are never alone. Jesus carried the Cross that He would eventually die on and while this was a physical burden, attached to this was the spiritual burden of all of our sins. So too as disciples of Jesus, we encounter the struggle against sin in our lives and the lives of those we interact with. These times are not to run from but are to be walked alongside Jesus so that His love and guidance can help us and others see how the grace of God can work in any situation.

To close, the life of a disciple of Jesus requires a response of turning, repenting, and following. These requirements take a life time and will be something that you’ll cycle through many, many times and will make mistakes on many, many times. But it is worth it, for Jesus will be walking with you every step of the way and your life will be all the better for it.

Questions:
- How have you felt the call to be a disciple?
- What was most striking to you about the story of Matthew (if you didn’t read it, it is Matthew 9:9-13)?
- Name some things in your life that you need to ask forgiveness for. Is there someone that you need to forgive?
- How can you follow Jesus more than you already are?
- What can you do to reach out to Jesus when you are struggling with something?

Activities:
Find a time when, together as a family, you all can go to Reconciliation together. Share any stories and/or fears you each may have.

As a family, discuss things that are a struggle, what you can do to support one another, and how can you invite Jesus to be part of the situation.
How do you know when something is alive? There are many answers here, but a good general consensus will offer answers like you see it moving, you see it breathing, you see it eating, you see it growing, and so on. We know that something is alive when we recognize a certain level of activity going on in and around the object in question.

It might be funny to say, but how often do you think of God being alive? I think it can be easy to think of God as some far off distant being that doesn’t seem alive because He is thinking about more important things. Or perhaps one could think of God as just some kind of idea that people talk about when things are going bad but doesn’t really mean anything in my life or the lives of others. We must remember that God is a God of the living because He Himself is life itself; He creates it, He sustains it, and He loves it.
God is very much alive and an excellent example of His life is found right here in our Church. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with and enliven the Church so that the people of God could encounter the presence of God in their day-to-day lives. The activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church shines forth in any number of ways but one example stands out. If you really pay attention to the readings each week, you’ll notice that there will be a word or a phrase that stands out, that really seems to speak to your life and something that you have on your mind or heart. This is no chance happening but rather is the presence of the Holy Spirit that is actively trying to get your attention to tell you that “I, God, am right here. I love you and I am going to be with you through this thing in your life”. This is pretty neat because it shows that the Church isn’t some old historical thing but rather a living organism filled with the presence of God wanting to be a part of your life.

Now, the Holy Spirit isn’t bored, sitting up in Heaven just deciding this day or that day to come be in your life because there isn’t anything else to do in eternity. He isn’t some nosy, controlling figure that is trying to run your life for you. The Holy Spirit loves you and loves you so much that He wants to experience all that is in your life, all the good and all the bad and all the in between. The Holy Spirit wants to celebrate the good things in your life with you and help you navigate the bad things in your life with you. Remember, the Trinity is a community of persons and just as the Trinity experience a community among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity desires that you too experience community with the Trinity in your life. Here, you will find happiness and peace and fulfillment in your shared life with the living God.

Questions:

- What are some ways that you know of that tell you God is alive today?
- Tell how are some of the ways that God loves you.
- How do you experience God alive in your life?
- Are you comfortable sharing your thoughts and feelings with God? Continue to pray to the Holy Spirit and invite Him in.
- What is an example of when the Holy Spirit speaks to you?

Activities:

Take some time to think about the communities you have: your family community, your friend community, your dance class community, etc. Think of the good, positive traits of these communities. How do you see God present in your life through these communities?

As a family, discuss ways that you can be more intentional about inviting the Holy Spirit into your individual lives and into your family lives.
The Bible is made up of 73 books that cover many different time periods and characters and perspectives. It tells stories of men and women dealing with a number of things in their particular time and place. Most important within these stories is the detailing of how God is interacting with people and their lives. Knowing that God wants to be in relationship with His people, the Bible is the primary source to turn to for us to see how God has interacted with humanity and offers us a lens in which we can see Him interacting with us.

This lead in helps us to understand that God is the author of Sacred Scripture. He wants us to know Him and while we can experience Him in a variety of ways, the Bible provides a direct line of contact. We say in the language of the Church that the Sacred Scriptures of the Bible are divinely inspired, meaning that the stories and teachings found within are authored by God Himself. God desires or wills that the contents of the Bible are placed there intentionally to tell humanity who He is and to encounter Him there within.

This authorship of God came through the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit guiding the human authors of each book to use their own words to communicate the truths of God. The inspiration from God did not

RELATES TO JESUS:
Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit working in the Church, we experience the real Jesus Christ in the words and stories of the Bible, which speak the truth of God present and active in our life.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
We can place our confidence in Sacred Scripture as a Living Word who helps us know, love, and serve God.

Sample Script:
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take away the free will of the human authors, making them some kind of divine robot. Rather, the words and stories that came forth from their pen brought forth the necessary Truth that was intended. The words found in Sacred Scripture are said to be alive, having been inspired by God who is love and truth, and Who seeks to encounter you and me in our present state in life.

The Catholic Church holds this teaching of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures to be of the most importance. The Word of God is what is central to our belief and is the foundation of our worship of God in the Holy Mass. Jesus Christ, as Word of God, gave of Himself in word and sacrament to the Church so that God might be ever-present to His people and that we might receive the divine inspiration in our lives. The bishops of the Church, who hold the special responsibility of being our chief teachers in the faith, help to uphold the divine nature of the Bible through their preaching and reverence for the Scriptures in all that they do as leaders of the Church.

So what does this all mean for you and I? The fact that God is the author of the Sacred Scriptures and that these passages of the Bible are divinely inspired, should provide us with great confidence that truth and goodness is being made available for us. God wants us to be in contact with Him and He wants us to know about Him and the life that He has for us. Knowing that God is love, we can faithfully read the Scriptures knowing that God wants us to know that we are loved and cared for. The divine inspiration of the Bible should then inspire us to share these stories of love with our family and friends so that they can come to know the love of God which also calls out to them. This gift of sharing the Sacred Scriptures makes you and I evangelizers, people that hand on the Good News that God wishes all to hear so that life and love can be experienced. By sharing the Good News, we pass along the inspiration of the Scriptures and ultimately the presence of God.

Questions:
- Who is considered the author of the Scriptures?
- How man books are in the Bible?
- Do the authors of the Bible write word for word what God wants written or do they use their own words to tell God’s story and truth?
- How can we use the Scriptures to get closer to God?
- Name some way that you can share the Scriptures with someone else.

Activities:

Use your own words to explain to someone else that God loves them more than anything else in the world.

Write down the names of all the old testament books and then write out the names of the new testament books of the bible.
Human beings are blessed to be made up of having a body and a soul. This body and soul that is given to us by God allows us to encounter and experience the world around us. As we go about our day-to-day lives, we come to understand that there is a physical world that we can come to know through our sense of touch, vision, and so on. We also come to realize that there is a spiritual world around us; an unseen world that communicates and interacts with us. Both the physical and spiritual worlds are real and play an important part in our daily lives.

As we know very well, the physical world is made up of the material; tangible things that we can touch and experience by studying and controlling. More often than not, we can come to know a great many things about the material world through the use of various sciences that allow us to explore the world around with some certainty. Our spiritual world, made up of the things that we cannot see, is more difficult to come to understand strictly through our senses and requires help from our Catholic faith.

RELATES TO JESUS:  
Jesus is Lord of Heaven and earth, of the visible and invisible. The disobedient angels (Satan and his demons) despise humanity because Jesus took on human form and placed humanity above the angels by taking on humanity as the Son of God. Jesus and His angels protect us from all the evil that would harm us.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:  
We are the most beloved of God's creation; the height of both the physical and spiritual realm. We give God great glory when we act as such - loving God, loving neighbor and treating ourselves and others with dignity and respect.

Sample Script:

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The spiritual world, as we exist here and now in time, is made up of angels and demons. Both angels and demons are spiritual beings that are created by God. The angels are the messengers of God that work to bring about His word and will into the world. The angels serve God in different functions and roles. Most personal to you and I is the guardian angel who is appointed to us. This guardian angel works to keep us from harm and assists us in living the good and holy life God intends for us.

The demons are the angels who intentionally disobeyed God and actively choose against Him. These demons work against the will of God and seek to disrupt our relationship and communication with God. They want us to become like them; namely to be willful participants who choose against God and work to bring disharmony and disunion to the world.

This reality of the spiritual world is certainly scary but we do not need to be hopelessly afraid! We must remember always that God loves us and wants to be with us. He Himself desires a relationship with you and me, and sends His holy angels to protect us, as well as Saints to pray for us and a number of loving family and friends to be us to keep us safe and direct us on the right path in life. We need to do all that we can to say yes to God and all that He has to offer us, inviting Him into our life so that the demons and any power of darkness will stay far, far away from us.

What then are some ways that we can ensure that we remain in the safety of God? We need to go to Sunday Mass and receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Jesus has conquered sin and death, including all demons in the spirit world. They tremble at the name of Jesus and if we reverently and devoutly and sincerely receive Him into our heart and soul at each Communion... There is no better defense in any world, physical or spiritual. Centered in Jesus, which is supported by a life of daily prayer, reading the Bible as much as we can, following the Commandments, and loving those around us by doing acts of charity and service, the love of God will keep us safe and this love will come forth from us to assist in the protection of the world around us and bring more souls to the light that is Jesus Christ.

Questions:
- The world is made up of both physical and __________
- What are angels?
- What are demons?
- How can we know more about the physical world?
- What are ways we can stay close to God in the Spiritual world?

Activities:
- Depict a scene (in story, poem, art, etc.) where our guardian angel is protecting us from spiritual harm.
- Create a list of ways you can explore God’s created world.
God created all things out of love. When he created humans, he gave us both a body and an immortal soul. The Garden of Eden was a place of perfection, and Adam and Eve walked with God and lived in union with him and with each other. But Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, and the consequence of their sin was a break in their relationship with God and with each other. Adam and Eve, and their descendants, would now experience death. At death, their body and soul would be separated.

God expelled them from the Garden, but also promised to send a remedy, someone who would defeat the power of sin and death. Jesus, the eternal Son of God and second Person of the Trinity, took on human flesh and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice that would defeat sin and death and restore our relationship with God. Through Jesus, the gates of heaven were opened. We live in confident expectation that our body and soul will be reunited, and we will one day live in complete union with God.
Although every human being is created in the image and likeness of God, we are not all rubber stamps of each other. Every person is a unique and unrepeatable expression of God’s image and likeness. We even learn this through science, which shows that every person’s fingerprints are unique. In a sense each person is a finger print of God. Each person is a gift that God places in the world at a specific time and in a specific location. God created us for relationship with Himself and other people. We are a human family, formed by our Creator.

Because of sin, we don’t get along with each other all the time. We get angry and impatient, and sometimes our words and actions do not reflect our own human dignity or the human dignity of the person we are interacting with. The Fifth Commandment states “You Shall not kill.” It’s easy to think we live out that Commandment perfectly, because we haven’t taken another person’s life physically. But we can impact the quality of another person’s life physically. And we can injure them by hurting them emotionally or spiritually. When we laugh at someone’s mistake, or make fun of them because they aren’t as naturally gifted at sports or at math, we can injure their sense of who they are as a unique image of God. We injure their self-worth, and their belief in their own gifts and abilities. God created humans to be in relationship with each other, and maybe someone is feeling isolated or forgotten. Because God made humans with bodies and souls, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves and other people, caring for the whole person. We have a responsibility to see the people we meet as gifts from God and treat them accordingly.

Jesus laid out this responsibility when he taught about the final judgment (Matthew 25.31-46). This passage is sometimes referred to as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Jesus praises those who respond to the needs of others (the hungry, thirsty, naked, stranger, ill, in prison) and condemns those who do not. A key to this passage is that Jesus identifies himself with those in need “Whatever you did for one of these, you did for me” and “Whatever you did not do for one of these, you did not do for me.” When we encounter someone in need do we see the face of Jesus? Do we consider their God-given dignity as we respond to them? Do we see them as gifts from God or as a nuisance or a problem? Jesus is asking us to open our hearts to receive the gift of His presence in the people we encounter.

The Church teaches us how to care for and uphold the human dignity of others in the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (CCC 2447). These “works” are actions we can take to support the human dignity of the people in our family, neighborhood, nation and world. These works are drawn from the example of Jesus. Most of the corporal (bodily, physical) works are taken from the scripture we just considered, Matthew 25. 31-46. The spiritual works are also drawn from the actions and teachings of Jesus. Being made in the image and likeness of God means having both body and soul. We have to take care of the whole person, not just one aspect of them. That is true in how we care for ourselves as well as how we care for others. As baptized members of the Body of Christ we have a responsibility to uphold the human dignity of others.

(For an explanation of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, refer to this website: https://www.catholicapostolatecenter.org/works-of-mercy.html)
Questions:

- How did God create the world
- What is special about the way God created human beings?
- What does it mean that humans are created in God’s image and likeness?
- How are we supposed to treat the other people?
- How is taking care of the natural world a way we can show love to God and others?

Activities:

Discuss how you as a family can show honor to God by how you treat others and treat the natural world.

Create a list of ways you can respect other people and show honor to the fact they were created in God’s image and likeness.
SIN
Fourth Grade

Sample Script:

God created man and woman, Adam and Eve, and He created them out of His eternal self-giving love so that they might experience the life that God has and that they might live with Him forever. This was to be the destiny of all men and women after Adam and Eve. Unfortunately, sin and death entered the world through the Original Sin of Adam and Eve that separated them from God. Mankind now must struggle with sin and temptations each day only to endure death at the end, in which the soul separates from the body.

It is only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is both fully man and fully God, who comes to save us from our sins by taking on human flesh and sacrificing Himself so that man might atone for his sins by this Most Holy offering of Jesus. Jesus takes all the sins of humanity, and being man Himself, offers these sins to God the Father while being the perfect Son of God, defeats sin and death, rising from the dead, that most awful consequence of sin, and reunites the soul and body. We’ll all experience the reunification of our body and soul at the Second Coming when Jesus Christ returns at the end of time.

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus conquers sin and death and is, therefore, our source of strength 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, living virtuously, helping others) enables living a holy life to become second nature in our own lives.
For you and me, right now in our lives, what does all that we have talked about mean? We need to do our best to stay away from sin. Sin literally destroys us by keeping us away from true life and true love that is found in relationship with God. We need to come to recognize the sins in our life and run to Jesus, ask for mercy and forgiveness, so that we can be brought back to the Source of life and love. To assist us in this, it is important to recognize some more details about sin.

Sin at its very basic level is intentionally doing something against the will and love of God. It is choosing something that is bad, lying for instance, over the truth that God calls us to live and proclaim with our lives. God is good and asks us to return to Him and to our brothers and sisters that which is good. When we don’t do this, we commit a sin. Sins not only hurt God, but they hurt others and ourselves. Sins are selfish in nature. They say, “I know what is best for me, and I don’t care what anyone else says or thinks.” If a person is acting rightly, that kind of independent thinking is a good and holy thing and shows courage, but if a person is acting wrongly, that thinking can lead to increasing misery in our own life and the death of our soul.

Because God created us, he knows what is best for us, what will help us and what will hurt us. God’s laws are not there to inconvenience us or to make his his slaves in some ridiculous way. Rather, when we live the way God designed his human creation to live, we not only find peace in our own hearts, but joy, and not just joy, but abundant joy (John 10:10).

Sin is also found in omitting or not doing the things that we could do that are good and right. An example might be when we see someone at the grocery store put a candy bar in their pocket without paying for it. We might think that since it wasn’t me who took the candy bar or since I don’t work here, it isn’t my responsibility to worry about the situation. This is an omission of doing the right thing, in which we should tell someone that works there that stealing has occurred. This often takes courage, because the person who is stealing may try get revenge, but it is up to us to trust in God and ask for his protection if that were to occur.

Furthermore, sin is broken down into venial and mortal sins. Venial sins hurt our relationship with God for sure, but they do not destroy it. These are often thought to be smaller sins that while still wrong are more easily repairable. While this is true, if we continue to deliberately commit venial sins because we don’t think they are that bad, we will be weakened against being able to stop ourselves from committing more serious sins, which can eventually enslave us in habits of sin that we cannot break, and thus destroy our relationship with God. Venial sins can be forgiven at the beginning of Mass during the Penitential Rite, in which we call to mind the sins of the week and ask God’s forgiveness. They can also be forgiven by saying an Act of Contrition, blessing ourselves with holy water, reception of Holy Communion, or simply telling God we are sorry in our hearts and making a firm resolution, with God’s help, to stop sinning by telling God we are sorry for those sins. Lastly, the sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation). Confession also, of course, heals us of all our venial sins. While venial sins do not have to be confessed, they should be. This will help us keep them in check. However, if we forget to confess a venial sin, our confession is still good, and it is not necessary to have to go back into the confessional to confess them. Rather, we can be assured that God has forgiven us.

Mortal sins are sins that break and destroy our relationship with God. Having full knowledge and full freedom to commit a mortal sin makes us guilty of committing a mortal sin. Intending to commit an act of disobedience against God cuts us off from the life of loving relationship with God and moves us away from His presence. All the merits of any good actions we committed in life are no longer credited to us. No future good that we do will help us, unless we first tell God we are truly sorry for our sins and ask his forgiveness. If we die without having told God we are sorry for having committed a mortal sin, we risk Hell which is a place of permanent separation from God. In the Gospels, Jesus says that Hell was “prepared by God for the Devil and his angels”, and warns that those who do not do works of mercy will go there (Mt 25:41). It is important to understand that Hell is our choice. God does not desire that we go there. He does not send us there. We send ourselves there by freely choosing to separate ourselves from his love. He created us to share in the joy of his love. If we do his will, we can be assured that he will not let us go to Hell. This is also why Jesus gave the Church the power to forgive sins even as he did when he was on earth (John 20:21-25). Jesus’s death on the cross is too precious in the sight of his Heavenly Father to want to waste one soul for whom Jesus died. So, God wants everyone saved, but he will not make us go to heaven or make us love him. That must be our free will choice, and God will respect our choice.

So, what kinds of sins are mortal? Breaking any one of the 10 Commandments is a mortal sin, but the degree of seriousness does factor in to whether certain sins are mortal. For instance, murder is always a mortal sin, but not necessarily killing. A soldier who has a duty to defend his country and has no choice but to stop someone from killing him or his fellow soldiers, and kills a person in that duty because that person would not surrender, would not be guilty of a sin at all. The book of Leviticus had a law that stated, “You shall not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is in danger.” (Lev 19:16). Yet, doesn’t the fifth commandment tell us, “Thou shalt not kill”? The law in
Leviticus does not tell us to help our neighbor by killing him, but there may be no other practical way to stop him in time. The seventh commandment tells us, "Thou shalt not steal", but just as in human law there are degrees of theft (petty larceny vs. grand larceny), so, too, in divine law. A woman who steals an apple fallen from a tree on a neighbors' farm with scores of apple trees to feed her starving child or herself would be guilty only of a little venial sin, whereas someone who loots people's businesses or breaks into peoples' homes and steals from them is guilty of mortal sin. Using the excuse, "well, they have so much, they'll never miss it" does not excuse the sin, and can actually make our guilt worse because it is premeditated.

As mentioned above, to repair our relationship with God after committing a mortal sin, we need to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and with true contrition or sorrow for our sins coupled with the intent to not sin anymore, and confessing our sins and doing penance, our relationship with God will be restored to the life of love and grace that God desires to have with us. In addition to being restored into a relationship of friendship with God, the restoration of our merits for the good we have done in life, and being forgiven our sins, an added grace of the sacrament is that we also will be given added strength to assist us in not falling into that similar sin again. And while we may still sin in this way, knowing that God is walking with us provides us great comfort on our journey and the grace of strength to help us avoid future sin.

**Questions:**

- What are two types of sins?
- Does God forgive both types of sins?
- How did we come to have Original Sin?
- Why did God send Jesus?
- Do we have to confess all sins to be forgiven or just the big ones?

**Activities:**

Think about a time when you asked a friend to keep secret about a bad choice you made. You are asking them to commit a sin by doing so. Ask for their forgiveness.

Review the 10 Commandments and think about any sins you have committed. Go to Reconciliation and ask for God's forgiveness.
CALL TO HOLINESS

Fourth Grade

RELATES TO JESUS:
The primary vocation to which Jesus calls us is the Call to Holiness, that is, to follow God’s command to, "Be Holy for I am Holy" (1 Pt 1:16). Jesus is our model of holiness. We must look to him, seek dialogue with him in prayer, and follow his example, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (-Mt 11:29)

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
If I expect to enter the domain of the perfect and eternal abiding love of God called Heaven—the destiny for which God created us—we must "be Holy for God is Holy". The Saints show us this is entirely possible. It is not an easy road, not for the faint of heart, and will require God’s grace to get us through. We can expect to fall many times, but in the sacraments, especially Reconciliation, Christ has given us the means to start fresh as often as necessary.

Sample Script:
By creating each and every one of us in His image and likeness, God has gifted us with our own combination of unique gifts and talents that when used in accord with what God wants for us, we bring Him great glory and honor and praise. God wants us to experience the life that He has. God wants us to live fully in the peace and joy of love for all the days of our lives.

This desire of God to live a life like His, shows God’s desire for us to be holy. He wants us to live lives of holiness. Every single soul is created with this desire and call from God. Our loving God wants to have a deep relationship with every single person. That is so truly amazing to think about! God doesn’t create anyone as an accident or a mistake or unwanted; He creates each soul out of love and to experience the best things that life has to offer.
God’s call for each person to be holy is called the vocation to holiness. A vocation, or calling, is what God is asking of you in your life. A vocation is where, using all your gifts and talents in an ordered way for the glory of God, you’ll find peace in your life and will ultimately be happy. So, we know that God gives everyone the call to holiness, to be lovers of God and neighbor, to seek good and avoid evil, and to serve others in love so as to invite them into a deeper relationship with God. In addition to the call to holiness, each person is given their own specific vocation in which they are called to serve God and serve others in an explicit way. Most often, this specific vocation is seen through the Sacraments of Service within the Church, namely the Sacrament of Matrimony and the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Within the Sacrament of Matrimony, or marriage, the man and woman give of themselves in total self-sacrificing love so that they serve one another and their family all the days of their lives. Within the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the man who is ordained to the priesthood of Jesus Christ gives of himself in total self-sacrificing love so that the people of God may be served all the days of his life. Both of these Sacraments support the particular vocation, showing God’s personal blessing on the woman or man responding to the vocational call from Him.

For those who aren’t married or are not ordained, these souls either find themselves preparing to live out their vocation, still discerning or deciding what it is that God might be calling them to do in their lives, or living a life of generous service towards God and others. Still others might not have any concern for their vocation and we should pray for all souls to genuinely seek God to ask Him and to be open to Him to show them their vocation, which ultimately leads one to be happy in this life.

God wants each of us to be happy in this life. He gifts us with a vocation so that we can live in the happiness He desires for us. Again, God created us and knows us better than anyone else, so we can have confidence that our vocational call will bring us to a place of happiness and peace.

Questions:

- Why is it important to know that God created us?
- What is the vocation that every single person shares?
- What are the two major vocations God calls people to?
- How are the Sacraments of Service similar to each other?
- What should we do for souls that still are looking for happiness?

Activities:

Have you ever thought about or prayed about your vocation? Think about the gifts and talents you have. When you use these, how do these give glory to God? How might God be calling you to use these to tell others about Him?

Ask your mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, your parish priest how they came to discover their vocation of either Matrimony or Holy Orders. Listen to their stories and take note how God was working in their lives. How do you see God working in your life?
God created us out of love and desires for us to live a life that is open to receive His love and to be people who reflect His love to others in our daily interactions with each other. We are each individually created by the love of God and we are created to be with God forever. The love He has for us is meant to sustain us throughout this life and ultimately bring us back home to Him when we die.

Unfortunately, it isn’t that easy. Sin entered the world through the Original Sin of Adam and Eve. This disobedience of God and ultimate rejection of His love brought about many consequences. Most notable of the consequences is that a separation from the love of God by sin yields the fruit of death, which is seen in the separation of the body from the soul when we experience our physical death. However, sin also yields the fruit of a spiritual death, in which our relationship with God is damaged or destroyed and the order that should exist between our body and soul is thrown into disorder, with our body seeking base passions apart from sound reason, etc.

Sample Script:

For our part, we need to cooperate with grace by following and living the Precepts of the Church so that grace remains fresh in us and guides us to salvation.

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus came to save us from our sins by dying on the Cross and thus opens for us the necessary grace to live life in Him.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

For our part, we need to cooperate with grace by following and living the Precepts of the Church so that grace remains fresh in us and guides us to salvation.
So, we need a savior to bring us back from our sinfulness and into right relationship with God. Jesus Christ, in Him taking on our flesh and sacrificing Himself through the Paschal Mystery (which is to say, through His suffering or passion, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection three days later from the tomb) saves us from our sins and brings us the opportunity, if we choose it, for new life found in living in right relationship with God. To put another way, Jesus overcomes and conquers sin and death through His dying and rising and restores the order that was lost due to sin and allows harmony to exist again between God and man and between man’s physical and spiritual self.

This grace of new life that is offered us through the saving action of Jesus Christ has a lot to say for our daily lives. It allows us to truly seek the desire that we all have to be full, to be happy, to be complete. This desire we realize is fulfilled by love, which is found fully in God alone, and so a life of holiness that pursues this pearl of great price (cf. Matthew 13:45-46) becomes all the more pursuable due to God’s love for us in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. By keeping our eyes, mind, and heart fixed on Jesus, living the life of grace won for us, we walk the path of life as a disciple of Jesus and our brought to new life, to life that is full!

The grace that we speak of identified in two forms. Sanctifying grace is the habitual grace that we receive supernaturally, seen evidently in the Sacraments, especially in Baptism and Reconciliation, as this grace heals our broken human nature due to sin and restores us in our friendship and relationship with God. Actual grace is the grace received from God’s interventions throughout our life, like at the moment of conversion or reversion to the faith, and are the daily helps to assist us on our journey towards holiness. We should follow the role models we have in our life of faith and praise God for the gift of grace given to such souls (Saints are a great example, holy people in our family or who we see at Church).

Questions:
- Sin yields what two types of death ultimately?
- What is the difference between sanctifying grace and actual grace?
- To what did Jesus’ dying and rising bring harmony?
- Is anyone free from sin?
- What does God’s love give us in this world?

Activities:
Together as a family, discuss how our bad choices and sins affect us and others around us negatively. Conversely, hold a similar discussion in regards to our good choices and how these affect us and others around us positively. Put these answers and any points shared on a chart that can be referred to from time to time.

Think of your brother/sister or classmate or neighbor friend, some one that you are close to. Write down 5 ways that you can be an example of Jesus Christ for him/her and how these actions show God’s love for the other.
It is incredible to think about the beautiful reality that is our Catholic Christian faith! You might have heard that the Bible, and by extension Christianity, is the greatest story ever told and they are right. The many stories of God’s loving presence, the rise and fall of humanity, the saving mission of Jesus, and the action of the Holy Spirit working through ordinary men and women is something out of your favorite superhero movie... except this is real. To top it off, we have an important and necessary part to play in it all, if you and I are paying attention.

While there are so many amazing stories to detail, the life of Jesus is most important. And while there are many different “characters” or people that have played important roles in living the story of Jesus, it is Mary who has a most critical presence. Mary was there at the very beginning of the Incarnation, giving her free consent to God to bless her with the gift of a child from the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38). It is said that the angel Gabriel quivered and bowed in respect at Mary’s total yes to God’s message! Mary was able to give her yes in part because she was blessed to have been preserved from the stain of Original Sin from the...
moment she was conceived in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, (we call this grace given to Mary, the Immaculate Conception). Thus Mary’s will is in harmony with God’s. Mary never committed any personal sin and her Immaculate Conception meant that she didn’t have the selfish desire or attraction to sin or to follow her will over God’s will. Although she was subject to temptation just like Adam and Eve were, unlike Adam and Eve, she did not give in to any temptations to sin in her life. This is why many Saints in the Church referred to Mary as "the New Eve". Mary was there with Jesus to encourage Him to begin His public ministry (John 2) and ultimately His saving mission (verse 4-5) at the Wedding Feast of Cana. Just as any mother would say that she knows you so well that she knows you better than yourself, one gets the sense Mary recognizes something in this particular scene at Cana that says it is time for Jesus to begin.

Mary was there on Calvary, where Jesus is tortured and crucified for our sins. Loving her Son and suffering with Him in ways only a mother would know, Jesus returns the love Mary has for Him and leaves her not alone, but with what is looked at as the entire Church to be with her yes however and perhaps more rightly so that we in the Church will be blessed with so great a Mother to love and care for us just as Jesus does (John 19:26-27). These few instances show the critical role of Mary in the life of Jesus.

What does this mean for us? We need to do our best to remember the love Mary has for us. Her love for Jesus and His Church is seen in the stories of the life of Jesus and just as Jesus leaves us these stories to come to understand how He relates to you and me in this life, we can be sure that the accounts of Mary show the nurturing love and tender care that is available for you and me in our relationship with the Blessed Mother of God. Mary serves as another role model for us to follow on our journey to come to know Jesus and receive His love for us in this life. Mary reminds us that we are never truly alone in our walk of faith, knowing that like our earthly mother, our Heavenly Mother is just a call away. There is no better grace and no better story on earth that can compare with Mary!

**Questions:**

- Why is Mary sometimes called, "the New Eve"?
- What were some of the things that Mary did in her life that show us how she continued to love her Son Jesus as a mother and provide a model of holiness in our lives?
- Why was the Wedding Feast at Cana so important in Jesus' story?
- What does Immaculate Conception mean?
- Why is it important that Jesus had a mother much like we do?

**Activities:**

In the example of Mary, we find the first disciple of Jesus Christ, for she was first to say yes to accepting Jesus in her life. As a family, discuss ways that you can each grow in your discipleship and consider ways that Mary’s example can by your daily guide to keeping Christ central within your family’s life.

Pray a Rosary together as a family each night with the intention of being able to recognize God’s voice more clearly. Keep a family journal of how God is speaking to you through the intercession of His mother Mary and discuss as a family ways to respond.
Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, meaning He is the lead High Priest that offers Himself on our behalf to God the Father. Jesus’ work of salvation completed historically some 2,000 years ago is continually offered at each Mass to represent the great sacrifice so that, through Jesus’ intercession for us before the Father, we might offer ourselves and our prayers to God. Jesus is always with us in the Church and as the Mass makes present the offering of His Body and Blood given on the Cross to the Father, we are able to unite ourselves to Jesus and give our own sufferings and struggles and the sufferings and struggles that we have been asked to pray for in sacrifice to the Father as well. Here, we are being active in the Mass and in our worship of God. This sharing in the saving mission of Jesus Christ unites us to Him and the Church and gives God His proper due in being worshipped and praised.

The Catholic Church, in her wisdom, as guided by the Holy Spirit, has given us a list of precepts or principles to guide us in our life of faith so that we might remain united to Jesus Christ and be the holy girls and boys that He has called us to be. The Precepts of the Church give us the minimal guidance necessary to order our
The Catholic Church, in her wisdom, as guided by the Holy Spirit, has given us a list of precepts or principles to guide us in our life of faith so that we might remain united to Jesus Christ and be the holy girls and boys that He has called us to be. The Precepts of the Church give us the minimal guidance necessary to order our lives towards God, but God does not call us to be minimalists, and if we think we will make it to Heaven by being minimalists, we ought to re-think that position. God does not desire that He is merely a part of our lives, like our social life, our work life, and a little 45 minute part on Sundays. He wants all of us. Christ must be at the center of our lives, All our decisions should revolve around the question, "What does Jesus want me to do?" Our first waking moment should be one of prayer. We should be in dialogue with God all day, and prayer should be our last conscious action of the day. Far from some sort of "fanaticism", this centrality of Christ in our lives is actually the minimum we need just to hope to make it to purgatory according to many Saints! Jesus said in the Gospels, "Once you have done all the things I have commanded you, say, 'I am a worthless servant having done only that which is my duty" (Luke 17:10). Yes, Jesus actually does expect this of us. Now, the Precepts of the Church are as follows:

1. Observe Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation by going to Mass – This is our first duty to God who has given us everything we have and are, including life itself. The Mass is the only true worship of God on earth. It was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper and not only recalls, but makes real again his suffering, death, and resurrection. It is the primary way that we give God worship and praise, as we encounter Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament and offer back to God Jesus’ Body and Blood in the Eucharist while also uniting our own life and prayerful petitions in uniting with Jesus’ saving mission. It is our baptism that makes our own worship possible, because it makes us part of Christ’s mystical body, the Church. In return, God gives us the precious body and blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus, his Son in Holy Communion. This sacrifice of worship is God’s most intimate design in order to unite with and be in relationship to His people, making Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation so very important in one’s spiritual life. When God commanded Moses to keep Holy the Lord’s day, he ultimately would mean by means of the Mass. Thus, it is a grave sin to ignore or belittle this obligation and puts us in peril of eternal separation from God—by our own choice!

2. Confess your sins at least once a year – We are sinners. By being born as a human being, we inherit and take on the Original Sin of Adam and Eve, and are subject to all the effects of that sin (e.g., illness, death, bad decision-making, giving into sin easily even when we know its wrong, etc). And while we are cleansed in the waters of baptism, the effects of sin endure, causing us to fall into sin in our thoughts, words, deeds, and neglects or omissions. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is important for us to do at least once a year, more if possible, so that we can be washed of our sins, be protected against falling back into sin easily, and restore our relationship with God who loves us so. The Church recommends going to confession at least once a month in order to strengthen us against sin and close to God. However, we ought to go to confession any time we find ourselves in mortal sin because neglecting to do so can put us in spiritual peril.

3. Receive the Eucharist in Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season – The Eucharist is referred to as the "source and summit" of our faith, which means that Jesus’ Body and Blood is the most important gift for us to be in close relationship with God. The Church asks us to receive the Eucharist at least once a year during the Easter season, so that we can receive the grace of having our Lord so very close to us in our hearts while celebrating the resurrection, the victory over sin and death and the promised hope of spending eternity in the presence of God, as experienced in the Eucharist, at least one time a year. Again, in order to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, we must receive him with our souls properly ready, free from major (i.e., mortal) sins, with a heart of love and desire for him, and seek to receive Him every week as much as possible.

4. Observe days of fasting and abstinence – On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the Church asks us to fast (one full meal and two small meals not equaling a full second meal) and abstain from meat. Also, on Fridays during Lent, the Church asks us to abstain from meat. But did you know that on ALL Fridays throughout the year, the Church asks us to abstain from meat as well? However, in place of abstaining from meat, we can offer some other act of penance or something else to participate in the ascetic practice of self-denial, turning us from focusing on ourselves to focusing more intently on God. This can take many forms, how you decide what to do is up to you, as any act of giving up something can be a way to put our faith into action.
Questions:

- Why is the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of the utmost importance in our lives?
- What sacrament makes our worship at Mass possible? Why?
- How often, at a minimum must we go to confession to remain in good standing with the Church according to the precepts? How often does the Church recommend we ought to go?
- What does it mean that families should be “the domestic church”?
- How do we live our mission?

Activities:

Review the Precepts above together as a family. Discuss which of these you collectively are good at. Which one’s do you need to work on? Choose one that is particularly challenging and draw up a plan to work on living this particular Precept more intentionally.

Choose one of the Precepts on your own and briefly write how this Precept brings you closer to Jesus and His Church.
Any membership to anything comes with some nice perks. If you are a member at the zoo, you get to enter without paying and get to skip the line. If you are a member at the local coffee shop, your twelfth purchase is free. If you are a member at the gym, you get free towels and access to the hot tub. Being a member of the Catholic Church, you receive the gift or grace of divine life with God and a chance at eternal life!

Now, being a member of the Catholic Church means so much more than the zoo, coffee shop, or gym. In the Catholic Church, you are in a relationship with Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God who died for our sins and won for us the chance of life eternal. With the Sacraments of Initiation, which consist of baptism which you probably received as a baby, the Eucharist which you received most likely as a second grade student and hopefully get a chance to receive every Sunday, and the Sacrament of Confirmation which you’ll receive around 8th grade, you become a full member of the Catholic Church. Baptism seals you with what is called an indelible mark on your soul, meaning

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus desires that we all be one and gives us the Sacraments of Initiation to be united with all of humanity, past/present/future.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The Catholic Church exists for you and me to be in relationship with God and to spread the love and joy of this relationship to all those that we encounter.

Sample Script:

Any membership to anything comes with some nice perks. If you are a member at the zoo, you get to enter without paying and get to skip the line. If you are a member at the local coffee shop, your twelfth purchase is free. If you are a member at the gym, you get free towels and access to the hot tub. Being a member of the Catholic Church, you receive the gift or grace of divine life with God and a chance at eternal life!

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that no matter what, your soul is marked as being a child of God. Your baptism in the Catholic Church is not a membership you can cancel; you are a child of God called to be in a relationship of love with the Lord of the universe!

Confirmation provides the person with a special gift of grace from the Holy Spirit, who gives the power of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit for the person to be strengthened and more committed to living life as an active member of the Catholic Church. This commitment is graced by God and while the struggles of life will still undoubtedly come, the presence of the Holy Spirit in one’s life will provide faith and endurance to get through and overcome.

With the Eucharist, we receive the source and summit of our faith which consists of no mere symbol or sign of our faith; rather we receive the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eucharist offers us the weekly grace of receiving Jesus into our minds and hearts, saying that He is Lord of our life and that we want to follow Him. The Eucharist gives us actual grace to choose and follow Jesus in our daily life and brings us along in our life as “members” of the Catholic Church.

One of the very neat things about belonging to the Catholic Church is that through the Sacraments of Initiation we are united to every Catholic past, present, and future as brothers and sisters in the Lord. This oneness found in the Church is referred to as the three States of the Church. We are the Church Militant, fighting the spiritual fight of staying faithful to Jesus and His Church by choosing a moral life in relationship with God. There is the Church Suffering, the holy souls in Purgatory who died in the friendship of God but are still in need of purification before entering their eternal rest in Heaven. We need to pray for these souls that their time here might be quick. There is the Church Triumphant which consists of the souls who are resting peacefully in their heavenly glory, which consists of both saints and angels. It is amazing to think about that the saints and the souls that have lived and that will live will be baptized in the same Baptism, receive the same Eucharist, as you and me!

Questions:

- What makes us a member of the Catholic Church?
- Name the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as received at Confirmation.
- What does it mean that the Eucharist is the "Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity" of Jesus Christ?
- What are the Three States of the Church?
- How is the Church Suffering different from the Church Triumphant?

Activities:

Interview someone you know who lives outside your house who is Catholic. What does being Catholic mean to them? What is something that is truly special to them about the Church? Have them tell you a bit about their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith and is the greatest of the Sacraments. Ask your family to find a time together to go to an Adoration chapel or to spend some time after Mass praying before the Tabernacle. In this time of prayer, quietly listen for God’s voice and offer Him any intentions and prayers to life up to His divine love and mercy.
We sometimes like to wear clothing that shows others the things that we like to do. Maybe you like to wear your sports uniform because it shows others that you play and what team you are on. Maybe you like to wear the sweatshirt that shows the club you are in, or where you went on vacation with your family last summer. We like others to know the sports and clubs we belong to because we do it, and are proud of it!

In Baptism, we become a part of something incredibly special, even more than belonging to a team. When we are Baptized, we become adopted sons and daughters of God the Father. That means that we share in God’s divine life, a life centered on his love! This is all possible because of the Son! We know that the second person of the Trinity is the Son. He shares divine life with the Father fully! When the Son became man, he made it possible for us to share in that life as well, and to be adopted by the Father, and we receive that new life in Baptism!

**RELATES TO JESUS:**
Jesus’ being baptized in a baptism like ours made you and I His brother and sister. We are adopted as children of God who live and follow the way of His Son Jesus, Who opens the doors of grace and washes away our sins so that we might be His disciple and live eternally with Him.

**RELATES TO MY FAITH:**
The sanctifying grace received in baptism washes our souls clean from Original Sin and restores our relationship with God. We are brought together by baptism with all the baptized under the care of the Catholic Church.
Why is new life, and becoming an adopted son or daughter of God something so incredibly special? It goes all the way back to the beginning, to the story of Adam and Eve. God wanted to share his life with them too, and they partook in his life in a beautiful and harmonious way! But what happened? Adam and Eve decided to disobey God. They wanted to be like him by eating the fruit, like the Serpent tells them, but they wanted to do it their way. By that sin they hurt that beautiful and close relationship with God by disobeying him, and they couldn’t fix the relationship by themselves. It was then that the Father sent his Son to become man, so that man could become like God and in an even greater way than Adam and Eve had been! Jesus opened the gates of heaven, making it possible for us to share in God’s life and making available to us the gift of sanctifying grace that heals what is wounded in us by sin! We receive the gift of sanctifying grace when we are Baptized, and we begin to share in that divine life by receiving graces and becoming God’s adopted son or daughter!

**Questions:**

- What do we become when we are Baptized?
- What does it mean to be an adopted son or daughter of God?
- How is it possible that we can partake of God’s divine life?
- What gift do we receive in the sacrament of Baptism that heals what is wounded in us by sin?
- What bigger family do we become a part of at our Baptism?

**Activities:**

Write down some of those things--clothing, maybe jewelry--that you like to wear that shows you belong to something. Why do you like belonging to this group?

Journal, perhaps writing a letter to God about what you have learned about being his adopted son or daughter. What does it mean to you?
CONFIRMATION

Fourth Grade

Sample Script:

Throughout the Old Testament many references are made to the “spirit of the Lord”. The famous prophet Isaiah said the spirit of the Lord would come to rest on the Messiah! “But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

When Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist, we see the Holy Spirit resting upon Jesus, a sign to everyone that he is the Messiah! John the Baptist exclaimed, “I saw the spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him” (John 1:33). The spirit that the prophet Isaiah was talking about was the Holy Spirit! Thus Jesus received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But it didn’t end there. On the feast of Pentecost, after Jesus has already ascended into heaven, the apostles also received an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when “there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (Acts 2:2-3). Fire is a popular symbol of the Holy Spirit, and therefore also a symbol of Confirmation.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus confirms the role of the Holy Spirit by sending Him to be with Mary and the Apostles in the Church. The Holy Spirit is with us today, just as Jesus is, alive in the Sacraments to keep us in His love.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
The indwelling of the Holy Spirit residing inside of us makes us temples of the Holy Spirit, and this should remind us to care for ourselves and others with dignity and respect.
Confirmation completes Baptism—it is a strengthening of the graces that God has already given us in Baptism. 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). Jesus gave us the fullness of the Holy Spirit that he himself had.

When we receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, we also receive the same Gifts that Isaiah listed in his prophecy about Jesus! There are seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, counsel, and awe of the Lord. These provide us with what we need to imitate Jesus, our main goal as Christians!

**Questions:**
- What were the gifts that Isaiah prophesied the Messiah would have?
- What are the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive in the sacrament of Confirmation?
- What promise did Jesus make to his apostles and to us?
- Confirmation completes what other sacrament? How so?
- What is the typical symbol for the Holy Spirit?

**Activities:**
- Draw a timeline with the different events throughout Scripture from Isaiah to you, tracing the Holy Spirit.
- Draw a picture of how you think the Holy Spirit came to the apostles.
For those times that we are faced with a difficult choice, or even when we take action throughout our day, God has given each person a conscience. “Conscience is the inner voice in a person that moves him to do good under any circumstances, and to avoid evil by all means. At the same time it is the ability to distinguish the one from the other” (Youcat 295). In our conscience, it is God speaking to us and leading us to good choices.
Conscience is a gift from God, and he has given us the responsibility to form our conscience well. Some don’t, and it is confusing and difficult for them to know what is good. That is why it is important that we do things that will form our conscience, so that we have little difficulty in recognizing what is good from bad and can choose it! We form our conscience by taking a little time each day to pray, by studying the faith (like in catechism lessons), and making habits of virtue so that we can hear God better! Once we have a solidly formed conscience, we can trust it and must be sure to follow it.

There are many situations in which you may be faced with a difficult decision. For example, say your friends all agree that doing something would be fun, but you get the feeling that it isn’t a good choice. Something you can do is stop for a minute and think: why do you have a bad feeling about this? It may be from your conscience, and in thinking you can realize the consequences of that decision and voice them! Or, say someone at school or sports practice asks you to do something you don’t understand. Ask someone older than you, especially someone you trust for help as to what you should do and whether it is a good choice or not. If you’re ever in a situation where you have a little time, say a prayer asking God what to do. He may lead you to an answer or help resolve the situation! Always remember that you have the gift of your conscience for aid!

Questions:

- What is a conscience? Why does each person have one?
- What must we do to form our conscience well? What is the case if we do not form our conscience?
- Name a method you can use when faced with a difficult decision.
- If someone tells you to do something and you know it is a sin, is it their fault because they told you to do it?
- What do we do to receive forgiveness for our sins?

Activities:

Have you ever been in a situation like one of the ones described? Talk about that time, or a time you could have used one of these methods to make a good choice.

Interview various family members asking them a time when they were faced with a difficult decision, and what method they used to make a good decision.
What is the greatest gift you’ve ever received, and why? Similarly, the greatest gift, and the greatest sacrament we can receive is the Eucharist, because the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. When we receive the Eucharist at Mass, we receive Jesus himself!

This is not something the Church invented, it is what Jesus celebrated at the Last Supper. He anticipated his own death, in which he would give his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity over to all
people by dying on the cross for them. So he established the sacrament that embodies his self-gift in the Paschal Mystery to remain close to you and I. He loves you and I so much that he died so we could be united with him in heaven one day, and he gave us the Eucharist so that we can be united with him even now!

Jesus told us, “the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world” (John 6:51), and “whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). We do this at Mass when the bread is transformed into Jesus, even as it still appears to be bread and wine. It is transformed at the words of the institution, “This is my body” and, “This is my blood...” said by the priest or the bishop, the same words Jesus said at the Last Supper. When we receive him, we are joined more fully to Christ, we are more fully united with the Church who is God’s family, we are freed from venial sins and preserved from mortal sins, and our faith is made more solid!

In order to fruitfully receive all of this, we should make sure we are prepared to receive Jesus into ourselves! That means we should be free from mortal sin, make sure we don’t eat or drink anything (except water) in the car on the way to Church, or an hour before receiving Communion, and once we get to Mass we don’t want to zone out. Try your best to pay attention to what the priest says and the prayers that you say in response. We are meant to take away something from Mass that we can think about, so we should do our best to be fully present at Mass like Jesus is!

**Questions:**

- What is the greatest sacrament we can receive?
- What is the Eucharist? What does the Eucharist embody?
- What happens in us when we receive the Eucharist?
- What can we do to prepare for receiving the Eucharist?
- What occurs at Mass to change the bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ?

**Activities:**

The next time you go to Mass, bring a journal where you can write down one takeaway that you heard from Mass. This is a neat habit to make so that you can always look back on what struck you most.

While you are at Mass practice being present to what is occurring. Many times people tend to think about what they will do after Mass. Catch yourself when you begin to zone out.
I want to be sure that you understand what is happening when we are at Mass. Although we live in time and space, God is not bound by them. God is outside time and space. At Mass we enter into Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. It’s not just that we think about it. We don’t repeat it or re-enact it. God makes us present to it. Jesus died on the cross once for all times and all people. We know that happened almost 2000 years ago. Yet at Mass, we become present to those historical events. We are brought to the table at the Last Supper, and to the foot of the cross. It is how Jesus won salvation for us. It’s hard to understand because it is almost more than our brains can hold. But it really happens at every Mass by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the graces of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Have you ever sacrificed something for the good of another person? Maybe you let your brother play with your favorite toy, or left the last cookie you had been eyeing for your sister. During Lent you probably “gave up” something as a gesture of repentance to God.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus’ coming as God and man gives us not only a divine mediator but also a relatable bridge that intimately bonds us to our Creator.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Our Catholic Church continues and promotes the closeness with God that He desires for His people so that we might have the opportunity to grow close and fall in love with Him who loves us.
Making sacrifices can be hard, can’t they? For it to be a true sacrifice it has to be a sincere gift, and we have to do it whole heartedly. If we hold something back, only do it half way, the action loses meaning.

Jesus offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why we refer to him as the Lamb of God. Remember that in the Old Testament offering sacrifices was an important way that the people worshipped God. The priests offered the sacrifice for the people. When the offering was in thanksgiving, or asking God for his blessing, they would offer the best produce from their crops, what scripture calls the “first fruits.” When the offering was made to express sorrow for sin and show their desire to atone for their sin, they sacrificed an animal. It had to be the best animal of the flock. The animal represented the sins of the people. The blood of the animal was especially important, because blood represented life. The life of the animal was offered to God as repentance for sin. The blood was sprinkled on the altar, and sometimes on the people. After the temple in Jerusalem was built, the animal sacrifices took place there.

The events in the Old Testament often point forward to Jesus, who completed them and brought them to fulfillment. Jesus took on our sins and freely offered his life on the cross in atonement for our sin. He became our sacrifice. Jesus was fully human and fully divine. St. Paul tells us that Jesus was like us in all things but sin (Hebrews 4.14-15). So he was the perfect sacrifice, the spotless lamb, and he offered himself on the cross for all of humanity. His blood was shed on the cross for us. His death broke the hold that sin and death had on humanity and restored our relationship with God. It is this sacrifice that we are made present to at Mass. In offering himself as a sacrifice Jesus acts as the priest. Since he is also the one who is being offered, he is the sacrifice. In his death and resurrection he defeats the power of sin and death and restores our relationship with God.

When we come to Mass we hear the Word of God, the Scriptures, and hold those words carefully in our hearts. We are made present, in a real way, to Jesus’ death and resurrection, through which we are saved. In being made present to these events, we join the entire Body of Christ, the Church here on earth and the faithful in heaven in giving praise to God. We receive the Eucharist, the very body and blood of Jesus, to strengthen us and unite us ever more closely with Jesus. Then we sent out to bring the Good News of salvation to all those around us. We are given a mission, so that all people will know of salvation in Jesus. At our baptism we became members of the Church, the Body of Christ, which continues the saving work of God, bringing the news of salvation to the world.

The word liturgy means work, and we call the formal prayer of the Church liturgy. The Church’s liturgy includes the Mass, our most important act of worship, the Sacraments, Adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross and other formal prayers. At baptism we become a child of God and a member of his body, the Church. Jesus is the Head of his body (Colossians 1.18). That is what he meant when he said I am the vine. You are the branches (John 15.5). Jesus’ work of salvation continues through the life, work and teachings of the Church. The formal definition of Liturgy is the participation of the People of God (the Church) in the ‘work of God’ (restoring the relationship with God that had been lost because of sin, our salvation). How do we participate in the work of God at Mass, in the celebration of the Sacraments, at Adoration or any other formal prayer of the Church? We participate by preparing our hearts to receive God’s grace, and in the Eucharist the Body and Blood of Jesus. We participate by cooperating with this grace, so that our lives are more focused on God, and more in line with God’s will. We participate by recognizing the great gifts God has given us, and offering to him our praise,
thanksgiving and all of ourself, our very being. Our work is being open to and cooperating with the work that God is doing in our lives, both individually and as the Body of Christ, the Church. What we believe shapes how we pray. How we pray shapes how we live, and treat the people God puts into our lives and the natural world.

The Church calls of each of us to “full, conscious and active” participation in the Mass. This means so much more than just being physically present. It means learning the prayers of the Mass and speaking/singing them with meaning. Really putting your heart and mind into the words you are praying. It means becoming students of the Mass so that we continue to deepen our understanding of the meaning of the words and actions, letting God unfold their meaning throughout our lives. Every part of the Mass is designed to bring our attention to all that God accomplished through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Our response should be a full giving of ourselves in praise and thanksgiving.

Questions:

- Why is Jesus the perfect sacrifice, and the only sacrifice that could fully restore mankind’s relationship with God?
- Why is the Mass not a re-enactment or repetition of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection?
- How does knowing that the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of our Lord change or deepen your appreciation for the Mass?
- How can you show your love for Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist, more fully and completely?
- What does the word liturgy mean?

Activities:

The Christian life highly values sacrifice, as it frees us from things so our attention can be placed on God and the other. As a family, talk about something that you could sacrifice on a regular basis for the good of someone else. What is something you could give up lovingly? How do you see God in this event? What in your sacrifice reminds you of Jesus’ sacrifice?

The Church has many different forms of prayer. Review some of the prayer practices listed above, choose one you haven’t done before, and see if you like it or not. Try to do it once a day for week and invite your siblings and/or parents to join you!
RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus and the followers of Jesus tell the story of the Kingdom of God and they each proclaim this message with their lives.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Memorializing the life of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints connect us to the Divine and set an example for us how to live lives of holiness.

Sample Script:

You know how we have to go to Mass every Sunday. You may already know that there are even some other days that we are required to go to Mass that are not Sundays. These days are called “Holy Days of Obligation.” These days are not meant to be a chore. These Holy Days of Obligation are incredibly important days in the liturgical year. They are so important that the only proper celebration for these days is attendance at the Sacrament of the Mass. Would you ever miss your best friend’s birthday part as long as you were able to go? When someone is special to you and they are celebrating something significant, it’s important that you go to celebrate with them! In the same way, the Church recognizes these days are very important for all of us, and so we come together as a Church family in order to celebrate.

The Church can name different holy days at different times, but right now there are 6 Holy Days of Obligation:

1. Feast of the Immaculate Conception
2. Christmas
3. Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God
4. The Ascension
5. The Assumption
6. All Saints Day
The feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated on December 8th. This feast commemorates the day when the Blessed Mother was conceived without sin. It’s an important day for the Church, because Mary’s immaculate conception is what allowed Jesus to be born into the world, so we could be saved. Christmas is of course the day when Jesus was born! Even though He is God, He decided to become one of us so He could be close to us and die for us on the cross. We celebrate Christmas on December 25th.

On January 1st we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. This feast reinforces that Jesus is both man and God. Jesus is truly God and Mary is truly His mother. Because of this truth, even though God is timeless and is not “born”, Mary is responsible for God being born on earth as a man. I know that’s a little complicated, so it’s okay if you don’t understand it all right now! You just have to know that Jesus is really God and Mary is really Jesus’ mother.

39 days after we celebrate Easter Sunday, we celebrate the feast of the Ascension. This year the Ascension is celebrated on May 13th. On this day we celebrate Jesus ascending into Heaven to be with the Father. Even though He finished His ministry on earth, He left us the amazing gift of the Church and the Eucharist! This day reminds us to wait for Jesus’ second coming when we will all be with God in Heaven and that we should always spread the good news of the Gospel!

On August 15th the Church celebrate the feast of the Assumption. The Assumption is when Mary followed Jesus by being taken up into Heaven body and soul. Since Mary was born without sin and followed Jesus perfectly, she did not need to suffer death like the rest of mankind. Instead she was rewarded with going straight into Heaven. On November 1st, we celebrate All Saints Day! This is the day we celebrate all the Saints who are in Heaven. That means both the Saints we know who the Church declares and the Saints who we don’t know about who are in Heaven! The Saints inspire us and help us to become Saints one day ourselves.

Each of these feast days are incredibly important for the Church. They help us to commemorate some of the most wonderful days in our Church history and grow in holiness.

**Questions:**

- Why are holy days of obligation important?
- What are the six holy days of obligation?
- Why is each day important?
- The holy days and the liturgical calendar all kind of reflect who’s life?
- What if a holy day of obligation occurs during the week?

**Activities:**

Take some time to write down these holy days on your calendar together.

Try to see if you can write out the names of the 6 holy days from memory!
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. 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.

Even though our free will is meant for us to make good choices, we can also use our free will to make wrong choices. These choices hurt ourselves, the people around us, and our relationship with God. When our choices hurt our relationship with God and the people around us, they are called sins. Ultimately, choosing between the right thing and the wrong thing is choosing whether we want to love God or do what is evil. God made us to be in relationship with Him. He loves us infinitely, meaning He never stops loving us and He always wants us to do the right thing, so we can be together with Him in Heaven. When we choose to follow God by listening to the teachings of Jesus and His Church, we become His disciples!

**Sample Script:**

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. 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.

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**RELATES TO JESUS:**

Jesus shows us the what the will of God is, to love God and love neighbor, and we are to follow lovingly as His disciples.

**RELATES TO MY FAITH:**

Making good choices day in and day out helps to form us in virtue and thus attune our heart to recognize the voice of God speaking to us through our conscience.
How do we make sure we are making the right choices, so we can be disciples of Jesus? To do this, we need to make sure we have a well-formed conscience. Our conscience is a gift from God that helps to tell us what is right from wrong. Whenever you just have a feeling that something is the right decision or you have something in your mind that tells you what you think the right thing to do is, that is your conscience helping you. God speaks to us through our conscience to help guide us and keep us on the right path. Depending on the choices we make, we can have a well-formed conscience or a mal-formed conscience. When something hasn’t been used for a long time or if something has been used in the wrong way, eventually it doesn’t work right! If you use your favorite toy like a hammer, eventually it will probably get broken. If you leave food out too long without eating it, eventually it goes bad and it’s not good to eat anymore.

A mal-formed conscience happens when we don’t use our conscience or we don’t use it like we’re supposed to. It makes it easy to make the wrong choices, or we can even start thinking that the wrong choices are actually good ones. Just like exercising our body and eating healthy foods, we need to make sure we exercise our conscience to help it to grow and that we feed it good spiritual foods so that it can stay strong. We can exercise our conscience by practicing virtue and making the right choices over and over again. We can feed our conscience good spiritual foods by making sure we are praying often and learning about good things that feed our soul like reading from the Bible, watching a good video that teaches us about God, or anything that helps you to learn how to be a better follower of Christ.

Making the right choices isn’t always easy, but we don’t have to do it alone or without help! There are three things you can do to help you make a good decision: ask, listen, and think. When we have to decide what the right thing to do is, you should always try to ask for help. You can talk to a trusted adult like a parent, teacher, or priest, and you should always make sure you talk to God by praying to Him. Always ask God to help you know what the right thing to do is and to give you the strength to do it. You can also ask to find out more information about the choice you are going to make. You might not know everything you need to know to make a good decision yet! Make sure you listen to what your conscience is telling you. What do you think and feel the right choice is? What is God telling you? Don’t rush your decisions if you can help it. Make sure you give yourself time to really think about it. Make sure you are considering how your choice will affect the people around you. Ask yourself, will this make the people around me better? Will this help me to be a better person? Why do I want to make this decision? These are not the only parts to making a good decision, but it’s a great place to start learning!

Just as an example, let’s say James was invited by his friend Mark to go over his house for a sleepover. James hasn’t gotten to spend time with Mark in a long time, so he really just wants to say yes and go with Mark right now, but he also knows from asking his parents that he should talk to his parents first before he gives Mark an answer. He takes a second to listen to what his conscience is saying to him. James thinks he should tell Mark that he has to ask his parents first and then ask Mark a few questions to learn more about the sleepover. James thinks about everything he knows. He knows that his parents would want him to wait and ask them and that his conscience thinks that’s the right thing to do even though it’s hard. He knows he will make his parents and God very happy by doing the right thing. James chooses to listen to his conscience, and he says he will have to give Mark an answer later. He asks Mark what time the sleepover will be, how far away does he live, and will his parents be home? Mark made a good decision by not rushing, listening to his conscience, doing what he thought was right, and asking for more information. Now whether or not he gets to go on a sleepover, James knows he did the right thing by asking his parents first.
By making the right choice, even in little things, we are choosing to follow God. The more we do this, the more we grow in virtue, and are able to form our conscience to help us make even better decisions. The more we grow and the more we learn about choosing the right thing, the closer we get to becoming Saints and being true disciples of Jesus.

Questions:

- What is our free will?
- What is our conscience?
- What is a mal-formed conscience?
- What can we do to have a well-formed conscience?
- How do we make good decisions?

Activities:

Think about the things that you already do that help you to have a well-formed conscience. What things might you be doing that move you towards a mal-formed conscience? Ask God to help you choose the things that are helping you form a good conscience. Make a list of those good habits and keep doing them!

Write down ways you can make good decisions. Make a list of steps you can take to help you know the right thing to do. It can be things already talked about in this lesson, or your own ideas!
Being made in the image and likeness of God, having dignity and worth beyond anything that the world could offer, we are each thus an unrepeatable gift that offers something unique to this life. Isn’t that amazing to think about! You and only you have something to offer this life that only you can offer. If we all saw ourselves as gifts, what a difference it would make in how we treat ourselves and take care of ourselves!

Recognizing that we are gifts from God, this then allows us to see the other person as a gift from God. Here, we can better celebrate the others’ gifts and talents as these reflect the gift God has created in this particular person. Showing love and kindness and joy towards the other, and not feelings of jealousy and resentment, allow for the love of God to build-up the community and bless all with the bonds of relationship that are fruitful.

I think this is why we hear a lot in the Church of the importance of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. These works of mercy point us and direct us to recognizing the giftedness that the other person is by treating that other as Jesus and communicating the value that that person has. The care for the entire person that the works of mercy ask for show forth the
dignity and respect that each life has before the eyes of God. “Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7).

The giftedness of the human person is something that God has constantly communicated to His people. In the revelation of the Ten Commandments, in which God presents the foundations for loving God and loving neighbor, we find how God’s desire for communion with His people is meant to show us how to return the gifts we have been given to God to build-up the community He asks for while also using our gifts so others can be invited to see their own giftedness. By using our gifts to build-up others we show that our center or our focus is rooted in God, giving Him thanks for the gifts that He has given to us.

A further extension of how we can show God’s love for us and for others through our gifts exists in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Jesus gave the Beatitudes to the disciples at the Sermon on the Mount. These 9 ways show the inner workings of God’s heart, showing that those most in need hold a special place for the love of the Lord. As His followers seeking to live a Christian life, we are called to live the Beatitudes in our daily life, being aware of and reaching out to people who are most in need, being an image of God’s love for others to encounter.

Questions:
- What are some of your gifts and talents?
- How do you celebrate the gifts and talents of others around you?
- What is your favorite Work of Mercy? What do you like most about it? (See lists below.)
- How do the Ten Commandments remind us of the importance of living a Christian life?
- How do the Beatitudes remind us of the importance of living a Christian life?

Activities:
Make a list of the gifts and talents that you have. Next to each gift/talent, write how you use this gift/talent to praise God and serve others.

As a family, read Exodus 20: 1-17 and Matthew 5: 1-12. Talk briefly about each Commandment and Beatitude. What do these mean? Did you notice anything new or challenging? Practice as a family coming to learn and memorize these.

Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Counseling the Doubtful
- Instructing the Ignorant
- Admonishing the Sinner
- Comforting the Sorrowful
- Forgiving Injuries
- Bearing Wrongs Patiently
- Praying for the Living and the Dead

Corporal Works of Mercy
- Feed the Hungry
- Give Drink to the Thirsty
- Shelter the Homeless
- Visit the Sick
- Visit the Prisoners
- Bury the Dead
- Give Alms to the Poor
There is no one right way to pray! It’s actually good to have a few different kinds of prayer that we practice. There are prayers that we pray by ourselves to foster our personal relationship with God and then there are prayers that we pray together as a group to build up our Church family by bringing us together and strengthening our unity. Sometimes we simply need time to be quiet and silent, spending time in the presence of God not saying anything or just listening to what God has to say. Sometimes we have a lot of stress or problems in our lives and we need to spend time asking for God to help us and those that we care about. In adoration, we get to just look at God in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and marvel at how wonderful He is! Sometimes people we care about trust us to pray for something they need. This is a great way to help one another which makes God very happy called intercessory prayer. We can also ask other people to intercede for us, even people who have passed away, such as the Saints of the Church! Sometimes life is crazy and chaotic, it doesn’t have any order or stability. During these times it’s easy to be distracted and lack focus. Repetition prayers like the rosary are especially good during these times, but they are also good at any time! The rosary is a prayer we can pray every day. It helps us to focus on what’s really important and come back to the simple truths instead of wandering after different things we think will make us feel good.

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus’ loving presence with His people shows His deep desire to be united with us in prayer so that He can walk this life with us.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Any kind of prayer, for any amount of time, done with intention to reach God, is most pleasing to Him and strengthens our faith and relationship with the Divine.

Sample Script:
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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. St. Paul tells us in the Bible that we should “pray without ceasing” which means to pray all the time! This can sound like it’s impossible, but the Church tells us that it’s not! Every little part of our day can be offered to God as a prayer of thanksgiving, petition, or reparation. Even in doing the little and boring things of our day, we can be thinking prayerfully about how awesome God is. If there is something we really don’t like doing, we can make it a sacrifice for someone we care about. These kinds of prayers during the day make God very happy. God wants us to do good work, to do well in school, and be out spending time with the people we care about. He also very much wants to be a part of these great things with us. He wants to work with us and help us in all the good things we do. We should also try to make every part of our lives a prayer that we offer to God so He can help us on the road to Heaven.

Questions:

- What are some different forms of prayer and how do they help us?
- Is it possible to pray at all times? How?
- What is an intercessory prayer?
- What are the prayers of the rosary?
- Other than God, who else can we pray to intercede for us?

Activities:

This week try one of the prayers in this lesson you haven’t experienced before or haven’t done in a long time. Take note of how it particularly helps you grow closer to God.

See if you can spend a whole day in prayer. If you find during the day that you forgot, that’s okay! Just start up again right where you left off. This will take a lot of practice and you might not be able to do it right away. Don’t worry! It’s just awesome that you tried and know that it’s possible.
Do you have dreams of what you want to do or be when you grow up? Do they include plans of what God is calling you to? If you have never thought about what God might have in mind, that’s okay! God does call you to a state in life where he knows you will be happiest, so it’s important to include his input into your plan making!

God calls people to a specific state in life. The most common state he calls people to is married life. Marriage is a covenant (a weighty promise that makes people become family) of life between a man and a woman, it exists for the well being of both the man and the woman so that they can be there for each other through life and reaching heaven, and for the birth of new babies and raising them. This state in life beautifully mirrors the Trinity – the love between a Mom, Dad and child is like the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Your role right now is to be a son/daughter who loves and respects your parents and siblings.

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Another heroic state in life that God calls men to is priesthood. You are familiar with the priest’s role at Mass – he gives the Sacraments and leads the people in worship. The priest acts “in persona Christi” which means “in the person of Christ” by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. He truly represents Christ so Christ is present and acting – he possesses the power and place of Christ himself. This doesn’t mean he pretends to be Christ like actors in a play. Rather, when the priest takes action it is Christ’s action.

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 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!

You can begin asking God what state in life he is calling you to remembering to include his input when you make plans for your future!

Questions:

- What is a marriage covenant?
- How does a family mirror the love of the Trinity?
- What does it mean to act “in persona Christi”? Can everyone do this?
- What are the 2 forms of single life?
- What are the vows that a religious takes?

Activities:

Write a little letter to God, telling him your thoughts and plans for the future and entrusting them to him!

If you know a religious or priest, ask them the biggest blessing of their state in life.
THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Fourth Grade

Share Your Faith in Christ

Sample Script:

God has gifted us all with many blessings. Whether it’s our talents, our time, or our families having jobs, God makes sure to provide us with what we need. God gives us these gifts, not just so that we can keep them to ourselves, but so that we can share them with the people around us and give glory to God. When we give a portion of our time, talents, or treasure, it’s called a tithe. A tithe is meant to be a gift from our own wealth of time, talents, or treasure for the sake of the poor and those who have not. God calls us to put our gifts to good use by taking care of those who are less fortunate and in need.

Our life in Christ calls us to good “stewardship.” A good steward is someone who takes care of what is entrusted to him. God has entrusted mankind with being stewards of the earth and the animals. God entrusts people who have property with not just benefitting themselves but showing God’s care for His children by using one’s wealth and property to care for

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus shows us the way of life and how our life is best realized when it is given away in loving service to the other.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Freely offering our time, talent, and treasure allows the mission of the Church to be realized in our world, helping all to come to know the loving presence of God.
them, first and foremost, the owner’s family. God has trusted you with talents, time, friends, and family! He has made you a steward of these gifts, and He asks that you take care of them by using them and helping them to grow. God also wants you to use your gifts for the good of those around you who need it by giving little tithes of what you have.

One gift that we all share, are meant to be stewards of, and give freely to everyone around us, is the gift of our faith. You and I are blessed with having faith in God and in His Church, that not everyone has. Some people haven’t been told about the faith, or they haven’t been loved the way that Jesus loves them. We should try to share our faith with everyone in our lives, even by little acts of great love: praying for them, spending time with them, and showing them we care for them more than we care for ourselves.

Ultimately, everything we are and everything we have is a gift from God. We should strive to thank Him by putting our gifts to good use and serving the people around us.

**Questions:**

- What is a tithe?
- What does it mean to be a good steward?
- What is the one gift from God we all receive that is meant to be freely given to everyone around us?
- How do we share our faith in God with others?
- How does God want us to use our gifts that he has given us?

**Activities:**

Make a list with your child of their gifts and talents. Come up with ways together that they can use some of their gifts and talents as a service to people who may need it.

Look into some of your Church programs that support the less fortunate. Explain to your child that your family’s tithe money goes to support these programs. Create a dream list together of some services and programs that you and your child would love to see in the world.
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! A Saint is someone who knows they are made in the image and likeness of God. They use their gift of free will as much as they can to do the right thing and do what God asks them to do.

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.

Sample Script:

RELATES TO JESUS:
Jesus unites Himself to humanity by entering a baptism like ours and shows us that our life toward sainthood begins by opening the doors of grace.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:
Striving to live a virtuous life includes remaining faithful to the Church’s teachings even after we fall; returning to God with contrition, seeking forgiveness, doing penance, and seeking virtue once more.
Saint Teresa of Calcutta is a Saint who lived not too long ago and by making little choices with her free will, even when it was hard, she became a hero that the whole world admired for her goodness. She started out as a little girl who went to school and Church just like you do. One day on a trip with her family when she was still little, she heard a call from God to join a religious order. Even though it was hard and meant she had to give up a lot, she said yes to what God asked her to do. When she was old enough, she became a nun and worked teaching at a school. One day she heard another call from God to found a religious order devoted to serving the poor. This was another hard choice that meant she had to leave behind her old life and go to serve the poor by herself. Even though it was hard she got permission to found this order and went to Calcutta which was a very poor city in India with many sick people who were suffering. St. Teresa went down to Calcutta all by herself and devoted herself to caring for these sick people, one person at a time. She showed them love and care just like Jesus would have. Eventually other people wanted to follow St. Teresa and do what she was doing. Today her order called “The Missionaries of Charity” is all over the world, but it all started with her saying yes to God and helping one person at a time! Amazing big things always start by doing good little things.

You might not be called to join a religious order, go to another country, and serve the poor, but God does have a special plan just for you! Just like Saint Teresa, you can do amazing things with your life by using your free will to do little things even when they are hard. Even by just helping out around the house or being nice to your friends at school, you’re using your power of free will to show God’s love to the people around you which make Him very, very happy.

**Questions:**

- What does free will mean?
- What does that have to do with being a Saint?
- Who was Saint Teresa?
- How did she use her free will?
- How do you show free will?

**Activities:**

Talk with your child about little things you both can do differently to show the people around you that you love them. It could be something big like giving someone a special gift, or even something small like saying some kind words someone might need to hear.

Talk with your child about a problem going on in his community or social circle. She if you can both come up with small things that he or she might be able to do to help make that problem a little better.

Spend some time in prayer this week asking God to help your family know what His will is.