

## Sunday Gospel Background

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that he has come to redeem, not judge. Lent is a time for all of us to come to terms with the darkness, the sinfulness, in our lives. This isn't meant to produce guilt but rather, gratitude for Jesus' redemption. Many people choose the darkness of sin. As families, we can show others how to choose the light by our words and deeds of love.

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

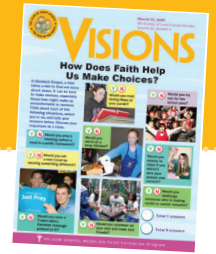
## Share Experiences

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

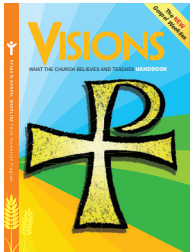
- ☐ **Pray together** Light a candle if you have one, and **pray:** God of light, without you, we are in darkness. We are grateful that you have sent Jesus to light our path. Help us share our light with each other. Amen.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • How Does Faith Help Us Make Choices? (page 1)** Have your child fill in the Y or N circles. This is an opportunity for your child to assess a personal comfort level for trying something new. Point out that our faith can help us make decisions, and share that this Sunday's Gospel is about a man who takes a risk to find out more about Jesus and his teachings.
- ☐ **Article • The Solution Is Hope (pages 2–3)** Before reading the article together, talk about words you associate with gangs. (Examples might include *criminals, guns, tattoos, drugs, etc.*) Although this article may be difficult to read at some points, it uses real-life accounts to explore the power of God's unconditional love for all people.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Drugs, violence, abuse, loss of a parent, poverty, stereotypes that assume they are hopeless. 2. Without hope, gang members don't care if they live or die. They live by the gang codes of hanging, banging, slanging. The power of hope shows in the personal stories. 3. Father G insists God made the homies as they are. By "showing up" in their lives, he reflects God's love for each of them, valuing them just as they are. 4. Chico wants to learn a skill and work; he was being just who God created him to be—a terrific kid, in Father G's estimation.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Gives Us Light (page 4)** Note that, in Jesus' time, it could be risky to follow him or even be associated with him. This was the case for Nicodemus, a Pharisee, or teacher in the Jewish religion. Proclaim the Gospel by reading aloud the parts of Narrator and Jesus 1–5 together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. God sends us Jesus to show how much God loves us, to invite us to live forever through believing in Jesus, and to enlighten us as to what is true and good, that which is God's will. Jesus intrigues Nicodemus, but he is a Pharisee who isn't sure how his fellow Pharisees might feel about his interest in Jesus. 2. God loves the world and wants to save the world. 3. Nicodemus is a Pharisee, a Jewish teacher of the law. Nicodemus' curiosity is significant. 4. Open-ended; Father G does not condemn gang members. He is a light for them to follow to new lives outside of the gangs; he gives them the chance to live their lives in the light with new jobs and opportunities. 5. Nicodemus has become Jesus' follower.*



- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • What Is the Message of John 3:16? (page 4)**  
Read this feature as a summary of Sunday's Gospel message—Jesus is God's Son sent to show us God's love.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Talk* questions on page 4.** Both questions facilitate discussion. You might have your child create a small poster featuring a favorite Bible verse to hang in your home.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Conscience (page 4)** Read aloud the definition. Explain that conscience is how we make concrete judgments about what is right and wrong. Jesus shows us God's love and our capacity to love—this is the light Jesus brings us. When we prepare for Reconciliation, we examine our conscience and how we are following Jesus' light in our choices and actions.



- ☐ **Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 30.** Share the roots of the word *conscience*: *con* (with) and *science* (knowledge). Invite your child to read the paragraph silently. Then use the paragraph to brainstorm a list of ways people can form their consciences.  
*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

- ☐ **Our Catholic Faith • Celebrate a Lenten Reconciliation Service (page 5)** Celebrate this prayer service together as a family. If there are two of you, simply alternate the reading between you. Or, have your child assign the parts to family members. Emphasize that answers to the questions in the examination of conscience do not have to be shared. Play music in the background while your child writes a letter to God. Write a letter of your own too. Find out when Reconciliation is offered at your parish and make plans to receive the sacrament together.

## Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Living the Gospel • How Do We Walk in the Light of Jesus? (pages 6-7)** Ask why, when we know right and wrong, making good choices can be so hard. Explain that practicing moral reasoning helps build moral character, just as building muscles takes repetitive exercises. Have your child read the first dilemma, "Really Good Shape," silently and respond to the steps. Talk about what your child thinks Connor should do. Repeat the process with "What Counts?" on page 7.
- ☐ **Puzzle • Taking a Risk to Grow and Change (page 8)** Have your child match the quote and famous risk taker. **Answers:** 1. Chávez, 2. Pimentel, 3. Edison, 4. Pope Francis, 5. Jesus, 6. Geisel (*Dr. Seuss*), 7. Saint Teresa, 8. Carter, 9. Keller, 10. Heaton.
- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Catholics pray the Lord's Prayer during Mass before receiving Holy Communion. It is a reconciliation prayer. In this spirit, pray the Lord's Prayer together. Then offer each other a sign of peace.



## Parent Resources

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## Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus faces hostile religious leaders who are plotting against him. Many Jews and Greeks who are in Jerusalem for Passover seek him out. His popularity fuels his opponents' hostility. Jesus' friends worry about him. Jesus uses the life cycle of wheat to teach them about what will happen to him. He explains, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit" (John 12:24). Jesus challenges his friends to follow him—to serve others and give their lives as he does.

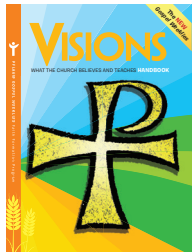
## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Loving God, look with kindness on our family. With your great compassion, wipe away our imperfections and guilt. Create clean hearts in us. Amen."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • One Grain of Wheat Becomes Many (page 1)** Invite your child to read about the life cycle of wheat and the steps involved in processing wheat into flour and bread. Note the time and effort that goes into every step of this process—the work of human hands. Talk about where you see yourselves in the life cycle of wheat, and where you might feel "planted."
- ☐ **Play/Drama • Jeremiah, the Prophet (pages 2–3)** Explain that prophets speak for God, warning people when they don't keep the commandments and urging them to trust God's love and faithfulness. God calls Jeremiah to tear down and to build up. You can read this historical drama together as a family, with members taking the various parts, or have your child read it silently.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Jeremiah reminds the people—especially the kings—to trust and honor their one God and to keep the commandments. Like a lawyer, he indicts the king and people for breaking God's law. 2. Jeremiah still speaks to us about how God wants us to live and testifies to God's faithfulness no matter what. 3. Like Jesus, Jeremiah is controversial. He suffers with the people under attack and suffers from officials seeking to kill him. He is a witness of how to live. 4. Open-ended.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Like a Grain of Wheat (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by reading it aloud together. Alternate the speaking parts.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Like a seed that dies to grow wheat, the worldwide Church grows out of Jesus' Death and Resurrection. Open-ended. 2. People who are self-centered end up closing themselves off to others and God. 3. After his Resurrection, Jesus draws all who believe in him to himself. Faith in Jesus' Resurrection from the dead is the heart of Christian faith.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • God Gathers Us Together as a People (page 4)** Read this feature aloud to articulate meanings and images of Church—people of God, Body of Christ, family of God.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Remind your child of possible relatives—godparents, grandparents, a favorite aunt or uncle; open-ended. 2. The nature of social media is that its influence—whether good or otherwise—grows quickly! Think of social media campaigns to support young people who have been bullied, for example, or peaceful efforts to right some other wrong.*



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 14. Remind your child that this Sunday's Gospel is about Jesus' Death, but it's more about what happens after his Death. This section on page 14 is not long—just three paragraphs—however, it contains essential Church teaching, so make sure to take time with each paragraph. Here are some questions to ask as you read. (Answers can be found in the text.)

**Paragraph 1:** What happens immediately after someone dies? What happens at the resurrection?

**Paragraph 2:** What happens to those who die, but are not yet ready for eternal life with God?

**Paragraph 3:** Why is it so important that we pray with the Communion of Saints during Mass? What is the Kingdom of God?

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

- **Our Catholic Faith • Covenant (page 5)** Draw attention to the definition and read it aloud to introduce the *Our Catholic Faith* feature.
- **Our Catholic Faith • Jeremiah Speaks of a New Covenant (page 5)** Read the introduction and Sunday's First Reading aloud, using the timeline for reference. Look at the map and ask if your child recognizes the locations. Discuss the map question. *When Assyrians and Babylonians try to extend their empires, they must follow the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers north and then go south on the road along the sea—right into Israel. Egypt can follow the same way of the sea north.* **Discuss:** What is the king of a small country to do? **Ask:** What do Jeremiah's words tell us about God? Why do you think his words are so unpopular?

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • Bread and Wheat Help Us Reflect on Who Jesus Is (pages 6–7)** Read the paragraphs on the left side of page 6 together, then make a list of all the meanings of bread and wheat.
  - Read aloud the blessing of the bread at the top of page 6. **Ask:** Where have you have heard these words? *At Mass, (the Prayer over the Offerings).* Take some time to respond to the questions together.
  - Read aloud the quote from 1 Corinthians on page 7; then respond to the questions together.
  - Brainstorm responses to the question near the priest's hands and take turns writing the responses in the grains of wheat.
- **Attitudes • What Is the Best Advice You Have Ever Received? (page 8)** Invite your child to read the responses on page 8, circling any that are particularly meaningful right now. Ask what response your child has to this week's *Attitudes* question. Affirm your child's response.
- **Closing Prayer** Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Invite your child to pay special attention to the line, "Give us this day our daily bread." Together, ponder what this line means to you today.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

Passion/Palm Sunday begins the celebration of the most important week in the Church year—Holy Week. During this time, the liturgies teach us and invite us into the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. This week, the lesson guides you through a dramatic presentation of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It's meant to help you and your child encounter the emotions—fear, joy, betrayal, anger, and disbelief—that Jesus and his friends experienced during this most holy time in the Church.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** On the Cross, Jesus cries out to his Father, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). Together, share about times you have felt alone or discouraged. Listen to your child’s response. Pause and pray the Lord’s Prayer with these experiences in mind.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Holy Week Calendar** Take turns reading aloud the descriptions of the days of Holy Week. Explain that the Paschal Triduum (also called the Holy Triduum or Easter Triduum) is the period of three days that begins with the liturgy on the evening of Holy Thursday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. Check your parish schedule for Holy Week services and make plans to attend in whatever way your family is able—online or in person.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Passion Play • The Road to the Cross and Beyond (pages 2–7)** Although this play is written for a classroom of several students, you can adjust it for home use in several ways. You can invite additional family members to take parts, if available. Or you might ask your parish about joining other families to put on the play, either live or remotely. You might even consider inviting extended family members to participate online. Page 2 includes a cast list and a possible stage layout you can use as a basis from which to improvise a “stage” in your home.

Props are optional, but can add to the experience. Use whatever you have on hand. You can make a cross using panels from a cardboard mailing box or poster board. Some fabric, a rug, or sheets of paper, could work for the white road, and brown paper bags or mailing paper could be used for the brown road. (Be sure to reuse or recycle any paper you use!)

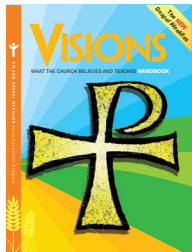
Read through the play before acting it out. Note how it picks up where the Advent play, *The Road from Beginning to End*, (*Visions*, December 6, 2020) left off. You might want to record and share your family’s dramatization.

- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 7. Answers: 1–2.** These are open-ended, discussion-based questions. Talk about how we can “crucify” people with our words—especially a text or group chat shared in anger, or when we like or forward an unkind or untrue post.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Hosanna (page 8)** Call attention to the definition. Read it aloud. Point out how “hosanna” is a prayer and “Jesus” is the answer to prayer. Challenge your family to memorize this definition.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • We Celebrate the Paschal Mystery (page 8)** Read aloud the doctrine, which addresses both the opening Gospel (Mark 11:1–10) and the Passion story (Mark 14:1–15:47). Emphasize how Jesus’ ride into Jerusalem is similar to our journey into Lent—it’s both emotional and spiritual.





- Turn to the *Talk* questions on page 8. **Answers:** 1. This is an open-ended question; but it's a good time to check in on your Lenten commitments together and discuss how you have both worked to meet them. Remind your child (and yourself!) that Lent is not the end. If your Lenten resolutions were less successful than you would like, you can—and should—continue to work on them beyond Lent. 2. You might work together with your child to ask and answer questions. Consider taking the journalist's role and have your child play Jesus. Then switch roles.



- Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 20. As you read the page aloud, pause to discuss the meaning of words such as Resurrection, Incarnation, Ascension, and Pentecost. Use the handbook's glossary to find the meaning of any words your child is unsure of.

Turn to page 65 (inside back cover), and identify the season the Church is currently observing (*Lent*); the shorter, three-day period it will enter this week (*the Triduum*); and the one it will pass into next week (*Easter*).

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to *Visions* page 8.

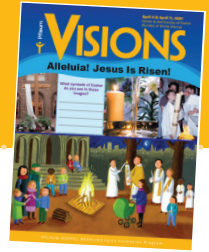
## Live the Gospel

- **Closing Prayer • Journey of the Cross Prayer** (If you have a cross, place it in your prayer space.) Invite all family members to place their hands on the cross. Pray the following and have everyone respond “Amen” after each line:  
Sign of Jesus' Death and Resurrection, we accept and follow you. **Amen.**  
Sign of our own dying and rising, we accept and follow you. **Amen.**  
Sign of the struggle against sin, we accept and follow you. **Amen.**  
Sign of God's great love for us, we accept and follow you. **Amen.**  
Thank you, loving God, for the Cross of Jesus, which has become for us the tree of life. May it be always a sign of your faithful love. May we never falter as we follow it to the joy of Easter. **Amen.**



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## Scripture Background

Alleluia! He is risen! This is the central point of our faith. Without it, there is no Christianity. Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. But on the third day, he rose again and he lives on. Mary Magdalene and the Apostles (except Thomas) saw Jesus alive on that first Easter. We sometimes want proof, like Thomas did, but Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (John 20:29). We must pray that our faith in the Resurrection is always strong.

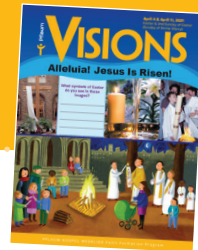
## Share Experiences

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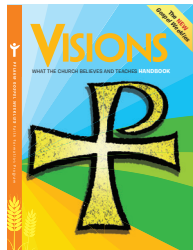
- ☐ **Pray together** “Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again.” (Repeat this acclamation prayer a few times together.)
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Alleluia! Jesus Is Risen** Have your child complete the activity. *Easter symbols include: water, lilies, candle, Baptism, fire, and the empty cross.*
- ☐ **Story • Miles To Go (pages 2–3)** Invite your child to predict what the story will be about based on the header and photos. Then have your child read the story silently.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Daniel is running to raise money for Alzheimer’s disease research. He gives up a camping trip with friends so he can train for the run. 2. Daniel’s grandpa taught Daniel how to set up a tent, how to swim and dive, took him to ball games, and spent quality time with him. 3. Daniel is a good grandson because he recognizes all the wonderful things his grandfather has done for him. Daniel remembers and runs the race out of gratitude. 4–5. Open-ended.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Risen (pages 4–5)** This long Gospel is actually three Gospels: the Easter morning Gospel, the Gospel for the Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy), and the Gospel about Mary Magdalene that comes between them. Proclaim the Gospel by assigning the parts to you, your child, and any additional family members, if available. You may wish to read it over the course of a few days, stopping at each boxed Scripture citation, and picking it up again the following day.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. They see the stone has been moved away, that the tomb is empty, the wrappings used to cover Jesus’ body are on the ground, and the cloth for Jesus’ head is rolled up by itself. They think someone has taken Jesus. 2. He believes immediately because he has great faith. 3. He feels anxious and afraid, yet eager to see the tomb. Peter goes inside the tomb but comes to no conclusion. Perhaps his regret over denying Jesus during his Passion keeps him from focusing on what might be happening—Jesus is Risen. 4. She recognizes him when he calls her by name. 5. Thomas wants to see Jesus before he believes. He believes when he touches Jesus’ wounds.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus Gives Us Joy (page 5)** Read aloud as a summary of Sunday’s Gospel message.
- ☐ **Turn to the Talk questions on page 5.** *Answers: 1. We believe by reading Scripture, participating in Mass regularly, and sharing the Good News with others. Sacred Tradition transmits the message of the Gospel in the Church from the preaching of the Apostles to the present day. We hear the Word as the earliest believers did. 2. Open-ended; emphasize that the presence of Jesus may be felt anywhere and anytime.*



□ **Catholic Faith Word • Resurrection (page 5)** Read aloud the definition together.



□ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 11. Read the two paragraphs in Section 12 (Jesus' Mission) aloud. **Ask:** What was Jesus' mission on earth? *To reveal God's love and to ensure our salvation.*

Turn to page 29. This is an introduction to the *Follow Jesus* section of the handbook that highlights the history of our ancestors in faith. Before you read, you may wish to have your child flip through pages 30–36. Many of the topics in this section will probably be familiar to your child. Take turns reading aloud the paragraphs on page 29. Pause at the end of each for comments and questions.

**Ask:** What does Jesus' Resurrection mean for you? If your child hesitates, it's fine to reference the text on page 29; the goal is to help your child begin to articulate some of these truths.

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

## Live the Gospel

□ **We Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection and New Life (pages 6–7)** If your family has participated in the Easter Vigil, talk about the experience together. Ask what your child remembers and what was special. Read aloud paragraphs one and two on page 6. A vigil is a time of waiting. At the Easter Vigil, we await Jesus' Resurrection. Go through the order of the Easter Vigil service together.

1. The Easter Vigil starts with the church darkened and the congregation outside where the priest lights a new fire.
2. The priest or deacon carries the newly lighted Easter candle into the darkened church.
3. Everyone lights a candle from the Easter candle as the photo at the top of page 6 shows. Ask what it symbolizes and why it is close to the baptismal font. *The Easter candle symbolizes the Risen Jesus; the spreading light shows we share the light and life of his Resurrection through Baptism.*
4. Read the Scripture quotes together. These reflect the stories of Creation and the Exodus and the words of prophets.

Use the photos and captions on page 7 to discuss why the Church baptizes new Christians at the Easter Vigil. Finally, have your child follow the directions to write My Easter Prayer. Use it at the end of your learning session as your closing prayer.

□ **Puzzle • Jesus Is Risen and A Decade of Days (page 8)** Take some time to play the game with your child. Then have your child complete the puzzle. **Answers:** 1. daybreak (or daylight), 2. daydream, 3. Friday, 4. birthday, 5. weekday, 6. Dayton, 7. holiday, 8. payday, 9. May Day, 10. Sunday

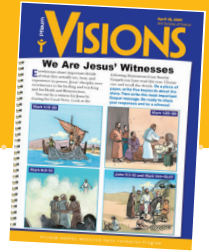
□ **Closing Prayer • Celebrate Easter (page 7)** Sit with your child in a comfortable spot in your home. Read aloud the parts of the prayer service on page 7. (Unlit candle and holy water are optional.) Have your child read aloud the Easter prayer written earlier.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

In this Sunday's Gospel, the Risen Jesus appears to his friends and designates them as his witnesses. They have Good News to tell: love is stronger than death; joy and triumph can come out of suffering; life can come from death; and we can live forever with Jesus. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus explains the Old Testament prophecies to Cleopas and his companion. They are slow to understand that Jesus, the Messiah, had to suffer and die so that he could rise again and save the human race. As the disciples finally recognized Jesus when he broke the bread, we need to recognize him in the Eucharist.

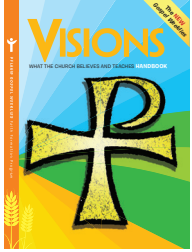
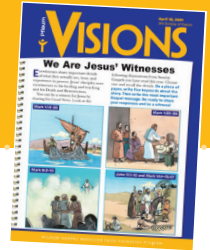
## Share Experiences

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- ☐ **Pray together** Turn to page 53 of the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook and pray the Apostles' Creed aloud together. Invite your child to reflect silently with you on what it means to be a member of the Catholic Church.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • We Are Jesus' Witnesses (page 1)** Your child will need a sheet of paper to work independently on the activity. Encourage your child to recall as many details as possible about the Gospel story before looking it up in the Bible.
- ☐ **Article • Paul Spreads the Good News of Jesus (pages 2–3)** This first-person account invites us to travel along with St. Paul as he spreads the Good News. Take turns reading the text balloons. Pause together at each city noted in the text and find it on the map on page 2, so that you can trace Paul's journeys.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Paul changes his name from Saul; he stops persecuting Christians; he becomes a disciple of Christ. 2. Paul travels the Middle East, sharing Jesus' Good News with Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul teaches all that Jesus taught—love, forgiveness, peace—and proclaims Jesus' Resurrection from the Death to new life.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Appears to His Disciples (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel together by reading aloud the parts of Narrators 1 and 2 and Jesus.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. To experience Jesus with them is beyond the disciples' wildest imagination, so Jesus' presence scares them; they think they see a ghost. 2. Jesus is not a ghost; he has flesh and bones; he can eat and drink. 3. Jesus wants them to recall that the Scriptures say the Messiah had to suffer and that he promised to be with them. 4. Open-ended; we are part of Jesus' community of friends when we gather as a community at the Eucharist (Mass).*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus Awakens Our Faith (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel. Lent has prepared us for Easter, and Easter now calls all believers to witness the Good News.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended; talk with your child about how this year's Lenten commitments made you both more aware of problems and needs in our world. 2. Open-ended; help your child brainstorm ideas.*
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Deposit of Faith (page 5)** Read aloud the definition to reinforce the connection to Church doctrine.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 13. Read together about the Marks of the Church. Read aloud the two final paragraphs regarding the duties of bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people. Talk about what it means to be a layperson in the Catholic Church.

Turn to page 23 and read aloud this catechism feature on the Eucharist. Invite your child to ask questions about the Eucharist. Answer as you are able. If your child asks questions you are unable to answer, feel free bring these questions to your parish faith formation leader, pastor, or deacon.

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

- **Our Catholic Faith • Jesus Reveals God's Love (page 5)** Have your child read this feature, which explores how we gather, remember Jesus, and eat together as he taught in order to become what we celebrate—the Body of Christ, the community of his disciples. Then have your child fill in the column marked with hearts. *Answers might include: giving his life on the Cross, forgiving, healing, teaching, sharing meals, showing hospitality, including, feeding.* Then have your child fill out the column marked with stars. Affirm your child's responses.

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • At Mass, We Participate in the Work of God (pages 6-7)** Read aloud the introduction to the activity (page 6, left column), which explains the Jewish *berakah* (pronounced bear-a-kah) as the origin of the Eucharistic Prayer we pray at Mass. Point out the three parts of the activity on pages 6-7: We Remember, We Celebrate, We Pray for God's People—that indicate the past, present, and future parts of the Eucharistic Prayer.
  - Invite your child to read the priest portion of the *We Remember* section aloud. Brainstorm responses to the questions on page 6.
  - Take turns reading aloud the priest part of *We Celebrate*. Discuss the question at the bottom and have your child jot down any thoughts on the lines.
  - Read the priest part of *We Pray for God's People*. Have your child fill in prayers and loved ones' names where indicated. Remind your child to pray for these needs often.
  - Finish by having your child complete the question at the bottom right of page 7.
- **Catholic Leaders • Vivienne Harr: Helping to Build Africa's Great Green Wall (page 8)** Vivienne Harr's contribution to helping others is impressive, but emphasize that she did not set out to start global initiatives. She simply saw something wrong and could not ignore it; she found a way she could contribute if even in a small way.
- **Closing Prayer** Invite your child to choose one of the Mass prayers on pages 6-7 (or a part of a prayer) and have your child read the prayer aloud.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus compares friendship with him to the caring relationship between shepherds and their sheep. A real shepherd knows and looks after his sheep with great care, and Jesus does the same for us. In this lesson, you'll examine our relationship with the earth, recognizing how it cares for us, and how we, in turn, can care for it.

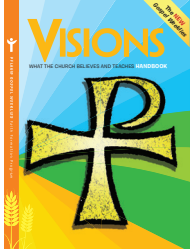
## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Loving God, we appreciate your care for us. We are grateful for the people you place in our lives who act as shepherds and guides for us. We also understand your call to shepherd others. We pray for those who need our help. Thank you for being with us all. Amen."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • We Care for God's Creation (page 1)** Have your child fill out the cover survey. You can answer the questions yourself on a separate sheet of paper. When finished, score yourselves by using the key at the bottom of page 4.
- ☐ **Article • A Shepherd for Others (pages 2-3)** If you know anyone who is a member of the Knights of Columbus, share what you know about ways they help others through this organization. Then read aloud the article about this American priest who founded the Knights of Columbus.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Coming from a family of immigrants, he saw their struggles, especially when the head of the family died. His family's strong faith influenced his desire to become a priest. 2. Men weren't going to church. He wanted to strengthen their faith. 3. Many were immigrants, like his own family; he treated them like family; even becoming the legal guardian for one of them. 4. Open-ended.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by taking turns reading the paragraphs aloud.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. A hired shepherd may do a fine job of watching the flock when things are good, but is working for a wage, so will probably protect him/herself before protecting the sheep if they are attacked. A shepherd who owns a flock will sacrifice anything to protect the flock, including his or her own life. 2. Jesus gave himself even unto death so that we, the flock of believers, could have life in him and with him. Father McGivney worked to help his parishioners with all of their needs, both physical and spiritual. 3. We know Jesus through the memories of the disciples who followed him, handed on his teaching, told stories about his actions, his Death, and his Resurrection. Over forty years, these memories became oral traditions, which the Gospel writers wrote down so the traditions travel through time to us. We know Jesus through the Gospels.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • The Church Is the Sheepfold (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine on this Sunday's Gospel. **Ask:** Tell me about someone you admire as a leader. How are they like Christ?
- ☐ **Turn to the Talk questions related to the doctrine.** *Answers: These questions are meant to prompt open-ended discussion. You may wish to share your own answers as a prompt if your child hesitates.*



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 6 and read the Nicene Creed aloud together. Point out that God our Father is “maker of heaven and earth.” **Ask:** Why do you think that our belief in God the Creator is so prominent in this creed? *We list God first when we make the Sign of the Cross, he is our creator and all things come from him. The Creation story in Genesis is also one of the first stories many Christians read in the Bible. Accept other answers as well.*

Turn to page 9 and the section on Human Beings. Take turns reading the three paragraphs. **Ask:** How are human beings created like God? *We are most like God in our human souls.* Why did our first ancestors disobey God? *They were tempted to sin; they acted of their own free will and deprived themselves—and all of their ancestors, including us—of holiness. This deprivation is what we know as Original Sin.* What comfort do we have even after Adam and Eve sinned? *God promised them—and us—that he will always be with us.*

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

- **Catholic Faith Word • Stewardship (page 4)** Read aloud the definition. Talk about ways your family contributes time, talents/gifts, and material resources, and which of these is hardest or easiest to share.
- **Our Catholic Faith • We Must Be Good Shepherds of Earth (page 5)** Have your child read this feature aloud. Then discuss and complete the questions together. Relate your responses to what you’ve already discovered from the cover activity.

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • How Do We Care For God’s Creation? (pages 6–7)** The Good Shepherd metaphor in the Gospel gives us the model for how we should treat one another—with unfailing love and care. It’s not a big stretch to extend that care to include our common home, the earth. Catholic social teaching stresses care for Creation and recognizes our interdependence with all living things.  
  
Have your child work through the list independently. When finished, your child can match responses with the groups identified on page 7: Waste Watcher, Nature Lover, Careful Consumer, or Creature Teacher. Have your child choose a group and spend time thinking about the suggested ideas for action. Invite your child to speak the pledge aloud and discuss realistic ways to accomplish it. Offer positive reinforcement when your child follows up on this pledge.
- **World Church • The Year of Saint Joseph (page 8)** Read aloud this feature together. Note that this week we celebrate the feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker (May 1). His primary feast day—yes, he has two!—is celebrated on March 19. Encourage your child to pray this prayer for Saint Joseph, which Pope Francis included in his recent apostolic letter, *Patris Corde*, which means “with a father’s heart.”
- **Closing Prayer** Take turns sharing about one special thing in the natural world for which you are most thankful. After each mention, respond together: Loving Creator, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus compares himself to a vine and us, his followers, to the branches. All of the branches of a vine live from the nutrients that its roots find in the soil and its trunk brings to the branches. The Church has spread like a vine. From its roots in Jesus' life, Death, and Resurrection in Palestine, Jesus' followers have become witnesses who have taken his message throughout the world.

## Share Experiences

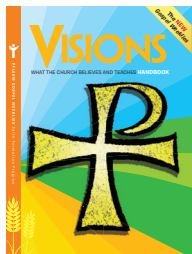
Check off the boxes as you complete each part of the lesson.

- ☐ **Pray together** Explain that you will be exploring the Sunday Gospel about the vine and branches. Jesus is our common vine; we are the branches. During Mass, we pray the Lord's Prayer together before we receive the Eucharist. We pray as a community. Invite your child to join hands with you and pray the Lord's Prayer together.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • What Makes Our Church Catholic? (page 1)** Your child can probably identify Pope Francis in the photo, upper left. Explain that Pope Francis is with Patriarch Bartholomew I, head of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He and Pope Francis often speak out to protect refugees and God's Creation. After reading the introductory paragraph in the left column, discuss the three questions together.
- ☐ **Article • The Cowboy Priest Rides on to Sainthood (pages 1–3)** Jesus left his disciples with a "missionary mandate," a direct order to "go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19–20). Have your child silently read this story about Father Eusebio Kino, who took Jesus' missionary call to heart.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. By sharing the faith and baptizing them; by helping them escape forced labor, by sharing knowledge to improve their lives. 2. He became ill and nearly died. He missed the first ship to America. His first mission in Baja failed. Padre Kino's setbacks ultimately resulted in a more fruitful life, serving thousands of people and changing their lives for the better. 3. Open-ended. 4. Through the Kino Border Initiative and Kino Teens, people are reminded to see Christ in everyone, especially migrants.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Vine, We Are the Branches (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by taking turns reading aloud the four parts.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. We can share his life and strength. He is the one who is the root and trunk of the vine and gives the vine its character and life. 2. No one can live apart from the vine, but branches can be pruned to bear more fruit. Whatever anyone on the vine asks will happen. 3. Open-ended; grandparents are like the main vine from which your family grows. Same name, similar looks, know same songs or jokes, similar talents, ways of doing things, common history, nationality, religion, values, etc. 4. Jesus is the one vine; all Christians are the branches. Jesus shares with us the divine life of Father, Son, and Spirit. Connect this image with other images of Church—Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit.*
- ☐ **Connecting Scripture and Doctrine • We Are One in Jesus (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine. Emphasize that Christians belong to the same family, with common roots in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended. 2–3. These are both action items; help your child with them as you are able.*
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Ecumenism (page 4)** Read aloud the definition to connect the Sunday Gospel message to the *Our Catholic Faith* feature.





- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 40. Read through the prayer forms together. Invite your child to choose one of the prayer forms and compose a prayer as an example of that form. Invite your child to share this prayer with your family.

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

- **Our Catholic Faith • We Work for Unity Among All Christians (page 5)** This feature highlights the history of how Jesus' followers, the Christians, became segmented into different "branches." It also explains that the Catholic Church acknowledges the split and works with other Christians toward unity. Have your child read this feature, either silently or aloud. Help your child identify someone you know to interview.

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • Write Prayer Poems Like Israel's Psalms (pages 6–7)** Read the introduction on page 6 together to learn about how Israel's prophets and poets write poetry. Begin with the example in the left column. Talk about how details build up and strengthen the descriptions. Then do the same with Psalm 23 in the right column. Introduce and read aloud the verses from Psalm 46. Ask your child to describe the effect the poet creates by building up details. *Even if earth, mountains, and sea rock, God is present.* Invite your child to complete bubble maps around two contrasting words in the psalm—refuge and fear. Compare the two maps.  
On page 7, read aloud the verses from Job 12 and have your child follow the directions to mark repeated ideas and add another line. Read aloud the directions for "My Creation Psalm," and give your child time for the activity. If your child struggles with writing, you may wish to work together on this activity.
- **Catholic Leaders • Father Daniel Groody (page 8)** Ask your child to look at the photos, and read the text. **Ask:** Why does Fr. Groody empathize with immigrants? How is Jesus a migrant?  
See Father Groody's quote in the right column. Which of the principles of Catholic social teachings apply to immigration? (See page 51 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook if you need a reminder.) **Answers:** *Each person is sacred, made in God's image, and social, in need of family and community. All people have rights and responsibilities. We care for people who are poor and vulnerable. Workers have rights; work has dignity. Solidarity is our call. We care for Creation. (They all do!)*  
Direct your child's attention to the QR code, which links to the U.S. bishops' prayer for migrants. Encourage your family to keep migrants in your prayers.
- **Closing Prayer** Turn to page 54 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*, and pray together the Act of Faith. Like our creeds, this prayer expresses many of the beliefs shared by Christians.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

Sunday's Gospel comes from the long talk that Jesus shares with his Apostles at the Last Supper, as he prepares them for life after he is gone. He tells them, "As the Father loves me, so I have loved you." He then goes on to give them a great command: "Love one another as I have loved you." Jesus anticipates his death and gives his followers an example to follow when he says, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." Jesus calls his followers friends, and he chooses us as friends too. As Jesus' friends, we are called to go forth and bear fruit in the world, fruit that will last.

**Note:** During May, we especially remember and pray to Mary, the Mother of God and the mother of the Church. To honor Mary is to affirm our belief in the Incarnation. Jesus was not just God pretending to be human. Jesus was born of God and of Mary, a fully divine and fully human being. Mary and Jesus are as truly mother and child as any of us. This is the great love of God for us.

## Share Experiences

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

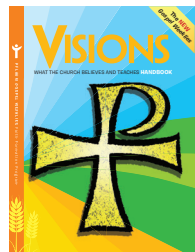
- ☐ **Pray together** Think back on the school year together and take turns sharing moments you remember most. Then pray the Lord's Prayer together.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Go Forth in Love! (page 1)** Turn this class prophecy activity into a "family prophecy." In the first column, work together with your child to write the names of family members, followed by their good qualities in the second column, and your child's prophecies for them in the third column. Reiterate the directions that the prophecy doesn't have to be serious but must be kind and reflect each family member's gifts.
- ☐ **Story • What Friends Do (pages 2–3)** Early teens begin the life task of making, keeping, and breaking friendships; growth is often painful. Invite your child to read the story silently and share reactions with you.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended. Examples or welcoming don't need to be limited to the lunch table. 2. Open-ended. The question broadens the first. 3. Generate a list of qualities. 4. Open-ended. Stress that love is a verb that is revealed in actions—sharing, talking, hanging out, doing sports together.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Love One Another (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by sharing the three Jesus parts between you.
- ☐ **Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Keep Jesus' commandments and his Father's. 2. The first three commandments challenge us to love and worship God alone, to respect God's name, and keep the Sabbath holy. The other seven command us to respect each other's lives, spouses, property, and good names. 3. We honor God by loving each other "as" freely and selflessly as this love has been given to us. 4. Open-ended. It's a privilege, special and personal, to be called a friend by Jesus. 5. Both girls show their love for each other; Caitlin includes Amelia, who thanks Caitlin. 6. God initiates the gifts each of us has and chooses to love us. 7. Open-ended; the Fruits of the Spirit are listed on page 50 in the What the Church Believes and Teaches handbook.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Love One Another (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel. Emphasize that Jesus' command to "love" is not a romantic emotion; rather, it's a selfless act.



- Discuss the *Talk* questions on page 4. *Answers: 1. Open-ended. 2. Open-ended; possible responses include being selfless, loyal, and kind. 3. Open-ended; mention some situations or people—friends, family, attending sports practice—that might prompt your child to think of opportunities to act in love.*



- Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 40 and read aloud the paragraph in Section 2 (The Holy Spirit and Prayer). Explain that the Holy Spirit may be the hardest of the three Divine Persons to understand and describe. It can be helpful to think of Holy Spirit as we think of love in this Gospel—active, moving, and present in our lives.

Turn to the Nicene Creed on page 6. By now, your child will be familiar with the beliefs proclaimed in the creed. Still, it's important to emphasize that our creed states that we believe in a Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Have your child find all the references to the Holy Spirit in the words of the Nicene Creed.

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions page 5.*

- **Catholic Faith Word • Holy Spirit (page 5)** Read aloud the description to underscore the doctrine and to introduce the *Our Catholic Faith* feature. Encourage your child to pay special attention to the words “and the Holy Spirit” when making the Sign of the Cross.
- **Our Catholic Faith • The Holy Spirit Guides Us (page 5)** The opening paragraph and four questions focus on schools and parishes. You and your child can discuss responses based on your own experiences. After you've read the article together, call attention to the fire illustration. Ask what other symbols the Bible uses for the Holy Spirit. *Wind and a dove.* Emphasize that the Holy Spirit is always with us, not just when we are doing good.

## Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • How Does the Holy Spirit Act in Us? (pages 6-7)** Read page 6 aloud together, including the directions at the top right. Your child can write responses to the dilemmas, or you can talk them through together. Have your child answer the questions at the bottom of page 6.
- **Closing Prayer • We Commit Our Holy Gifts (page 8)** This prayer service calls for a bowl of holy water and a Bible. If you don't have holy water, simply bless yourselves without it. Choose who will be the Leader and Reader. You, your child and any other available family member(s) can read the parts of Chorus 1 and Chorus 2 together. Read the directions (on page 7) for the Spirit Commitment Card aloud. Instead of returning the completed card to you, have your child hold on to it. After the prayer service, invite your child to post the card somewhere in your home (taped on a mirror or refrigerator for instance). Or take a picture of it to keep on your child's phone as a reminder.



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