



## Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus reminds us that he has come to redeem, not to judge. He speaks of light and darkness, noting that those who live in the light are his followers. Jesus is the very best sign of God's love. Sunday's Gospel compares Jesus to a light in the darkness. Jesus is like a light that shows us how to live happy, loving lives. We live in God's light when we follow Jesus' teachings and the Ten Commandments. Look for opportunities outside this week's lesson to talk about the rules your family follows at home, school, work, in the community, on the road, etc., and offer affirmation when your child keeps the Ten Commandments.

**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** "Loving God, thank you for loving us. Help us treat others with love. Help us follow Jesus' example and keep the Ten Commandments. Amen."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Stop, Slow, or Go? (page 1)** Invite your child to look at the traffic light at the top of page 1 and review what each color means. Explain that each child here has a choice to make: stop, slow, or go. Have your child color the traffic light next to each picture according to what choice the child(ren) should make. (Some pictures are open to interpretation.)
- ☐ **Story • Four-Square Trouble (page 2)** Invite your child to look at the picture on page 2 and read aloud the title. **Ask:** What do you think the trouble is? Read aloud the story together, switching readers at each paragraph.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the story.** Then **ask:** What do you think Jesus would do? Would he make Four Square a boys-only game? Would he tell the teacher about the boys, or would he encourage the children to work it out themselves?

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 2)** Read and discuss "Jesus Is Our Light." Emphasize that God wants us to be happy. He gives us Jesus and the Ten Commandments to lead us to happiness—like a light that guides us in the darkness.
- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Come to the Light (page 3)** Talk about ways your family and your child show love for others. Examples might include listening when others are speaking, taking care of common areas of your home, or not laughing at another's mistakes. Then take a moment of quiet together to think of one way each of you might change to follow Jesus better during these last weeks of Lent. Proclaim the Gospel by reading the parts aloud together. Have your child underline the words next to Jesus 2. You will return to these words later.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the Gospel.** Talk about ways we can slow or stop ourselves when we're tempted to hide bad actions. *We can change our choices to those that follow Jesus' rules for us.*
- ☐ **Activity • Memory Verse (page 4)** These are the words your child underlined in the Gospel. They are a summary of what the Good News of Jesus is. Read the verse aloud together and encourage your child to memorize it.



- **Catholic Faith Word • Ten Commandments (page 4)** Have your child find and read the definition.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 31. Lead your child through the Ten Commandments, reading what each requires of us. Ask for examples of how your child can keep each commandment. Make it clear that fighting, getting even with someone, or hurting another's feelings are all sins against the Fifth Commandment. If your child asks what adultery is, explain that the word only applies to adults, but respect for one another and our commitments applies to children too. The Eighth Commandment mentions false witness. This originally meant not committing perjury by telling lies in court. Now it means any kind of lie.

Explain that we can stay on track following the Ten Commandments by examining our conscience. This means asking ourselves questions about how we follow each Commandment. Using the examples you talked about earlier, work with your child to develop a list of questions that can form an examination of conscience. For example, for the First Commandment, you might ask, "Do I trust in God's love and care, even when things are not going well in my life?" You might wish to write down your questions. Encourage your child to think about these questions honestly every night, then say an Act of Contrition, trusting in God's help to do better the next day.

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

## Live the Gospel

- **Activity • The Ten Commandments (page 4)** Explain that as a Jewish man, Jesus kept the Ten Commandments. As Jesus' followers, we should keep them too. Have your child use the code to fill in the blanks. **Answers:** 1. heart, 2. name, 3. holy, 4. honor, 5. kill, 6. adultery, 7. steal, 8. lie, 9. take, 10. property. **Ask:** What do the first three commandments tell us to do? *Love, honor, and respect God.* **Ask:** What do the rest of the commandments tell us to do? *Love and respect other people.*
- **Activity • Lenten Calendar (page 3)** Invite your child to guess this week's Lenten word—*GIVE*. Read the suggestions aloud and remind your child to do each giving action before adding its square to the Lenten calendar.
- **Closing Prayer** Say the prayer together. Then say the Our Father together.

**Parent:** Jesus, you are our light...

**Child:** Jesus, you are our light.

**Parent:** When we want to hide our sins in the dark...

**Child:** Help us turn to your light.

**Parent:** When we are tempted to be unkind...

**Child:** Help us turn to your light.

**Parent:** When we don't want to obey...

**Child:** Help us turn to your light.

**All:** Jesus, you are our light and our joy. Thank you for the gift of your love. Help us follow your teachings and trust you to lead us to live in your light. Amen.



## Parent Resources

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## Sunday Gospel Background

When a single grain of wheat falls into the ground, it appears to die, but in fact it bursts its hull, sprouts, and grows into a stalk with many grains of wheat upon it. In his Death, Jesus' life seems to end but in fact grows into a rich harvest of followers. Jesus gave up his life so that we could have life forever with God in Heaven. We remember Jesus' sacrifice at every Mass. He gives himself to us in Holy Communion. This lesson contains many references to baking bread. Try to take some time to savor the taste of fresh bread together this week. If you have time, you might even bake bread together. Either way, take the opportunity to share with your child how important it is for you personally to receive Jesus' Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to live with us and for teaching us about God. Help us listen to your words and grow as God's children. Amen."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Wheat Becomes Bread (page 1)** Have your child read the title in gold and describe the pictures. Explain that in Jesus' time, grain was harvested by hand. People used long knives on handles to cut the stalks down near the ground. Others tied the stalks together into a sheaf. On the threshing floor, they beat the stalks until all the grain came off. They then scooped up the grain and tossed it into the air over and over again until the chaff, all the leftover bits of stalk and outside kernel, blew away. They then ground the grain into flour. (Note: You'll come back to the crucifix later.)
- ☐ **Story • Making Bread Together (page 2)** Talk about favorite kinds of bread or any experiences your family has had baking bread together. Read this story aloud together, alternating readers at each paragraph.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the story.** 1. *Open-ended.* 2. *Jesus made bread the sign of his love and presence because it's a common food in many parts of the world. He wanted his Body to be available to everyone.*
- ☐ **Activity • Making Bread Word Search (page 2)** Invite your child to complete this word search. You will return to it later in the lesson.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Like a Grain of Wheat (page 3)** Proclaim the Gospel by reading the five parts aloud together. You might take the Narrator part and alternate reading the Jesus parts with your child.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the Gospel.** 1. *Open-ended.* 2. *The grain of wheat dies to bring new life. Jesus died and rose to new life so that we can go to Heaven.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 3)** Read together "Jesus' Death Gives Life." When you get to the word *sacrifice*, help your child understand that when we make a sacrifice, it is a form of "dying"—we put the needs or wants of another before our own. Point out that Jesus' sacrifice involved really dying. **Ask:** Why did Jesus sacrifice his life? Continue reading at "Jesus gave up..." to find out.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • sacrifice (page 4)** Review the meaning of the word *sacrifice* with your child. Explain that we "die to self" when we make sacrifices, even small ones. Out of our sacrifices, good things can grow in our lives and



in the lives of others. Help your child understand that this term is used to refer to Jesus' Death. We also refer to the Mass as a sacrifice. Jesus gives his Body and Blood to us in Holy Communion.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 22. Read aloud the two paragraphs in the Eucharist section. Talk about what your child likes best about your family's Thanksgiving meals. Share that what makes many family meals special are four things: *Gathering, sharing stories, sharing a special meal, and going home.* Print these in a column on a sheet of paper. Read the section about the Mass. Then print the following in a column next to the meal words: *Liturgy of the Word, Concluding Rites, Liturgy of the Eucharist, and Introductory Rites.* Invite your child to match each part of a meal to its similar part of the Mass. If you want, you can number the Mass parts in their correct order: 1. Introductory Rites, 2. Liturgy of the Word, 3. Liturgy of the Eucharist, 4. Concluding Rites.

Next time you're at Mass, encourage your child to pay attention to the flow of the Mass and notice the different parts.

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

## Live the Gospel

- **Activity • A Eucharist Crossword (page 4)** Give your child time to complete the crossword. When finished, read the completed sentences together, inviting your child to fill in the missing words. Help your child understand that the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper are the words the priest says during the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass. The answers are **4. Jesus, 5. Supper, 2 down. bread, 7. eat, 6. love, 1. Mass, 3. altar, 2 across. Body, 8. Amen.**
- **Activity • I Am the Bread of Life (pages 2, 4, and 1)** Have your child turn back to the word search on page 2. The letters that weren't circled spell a message. Give your child some paper to write down the remaining letters, beginning at the top left and going right. **Answer: I am the bread of life. Whoever eats it will live forever.** **Ask:** Who said this? **Jesus.** **Ask:** What is he talking about? **His Body is Holy Communion.** Turn to the Memory Verse on page 4. Encourage your child to memorize these words of Jesus.

Now invite your child to turn to page 1. **Ask:** Why is a crucifix on this page about making bread? **Jesus' body died on the Cross. Jesus' Body is Holy Communion.** Invite your child to color the crucifix.

- **Activity • Lenten Calendar (page 4)** Direct your child's attention to the four calendar squares to guess the Lenten word—**FAST**. Then read the suggested actions. These actions will help your child experience different ways to fast and sacrifice. This will complete your Lenten calendar.
- **Closing Prayer** Have your child repeat each line of the prayer after you. **Pray:** "Loving God, thank you for the gift of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Help us to grow more and more like Jesus. Help us to be Jesus' Body in our world. Amen."



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## Sunday Gospel Background

The first Gospel and procession of Palm Sunday recall how the people of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus. The Mass that follows includes the Gospel of the Passion. This Sunday also begins Holy Week, as we follow the last days of Jesus' life on earth. On Holy Thursday, we remember Jesus' Last Supper with his Apostles. On Good Friday, we remember his Death on the Cross. On Holy Saturday, we remember his body in the tomb. We celebrate the joy of his Resurrection on Easter. Learn the times of Holy Week liturgies at your parish and make plans to attend as a family in whatever way you are able—online or in person.

**Editor's Note:** *Good News* places the Gospel into three separate parts this week. You may wish to spread the Gospel portion of your lesson across three days, proclaiming one part each day.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together:** "Jesus, thank you for bringing us together. We welcome you into our hearts and into our lives. Help us to welcome others as you welcome us today. Amen."
- ☐ **Warm-Up Activity • Celebrations and Special Guests** Talk about ways your family has celebrated special events such as birthdays and graduations while you have stayed at home. **Ask:** What do you like best about our family celebrations? What do you miss most about celebrating with others? Talk about the people you look forward to inviting to your home. **Ask:** How will we get ready? *Prepare special foods, clean, put clean sheets on guest bed, display things you'd like your visitor to see.* **Ask:** How will you welcome visitors? *Greet them at the door, hug them, make a welcome sign, offer them a chair or food/drink or both, spend time with them to let them know they are special.*

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Activity • Gospel Warm-Up** Explain to your child that Palm Sunday is the only Sunday on which we hear *two* Gospels at Mass. You will break the second Gospel into two parts here. Encourage your child to pay attention to the different feelings and moods of the people in the Gospel readings you share.
- ☐ **Sunday Gospel, Part 1 • Jesus Comes to Jerusalem (page 1)** Together, read the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Discuss the feelings of the people, why they put leafy branches on the road and shouted, "Hosanna," which originally meant "Save us, please" and came to mean "Hooray! Salvation has come!" Invite your child to color the *Hosanna* with joyful colors.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Holy Week (page 2)** Read aloud the definition of *Holy Week* on page 2. Explain that Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week—the most important week of our Church Year.
- ☐ **Sunday Gospel, Part 2 • Jesus Shares a Meal with His Friends (page 2)** Have your child color the border pictures on page 2. Share the individual speaking parts to dramatize Jesus' story. Take turns leading the call and response with your child.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to this Gospel.** 1. *Eucharistic Prayer.* 2. *The Eucharist (also Holy Orders).*





- **Sunday Gospel, Part 3 • Jesus Is Arrested and Put to Death (page 3)** Share the speaking parts as you read through the Gospel drama. Invite other family members to take parts if they're available. **Ask:** What did Jesus' friends do? *Slept when Jesus asked them to stay awake, Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, most everyone else ran away.* **Ask:** Who in this story recognizes who Jesus really is? *Roman soldier.*
- **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 4)** Read "We Celebrate Holy Week." Point out the change in people's feelings about Jesus as you move through the events of Holy Week.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 48. Look at the picture of the Rosary and share what you know about this devotion, or invite your child to do so. *The Rosary is a Gospel prayer that helps us think and pray about important events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. These events are grouped into four Mysteries—Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious. Each mystery contains five events.*

**Ask:** What does the word *sorrow* mean? Your child might associate it with the more familiar word, *sorry*. Explain that *sorrow* means "deep sadness." **Ask:** What events in Jesus' life would have caused Jesus and his followers to feel deep sadness? Tell your child that the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary help us reflect on these very sad events in the life of Jesus. Read page 49 together. Help your child understand any words that are difficult.

Lead your child in praying one of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary together. Invite your child to follow along by placing a finger on each bead on page 48.

Have your child turn to page 57 and read about the Triduum. Invite your child to color this section of the calendar.

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

## Live the Gospel

- **Closing Prayer • We Adore the Cross (page 4)** Finish this session by adoring the cross as Catholics do at the Good Friday service. Use a cross you have in your home. If you do not have one, invite your child to draw or color a simple wooden cross. You may wish to begin by covering your cross with a piece of good quality fabric. Spend a few moments in silence while the cross remains covered. Then uncover it slowly and with reverence. Decide which of you will take the Leader part. Your child may genuflect or bow before the cross as a sign of respect and love.

Note that the dogwood blossoms on this page are a sign of Jesus' Passion and Death. Legend says that the wood used for Jesus' Cross came from the dogwood tree. Since then, the blossoms of the dogwood bear marks of Jesus' wounds.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

Alleluia! He is risen! Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried. But on the third day, he was raised again. He appears to his disciples. Thomas doubts Jesus' Resurrection until he sees and touches Jesus' wounds. The Resurrection of Jesus is the most important truth of the Catholic faith. Jesus' Death and Resurrection opened the gates of Heaven for us. He promises his followers the joy of Heaven. Find ways to celebrate this joy throughout these 50 days of Easter. For instance, you might greet your child every morning by saying "Happy Easter!"—all the way to Pentecost.

**Editor's Note:** This week's *Good News* is for two Sundays. You can do both lessons at once, or spread them out; focusing on the Easter Sunday Gospel first, followed by the Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Dear God, thank you for raising Jesus up and for filling us with new life. Amen. Alleluia!"
- ☐ **Activity • Signs of Easter** Talk together about signs that Easter is here. *Easter cards, flowers in church, Easter clothes, eggs, baskets, Easter Mass, spring weather.* Summarize by saying that Easter is a time of really special joy because Jesus' Father raised him from the dead. As baptized followers of Jesus, we have his new life in us too.
- ☐ **Story • Lost and Found Treasure (page 2)** Invite your child to look at the picture of the two boys on the left of page 2. **Ask:** What are they doing? *Using metal detectors to find metal objects on or in the ground.* Read the story together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Know questions related to the story.** 1-2. *Open-ended.* 3. *Timothy, how much they care about one another.*
- ☐ **Activity • Nature Walk or Stretch and Pretend** If possible, take your child outdoors to observe all the new life in nature. Or lead your child in pretending to be animals and plants, using movements to answer your questions:
  - Can you swim like a fish?
  - Can you stretch like a giraffe?
  - Can you slither like a snake?
  - Can you jump like a kangaroo?
  - Can you grow like a grain of wheat?
  - Can you fly like a butterfly?
  - Can you open slowly like a flower?
  - Can you walk like an elephant?
  - Can you pounce like a tiger?
  - Can you walk on soft little feet like a kitten?

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel, Part 1 • Jesus Is Raised to New Life (page 1)** Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus' Resurrection by sharing the reading parts aloud. (Note that it is Mary Magdalene who is the first witness to Jesus' Resurrection in all four Gospels.) **Ask:** Why did God raise Jesus from the dead? *God wants Jesus' followers, which include all of us, to know that death is not the end of everything. When we die, God brings us to a new, happy life. We know this is true because it happened to Jesus and Jesus told us it would happen to us too.*
- ☐ **Activity • Gospel Drama** Direct your child in acting out the Easter Sunday Gospel. Read the part of Narrator aloud and invite your child to perform the actions of Jesus, Mary, Peter, and John.



- ☐ **Sunday Gospel, Part 2 • Jesus Brings Peace (page 3)** Proclaim this Gospel by sharing the reading parts. **Ask:** Why did Jesus say “Peace be with you” to his scared friends? *Jesus wanted them to know that they could trust in God.* Peace comes from believing that even though hard things happen, God will be with us and help us through them. **Ask:** Why didn’t Jesus scold Thomas for not believing he had risen from the dead? *Jesus knows that his Resurrection was something very unusual and special. Sometimes it’s hard to believe that he is with us because we can’t see him.*
- ☐ **Activity • Gospel Drama** Direct your child in acting out the Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter as you did before. Read the parts and invite your child to perform the actions of Jesus, John, and Thomas. When you’ve finished, invite your child to color the *Alleluia* on the cover.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 3)** Read “Easter Brings Us Joy.” Help your child see that Jesus’ Death led to new life not only for him, but also for us. Through Jesus’ Death and Resurrection, his followers are promised life in Heaven.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Alleluia (page 4)** Read aloud the definition of *Alleluia* on page 4. Remind your child that we didn’t say or sing it during Lent. Now that it is Easter, we use it to praise God for the joy and gift of Easter.



- ☐ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 11 and read aloud the paragraph under the heading that starts “On the third day.” This part of the Apostles’ Creed is about Easter. Look at the picture of an empty tomb together. This is not Jesus’ tomb, but it is similar to what Jesus’ tomb may have looked like. Point out that the last part of the paragraph tells what happened after Jesus’ Resurrection until he ascended to Heaven (the Ascension) forty days after Easter Sunday. Turn to page 19 and read aloud the first paragraph under “Easter.” Read with emphasis to help your child understand why Easter is our most important holy day. Then have your child read aloud the paragraph about Easter eggs. If you want, draw an outline of a large Easter egg on a sheet of paper and have your child decorate it with a drawing of Jesus’ Resurrection on Easter morning.

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

## Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Activity • Easter Egg Letter Hunt (page 4)** Give your child time to complete the activity. **Answer:** *Resurrection.*
- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Take turns sharing names of people you and your child wish to pray for. After each petition, lead your child in saying “Lord, hear our prayer.”

Finish by having your child repeat each line of the following prayer after you:

Thank you, God, for signs of Easter. Thank you, God, for raising Jesus to new life. Thank you, God, for the promise of life with you in Heaven. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!



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## Scripture Background

In Sunday's Gospel, the Risen Jesus appears to his friends on Easter evening with a message of peace and forgiveness. They have spent the day in fear and confusion and at first they think he is a ghost. It's a sign of Jesus' great tenderness for his friends when he wishes them peace. Jesus eats food and lets them touch him, which helps them believe he is really there. We, too, believe in Jesus' Real Presence; that he is really with us in Holy Communion. This lesson includes a story about a pet who has died. You can ease into the lesson by sharing memories of pets and loved ones who have died. You may also want to share your belief in the Real Presence, and the comfort it brings you.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Jesus, help us listen well to the stories about you. Thank you for the many ways you are with us. Amen. Alleluia!"
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Jesus Is with Us (page 1)** Look at the cover with your child. Read the title aloud, followed by the question at the bottom of the page. *Signs of Jesus being present among us at Mass include: The bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood; the Gospel tells his story; the cross shows Jesus' love; the Easter candle celebrates his Resurrection, the tabernacle holds the consecrated hosts from an earlier Mass; the light by the tabernacle tells us that the Body of Christ (in the form of consecrated hosts) is present in the tabernacle; the baptismal font is where we all become Christians; the priest will say the words Jesus said at the Last Supper; the people gathered are Jesus' Body today; the money gifts are ways to support the good works of the parish and the larger Church; the people are showing care for one another.*
- ☐ **Story • Remembering Buddy (page 2)** If you have recently lost a family pet, you may wish to read the story ahead of time to prepare. When you are ready, settle comfortably with your child and read aloud the story. Invite your child to share memories of a favorite pet if you have or have had one. Take as much time as your child needs to talk about this.
- ☐ **Discuss the Know question related to the story.** You may wish to help your child think about and answer the question by sharing a story yourself. There's no need to force this, however. You can also make the connection with how the Gospels tell Jesus' story.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Lives! (page 3)** Turn your child's attention to the picture on page 3, read the Gospel title, and ask: Who is in the picture? What is happening? *Jesus, with the marks of the nails in his hands and feet, is trying to persuade his surprised friends that he is alive again. A child is offering him a fish to eat.* Proclaim the Gospel by sharing the reading parts together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Know questions related to the Gospel.** 1. *He invites them to touch him. He shows them his wounds. He eats food.* 2. *Tell the Good News to others, be his witnesses.* **Ask:** What Good News about Jesus can you tell others?
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 4)** Read "We Believe" together. Refer back to the story about Buddy. Explain that telling stories about Buddy helped Jason feel as if Buddy was still with him, but the memories didn't bring Buddy back to life. It's different with Jesus' Real Presence. He *really is* with us! There's no example from human experience that



gets anywhere close to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Real Presence (page 3)** Read together the definition of *Real Presence* on page 3.



- ☐ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 14 and read aloud the section about Amen. Say some statements aloud and invite your child to say *Amen* after each one your child believes to be true. Examples: Jesus is the Son of God (T), Jesus died on Ash Wednesday (F). Come up with other statements. You might invite your child to add some statements as well.

Have your child to turn to page 57. Point out the wedge for the Easter season and invite your child to read about it. Just as we celebrate Christmas for a period of weeks, we do the same for Easter. Easter is our most important celebration, so we take seven weeks to celebrate it. Have your child color this area of the calendar.

Turn back to page 19 and read the paragraph about the Easter Season. Explain that even when the Easter season is over, we continue to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection every Sunday. Every Sunday is a little Easter.

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

## Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Activity • Amen Puzzle (page 4)** Help your child with this activity if needed. **Solution:** Row 1: NAME, Row 2: EMAN, Row 3: AENM, Row 4: MNEA.
- ☐ **Activity • We Believe, Receive, and Share (page 4)** **Ask:** What is the name of the sacrament Jesus gave us at the Last Supper? *Eucharist, also Holy Orders.* **Ask:** What happens to the bread and wine at Mass? *They become Jesus' Body and Blood. They are given to the community to nourish our faith and help us grow closer to Jesus.* **Ask:** When we leave the Mass after receiving Holy Communion, what are we sent out to do? *Be the Body of Christ in the world, love others as Jesus loves us, share the Good News of Jesus, share what we believe.*

Read aloud the activity title and directions. Have your child cut out the pictures first, then place them in the boxes on the page. Caution your child to make sure all the pictures are in the correct boxes before gluing them down.

- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Have your child follow the arrows as you both read the words of the We Believe, Receive, and Share activity on page 4. This will be your prayer. Begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. He tells his friends that he knows and cares for them just as a shepherd cares for his sheep. Jesus says he will even lay down his life for his sheep, whom he knows by name. Jesus cares for all of his followers. Most parishes have a pastor, who leads and cares for the people of his parish, much like a shepherd cares for his sheep. Since Earth Day is April 22, *Good News* connects a shepherd's care for his sheep to our responsibility to care for God's Creation. This week, as you play the "We Care for Creation" game with your child, let it inspire you to make a family commitment to one new way of caring for God's Creation.

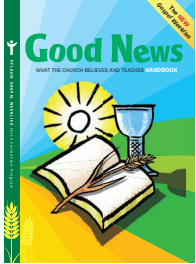
## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** Take turns sharing the names of people you wish to pray for. You may want to write down the names. Then pray: "Jesus, you are our Good Shepherd. You love us and watch over us. Thank you for your care. Please take care of these people we are concerned about. We trust that you will take care of us all. Amen."
- ☐ **Activity • Sheep and Shepherds (page 4)** Begin the lesson by talking about sheep and shepherds. **Ask:** What do you know about sheep and the job of a shepherd? Relate this to what your child may know from taking care of pets or other animals. Then turn to page 4 and invite your child to color the picture of the shepherd and his sheep. While your child is coloring, **ask:** What do you think a shepherd does when the sheep run out of good grass to eat? When the sheep are thirsty? When a wolf comes near? When someone tries to steal a sheep? When a sheep gets lost? Emphasize that the shepherd does all he can to take care of and protect his sheep.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Our Good Shepherd (page 1)** **Ask:** Have you ever heard of anyone calling Jesus the Good Shepherd? Proclaim the Gospel by sharing the reading parts between you and your child.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the Gospel.** 1. Review the answers you discussed as your child colored the picture on page 4. You can also talk about what the shepherd might be doing in this picture—watching for possible dangers, counting his sheep, checking weather, etc. 2. Jesus always has us in his heart and care, gives us other people to help us, gives us the ability to love and care for others so we can be good shepherds too. Jesus feeds us with his Body and Blood at Communion, welcomes us into his family at Baptism, answers our prayers, helps us learn how to be like him through his actions and teachings in the Gospels.
- ☐ **Activity • Wolves in Hiding (page 1)** Invite your child to find and circle the eight wolves hidden in the cover picture. An answer key can be found at [gospelweeklies.com/lesson-updates](http://gospelweeklies.com/lesson-updates).
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 4)** Read "Jesus Leads Us" with your child. **Ask:** What is the name of the pastor of our parish? If there are other priests and deacons who serve, ask about their names also. **Ask:** Who is the pastor of the whole Catholic Church? *The Pope*. **Ask:** What is his name? *Pope Francis*.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Words • parish, pastor (page 4)** Read aloud these definitions and ask: What are some ways the pastor of our parish acts as our shepherd?



□ **Open** the What the Church Believes and Teaches handbook to pages 51-54. Read through the definitions of some of the shepherds of the Catholic Church on these pages: bishop, deacon, priest, and Pope. Then read the following answers and have your child guess the question in a “Jeopardy!” style quiz.

- He is a shepherd and teacher, leader of a diocese or archdiocese, and can celebrate all the sacraments. *Who is a bishop?*
- He helps the bishop and priests, he distributes Holy Communion, assists at and blesses marriages, proclaims the Gospel, preaches Homilies. *Who is a deacon?*
- He leads the whole Catholic Church in the world. He is the bishop of Rome, Italy. *Who is the Pope?*
- He helps the bishop; he often leads the people of a parish as pastor; he celebrates the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Reconciliation, Eucharist, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick. He may celebrate Confirmation if the bishop gives him special permission. *Who is a priest?*

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Good News, page 2.*

## Live the Gospel

- **Activity • We Care for Creation (pages 2-3)** (Note: you will need game dice for the game.) Read aloud the first paragraph on page 2. Explain that God needs us to take care of his Creation. We are like shepherds of our world. The word we use for that instead of *shepherd* is *steward*. Read aloud the game directions. You can play the game with your child either by making an extra copy of the happy earth symbols to cut out, or by simply dividing the eight symbols between you. Players can move forward or backward on their turns.
- **Closing Prayer** Together, read aloud the prayer next to the shepherd picture on page 4. It is a prayer to Jesus, our Good Shepherd.



## Parent Resources

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## Sunday Gospel Background

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus refers to himself as the vine. He says that his followers are the branches. Jesus shares God's life with us. We belong to his family. As long as we stay connected to Jesus like branches connected to the trunk of a vine, we will share God's life, grow in faith and love, and produce good fruit. As you fill in the family tree on page 2 of *Good News*, talk about ways you stay connected with your extended family. Remember to pray the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) with your child every day.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** Share names of people and any concerns you wish to pray for. If you wrote down names last time, add any additional names to your list. Pray together: "Loving God, you always care for us and watch over us. Please take care of the people and concerns we have mentioned today. Please bless our family as we learn more about you. Amen."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Jesus Brings Us Together (page 1)** Have your child follow the directions. *Possible connections:* Two children with musical instruments, two with music club shirts, two with pets, three with sports equipment, three with Bolts team shirts, two boys with baseball equipment, boy with soccer ball and girl in soccer uniform, two with food drive bags, two with math books. **Ask:** How are you connected to any of the children in the picture?
- ☐ **Story • Family Trees (page 2)** Read aloud the story. Help your child complete the family tree on page 2. Feel free to expand this by drawing a larger tree representing your family on a separate sheet of paper.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* question related to the story.** You may wish to talk about how a tree spreads its branches across a wide area, and compare that to the various places members of your family live or have lived—remembering that you all share the same roots.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Vine (page 3)** Sunday's Gospel is told in a visual format. Jesus is the trunk of the vine (bottom). The children are the branches with their leaves and fruit. Notice that the children are of many different ethnic groups. The vine has traveled far since Jesus' time. Proclaim the Gospel by taking turns reading aloud the parts.
- ☐ **Discuss the *Know* questions related to the Gospel.** 1. *Jesus is like a vine that's planted in good soil and reaches its roots way down. His roots are in God, his Father. He is the source of our faith. He is solidly rooted in God's love. He gives us his life in the sacraments. His words have traveled all over the world.* 2. *We are like branches because we're connected to Jesus by Baptism. We're part of his family just as we are part of our own family. Just as we need our family to love us and teach us how to love others, we need Jesus to love us and teach us how to love and serve God. We need to stay connected to our family and to Jesus. We grow strong and beautiful when we stay connected to Jesus and to his Church where we hear his teachings and receive him in the sacraments. There are many of us who grow out of the one trunk. Some are big old branches and some are new ones, still green and flexible. (You might use a plant to illustrate how branches connect to the main stem of the plant.)*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 4)** Read together "We Share Jesus' Life." Emphasize that an important way to stay connected to Jesus is by praying.





- **Catholic Faith Word • Body of Christ (page 3)** Read aloud the definition of *Body of Christ*. This dual meaning may be difficult for a concrete thinker to grasp. You might use the saying “You are what you eat” as a way to help your child make the connection. Holy Communion truly is the Body of Christ, and the people who receive it (members of the Church) are also the Body of Christ in the world.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 35. Read aloud the section under “The Perfect Prayer.” Look up Matthew 6:9–15 and read it together. Then look up Luke 11:2–4 and it read aloud. **Ask:** Which version is closer to the one we pray? *The one in Matthew’s Gospel.*

Turn to page 40. Invite your child to silently read the paragraph under “The Lord’s Prayer” and look for the word *unites*. (It appears twice.) **Ask:** To whom does praying the Lord’s Prayer unite (connect) us? *God the Father and Jesus, the Son of God, the Church, all who call God Father.* Relate this to staying connected to Jesus as branches are connected to a vine.

Take turns reading aloud the seven petitions of the Lord’s Prayer. Encourage your child to pray this prayer every day to help stay connected to Jesus.

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

## Live the Gospel

- **Activity • I Grow Good Fruit (page 4)** Before your child completes the activity, refer back to the Gospel (page 3) and **ask:** What does Jesus want us to grow? *Good fruit.* **Ask:** What does that mean? If your child needs ideas, you might refer to Connecting Gospel and Doctrine on page 4. **Ask:** What other good fruits can you grow? Then have your child come up with at least three ways for the “I Grow Good Fruit” activity. You can use these responses in your closing prayer. Invite your child to color the leaves and grapes.
- **Closing Prayer** “God our Father, help us stay connected to Jesus, your Son. Help us grow good fruit with our lives.” Invite your child to read the ways he or she will grow good fruit (page 4). End with the Lord’s Prayer.



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## Sunday Gospel Background

Sunday's Gospel comes from the long talk Jesus shared with his Apostles at the Last Supper. He gives them a great command: "Love one another as I have loved you." Loving actions connect us to one another. They help us create communities of friends and neighbors who care about one another. We become members of the community of the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Initiation. With the grace of these sacraments, we grow closer to Jesus and become more like him. Look for opportunities to talk with your child this week about times when it is hard to be loving or obedient. Be sure to offer affirmation and praise when your child obeys and shows love toward others.

## Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** "Loving God, thank you for all the ways we are connected to others by love. Help us grow closer to Jesus and become more loving toward others. Amen."
- ☐ **Story • Who Can Play? (page 3–4)** Open *Good News* so that the front and back cover are faceup. Read the instructions together in the middle of page 4 and have your child make the cuts on the page. Once the cutout is ready, have your child place it on a workspace with the house and basketball hoop picture showing. Tell this story, stopping to give folding directions where marked.

Ben is very excited! It is his birthday. The only present he really wants is a basketball. When his mom brings out the present at his birthday dinner, the box is just the right size for a basketball. Ben rips it open. (Fold A) It is a basketball! Ben gives his mom and dad a hug and runs out to the hoop his dad has set up by the driveway. (Fold B) Ben dribbles and shoots, grabs the rebound, then dribbles and shoots again. His friends Michael and Charlie hear the ball bouncing and come out of their house. (Fold C) "Watch me!" Ben shouts to them. He dribbles, shoots, and rebounds over and over. "Can we play too?" Michael asks. But Ben is having so much fun that he doesn't even hear

Michael. "This is no fun," Michael says to Charlie.

Just then, Ben's brother, Luke, comes out to the driveway. When Ben dribbles toward the net, Luke steals the ball. (Fold D) He tries a layup and gets his own rebound. He shoots again, gets the ball back, dribbles to the other side of the driveway and nails a three-pointer. He gets the ball back again. "Hey!" Ben says. "Let me shoot." Luke stops in the middle of his dribble. "I have an idea," he says to Ben. Luke points to Michael and Charlie. "Get your friends over here. I will teach you some good plays." (Turn the picture over.) They play until it is too dark to see the net. It is Ben's best birthday ever.

**Ask:** What made this a great birthday for Ben? When have you had fun sharing with others? Use this discussion to lead into the page 2 activity.

- ☐ **Activity • How Do I Show Love? (page 2)** Children need to recognize that love is something we do every day. Invite your child to complete this activity and share with you. Talk about which sentences were easier to complete and which were more difficult.

## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Love One Another (page 1)** Proclaim the Gospel by taking turns reading aloud the parts.



**Ask:** What words do you remember hearing? *Possible answers:* love, friends, joy, commandment, slaves. Proclaim the Gospel again and invite your child to listen for more words or even sentences.

- ☐ **Discuss the Know questions related to the Gospel.** 1. *Keep his commandments.* 2. *Love one another as he loves us.* Conclude that Jesus made sure we know his one law—love. If we keep that law, we will keep all the other commandments too.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine (page 2)** Read “We Grow Together” aloud.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Sacraments of Initiation (page 2)** Read the definition of *Sacraments of Initiation*. Print the names of the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist—in three columns on a white board or sheet of paper. **Ask:** What do you know about each of these sacraments? Jot down your child’s answers under the appropriate sacrament. Don’t worry if your child’s answers are incomplete. This is simply a way to see what your child still might need to know.



- ☐ **Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 21. Ask:** Which is the first sacrament we receive? *Baptism*. Read about the Sacrament of Baptism. Explain that Baptism is the first of the Sacraments of Initiation. Initiation is the way a person becomes a member of a group. Initiation is the beginning of a person’s membership in a group.

Explain that the second Sacrament of Initiation is Confirmation. Read about Confirmation. Then have your child to turn to page 26 and give your child time to complete the activity. Then go over the *answers*: *Baptism = water; Confirmation = fire that represents the Holy Spirit; Eucharist = chalice and host.*

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Good News, page 3*

## Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Activity • My Mission to Love (page 3)** **Ask:** Who tells us to love? *Jesus.* **Ask:** Who helps us to love? *The Holy Spirit.* Read aloud the activity title and the line below it on page 3. Point out the word bank and explain that it contains ways that we can share God’s love. Have your child find the words in the word search, then write a sentence using at least three of the words.
- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Read together the Prayer of Mission at the top of page 4. End your prayer with the Sign of the Cross.



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