



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** Begin by **praying**: "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." **Ask:** Do you know what prayer this is? *The Nicene Creed, which we pray at Sunday Mass.* **Ask:** Do you remember the last time we said this prayer together? Where were we? Discuss this Mass experience—what was going on in your family's life, what you prayed for. Then say a short prayer of thanks for all those with whom you share your faith.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • God so loved the world . . . (page 1)** Read the Scripture passage aloud together and talk about what it means for you and your child. The text makes it clear that God loves us and wants us with the Father, Son, and Spirit forever. As Pope Francis tells us, God wants to save the world, not punish it. After your discussion, read the instructions in the box. Have your child cut out the words on the right and experiment with placing them in the blank spaces. **Note:** The colored lines in the text box match the colored words along the right side. They do not have to match the Scripture passage exactly. Encourage your child to read the sentences aloud, testing out which words best express your child's experience of God.
- ☐ **Story • Living a Lie (pages 2-3)** This is a true story, written by the sixth-grader who is its central character. Read it aloud together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** **Answers:** 1. The author lied because he had to cover up the theft of the cards. 2. The author worried that Rico would notice the cards were missing; he was irritable at home, told more lies, felt guilty, didn't enjoy having the full set, got entangled in all the lies. 3. He returns the cards; he doesn't confess to stealing, but he does not lie anymore. (If you're comfortable, you may wish to share an experience when lying got you into trouble and how you felt about it.) 4. He did not like the feeling of living a life of deceit. (Be sure to point out that lying and deceit foster disunity. Stress how important it is to build trust and to work for unity with one another.) He also may be absolved of his sin through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

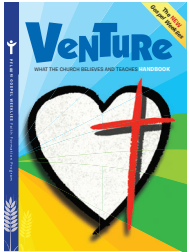
Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Light (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by reading it aloud together. Explain that some people, like Nicodemus, struggled with whether to believe in Jesus. Nicodemus has doubt, but he asks questions and remains open.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** **Answers:** 1. Anyone who had been bitten by a serpent would look at the bronze snake and be healed. Jesus is lifted up on the Cross, but his Death gives us life, just as the snake healed. 2. A light shows us the way



through darkness, guides us, gives us direction. 3. Open-ended; people who act according to the light of their consciences; people who give hope to others by their words, actions; people who create ways that others can follow Jesus too.

- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Truth and Love Shine in Jesus (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4. Answers:** 1. Open-ended. We may see glimpses in people who live as Jesus taught. 2. Open-ended. By staying close to people who model Christ-like behavior, and through regular, faithful prayer and Mass attendance.



- ☐ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 30. Explain that conscience is based on moral law—a shared understanding of right and wrong. Read aloud the four paragraphs in Section 1 on Moral Law. Note the following words in the text and explain if needed.
 - **Moral Law** Human beings' common understandings of right and wrong. The Ten Commandments are one expression of these understandings.
 - **Sacred Scripture** The Old and New Testaments give us stories of God's revelations to people over many centuries.
 - **Sacred Tradition** This is another term for the teaching of the Catholic Church.
 - **Free Will** We are free to choose between right and wrong.
 - **Original Sin** Adam and Eve chose to disobey God in the Garden of Eden. As children of Adam and Eve, we are like them and find it difficult to always choose the good. Baptism forgives Original Sin and gives us sanctifying grace.

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

- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Catechumenate (page 4)** Read the definition aloud to help your child become familiar with the presence of catechumens in your parish during Lent.
- ☐ **Our Catholic Faith • How Do We Learn About Faith? (page 5)** Use this feature to provide insight into how our proclamation of the Creed at Sunday Mass celebrates the gift of faith that we have received from many people in our lives.

Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Living the Gospel • You Shall Not Bear False Witness (page 6)** Read aloud the introduction to the activity at the top of page 6. If a review of the Eighth Commandment is needed, see page 35 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*.
- ☐ **Game • Truth Can Be Tricky (pages 6–8)** Read the instructions for the game on page 6 and have your child cut out the game cards on pages 7–8. The game works best with at least three players, so if possible, invite other family members to join the play, or work with your parish to have your child play remotely with others in your parish program.
- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Turn to page 53 in the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook. Pray The Apostle's Creed aloud together.



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** Share people and intentions you and your child wish to pray for today. After each petition, respond together: "Loving God, hear our prayer."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • What Do We Need to Grow? (page 1)** Read aloud the directions at the top of the page. Invite your child to come up with a few words and phrases for each photo. Possible answers may include: *water, food, clothing, sun, love, attention, coaching, practice, support/encouragement*. **Ask:** What do we need to grow spiritually, or closer to God? *Prayer, reading the Bible, acting as Jesus does.*
- ☐ **Story • Coming to You Live: Good News for Kids! (pages 2–3)** In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus tells his followers that a seed must crack and die in order to yield new life. He, too, will suffer, die, and rise in order to fulfill his promise of eternal life. In this story, Mat Vido and his team bring good news to children facing difficult situations. The shows Mat produces give others hope and allow patients to share their time and encouragement with other children facing surgery or sickness. Read aloud the article with your child. (Note: The hospital where Mat currently works is not mentioned in the article due to patient privacy.)
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** **Answers:** 1. *Working at the hospital allowed Mat to mix his love of working in television and radio with helping people; it made him feel him fulfilled, with greater sense of purpose.* 2. *Open-ended; it's a positive way to help others, and perhaps distract them from their own illness or pain.* 3. *Open-ended. Virus restrictions can prevent in-person visits; however, text messages or phone calls likely would be welcomed.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

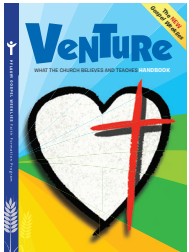
- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus' Death Brings New Life (page 4)** Explain that a metaphor makes a connection between something familiar and something strange or unfamiliar; for example, in this Sunday's Gospel, the metaphor connects the familiar way seeds grow with the unseen, unknown, and dangerous future that Jesus faces. Jesus' Death will not end his life, but will produce a rich harvest of followers. Proclaim the Gospel by reading the various parts with your child.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** **Answers:** 1. *A seed appears to die; however, in the earth, it swells, bursts its shell, sprouts, and grows into a new plant. It uses its stored energy to nourish a new wheat plant; the new plant grows up and produces many more grains of wheat.* 2. *Through this metaphor, Jesus hints at his own Resurrection. Life comes from Jesus' suffering and Death as surely as many grains of wheat come from the planting of a single one; Jesus lives on in all of his followers and in the Church.* 3. *People in El Salvador remember the words Romero spoke and his example of love; they continue to fight poverty and injustice as he did.*



☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus' Death Gives Life (page 4)**

Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel and summarize your discussion of the metaphor of Jesus' life as a grain of wheat.

- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended; your child may have initiated a friendship through an act of kindness. 2. Together, brainstorm a list of ways your family can live as Christian disciples through the year.*



- ☐ **Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 45, and read aloud the section at the top of the page.** Direct your child's attention to the Seven Petitions section. Read aloud the petitions in blue type and have your child read the explanations. Discuss as needed. Explain that, in the next part of the lesson, you will be reading the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Matthew. Your child might be surprised to learn that the Lord's Prayer comes directly from the Bible, and that it is part of two Gospels, Matthew and Luke.

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

- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Lord's Prayer (page 5)** Read aloud the definition to introduce the *Our Catholic Faith* feature.

- ☐ **Our Catholic Faith • We Pray the Lord's Prayer Together at Mass (page 5)** The Creed and the Lord's Prayer are two prayers of the Mass that belong to both the people and the priest celebrant—that is, we say them aloud together. Read aloud the text together. Give your child time to respond to the questions at the bottom of the page. It's a good time to remind your child that prayer can happen at any time, not just during Mass.

Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Living the Gospel • Commandments Call Us to Respect Others' Belongings and Friendships (pages 6-7)** Read aloud the introduction at the top of page 6. For each of the three dilemmas, have your child identify the problem, think of as many alternative courses of action as possible, consider the consequences, and then write down a personal response to the dilemma in the spaces provided. Remind your child that the commandments are about respecting each other's rights, not finding a legalistic way to get around them.
- ☐ **Saints • Saint Oscar Romero (page 8)** The anniversary of Archbishop Romero's assassination, March 24, always occurs in Lent, when we read the Gospel about the grain of wheat that dies in order to produce a rich harvest. Many other church workers in El Salvador were martyred during the repression of the 1980s, including four American churchwomen and six Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter in 1989. Like Archbishop Romero, they stood for equality and justice for the poor of the nation.
- ☐ **Closing Prayer** Pray the Lord's Prayer to conclude your faith-sharing time together.



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Sunday Gospel Background

Passion/Palm Sunday begins the celebration of the most important week in the Church year—Holy Week.

With reflections on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, this lesson speaks of what happens at the Holy Week liturgies as they teach and invite us into the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. Your child will also make an Exodus book to help connect the Jewish Passover, from slavery to freedom, to Jesus' Passover, from death to life.

Share Experiences

- ☐ **Pray together** Loving God, during this Holy Week, we will walk with your Son, Jesus, as he suffers and dies for our salvation. Give us the quiet space we need to meet you in the liturgies of these holy days. In your name, we pray. Amen.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • The Holiest Days of the Christian Year (page 1)** Take turns reading aloud the paragraphs introducing the days of Holy Week. Check your parish schedule for Holy Week services and make plans for your family to attend in whatever way you are able—online or in person.
- ☐ **Gathering Prayer-Hymn • All Glory, Laud, and Honor (page 3)** Read the instruction at upper right, and give your child time to find the words of praise, honor, and respect. *Glory, laud* (which means “praise”), *honor, and hosanna* (which means “God save your people”) *are all in the refrain*. Other words are *king, blessed one, anthems and hymns, exalted, source of love, Savior*. Give your child time to write these words on the palm fronds. Then read aloud the hymn together, alternating each stanza. Or, search the hymn online and listen to a recording.
- ☐ **Holy Week • Palm/Passion Sunday (page 2)** Think about past Palm Sunday liturgies in your parish and invite your child to share any memories of them. Use the illustrations on page 2 to remind your child of the palms and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- ☐ **Palm/Passion Sunday Gospel • Jesus Enters Jerusalem (page 2)** Proclaim the Gospel together by sharing the parts of Narrators 1–3, Jesus, Boy, and Girl.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 2.** *Answers: 1. They get a donkey for Jesus, spread their cloaks on the ground, cut and scatter leafy branches on the ground, and cry out, “Hosanna!” 2. Open-ended; talk about how you can do this at home with special music, prayers, blessings, flowers, a homemade banner or poster, etc. 3. The cross and palms as well as any modern symbols of welcome could express belief in Jesus.*

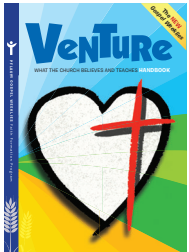
Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Good Friday Gospel • The Story of Jesus' Passion (page 4)** On Palm/Passion Sunday, we hear Jesus' Passion story according to Mark. On Good Friday, we read John's account. You can prepare the presentation of Jesus' passion as a family for the benefit of all. Choose one or more of the scenes to act out together and get your child involved (and perhaps taking the lead) in the studying and planning. This can help your child remember and appreciate Jesus' experience of where his love for us takes him. Your child might decide to present a scene totally in mime, or create simple speaking parts by having each person read a part of the account.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus Suffers and Dies for Us (page 3)** Read aloud this summary of the doctrine as it relates to the Holy Week readings, especially Palm/Passion Sunday and Good Friday.
- ☐ **Turn to the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. This discussion is meant to be open-ended; try to lead toward answering the question of why Catholics make Lenten Commitments. Ask: How have your Lenten resolutions kept God in your heart and mind?*



Was it through prayer? Or perhaps you thought of the sacrifice of Jesus every time you remembered that you gave up something important to you? Do you feel changed? In what way(s)? 2. Open-ended.

- **Catholic Faith Word • Paschal Mystery (page 3)** Read aloud the definition. Remind your child that Jesus did not suffer and die only for the people who lived in his time; we, too, are saved through his suffering/Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. Explain that *mystery* means that we will not fully grasp or appreciate the weight of these events; they are beyond our full understanding.



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 53. Remind your child that the Apostles' Creed is a statement of the beliefs of the Christian Church. It also includes a summary of the major events of the life of Jesus. It encompasses the entire Christian faith, which Catholics celebrate throughout the Liturgical Year. Then turn to the Church Year illustration on page 65 and point out the following Church Year connections:

- "Conceived by the Holy Spirit" – *The Annunciation (Advent)*
- "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" – *The Passion of the Lord (Lent, Palm/Passion Sunday)*
- "On the third day he rose again" – *The Resurrection (Easter Sunday)*
- "... seated at the right hand of God" – *The Ascension of the Lord*

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Venture pages 5–8.

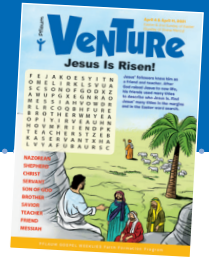
Live the Gospel

- **Activity • Holy Thursday and Easter Vigil: Israel's Passover and Jesus' Passover (pages 5-8)** Have your child fold pages 5–8 together once to make a booklet with the map on the cover. Use the page numbers on the lower outside corners to make sure the booklet pages are in order.
- **Catholic Faith Word • Passover (page 5 of booklet)** Have your child read aloud this definition to introduce the discussion of the Israelites in the booklet.
- **The Israelites' Passover From Slavery to Freedom (booklet pages 1-6)** The booklet will take your child through the story of the Exodus, including the first Passover supper, and into the celebrations of Light, Word, and Baptism by which we celebrate Jesus' passover from Death to life at the Easter Vigil. Read through the first six pages of the booklet together.
- **Closing Prayer • Jesus' Passover From Death to Life (booklet pages 7-8)** If possible, gather the following supplies: a large candle, a Bible, and a bowl of water. Use the candle during the Service of the Light, the Bible during the Service of the Word, and the bowl of water during the Celebration of Baptism. Explain that Easter is the greatest celebration in our Church year; and encourage your child to help make the prayer service as joyful as possible. Your child might draw spring flowers, make decorations for the candle, or choose some music to add to your prayer celebration. Then share the reading parts among family members.



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Sunday Gospel 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 was raised 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.

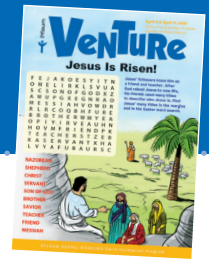
Share Experiences

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

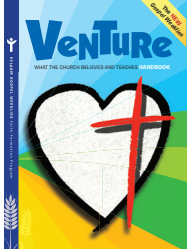
- ☐ **Pray together** Share something you are especially grateful for this Easter and invite your child to do the same. Say a brief prayer of thanks for these blessings.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Jesus Is Risen! (page 1)** See reverse side page TG4-7 for Word Search answers. After completing the word search, ask if your child can think of additional titles of Jesus. (*Lord, Prince of Peace, Lamb of God, Bread of Life, Light of the World, etc.*)
- ☐ **Article • Three Easter Christians (pages 2-3)** Share stories of your child’s baptism or other family baptisms. Then read the story aloud together, switching readers at each paragraph.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended. 2. Most parishes schedule baptisms for the Easter Vigil because it is the night of Jesus’ rising from the tomb. Being immersed in the waters of the font and rising to new life makes new followers of Jesus. 3. Point out that the children received all three Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Initiation means becoming a full member of a group. Older children and adults usually receive all three sacraments at their baptisms.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is Risen! (pages 2-3)** This long Gospel is actually three stories: the Easter morning Gospel, the Gospel for the 2nd Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy), and the reading about Mary Magdalene that John includes between them. Proclaim the Gospel by sharing the various parts.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 5.** *Answers: 1. They see the stone has been moved away, that the tomb is empty, and the wrappings used to cover Jesus’ body are there but Jesus is not. They think someone has taken Jesus. 2. He feels anxious and eager to see the tomb and interested and concerned at what he saw there. He believes immediately because he has great faith. 3. Mary is an eager, ready believer; she believes in Jesus and recognizes him when she hears him call her name. 4. They fear those who crucified Jesus and are ashamed that they left him. Jesus sends them to tell everyone that God has raised him up and to bring peace and forgiveness to people. 5. Thomas wants to see Jesus before he believes. He believes when he touches Jesus’ wounds.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus’ Resurrection Gives Us Joy (page 5)** Read aloud this feature as a summary of Sunday’s Gospel concept of Jesus’ giving us new life through his Resurrection.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 5.** *These are all open-ended discussion questions. Lent is a preparatory season—a time for us to grow and change. Remind your child that Lent is not the only time we can grow closer to God through prayers and thoughtful practices. We don’t have to abandon the Lenten commitments we’ve made either.*



- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Resurrection (page 4)** Read aloud this definition to emphasize this foundational belief—we believe that Jesus rose from the dead for our salvation. Alleluia!



- ☐ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 29. Read aloud the first two paragraphs together. Remind your child that lay people don't take religious vows, but answer the call to use their gifts in service of others. Read the third paragraph. **Ask:** How do you try to model your life after Jesus' life? Be as specific as you can. **Possible responses:** *I offer mercy and forgiveness to others. I show love and compassion to people who are outsiders.*

Read the remaining three paragraphs about grace, the sacraments, free will, and sin.

Ask: What does grace help us accomplish? Why do you think that God gave us free will? Wouldn't it have been easier for us to just follow his commandments? (These are challenging questions, so help your child think about them and affirm responses.) Remind your child of the good progress he or she has made by saying yes to God through this year's Lenten commitments. Encourage your child to continue these practices throughout the Easter season and beyond.

Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Venture pages 6-7.

Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Living the Gospel • Scavenger Hunt for Faith (pages 6-7)** Read aloud the directions at the top of pages 6-7. If your parish church is not open or you are unable to go, search online for images of Catholic churches to help your child find and identify the places and objects on page 6. Search the titles on page 7. Be sure to include the word "Catholic" in your search. For example, you might search "Catholic usher Mass" or "Catholics feed hungry."
- ☐ **Closing Prayer • O Sons and Daughters (page 8)** This Easter song tells the entire Resurrection Gospel in its eight verses. Give your child time to color the frame. Then take turns reading each verse. If you know the hymn or you can read music, sing the song together as a prayerful way to conclude this lesson.

Word Search Answers:

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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

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

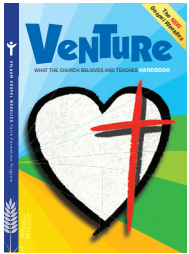
- ☐ **Pray together** Explain that in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus reveals himself to his disciples. He will explain the Scriptures to them so that they can spread the Good News. In this spirit, invite your child to share a piece of good news from this week and then express some form of gratitude to God. You might have your child simply say: "Loving God, thank you. Amen."
- ☐ **Play/Drama • The Disciples Recognize the Risen Jesus (pages 1-3)** Although the play is designed for a classroom of several students, you can easily adjust it for home use and a few readers. If there are two of you, simply alternate the parts between you. If other family members are available, assign them parts as well. Cut out one heart for each person participating. (If you don't have red construction paper, any type of paper will do.) The cloth-covered table is optional.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. They recognize that the Stranger is actually Jesus, risen and alive. He still has human qualities, such as hunger; he asks for food and the disciples give him baked fish, which he eats in front of them. 2. If you have a Bible, have your child look up and read Luke 24:30 (Emmaus), 9:16 (multiplication of the loaves), and 22:19 (Last Supper); Luke used the same wording to link Jesus to feeding and sharing himself in a meal of broken bread. 3. Open-ended. The image of Jesus sharing a meal, along with teaching the meaning of the Scriptures, can help us connect to the Body and Blood of Jesus that we share at Mass.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Appears to His Disciples (page 4)** Explain that this Gospel begins right at the point the play/drama ends. If you have already acted out the play together, you may wish to read this silently together as a Gospel meditation.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Jesus is not a ghost; he has flesh and bones; he can be heard and touched; he can eat and drink, but he is glorified and can appear and disappear. He wants them to understand he is still with them. The image of Jesus sharing a meal, along with teaching the meaning of the Scriptures, can help us connect to the Body and Blood of Jesus that we share at Mass. 2. He helps them understand that the Scriptures have told how the Messiah would have to suffer. They will be his witnesses and preach the message of turning toward God.*
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • We Share in Jesus' Mission (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel. It bridges your discussion of Jesus preparing his disciples to be his witnesses to a discussion of how missionaries continue to spread the Good News even today.



- Discuss the *Think* questions on page 4. *Answers: 1. Open-ended; your child might share about Jesus' mercy and compassion and how he includes outsiders. 2. Open-ended; this is not meant to discount the value of prayer, but to encourage your child to think of other ways we can impact our world. Your child might raise money to support Christian missionaries, or write them letters of support and appreciation. (See maryknoll.org.)*



- Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 12. Read the paragraph that summarizes the mission of the Church as the telling of Jesus' Good News. *Church* in this context does not mean the institutional Roman Catholic Church headquartered in Rome. It means the whole assembly of believers, who show by their words and actions what the love of Jesus is like. Read about the four Marks of the Church—one, holy, catholic, apostolic. Invite your child to choose two of them. You can take the other two. Then silently reread the paragraphs on the Marks of the Church and take turns explaining the meaning of each Mark in your own words.

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

- **Our Catholic Faith • Our Eucharistic Prayers Give Thanks to God (page 5)** Have your child read this feature aloud. If you have a Bible, invite your child to complete the first blue box by looking up the passage. If you do not have a copy of your parish worship aid, you can still help your child complete the second blue box by saying aloud the first few words of the doxology and inviting your child to join you. **Say:** Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. Amen.

Live the Gospel

- **Catholic Faith Word • Missionary (page 6)** Read the definition to introduce the *Living the Gospel* activity.
- **Living the Gospel • Where Have Missionaries Brought Jesus' Good News? (pages 6-7)** Give your child time to read the short biographies of missionaries who have served around the world. See crossword puzzle answers below. Read aloud the question on page 6, lower left, and talk about the person(s) who brought Jesus' message to people of your own national or ethnic background.

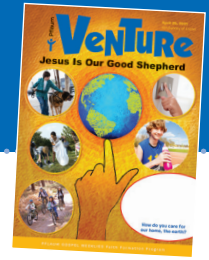
Crossword puzzle answers: ACROSS: 2. Patrick; 4. Apostle; 7. Mary; 8. Isaac; 12. Donovan; 13. James; 14. Ricci; 15. Solano; 16. Francis Xavier; 17. Peter; DOWN: 1. Masai; 2. Peter Claver; 3. Cabrini; 5. teach; 6. Paul; 9. Good News; 10. Junipero; 11. Boniface

- **Closing Prayer/Activity • What's the Good News About Jesus? (page 8)** By this time in your *Venture* year, your child will have plenty of Good News to tell about Jesus. **Ask:** How would you spread the Good News using social media? Invite your child to write or draw ideas on page 8. Then celebrate the prayer service, top left, as a family.



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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, we examine our relationship with the earth, recognizing how it cares for us, and how we, in turn, can care for it.

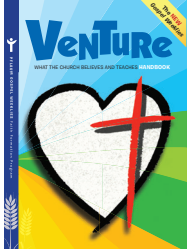
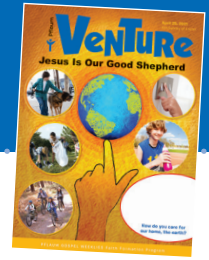
Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** Share people and intentions you wish to pray for today. After each petition, respond together: "Loving God, hear our prayer."
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Jesus Is Our Good Shepherd (page 1)** Look at the cover photographs together. Remind your child that Earth Day is April 22, but for Christians, Earth Day can be every day. Discuss how your family can do something for the earth around your house or neighborhood. *Some ideas: plant a tree; dig and maintain a flowerbed or garden; pick up trash at a local park or open space, etc.*
- ☐ **Article • Come and See the Shepherd's Garden (pages 2–3)** Before reading the article together, talk about any experiences your family has had working in a garden or caring for plants. What did everyone enjoy most?
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Fruits and vegetables are grown on the farm; cows and chickens too. There are a number of products made from the cow's milk, including cheese and yogurt. The farm even keeps bees. 2. The bees support the growth of the farm's crops; the bees in the hives symbolize the Church, which is not always perfect but tries to work together. 3. The Pope wants to share the peaceful setting of the farm, but also provide good examples for caring for Creation. 4. Pope Francis shared a story about a man who cared for olive trees. His relationship with nature brought him closer to God.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Good Shepherd (page 4)** Talk about who your child cares for—perhaps a younger sibling, neighbor, or family pet. **Ask:** How does it feel to know that someone counts on you? Proclaim the Gospel by reading the four Jesus parts together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Good shepherds protect their sheep; hired shepherds run away and let the wolf kill the sheep. 2. A shepherd knows, protects, guides, and takes care of sheep. Jesus says the Father knows, loves, and takes care of him. Jesus knows his followers by name, and we know him; Jesus gives his life for his people. 3. He cares for his people, especially those who are vulnerable; he also models taking good care of God's Creation.*
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Good Shepherd (page 4)** Have your child read the definition aloud as you continue your discussion of this metaphor.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Jesus Chooses to Give His Life for Us (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel, and give your child time to think about responses to the *Think* questions.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Possible responses might include a particular coach, teacher, older teammate, family member, priest or deacon, religious sister, etc. 2. Open-ended; remind your child about the many Gospel stories you have read about Jesus' healing, including Peter's mother-in-law and the man with the unclean spirit.*



- **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 43 and read aloud the section on meditation. Explain that you're going to lead your child in a simple guided meditation. Begin by finding a place to sit comfortably together. Invite your child to close their eyes, breathe deeply and exhale. Speak slowly and calmly as you:
- Invite your child to imagine the sun rising in the morning. It is very dim at first. Then it becomes brighter and stronger. You can feel its warm rays on your arms. You can relax in the warmth, but the heat does not burn you. It feels comforting.
 - Invite your child to silently thank the sun for bringing warmth and light. Then have your child silently praise God for making something so good. You might have your child imagine images such as birds sitting on the phone wires in the sun, a cat snoozing in a patch of sun, or flowers lifting their faces to the sun.
 - Have your child imagine a dark little cloud working its way across the sun. Soon it is joined by other clouds. The sun is hidden now. The air feels cooler. Then *splat splat* sounds begin—raindrops. The rain begins to hit the sidewalk and the leaves of the trees. Puddles form. The dust on the flowers washes away in the rain. The birds take a drink from rainwater caught in a leaf. Now the rain is falling more gently. Invite your child to thank God for making rain come, so the sun is not too strong for us. Soon the rain stops. We can enjoy a world washed clean and green.
 - Give your child a few quiet minutes before ending your meditation.

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

- **Our Catholic Faith • A Good Shepherd Knows, Protects, and Unites (page 5)** Have your child read this feature and complete the questions. **Answers:** *Jesus leads us to the Eucharist, where God's Word nourishes us, and we share the bread and wine that become Jesus' body and blood. Jesus loves us and takes care of us, even though it meant he would be crucified. Just as Jesus and his Father share one divine life, Jesus shares his divine life with his followers and shares human life with us too.*

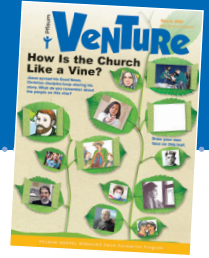
Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • We Care for Earth's Water and Air (pages 6-7)** One principle of Catholic social teaching is that our individual rights are tied to responsibilities. Our right to clean water and air means we are responsible to see that others also have clean air and water. Work on completing the survey together this week and make plans to reduce your water use.
- **KidTalk • How Can We Care for the Earth? (page 8)** Complete this section together as a family.
- **Closing Prayer** The Rosary is a form of meditative prayer. Say a decade of the Rosary together. (If needed, see page 54 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches* for instructions.)



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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.

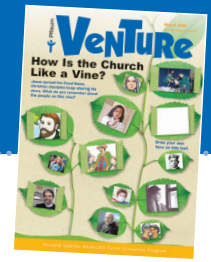
Share Experiences

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

- ☐ **Pray together** Have your child find Psalm 128 in the Bible. (See uscbb.org/bible if you do not have a Bible at home.) Take turns reading the verses aloud. Conclude by leading your child in a short, spontaneous prayer thanking God for the "olive plant(s)" in your family.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • How Is the Church Like a Vine? (page 1)** This cover recalls many of Jesus' followers your child has read about this past year. **Top row:** Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, boys from Saint Gregory's doing the Works of Mercy. **Second row:** Saint Francis Xavier, Miranda who practices Aikido. **Third row:** girl at Saint Theresa's who participated in Mary's Meals fund-raiser, Saint Juan Diego, Father Augustus Tolton. **Fourth row:** Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory; Mat Vido; Rosa Parks. **Bottom row:** Saint André of Montreal and Saints Perpetua and Felicity. Invite your child to name and tell one thing about a person or group in the collage. Then have your child finish the collage by adding his or her own picture.
- ☐ **Article • Setting a Record for God (pages 2–3)** A lot of plans changed in 2020 due to the coronavirus. For example, Sister Stephanie Baliga had planned to run the Chicago Marathon; instead, she still ran a marathon, but it was on a treadmill. Sister Stephanie has learned to accept changes and even embrace how they can lead her to a better place. Take turns reading aloud the article together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** **Answers:** 1. Sister Stephanie suffered a career-ending injury in college; more recently, the time she spent at the mission prevented her from training. 2. When she broke her foot in college, her friends invited her to go on a retreat. Last year, a friend encouraged her to broadcast her run over Zoom; another friend set up the cameras. 3. Sister Stephanie said that she soon saw God's plan for her. She thought that she would run a marathon for God's glory; however, her treadmill marathon gained attention for the mission and raised a lot of money to support their work. Share your own experiences together. Emphasize that things can seem unfair in the moment, but time can reveal how disappointment can lead to better things.

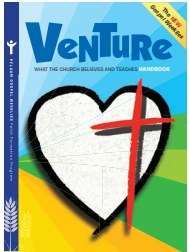
Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Jesus Is the Vine, We Are the Branches (page 4)** If you have a plant or tree in your home or close by, spend some time examining it together. Have your child trace the ends of the leaves or branches back to where they join the stem or trunk. Ask what your child remembers from science about how plants absorb nutrients and moisture from the earth and use them to extend their growth. You might also want to talk about how babies grow. A baby is connected to its mother by the umbilical cord. When the baby emerges, it is dependent on others to feed it. If a child becomes separated from nurture and love, it cannot survive. Even as older children and adults, we won't thrive if we separate from the love and care of others. Proclaim the Gospel.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** **Answers:** 1. We are all connected to Jesus; we have a duty to go out and spread his Good News 2. Families usually share common ancestors; however, many families are created by marriage or adoption and are also



very strong. We share traditions, memories, stories. A family name and heritage also contribute to a feeling of belonging. 3. The Church unites all of us in our belief in Christ, our common vine; parishes and believers throughout the world are its branches. 4. Open-ended; you might share one of your own experiences about making a tough decision that led to better things. 5. She changes her plans so that she can serve God and people in need at the mission and in her neighborhood. She remains open to how God is working in her life; in this way, she bears fruit.

- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Christians Share Jesus' Life (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel and the metaphor of the vine and branches.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** These are discussion-based questions, with no "right" answer. Possible responses include: 1. They are witnesses for Jesus in their words and their actions. Any of the saints are good examples, but also remind your child of the kids you've read about this year—the boys who did the Works of Mercy, the class that raised money to build a kitchen. 2. Open-ended; we need to spread Jesus' message everywhere in the world!



- ☐ **Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 30. Together, read the "What is Virtue" section that begins at the bottom of the page and extends to page 31. Explain that people who are "healthy vines" are those who also live the virtues. Turn to the cover of this week's *Venture* lesson. Ask your child to name the virtues the people on the cover show us.
Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Venture page 5.

- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Virtue (page 5)** Read aloud the definition to reinforce your child's understanding of this week's doctrine lesson.
- ☐ **Our Catholic Faith • Jesus Uses Nature to Teach (page 5)** Galilee, where Jesus grew up, has a broad valley filled with beautiful crops of grain and grapes, and bushes and trees with many kinds of fruit. It was natural for Jesus to use images from nature in his teaching (e.g., Jesus as a grain of wheat or the vineyard images from last fall). To help your child draw the image and respond to the two items at the bottom of the page, you might ask about your child's favorite experiences of nature.

Live the Gospel

- ☐ **Catholic Leaders • Cardinal Wilton Gregory (page 6)** Wilton Gregory was installed Archbishop of Washington in 2019, and Pope Francis elevated him to cardinal in November 2020. Read aloud this biography and background feature on the role of cardinals in the Church.
- ☐ **Closing Prayer • Prayer Cards (pages 7-8)** Invite your child to choose one of the prayers to pray aloud together. Then have your child cut out the cards and post them in places where they'll be seen around the house—on a nightstand, taped to a bathroom mirror, posted on the fridge or on a desk. Encourage your child to pray them every day.



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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.

Share Experiences

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

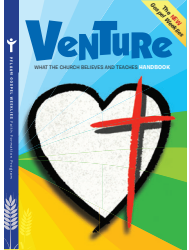
- ☐ **Pray together** Explain that May is "Mary's Month" in the Church. Mary showed great love throughout her life and is our model of willing service to God. Pray the Hail Mary together in honor of the Blessed Virgin, Jesus' mother.
- ☐ **Cover Activity • Love One Another (page 1)** The statements are from the U.S. bishops' document, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, Challenges and Directions* (1999). **Answers:** solidarity, social, Creation, responsibilities, poor, workers
- ☐ **Article • Mary, Our Mother, Our Neighbor (pages 2–3)** Mary may be viewed by some as a one-dimensional character, dressed in blue and white robes, holding Jesus, who is being a perfect baby. It is hard to imagine her as a real woman who worked hard, got dirty and tired, enjoyed her neighbors, and took delight in her home and family. This article aims to help your child more closely identify with Mary. Read it aloud together.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** The "Mary in the Bible Timeline" activity on pages 7–8 can help your child understand the events of Mary's life more clearly.
- ☐ **Catholic Faith Word • Rosary (page 3)** Read the short sidebar about the Rosary on page 3. Then read aloud the definition. Pray a decade of the Rosary, or set aside some time to pray it as a family later. (The order of prayers and the mysteries are noted on page 54 in the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook.)

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- ☐ **Sunday Gospel • Love One Another (page 4)** Talk about the extensive work your child did during Lent to learn and apply the Ten Commandments. Explain that Jesus has a new commandment; however, it does not replace the commandments that God gave to Moses. Proclaim the Gospel by sharing the reading of the three Jesus parts.
- ☐ **Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** **Answers:** 1. Jesus' commandment is to love one another. Jesus knows he will be killed. He wants his friends to know he loves them as his Father loves him. 2. He entrusts them with his joy and with his mission to bear fruit. Anything they ask for the Father will give them because they are Jesus' friends and ask in his name. 3. Jesus himself laid down his life for his friends. Examples of people who make sacrifices to benefit the lives of others include parents, health workers, soldiers, people who run charities, priests, sisters, teachers, and others who work for the Church. 4. We follow Jesus freely and love one another freely. We choose to accept Jesus as a friend.
- ☐ **Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • Just One Commandment (page 4)** Read aloud the doctrine related to this Sunday's Gospel. Jesus' commandment is simple and straightforward, but it can be hard to follow. Remind your child that love in this case does not mean hugs and kisses; rather, it's a choice to act in obedient, kind, selfless ways.



- Discuss the *Think* questions on page 4. *Answers: 1. Open-ended; brainstorm ideas together. 2. Explain that this exercise is a little like an Examination of Conscience. We can always make a better effort to act in more loving ways, but God always offers his forgiveness when we fall short.*



- Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 17 to find some of the feast days celebrating Mary. Add any Marian feast days your family or parish community celebrates. For instance, Mary is honored as Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is July 16.

Point out the Hail Mary on page 52, and pray it together if you did not pray a decade of the Rosary earlier in the lesson. Encourage your child to pray to this prayer often.

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

- **Our Catholic Faith • Summer Prayer for the Spirit (page 5)** This prayer service uses a lighted candle, a bowl of holy water, and some small pieces of paper. If you don't have holy water, skip the Leader 8 section and simply make the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead, asking the Holy Spirit to give your child strength to serve others in Jesus' name this summer. Provide slips of paper for you and your child (and any other family members present) to write on. Encourage your child to think of a way to put the Gospel values you've learned this past year into action during summer vacation. Take turns reading the Leader and Reader parts of the prayer service.

Live the Gospel

- **Living the Gospel • Mary in the Bible Timeline (pages 7-8)** This activity pulls together many of Mary's appearances in the four Gospels. Have your child cut out the ten squares on page 7 and follow the directions to learn about Mary in the Bible.
- **Saints • Saint Mother Théodore Guérin (page 6)** Mother Théodore is a recent American saint. Your child can learn much more about her at the Sisters of Providence website (spsmw.org). The sisters also have several biographies of Mother Theodore written for young people.
- **Closing Prayer** Search the Internet to play your favorite hymn to Mary. Together, pray the *Memorare* (page 55 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*).



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