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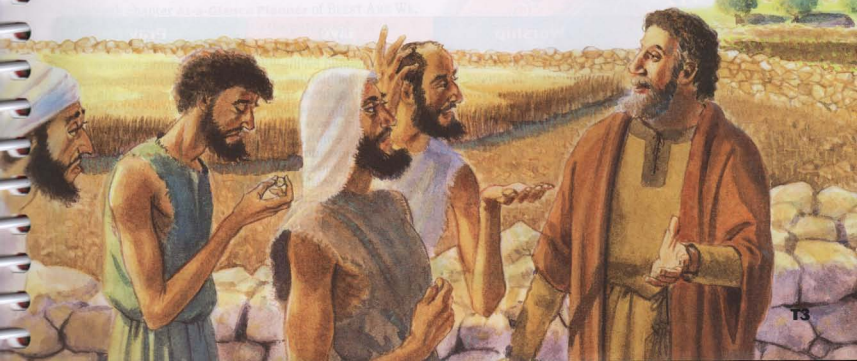
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<i>The feasts, seasons, Scripture, symbols, and colors are part of our worship.</i>		<i>Christmas celebrates Jesus as the Light of the World.</i>		<i>At Easter we celebrate Jesus, risen from the dead and alive with us today.</i>	
Sundays and Feast Days	236	Lent: Ash Wednesday	243	Mary: Annunciation	251
<i>Sundays and Feast Days are days in which to celebrate our Catholic faith.</i>		<i>During Lent we recognize the significance of the Sign of the Cross.</i>		<i>We honor Mary with many special prayers, especially the Hail Mary.</i>	
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<i>This feast celebrates people such as Saint Francis of Assisi, who teach us how to be true followers of Jesus.</i>		<i>For forty days we reflect on God's unending love for us.</i>		<i>Saint Margaret of Scotland is an example of Christian service to all.</i>	
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<i>Advent is a time of waiting and preparing our hearts for the celebration of Jesus' birth.</i>		<i>During Holy Week, we learn the importance of the three holiest days of the year.</i>		<i>As a Catholic priest, Fr. Nelson Baker used his gifts to serve others.</i>	
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				<i>At Pentecost, Jesus' followers received the Holy Spirit and the Church was born.</i>	

OUR CATHOLIC HERITAGE

Organized according to the 4 pillars of the Catechism

I. What Catholics Believe	260	III. How Catholics Live	271
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We Ask God's Forgiveness

UNIT 2

God is always ready to forgive us when we sin. God calls us to be sorry for the wrongs we have done. He wants us to forgive others who have wronged us.

*Rejoice with me because
I have found my lost sheep.*
Luke 15:6



God is like a shepherd who is happy to find his lost sheep. God rejoices when we are sorry for our sins.

Catch-up Catechesis

Topics To help the children who need Catch-Up Catechesis, this unit covers the following topics.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Ch. 5 Free Choice
Conscience | Ch. 7 The Ten
Commandments
Examination of
Conscience |
| Ch. 6 Healing
Forgiveness | Ch. 8 Being Sorry
Act of Contrition |

Let Us Pray Prayer to connect with this unit:
Act of Contrition, p. 15

Our Catholic Heritage Topics to review with this unit:
About Reconciliation, p. 264
Steps to Reconciliation, p. 265
The Ten Commandments, p. 273

UNIT 2

We Ask God's Forgiveness

Summarizing the Unit

Read aloud the unit title and the summary paragraph below it about forgiveness.

Discussing the Photographs

Invite the children to look carefully at the pictures and describe what they see.

† Discussing the Scripture

- Invite the children to read the quote from Luke aloud with you. Have them listen as you read aloud the caption that explains the connection between the pictures and the Scripture verse.
- You may want to revisit this page at the conclusion of the unit to reinforce what the children have learned about forgiveness.

Faith Words

Chapter 5

conscience
sin

Chapter 6

Penance and Reconciliation
absolution

Chapter 7

mortal sins
venial sins

Chapter 8

contrition
Act of Contrition

Introducing the Song

- Begin by reading through the words of the song with the children. Discuss the meaning of any unfamiliar words.
- Listen to the recording found on the BLEST ARE WE music CD 2.
- Have the children sing along with the recording. When you feel they are ready, have them sing along with the instrumental track.

Using the BLEST ARE WE Song Book

The BLEST ARE WE *Song Book* contains hymns and psalms that can be used in a parish liturgy as well as in the religious education of children. (Recordings and instrumental tracks are available.) Each chapter contains song suggestions.

Choosing Additional Songs

Each At-a-Glance Planner has several music suggestions that directly correlate to the specific chapter themes. These or any suggested songs/hymns can be used in place of or in addition to the unit or program song.



Suggestions for movement and additional music can be found at www.blestarewe.com.

Special Notes

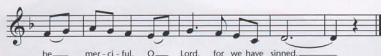
Collaborate with your parish director of music ministries to find appropriate times during parish celebrations to use the program or unit songs. This will help link the music learned in the religion program to the liturgical life of the parish community. If possible, have someone play the song on a piano or another instrument during the session. Guitar chords and keyboard accompaniment can be found in the BLEST ARE WE *Accompaniment Book*.

Psalm 51: Be Merciful, O Lord

Psalm 51

REFRAIN

Music by Marty Haugen



VERSE

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness,
in your compassion, blot out my offense.
O wash me more and more from my guilt and my sorrow,
and cleanse me from all of my sin.
Refrain
2. My offenses, truly I know them,
and my sins are always before me;
against you alone have I sinned, O Lord,
what is evil in your sight I have done.
Refrain
3. Create in me a clean heart, O God,
put your steadfast spirit in my soul.
Cast me not away from your presence, O Lord,
and take not your spirit from me.
Refrain
4. Give back to me the joy of your salvation,
let your willing spirit bear me up
and I shall teach your way to the ones who have wandered,
and bring them all home to your side.
Refrain

© 1981, GIA Publications, Inc.; refrain translation © 1989, ICEL.

When to use the unit song:

- before or after the opening prayer
- during the prayer celebration
- at the end of the session
- during special celebrations

When to use the instrumental tracks:

- as the children enter the room
- during the opening prayer
- as background music during independent work time
- during the prayer celebration (especially during a meditation prayer service)
- during the Feasts and Seasons lessons

We Can Choose What Is Good

Chapter

5

Background for the Catechist

This chapter introduces the children to the parable of “The Prodigal Son.” According to the dictionary, a prodigal person spends time and money foolishly and lavishly.

In reading the story, we can also reflect upon the Jewish father. He welcomes home his son who has neglected his religion and led a wayward life. The father loves his son so much that he has already forgiven him in his heart, and plans an elaborate party to celebrate his return.

God's Mercy

Chapter 5 entitles this parable “The Forgiving Father.” It could also be called “The Merciful Father.” As the father's mercy breaks through all barriers of guilt and fear, so mercy between God and us is as enduring.

God anxiously awaits our return when we wander away from his goodness. God, our loving Father, welcomes us home to the comfort of his unconditional, unquestioning love. Our God of mercy is always there to greet us whenever we choose to return home.


Faith Focus

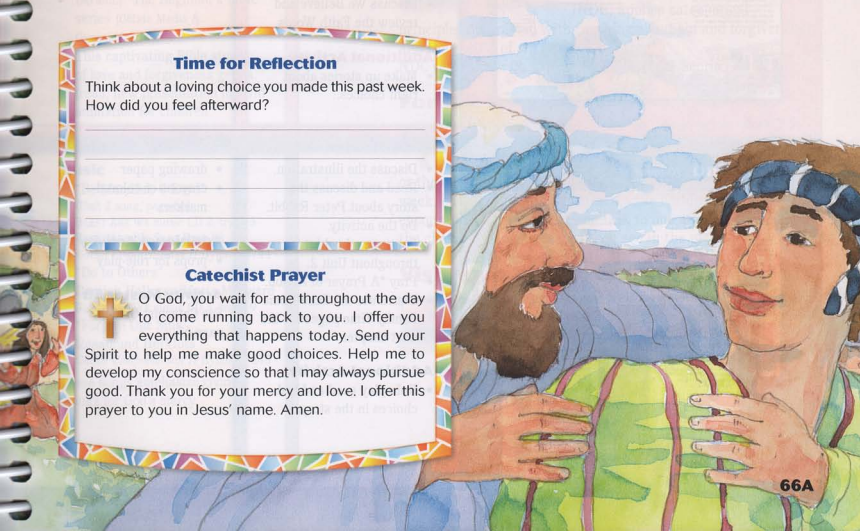
God gives us free choice. When we sin, God is always ready to forgive us.

Time for Reflection

Think about a loving choice you made this past week.
How did you feel afterward?

Catechist Prayer

 O God, you wait for me throughout the day to come running back to you. I offer you everything that happens today. Send your Spirit to help me make good choices. Help me to develop my conscience so that I may always pursue good. Thank you for your mercy and love. I offer this prayer to you in Jesus' name. Amen.



At-a-Glance Planner

TIME GUIDE

Share 15 minutes



- Pray the Scripture verse.
- Read the text and discuss easy and hard choices the children make each day.
- Complete the activity.

Additional Activity

- Brainstorm daily choices.

Materials

- materials for prayer corner as listed on page 66C
- pencils or pens

Activity Master 5a

See Catechist Guide, page 66D.



Hear & Believe 25 minutes



- Discuss the illustrations.
- Read and discuss the parable of "The Forgiving Father."
- Teach the doctrine in "Our Church Teaches."
- Discuss We Believe and review the Faith Words.

Additional Activity

- Make up stories about right choices.

- CD player

Additional Activity

- writing paper
- pencils



Respond 20 minutes



- Discuss the illustration.
- Read and discuss the story about Peter Rabbit.
- Do the activity.
- Continue a booklet for use throughout Unit 2.
- Pray "A Prayer of Action."
- Distribute the Take Home Family Time pages for the next chapter.

Additional Activity

- Role-play good and bad choices in the story.

- drawing paper
- crayons or colored markers

Additional Activity

- props for role-play

Activity Master 5b

See Catechist Guide, page 67.

Multimedia Resources

Books

- *If a Bus Could Talk: The Story of Rosa Parks*
Faith Ringgold
(Simon & Schuster Inc., 1999)
The bus on which Rosa Parks refused to take a back seat describes how she broke the racial barriers in Alabama. We see here the results of a choice she made.

Audio

- BLEST ARE WE Scripture CD 2, Track 4

Videos

- *The Story of the Prodigal Son* (30 min.) "The Beginner's Bible" series (Oblate Media & Communication)
This captivating Bible story of love and forgiveness gets a fresh, new presentation in vivid animation for children.

Music

- "Be Merciful, O Lord"
(Unit 2 song, page 66)
BLEST ARE WE music CD 2, track 3
BLEST ARE WE Song Book #8
Gather Comprehensive II Hymnal #744
- "Do to Others"
Damien Halloran/Maria Millward
BLEST ARE WE music CD 3, track 9
- "Forgive Our Sins"
Rosamund Herklots
Gather Comprehensive II Hymnal #848

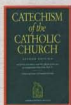
These songs emphasize giving thanks for God's mercy.

Learning Focus

This chapter will help the children

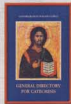
1. learn that God gives each person a conscience.
2. recognize the nature of sin.
3. understand that God is always ready to offer forgiveness.

Catechism Connection



The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) describes the need to form reliable consciences to help us recognize and make moral choices.
CCC references: 386, 1711, 1713, 1730–1732, 1745, 1777–1778, 1785, 1796, 1833, 1871–1872

GDC and NDC Connections



The *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) promotes family faith sharing as a means of catechesis.
GDC references: 226

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) applies catechetical

principles associated with teaching about sin and forgiveness, and the reality of sin and God's mercy.

NDC references: Ch. 6 Section 42 D; Ch. 5 Section 36 B, 1

For the Prayer Corner



Arrange the prayer corner as described on page T24.

Place magazine or newspaper pictures in the prayer corner. Select pictures that show choices being made or the consequences of choices that have been made. Each week, choose different pictures. As the children arrive encourage them to look at and talk to one another about the choices or consequences they see in the pictures.

Visit www.blestarewe.com



Visit our Catechists and Kids sections for

- interactive and printable activities.
- the Liturgical Calendar.
- Lesson Planning Resources.

Name _____

Making Choices

Think about the choices you make each day. In the left column, write a good choice that you make. In the other column, write what would be a bad choice.

Good Choice

Bad Choice

1. I obey my parents.

I disobey my parents.

2.

3.

4.

To the Teacher: Use this activity to enhance the Share experience.

BLESSED ARE WE 2

5a

CHAPTER 5

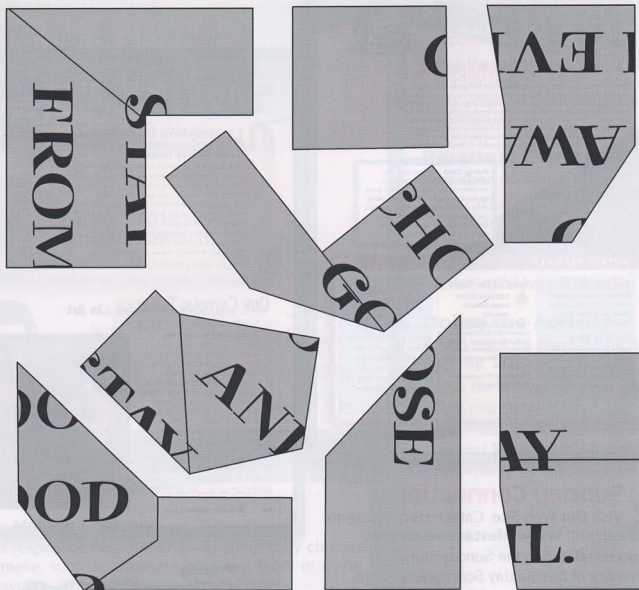


Warm-Up Activity Master can be used for early-arriving children.
Or Icebreaker for Share.

Name _____

Doing God's Will

Cut out the puzzle pieces. Ask a friend to help you put the puzzle together. Read the message about how to follow Jesus.



To the Teacher: Use this activity to reinforce the We Believe in the chapter.

CHAPTER 5

5b

BLEST ARE WE 2



Wrap-Up Activity Master can be completed during the session. Or at home.

Take Home PAGES

Pre-chapter home activities for families

Chapter

5


FAMILY TIME

Beginning at Home

Many of the children will have spent some time with their families working with the Take Home Family Time pages at home. You can help the children connect with what was done at home by discussing the saint featured or using A Prayer for the Week at an appropriate time.

Getting ready for Chapter 5

Take Home





We Can Choose What Is Good

Saint Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican priest and great theologian, proclaimed that humans always tended toward the good. But how do we figure out what the good is? It may feel good to finish the last of a box of candy, but others in our family might not see it as good. We try to form a good conscience to help us identify what is good and there try to conform our behavior to our conscience. Being Catholic helps us understand that God gives us free choice, and yet he is always ready to forgive us when we choose to sin.

ACTIVITY

Pick-up Sticks Did you ever play pick-up sticks? If so, you know that the sticks fall and you have to pick them up moving only the stick you are taking away. Play pick-up sticks with your child. Discuss how the game is like making moral choices. You need to choose carefully in order to succeed.

WEEKLY PLANNER

On Sunday During the Penitential Rite, reflect on the choices you made during the week. Thank God for his guidance.	Saint of the Week  Saint Peter of Saint Joseph Betancur (1868-1947) Peter lived as a shepherd. He moved to the city to become a Third Order Franciscan. In 2002, San Pedro de San Jose Betancur became the first canonized native of Guatemala. Patron Saint of: Guatemala Fest Day: April 18	A Prayer for the Week  Lord, thank you for giving us the freedom to choose. Help us to use this gift to make right choices. Help us to be caring like Saint Peter of Saint Joseph Betancur. Amen.
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Family Time Level 2 67

Sunday Connection
Visit Our Web Site
Catechists and parents can visit www.blestarewe.com for

- resources related to the Sunday liturgy.
- a summary of the Sunday Scripture readings.
- the Reflection Question of the Week.
- seasonal activities.

More About the Saint of the Week

Saint Peter of Saint Joseph Betancur Had hoped to become a priest. Instead became a tertiary, a lay member of the Franciscan order. Built a hospital and school for the poor and shelters for the homeless. Known as "Saint Francis of the Americas."

Getting ready for Chapter 5

Take Home

Praying A Prayer for the Week

A Prayer for the Week gives thanks to God for the gift of choice. Once Saint Peter of Saint Joseph Betancur realized he did not have a vocation to the priesthood, he chose to serve God as a Third Order Franciscan. Pray aloud this prayer about choices.

5 We Can Choose What Is Good



Love the LORD, your God, and obey his word.

Based on Deuteronomy 30:20

Share

We make many choices every day. Some choices are easy, but some are hard. Some are right, but others are wrong.

Draw a happy face for each good choice below.
Draw a sad face for each bad choice.



sad

- Tom does not share with his friends.



happy

- Juanita tells her dad the truth.



happy

- Wes obeys his mom and turns off the TV.



sad

- Mary takes a dollar that is not hers.

How do we know what is right and wrong?

Believe 69

Additional Activity

Share Making Choices

- Solicit responses from the children about daily choices they make, such as choosing breakfast food, or doing homework.
- Print their responses on the chalkboard.
- Discuss what makes some choices more difficult than others.

Share



Praying with Scripture

- On the chalkboard, print the words of the Scripture verse shown at the top of this page.
- Gather the children in a circle. In the prayer corner, light the candle. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture.
- Sing the unit song on page 66 or another song you have chosen. You may refer to it again during the prayer celebration.

Personal Experience

Read aloud the first paragraph.

Ask "What are some easy choices you make each day?" (*Children will share.*)

"What are some hard choices you make?" (*Children will share.*)

Doing the Activity

- Read aloud the directions for the activity.
- After the children complete it, discuss their responses.

Ask "What choice does Tom make? Juanita? Wes? Mary?" (*Answers should reflect the action each child chose to do.*)

Call attention to the Page Turner questions throughout the chapter.

Hear & Believe

✦ Discussing the Scripture Story

The Illustration Invite the children to look at the pictures on pages 70 and 71.

Ask “How do you think the young man in the top picture feels?” (*sad*)

“How can you tell that the people in the larger picture are happy?” (*They are hugging and smiling.*)

The Scripture Point out that Jesus often told stories to help us understand God’s love for us.

Say “Listen as we read one of Jesus’ stories. Then, think of a question you could ask others about the story.”

Have volunteers read aloud the Scripture story. Afterward, invite volunteers to ask their questions. Then ask summary questions:

Ask “What is a wrong choice the son made after he left home?” (*He wasted money; he hurt his father.*)

“Why did the son make the choice to return home?” (*He missed his home and was sorry he hurt his father.*)

“How did the father show that he loved his son and forgave him for his bad choices?” (*He hugged his son, and gave him new clothes and a party.*)

Hear & Believe

✦ Scripture The Forgiving Father

Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger son said, “I know you plan to give me money when I am older. May I have it now?” So his father gave him the money.

The boy moved far away. Soon, he had spent every cent! He was hungry and had no place to live.

The boy was sorry for the wrong choices he had made. He had wasted the money and hurt his father. The boy made up his mind to go home. He would ask his father to forgive him.

While the boy was still far from home, his father saw him. He ran to greet his son. “I’m sorry,” the boy said, but his father had already forgiven him. The man hugged his son. Then he gave the boy a big “welcome home” party.

Based on Luke 15:11–24



70



Scripture Background

Money in the New Testament

- In some of his teachings, Jesus referred to money. During Jesus’ time, coins minted in many places passed through Palestine. In Luke 15:8, Jesus tells a story about a woman who loses a *drachma*—a Greek coin. In Matthew 10:29, Jesus asks, “Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?” In Mark 12:15, Jesus talks about the *denarius*—a Roman coin—to pay the Roman tax.
- Jewish rulers coined their own money, too. But because of the commandments against making religious images on coins, the Jews chose plant and flower images for their bronze coins. Because Jews could not use coins with images on them to pay their Temple taxes, money-changers set up shop inside the Temple courtyards.



Knowing Right from Wrong

God lets us choose what to do. We call this **free choice**. The boy in the story knew he had done wrong. His **conscience** told him so. Our conscience tells us what is right or wrong.

Our Church Teaches

We **sin** when we choose to do hurtful things on purpose. When we sin, we hurt our friendship with God and with other people. He wants us to be sorry for our sins. God loves us very much. When we do wrong, he is ready to show us mercy. God is ready to forgive us.

We Believe

God gives everybody a conscience. God wants us to choose good and stay away from what is evil.

Faith Words

conscience
Our conscience helps us know right from wrong.

sin

To sin is to choose to do hurtful things on purpose. Sin is disobeying God.

How can we practice making good choices?

71

Understanding Scripture

Print the word *conscience* on the chalkboard. Pronounce the word for the children. Tell them to listen carefully to learn the meaning of this word. Have a volunteer read aloud "Knowing Right from Wrong."

Say "Each of us has a conscience. When we make choices, we need to become quiet inside and listen to what our conscience tells us is right to do."

Ask "What do we call our ability to decide what we will do?" (*free choice*)
"Who gave us this ability?" (*God*)

Understanding Doctrine

- Print the word *sin* on the chalkboard.
- Ask a volunteer to read aloud "Our Church Teaches." Have the children underline the first sentence and read it aloud.
- Say** "God is always ready to forgive us for hurting people and making wrong choices. God never turns away from us. God never stops loving us."

We Believe/Faith Words

- Reinforce the We Believe statement.
- Ask volunteers to explain the meaning of the Faith Words in their own words.

Additional Activity

Scripture Making Up Stories about Choices

- Have the children work in pairs. Invite each pair to create a story in which a child listens to his or her conscience and makes a right choice.
- If needed, offer examples such as spending allowance money, being honest, waiting in line, or sharing snacks.
- Invite the children to share their stories.



Liturgy Connection

The Mercy of God Our Father

The parable of "The Prodigal Son" occurs twice in the Sunday liturgy—on the Fourth Sunday of Lent and on the Twenty-Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time in Cycle C. The responsorial psalms for these Sunday liturgies are Psalms 34:2-7 and 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19.

These psalms emphasize the great mercy and goodness of God. If time permits, read part of each psalm to the children.

Respond

Discussing the Story

The Illustration Invite the children to look at the illustration on this page.

Ask “Who do you see in the picture?”
(a rabbit; Peter Rabbit)

“What is the rabbit doing?” (eating vegetables; eating radishes, standing in a garden)

The Story Tell the children that this is an old story about a mother rabbit and her children.

Say “This family lives under the roof of a large fir tree. A vegetable farmer named Mr. McGregor lives nearby.”

“One day Mrs. Rabbit sends her children out to play. The young rabbits have to make choices. Listen for the choices they make.”

Invite volunteers to read aloud the story.

Ask “Why was Peter’s choice wrong?” (He disobeyed his mother; he put himself in danger; the vegetables did not belong to Peter; he got sick from eating so much.)

“Why were Peter’s sisters’ choices good ones?” (They obeyed their mother; they did not put themselves in danger.)

Respond

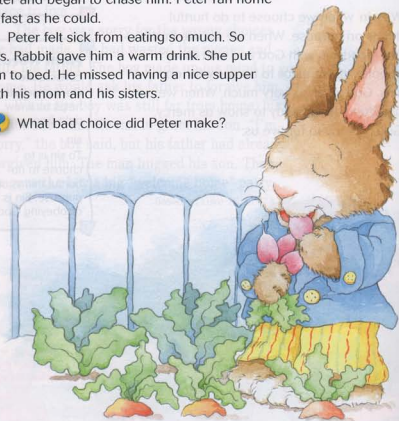
Making Good Choices

Mrs. Rabbit said, “Peter, you and your sisters may play outdoors. But stay away from Mr. McGregor’s garden!”

Peter’s sisters obeyed their mother. Peter made a bad choice. He went into the garden and ate a lot of vegetables. Mr. McGregor saw Peter and began to chase him. Peter ran home as fast as he could.

Peter felt sick from eating so much. So Mrs. Rabbit gave him a warm drink. She put him to bed. He missed having a nice supper with his mom and his sisters.

? What bad choice did Peter make?



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Enriching the Chapter

Continuing a Faith Booklet

- If the children began a faith booklet in Unit 1, explain that they will continue it through this unit. Ask a child to draw or write a story about Chapter 5 and to bring the drawing or story to the next session.
- If time permits, pass the booklet around so the children can see the four drawings or stories from Chapters 1–4. Use their contributions to briefly review what the children learned in Unit 1 about community.



Activity

We can practice making good choices every day. Unscramble the letters to complete the sentence for each picture.



t h g i f

r h a s e

Joey chooses not to

Tonya is happy to

f i g h t

s h a r e



t r t u h

Lily decides to tell the

t r u t h

How can we
celebrate the
gift of free
choice?

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Additional Activity**Respond Role-playing Good and Bad Choices**

- Read aloud a complete version of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (Frederick Warne & Co.).
- Invite small groups to role-play scenes. In them have each rabbit make choices.
- As each group role-plays, encourage the other children to discuss the choices and their outcomes.

Doing the Activity**Making Good Choices**

- Direct the children's attention to the three pictures on this page. Ask volunteers to describe what is happening in each.
- Afterward, invite a volunteer to read the directions for the activity. Provide time for the children to complete the activity and to share their unscrambled words. Then talk about making good choices.
- Suggest more decision-making. Ask the children to name some good actions for the coming week. List these on the chalkboard. Have the children select one good action that they will try to do this week.

Special Needs**Child with Dyslexia**

To help a child with dyslexia, pair the child with another before doing the activity. In that way, the dyslexic child will have help sorting letters and making words.

Or, a partner could show the dyslexic child the three completed words on a separate sheet of paper and say aloud each one. The child would then write the correct word on the blank lines following the sentence context.

Respond

Preparing for Prayer

Choosing good actions is a type of prayer. Teach the children simple gestures to use as well. Some ideas: folding hands with fingers up and palms together, opening hands with palms up, and crossing the arms over one's chest.

- Direct the children to draw or write about making good choices. Have them describe a good action they can do to help someone.
- Invite the children to bring their descriptions to the prayer corner with their books.
- Light the candle by the Bible. Read aloud the first paragraph of "A Prayer of Action."



A Prayer of Action

Say "God is pleased when we make good choices."

- Read together the prayer. Pause after "Help us to..." From left to right, ask each child to say in turn the good action they drew or wrote about.
- Pray "Amen" together. Close with a blessing and a song you have chosen.

Say "May the Holy Spirit help you to choose good actions this week. May God bless each of you as you make good choices."



Prayer Celebration

A Prayer of Action

Doing good actions is a type of prayer. When we act in good ways, we praise God. We thank God for the gift of free choice.

Celebrate making good choices. Pray this prayer together.

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of free choice.

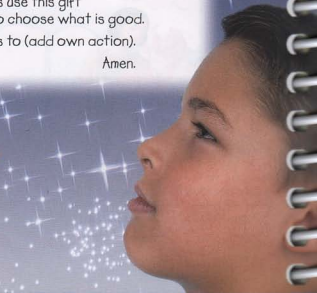
Help us use this gift to choose what is good.

Help us to (add own action).

Amen.



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Looking Ahead to Chapter 6



Take Home

Tear out the **Take Home Family Time** pages for the next chapter. Remind the children to work on these at home with their parents or guardians.

Cultural Connections

www.blestarewe.com/familytime



Visit our Web site for the Take Home Family Time pages in Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.



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Chapter Review

A Circle the words that best complete the sentences.

- God gives us a _____ to help us know right from wrong.
conscience free choice sin
- When we do hurtful things on purpose, we _____.
forgive love sin
- God lets us choose what to do.
We call this _____.
conscience free choice sin
- God wants us to be _____ for our sins.
angry happy sorry

**B** Draw a line to connect the parts of each sentence.

- The boy who left home knew _____.
 - Before the boy said, "I'm sorry," _____.
 - We thank God for _____.
- the gift of free choice.
 - he had done wrong.
 - his father had forgiven him.

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Chapter Review

Reviewing the Chapter

- Explain to the children that these exercises will help them remember the content of the chapter just completed.
- This page also serves as a review of the Learning Focus on page 66C. God wants us to choose good and stay away from sin, but God allows us to use our conscience and make our own decisions freely.

Completing the Exercises

- Allow the children to look back at the pages in the chapter to find answers they cannot recall on their own.
- Be sure to discuss the answers with your group and review concepts that were generally misunderstood or forgotten. Then have the children correct any mistakes they may have made.

Answer Locator

A		B	
1	p. 71	1	p. 70
2	p. 71	2	p. 70
3	p. 71	3	p. 70
4	p. 71		



Wrap-Up

Time permitting, Chapter Review and/or Faith in Action can be completed during the session. Or at home.

Self-Evaluation

This session was

- one of the best
 pretty good
 in need of improvement

What worked out best was

For next time I would change

I will be sure to prepare for

Faith in Action

Parish Ministry

A Parish Council

A parish council provides leadership in helping the pastor to fulfill the parish's mission. It helps place social ministry in the center of parish life. Members of the Council work through committees to connect with the parish and local community. Sometimes the finance committee must make choices as to what the parish wants and what it needs. Such decisions can be difficult to make on behalf of the parish.

Encourage children to find out if their parish has a parish council and who is a part of it.

Explain to the children that when they participate in group decision-making they are living out the Catholic Social Teaching **Rights and Responsibilities**.

Doing the Activities

1. Everyday Life Connection

- Have a volunteer read aloud the first two sentences. Point out that when family members share information with each other, family life seems to run more smoothly.
- Read aloud the direction line. Make sure everyone understands just what a family meeting is.

2. Parish Connection

- Direct the children to look at the maze. Tell them that a parish has to make choices about where to spend the money it has. There is not enough money to do everything.
- Read aloud the first sentence and direction line.

Faith in Action

A Parish Council Members of a parish council help the pastor. They help him make choices for the parish. They plan programs. They may decide ways to improve the church building. The pastor and the parish council try to make good choices.

In Everyday Life



Activity Some families meet together to make choices. They listen to the needs of one another. Talk about ways family meetings can be helpful.

In Your Parish



Activity One parish has chosen how to spend its money. Find their choices.



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Catholic Social Teaching

Rights and Responsibilities

- The Catholic Church shows concern for the sacredness of human life and issues that affect the rights of people. For every right or privilege there is a corresponding responsibility. We are called to work for the benefit of the common good, to speak up for those who have no voice.
- Addressing state and federal legislators on issues of health care, education, and housing are responsibilities for those who seek to ensure the rights of others. Along with the right to vote is the responsibility to be an informed voter.
- Catholic Relief Services helps children learn of the needs of others and how they might respond to those needs. Visit www.catholicrelief.org/kids/ and explore with children the needs and possible solutions present in the world today.

