

Sadlier
Discovering God Program

A Faith-Development Program for
Four-Year-Olds

Discovering God's World

Publisher

Gerard F. Baumbach, Ed.D.

Consultant in Early Childhood Education

Lesley Mandel Morrow, Ph.D.
Rutgers University

Official Theological Consultant

Most Rev. Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis

Program Collaborators

Julie Brunet
Renée McAlister
Rosie Soto Seaman

Editor in Chief

Moya Gullage

Product Developer

Michaela Burke

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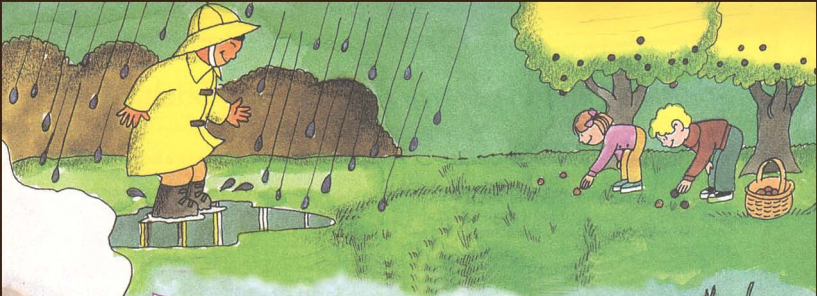
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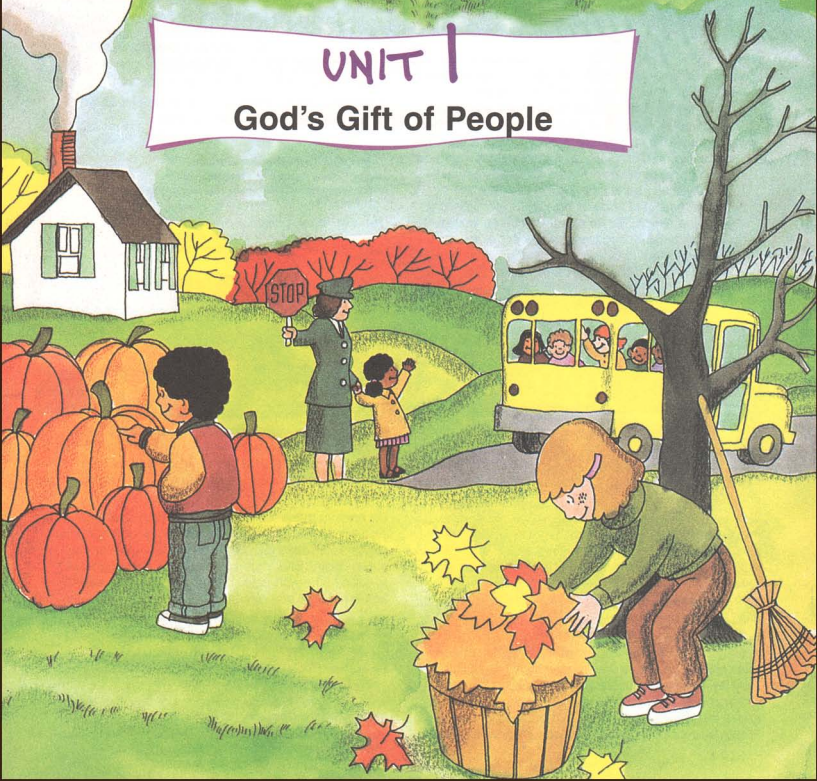
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*Seasonal or special lessons. Use when appropriate.



UNIT 1

God's Gift of People



Lesson 1

Beginnings

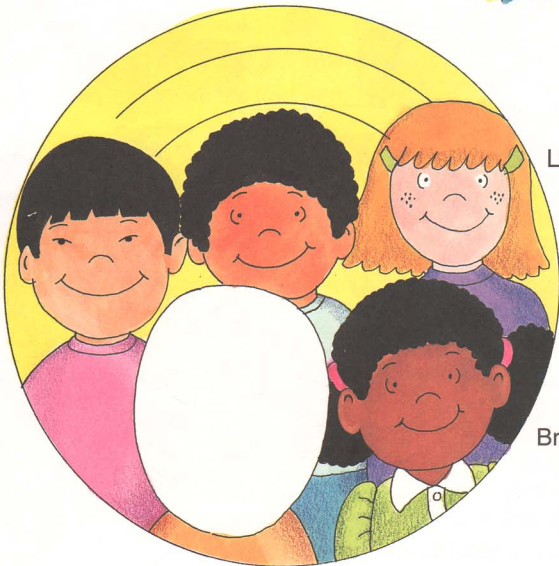
Preschool is a happy place,
A place I like to be!
With a happy smile upon my face,
I make new friends, you see.

Draw yourself with your new friends.



Carlos

Peter

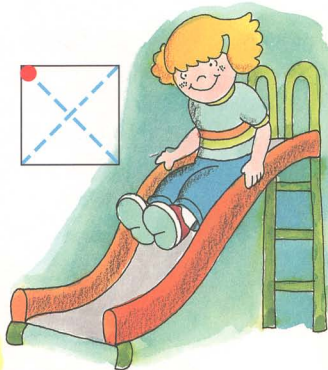


Lorrie

Brenda

A preschool is a place for fun,
and a place for learning, too.
We learn that God loves everyone,
and that means me and you!

What are these children doing?
Mark what you want to learn to do
in preschool. (X)



We pray.

Thank you, God, for all my new
preschool friends. Amen.









Lorrie









Teacher



A Beginning

When the  came up,  jumped up and dressed.  was so happy. Today  was going to preschool for the first time! She could hardly wait! Lorrie's  met her at the door and took  by her . She showed  where she would sit and where the toys were kept.

In  Lorrie met lots of children. When the  asked the children to sit in the circle of ,  was next to a boy, Carlos. He said, "My name is Carlos. Will you be my friend?"

 said, "Yes!"  was so happy! She knew she would like being at



Why did Lorrie like being in preschool?
What do you like best about preschool?
Do you have a new friend?
Shake hands with your new friend.



Carlos

Preschool

Parenting your 4-Year-Old

Hand-in-Hand

For each lesson in *Discovering God's World*, your child will bring home a page like this one. Each of these *Parenting Pages* will offer some suggestions to help you prepare for and enjoy the surprises that await you this year as your child grows and changes.

A wise abbess once said, "Spiritual life is not something apart from life. Spiritual life is *life*." This is especially true during the preschool years, when the spiritual life of the child and basic life-skills go hand-in-hand. On this page, overall spiritual and social goals will be shared with you, highlighting the specific goals chosen for the current lesson. Reflecting these goals and included on every *Parenting Page* is a short verse from Scripture. You may want to share some of the verses with your child at prayertime, bedtime, or when you read the lesson stories together. Particular suggestions for ways

"I have called you friends,
because I have told you
everything I have heard
from my Father."

John 15:15

you can enrich your child's growth in faith will be offered in *At Home with Your Family*.

Each week your child will learn a simple song to the tune of a favorite childhood melody. These songs can help reinforce the theme of the lesson. Singing these songs together at home can help growth in faith become a significant and ongoing part of your child's development.

The *Read to Me* story on the reverse side of this page also helps to develop the spiritual and social goals of the lesson. Four-year-olds enjoy simple stories and poems, and want their favorites retold over and over again. Invite your child to

tell the story to you from the illustrations. Take some time to talk about the questions at the end of the story. These questions will help you to share your own faith with your child. This kind of sharing, in support and understanding, is critical to your child's spiritual and social development.



At Home with Your Family

A warm and loving environment in which each child feels important, accepted, and welcomed is essential for a happy first experience in preschool. This early experience of a caring community of faith is an initial experience of Church community, an experience that will broaden and deepen as your child grows in faith. The Church welcomes an opportunity such as this to care for its youngest members, for, as Joseph Cardinal Bernardin wrote, "Children are not only the future of the Church; they are part of the Church now."

In this lesson, the children learned that preschool is a place of fun and learning. They were reminded that God loves everyone. They were helped to see preschool as a great place to make new friends. On the *Activity Pages*, they drew themselves in the group of children who will be featured in the text throughout the program.

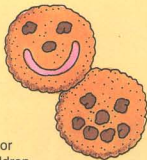
A simple experience of prayer was also begun in this lesson. Can you find time to pray this simple prayer at home together? Are there other things you and your child can thank God for in prayer?

Enjoy the *Read to Me* story of Lorrie and Carlos with your child. Invite him or her to tell you about the first day in preschool and about the new friends he or she is making.

Note: The following activity involves food. In any activity using food, parents are urged to be alert to any allergies their child may have and to make appropriate substitutions or adjustments as needed. All activities on the *Parenting Pages* are optional.

Friendly Faces

Encourage your child to invite a friend to play at your home. During this play date you may wish to help each child to decorate a cookie to look like himself or herself. Spread icing over the cookie for faces. Add features by using raisins, colored candy bits, or more icing. When finished the children may wish to exchange cookies as a sign of their friendship.



Making Friends

(To the tune of "London Bridge")

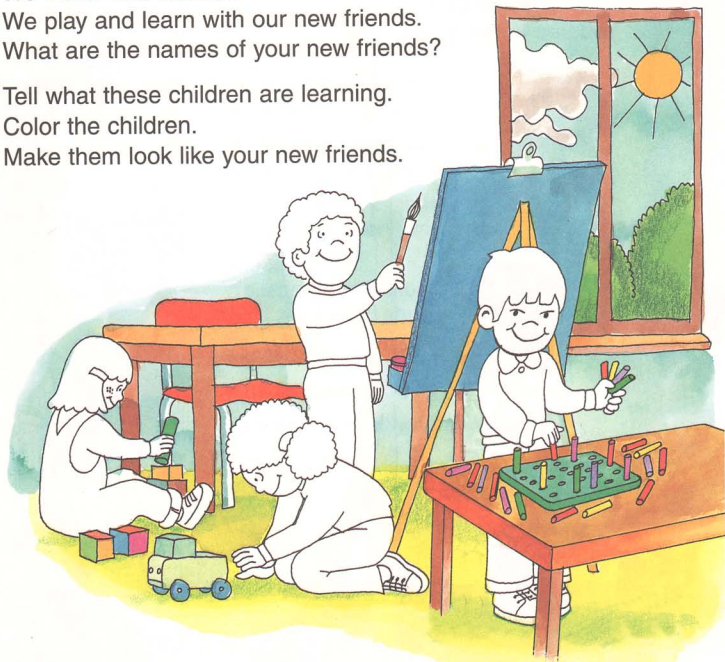
I can make a brand new friend,
Brand new friend,
Brand new friend.
I can make a brand new friend
In my preschool.

Lesson 2

Belonging

How glad we are to belong to our preschool!
We make new friends.
We play and learn with our new friends.
What are the names of your new friends?

Tell what these children are learning.
Color the children.
Make them look like your new friends.

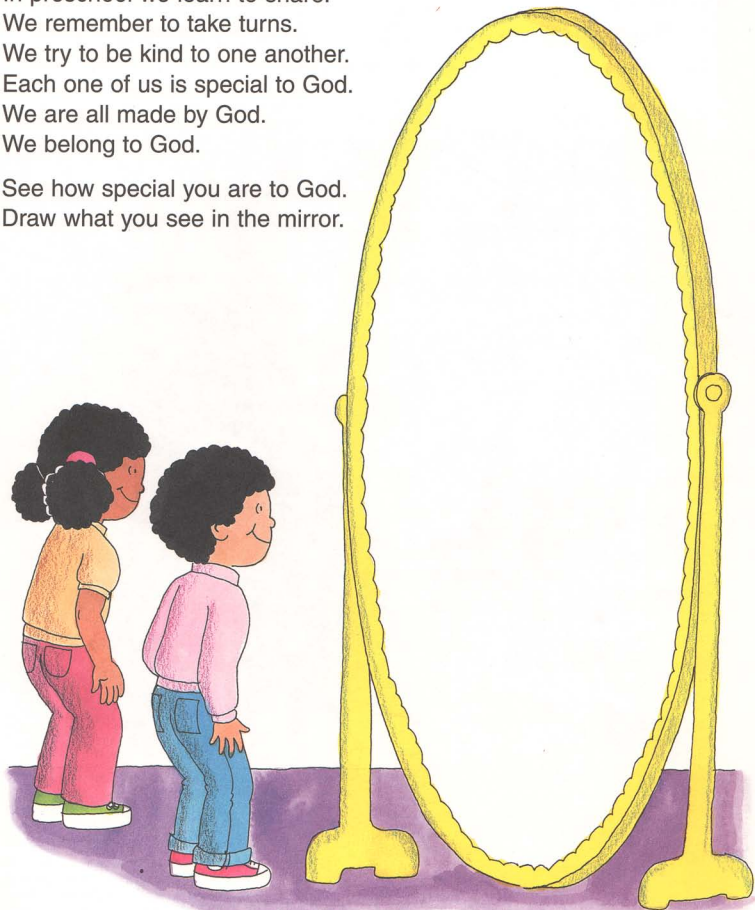


We pray.

Thank you, God, for my new friends. Amen.

In preschool we learn to share.
We remember to take turns.
We try to be kind to one another.
Each one of us is special to God.
We are all made by God.
We belong to God.

See how special you are to God.
Draw what you see in the mirror.





My Preschool

We learn to say "Hello"
When we meet each day.

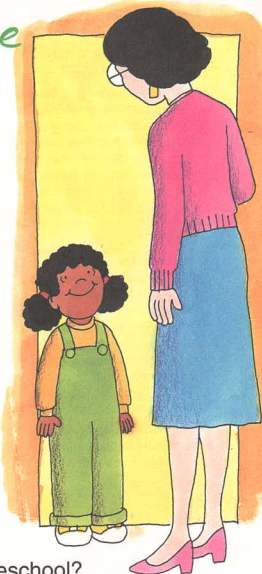
We learn to take turns
When we work and play.

We learn to give and share,
We learn to sing and pray.

We learn to love others
In each and every way.

And most of all,
We learn to love God
In all we do and say.

What are you learning in preschool?
How do you treat your new friends?



Parenting your 4-Year-Old

Belonging to God

The theme of belonging begins in this lesson and will be presented in various ways throughout this faith-development program. The children are helped to feel that they belong in their preschool group. A few lessons later, they will be helped to understand that they belong in their families; later in the year, their Baptism and their belonging to the Catholic Church will be explained to them. The explicit lesson throughout is that, above all, they belong to God.

This assurance of belonging is especially important to the four-year-old child. At four, awareness of self is paramount, but awareness of others and relationship with others is also becoming important. Other people and their opinions begin to matter—for good or ill! Yet the four's need for healthy self-assertion is still quite strong. Both independence and the need for belonging must be respected and nurtured.

Preschool, with its orderly environment and consistent expectations, can help foster this necessary balance in the child's life. For parents and

**"All belong to you,
and you [belong] to Christ,
and Christ to God."**

1 Corinthians 3:22-23

teachers, remembering that the children are children of God can give a needed perspective: "Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2222). While respecting the needs of the child, the needs of others in the group or family must also be respected. Belonging requires learning to live with others peacefully and happily.

This kind of peace and happiness is energetically expressed in this poem by David McCord. The lines below capture both the social and spiritual reality of the four-year-old:

*Blesséd Lord, what it is to be young:
To be of, to be for, be among—
Be enchanted, enthralled,
Be the caller, the called,
The singer, the song, and the sung.*

Learning to belong may sometimes be hard, but belonging—to God, to family, to Church, to preschool—brings joy and peace.



At Home with Your Family

Lesson 2 continues to deepen your child's sense of belonging. Throughout the lesson the children were encouraged to make new friends and to learn to get along with the other children in their preschool group. The social skills necessary for learning and working together were also explored and practiced.

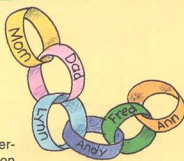
This lesson affirmed the uniqueness of each child. The children learned that each of us is made and loved by God. Each of us is special to God. You may wish to invite your child to share with you the self-portrait drawn on the *Activity Page*. Affirm and accept what your child sees as his or her own specialness. Share what you think is wonderful about your child, too. Remind your child that he or she is very special to God.

The *Read to Me* page summarized and reviewed the social skills and faith-development concepts explored in the lesson. Help your child to review these concepts by telling you what is happening in each of the illustrations.

My Belonging Chain

Help your child make a belonging chain by linking names of new preschool friends and family members

together. Cut variously colored construction paper into 1" x 8 1/2" strips. With a crayon or marker, help your child print the individual first names on each strip of paper. (You can print them first and have your child trace over your letters.) Invite your child to draw each person's face or other decorations on each link. Fasten the strips together into the belonging chain by taping or stapling the ends of each strip and linking together. Tape to a wall in your child's room.



The Sharing Song (To the tune of "Frère Jacques")

Take your turn now.

Take your turn now.

I'll take mine.

I'll take mine.

When we work together,

When we play together,

Sharing's fun!

Sharing's fun!