

Sadlier  
Discovering God Program

A Faith-Development Program for

Five-Year-Olds

# Discovering God's Love

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## UNIT 2

Wonderfully  
Made by God

# Parenting your 5-Year-Old

## Mutual Admiration Society

Your five-year-old is beginning kindergarten and is becoming more independent. At the same time, you may have noticed an accompanying appreciation and open admiration of you as mom or dad, especially if you are the primary caregiver. In fact, your five-year-old seems not to be able to get enough of you!

This is the time to graciously accept your role as the most important person in your child's life. As mom, your child orbits around you as the planets orbit the sun. As dad, you are the hero, the best of all possible dads. At times, this open admiration can become annoying (especially when you might be feeling your feet of clay). Try not to let your annoyance show. Leaving an impression of being pushed away can be very detrimental to your child's ongoing development. In purely natural terms, your child is being imprinted with your concerns, your values, your particular way of being human—just as ducklings learn to be ducks by following their parents around. Nothing can substitute for this kind of hands-on, in-your-face, underfoot learning. Your child is paying you the utmost compliment in wanting to be just like you.

Grandparents have a large share in this mutual admiration society, and all generations benefit from contact with one another by phone, photo, and visits. If grandparents are at a distance, an

adoptive grandparent program may widen your family's circle and brighten an elder's life.

Now is the time when your child's imitative skills are at their peak. As parents, you are role models, the most important your child will ever have. Above

basketball players or teachers or celebrities, your child looks up to you. This is also true at the spiritual level. Saint Paul the Apostle considered him-

**"Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love."**

*Ephesians 5:1-2*

self a "father in Christ Jesus" to his new converts and wrote, "Be imitators of me" (I Corinthians 4:16). Your child will imitate you—your language, your attitudes, your prayers, your way of following Christ. Be lavish with praise when your five gets it right. Your child needs praise for success and accomplishments in order for self-esteem and self-confidence to grow. Keep the *mutual* in the mutual admiration society!

### Additional Parenting Resources

Ames, Louise Bates and Frances L. Ilg. *Your Five Year Old*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1981.

Friel, John and Linda. *The Seven Worst Things Parents Do*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 1999.

Halmo, Joan. *Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988.

*Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*. Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1989.



## At Home with Your Family

The goal of Unit 2 is to provide the children with opportunities to discover the wonders of God's creation, both in living and non-living things, and to see all of creation as a gift to us from God our loving Father.

How wonderfully made by God each of us is will be a theme explored throughout the unit. Children will be encouraged to see themselves as unique individuals made and loved by God. Each of the lessons will help the children develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

The children will come to know Jesus Christ as the greatest of all God's gifts to us. They will learn that in God's plan for our world, God gave us his own Son, Jesus, to show us how to love God and others.

The changing seasons and the coming of winter will be highlighted in this unit. Building on the theme of change and growth, the children will explore the changes experienced in the cycle of birth, life, and death. What signs of winter in your area can you help your child experience?

### For Storytime During Unit Two

Ailiki. *Feelings*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1986.

Bang, Molly Garrett. *When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry* . . . New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1999.

Curtis, Jamie Lee. *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Norac, Carl. *I Love You So Much*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *I Love to Cuddle*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1999.

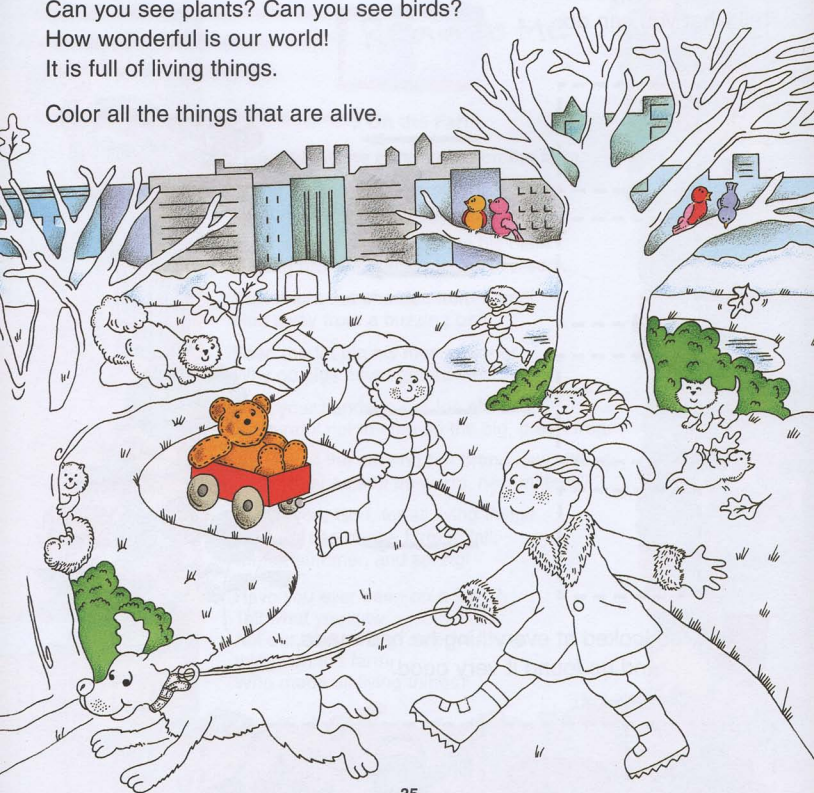


## Lesson 9

### Our Wonderful World

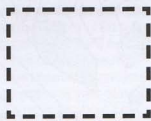
Look around you. What can you see?  
Can you see plants? Can you see birds?  
How wonderful is our world!  
It is full of living things.

Color all the things that are alive.



God made the whole world for us.  
 God made plants for us. God made birds for us.  
 God made the sun and water for us.  
 God wants us to take care of our world.

Cut out and match the ways you can  
 help care for God's world.  
 Tell what you can do.



"God looked at everything he had made,  
 and he found it very good."

Genesis 1:31





# Read to Me

## On the Farm

Listen for all the living things on the farm.

Living on a farm is lots of fun.

On the farm there's much to be done.

Ride a horse, sitting high on his back.

Dig big brown potatoes to put in a sack.

Pick bright red cherries from a tree.

Run away from a buzzing bee.

Feed the fat pig his messy dinner.

Why do pigs never get thinner?

Clap your hands to call the old dog.

Be careful not to step on the big, green frog.

Go to visit the cat and her brand new kittens.

Aren't they as soft as warm, new mittens?

Thank you, God, for all living things

That we see on the farm in fall,

winter, summer, and spring!

Have you ever been on a farm?

Tell what you saw.

Act out how we can care for living  
things on the farm.

Who made all living things?



# Parenting your 5-Year-Old

## Listening from the Heart

"Listen, my son," Saint Benedict wrote at the very beginning of his rule for his monasteries, "and incline the ear of your heart."

Saint Benedict wanted to emphasize from the very beginning that the harmony of the monastic family is based on listening from the heart. The same could be said of the harmony between

parents and children. From a child's point of view, parental guidance comes from outside oneself. Gradually, as family rules come to make sense (and even operate in one's favor!), the rules are followed from the heart, because the child experiences a sense of peace and satisfaction when things go well.

Because five-year-olds are generally anxious to please and ready to imitate, this is a good time to brush up on existing daily routines and perhaps introduce a few new ones. Family rules should be short and to the point. Talking them over with your child occasionally or on an as-needed basis is

important because it gives you the opportunity to "listen from the heart" to your child's concerns. Your five-year-old will want to know why things are done in a particular way, or how following this particular rule helps everyone. Consistency is key. For

example, if appropriate table manners are enforced at some meals and ignored at others,

the young child is understandably confused.

Consequences for ignoring or breaking family rules should be explained when the rule is set. Some parents have found that a short period of "time-out" is helpful in this regard. This time should not be considered a time of punishment but of reflection, thinking things over, and talking with an adult about what happened and why. The aim is not control and subservience, but true obedience. The root meaning of obedience is "listening." True obedience begins and ends with listening from the heart.

**"Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."**

1 Samuel 3:9

## At Home with Your Family



**B**uilding on your five-year-old child's natural sense of wonder and awe, this lesson helps him or her explore the wonders of God's creation both in living and nonliving things. You may wish to continue this experience by helping your child discover and name living and nonliving things in your home or neighborhood.

Help your child respond to God's wonderful gifts of creation by caring for God's world and by expressing thanks to God in prayer. Encourage your child to share with you ways to help care for God's world. Encourage your child to find one new thing he or she can do in your home environment to show love and care.

Invite your child to tell you about the wonders of creation on the farm from the pictures on the *Read to Me* page. Especially if the farm environment is unfamiliar to your child, try to help him or her find similar things in your own environment.

### Wonderful World Collage

Walk with your child around your neighborhood. Together, point out all the living things that God has made. When you return indoors, ask your child to recall what you saw. Help him or her to draw and color these

things on one side of a white paper plate. Cut out magazine pictures of living things, and help your child glue them on the other side of the plate. Punch a hole at the top of the plate, and run a piece of yarn through it. Hang it in an open doorway.

### God's Great Big World

*(To the tune of "London Bridge")*

God gave us our great big world,  
Great big world,  
Great big world.  
God gave us our great big world.  
God, we thank you.

Children all around the world,  
'Round the world,  
'Round the world,  
Children all around the world:  
God, we thank you.



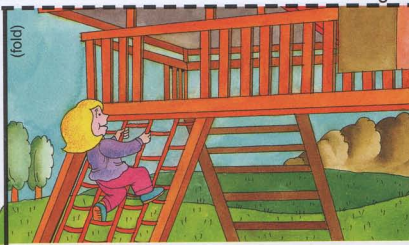
# Lesson 10

## See What I Can Do!

What wonderful things I can do!  
Tell a story about each picture.  
Finish the words.



I can **play** ball.



I can **climb**.



I can **ride**.

I can \_\_\_\_\_.

Draw what you can do best.  
Tell the story of your drawing.





## Favorite Things to Do

Alex could do many wonderful things. Here are some of the things he liked to do best. See whether you can guess why they were his favorite things to do.

Alex liked to eat pizza. He liked the tangy white cheese, the sweet sausage, the spicy tomato sauce, and the thick crust on the bottom. Whenever he thought of pizza, Alex said, "Yummy!" He liked the way pizza *tasted*.

Alex liked to look at his baby sister whenever he came near her crib. She smiled and waved her arms in the air. That made Alex feel good. He liked *seeing* her play.

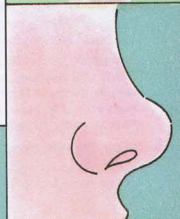
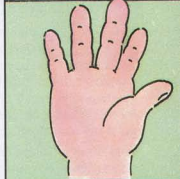
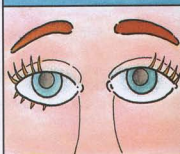
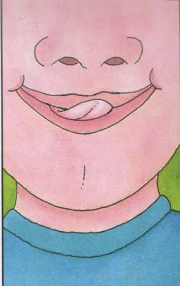
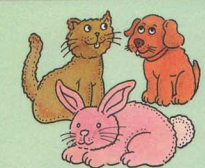
Alex liked to hear the roar of a plane's engines when it flew overhead in the sky above his house. He wanted to be on every plane that roared over his head. He liked *hearing* the planes.

Alex liked to touch the warm fur on his cat's back. The cat's fur was soft and smooth. Alex was sure this was the finest cat in the world. Alex liked *touching* his cat's soft fur.

Alex liked to visit the lumberyard with his dad. Even with his eyes closed, he knew when he was near the lumberyard. Alex liked the way wood *smelled*.

God gave us our five senses—to taste, to see, to hear, to touch, and to smell. That's how Alex found his favorite things to do.

What are your favorite things to taste, to see, to hear, to touch, and to smell?  
Who gives us all of our favorite things to do?  
Who gives us our five senses?



# Parenting your 5-Year-Old

## Just Child's Play?

In the past several years, both parents and educators have been almost overwhelmed with research on child development that suggests how very ready to learn young children are. The curriculum for kindergarten is now more academically focused, and parents may wonder whether ordinary playtime should now take the back burner to more formal learning.

A balanced approach is probably the best course. It is important to respect play as central to every level of a child's development. For a young child, there is no distinction between "work" and "play." The alphabet paper presents one kind of challenge; the block corner presents another. The first challenge is that of representing reality with symbols; the second is that of reality itself. Children are faced with the realities of physics and geometry years before they face them in symbols.

Dramatic play, that is, acting out scenes from TV, movies, or real life (the most entertaining of all) is especially important for five-year-olds. It is through this kind of play that they use their imaginations

in order to comprehend the meaning of what they have seen and heard. One little girl, hospitalized briefly after a car accident, played "hospital" with her friends for months afterwards. It was her way of dealing with and finally putting to rest a frightening event.

Play in the real world is necessary for reading preparation. The more a child experiences the

world, the more a book or poem will make sense as it interprets that world. The meaning of a word depends upon previous experience of that word in reality.

The quality of human relationships also depends upon play. Through play, real solutions are found through trial and error or through talking over a problem with other children or an adult. In play with others, conflicts must be resolved. The right words must be called up from one's mind and heart to explain a situation. In the kindergarten, we call it child's play; in our relationships at home or with friends, in business or on the work site, we call it work!

**"See what love the Father has  
bestowed on us that we may be called  
the children of God."**

1 John 3:1



## At Home with Your Family

**A**ffirming your child's emerging sense of self-esteem and self-worth is the theme of Lesson 10. The concept that all the wonderful things that I can do are God's gifts to me is developed in Part 2 of the lesson. This is preparation for the child's later understanding that God has made us in his own image and likeness.

Find opportunities to affirm your child's special talents and abilities. Encourage your child to tell you his or her own story from the booklet made in the session. Are there other family members or friends to whom he or she could read the booklet?

Encourage your child to tell you about Alex's favorite things and why they were favorites. Share what your favorite things to taste, see, hear, touch, and smell. Help your child think of and name more of his or her favorite sense experiences.

### I Can Do What You Can Do

Have your child enjoy the "I Can Do Game." Have him or her stand facing you. Explain that the purpose of the

game is to physically perform a task that you command and to do so as quickly as possible. For example, say, "Jump up and down three times"; "Clap your hands five times"; "Sing a song"; "Take two steps backwards then two steps forward." Congratulate your child on being such a good player.

### I Am Special

(To the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

I am special and I know it, clap my hands. (Clap hands.)  
I am special and I know it, clap my hands. (Clap hands.)  
I am special and I know it,  
And it's oh such fun to show it.  
I am special and I know it, clap my hands. (Clap hands.)

Second verse:

Let me show you all the things that I can do. (tap, tap) . . .



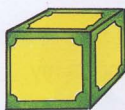
## Lesson 11

### Learning New Things

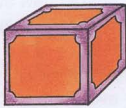
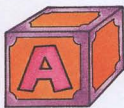
See what I have learned.

I can print my first name.

I can count. What number is missing?



I know the alphabet. What letter is missing?



I can make the sign of the cross.



Use your imagination. Think about one new thing you will be able to do soon.

Draw what you imagine on another piece of paper.

Tell about your drawing.



I am learning about God.  
See what I have learned.

God made me.

God loves me.

God knows my name.

God made our world.

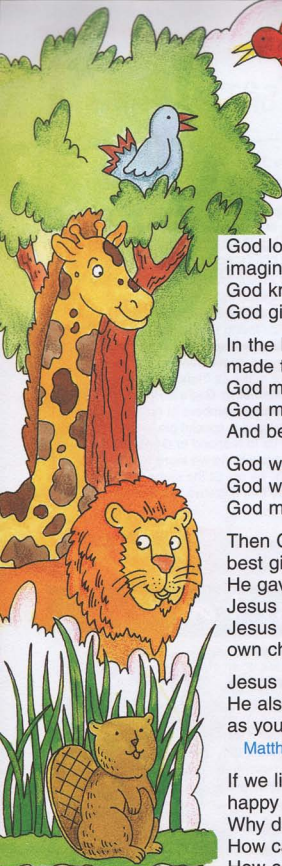
God made all living things.



We pray.

Dear God, help us to know you and love you.

"Teach me, LORD, your way." (Psalm 86:11) Amen.



### God's Best Gift of All

God loves each one of us more than we can imagine. We belong to God.  
God knows each one of us by name.  
God gives us many wonderful gifts.

In the Bible we read that God made the world for us.  
God made the land and the sea.  
God made the animals, plants, and birds for us.  
And best of all, God made you and me.

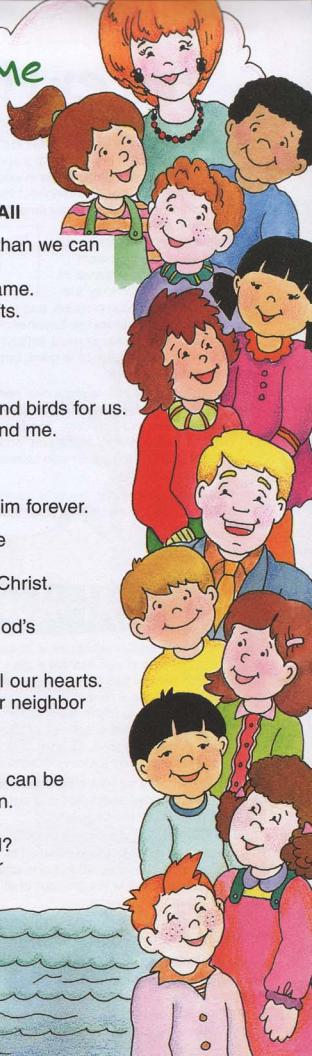
God wants us to know him.  
God wants us to love him.  
God made us to be happy with him forever.

Then God our Father gave us the best gift of all.  
He gave us his own Son, Jesus Christ.  
Jesus shows us who God is.  
Jesus shows us how to live as God's own children.

Jesus told us to love God with all our hearts.  
He also said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

[Matthew 22:39](#)

If we live as Jesus shows us, we can be happy with God forever in heaven.  
Why did God make us?  
How can you show you love God?  
How can you show you love your family and friends?



# Parenting your 5-Year-Old

## Friendship: Gift and Grace

Kindergarten often brings with it a special gift: that of friendship. Friendships made in kindergarten often grow and develop throughout life. Other friendships may last a shorter time but also bring their own gifts of growth.

Through their friendships with other children, fives learn needed skills: acceptance of another way of thinking, the give-and-take of compromise, and the honest realization that sometimes two together can do something that is more fun or more satisfying than just one alone. Independence is good, but interdependence is often better!

Sometimes these friendships may need adult supervision and mediation, especially if they involve three or more children. The five-year-old can become possessive of "my friend" and may find it difficult to share the friend with someone else or in a group situation.

Five-year-olds are also ready to develop friendships with one or two adults other than the ones

with whom they live. Fives enjoy conversations with adults, and may imitate the mannerisms of the cherished grown-up. Whether a neighbor or aunt or uncle, adults who respect the uniqueness of your child should be encouraged to be a part of your child's world.

All our loving relationships are based in God's love for us.

With your help, your child will gradually come to understand that each loving relationship in our lives helps us to glimpse God's love and care for us as individuals and in communion with others. The connections we make as friends with one another, brought together by God's loving providence, help us to live as members of the body of Christ. Each friendship is a special grace in our lives that prepares us to respond to God's love more fully and generously. As we learn to give and receive human love, we are at the same time responding to the love that is divine, unconditional, and everlasting.

**"For he [Christ] is our peace, he who made both one. . . ."**

*Ephesians 2:14*



## At Home with Your Family

**T**his lesson continues to deepen the child's sense of self-esteem and self-worth by helping him or her recognize how much has been learned about God. It is important to find the time and opportunity to affirm your child's sense of self-worth. A healthy love of self is foundational to love of neighbor and love of God. As such, it is the key to nurturing and developing a strong, mature life of faith. You will be delighted as your child shows you how much he or she has learned about God and our world, and imagines what might still be learned.

The *Read to Me* story summarizes the story of creation very simply. The children are introduced to Jesus, the Son of God, who shows us who God is and how God wants us to live. Jesus is the greatest of all the wonderful gifts God has given us.

Share with your child who Jesus is for you. Such modeling and sharing is your gift of faith to your child.

### Look at Me Learn

Introduce a few new tasks for your child to try to master.

**Folding Clothes:** Show your child how to carry a basket of small and/or medium cloth items (such as a handkerchief, hand towel, socks) to a table and fold them, one

at a time. Encourage your child to count the folds when working with each individual item.

**Watering Plants:** Show your child how to care for and water an indoor plant. Point out that certain plants need more watering or sun exposure than others.

### I Am Growing

*(To the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb")*

I am growing every day,

Every day,

Every day.

I am growing every day,

And I belong to God.

I am learning how to live,

How to live,

How to live.

I am learning how to live

As a child of God.





# Lesson 12

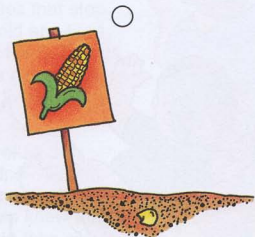
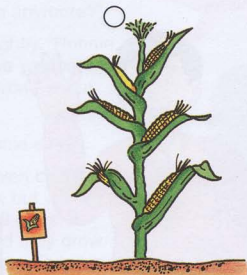
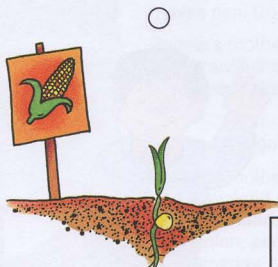
## Growing and Changing

In God's world, everything grows and changes.

Tell how plants grow and change.

Put the pictures in the right order.

Mark them 1, 2, 3, or 4.



Act out how animals grow and change.

Act out how birds grow and change.