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The Word of God

2

We Pray

For the LORD's word
is true;
all his works are
trustworthy. PSALM 33:4

**Lord God,
send the Holy Spirit
to open my heart
and mind
to your holy word.
Amen.**

*What is your favorite kind
of book?*

There are many kinds
of books. The Bible is
the most widely read
book in the world. It is
God's word.

*What is your favorite story
in the Bible?*

Sacred Scripture

Faith Focus

What does it mean to say the Bible is the word of God?

Faith Vocabulary

Sacred Scripture.

Two words that mean "holy writings"; the writing the Holy Spirit inspired the people of God to write and that have been collected by the Church in the Bible.

Inspiration of the Bible. The Holy Spirit guiding the human writers of Sacred Scripture to faithfully and accurately communicate God's word.

The Holy Writings of God

Books tell stories of happiness and sadness, successes and failures. The Bible tells the story of God's love for his people and their response to his love. The Bible is God's own word to us. He speaks through the Bible.

Sacred Scripture is another name for the Bible. It is a name that means "holy writings."

And for this reason we too give thanks to God unceasingly, that, in receiving the word of God from hearing us, you received not a human word but, as it truly is, the word of God, which is now at work in you who believe.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13



The Bible is really more than one book. It is a collection of many books. Some of the books in the Bible tell wonderful stories, such as the story of Moses. Others are history. There are also songs and poetry. But while there are different types of writings in the Bible, they all, in their own way, tell the story of God's love for us.



Faith Focus

What is the message of the Old Testament?

Faith Vocabulary

prophets. People chosen by God to speak in his name.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament has four different kinds of books, or writings. They are the Torah, the historical books, the wisdom books, and the prophetic books.

The Torah

The Torah, also known as the Pentateuch, contains the Ten Commandments and other laws and teachings that guide God's people to live the Covenant. The five books of the Old Testament that make up the Torah are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Historical Books

The sixteen historical books are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles,

Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, and 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. In these books of the Old Testament, we hear stories about how the Israelites lived the Covenant both successfully and unsuccessfully.

The historical books also reveal that God always remained faithful to his people. He always forgave his people and gave them another chance to live the Covenant faithfully.

The Wisdom Books

The seven wisdom books of the Old Testament are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus). These writings teach us practical ways to live God's Law.

They include short sayings and longer stories.



Torah scroll



Scribe repairing old Torah scrolls in Jerusalem

The Prophetic Books

God chose certain members of his people to speak in his name. These people are called **prophets**. There are eighteen prophetic books in the Old Testament. These books contain the teachings of the prophets. The prophetic books in the Old Testament are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Naham, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

When God's people, the Israelites, turned away from

the Covenant, God called them back through the prophets. When hardship and exile discouraged his people, God sent prophets to help them live with faith and hope. Through the prophets, God gave his people hope that his promises to them would come true. Again and again, God spoke through his prophets and promised to send his people a savior.



What is God telling us through the Old Testament writings?



Jerome

Saint Jerome (343–420) translated the Bible into Latin. Jerome's translation became known as the Vulgate Bible and was the standard Bible for the Roman Catholic Church for hundreds of years. Saint Jerome is honored as one of the four great Doctors of the Western Church. His feast day is September 30.

The Writings of the Old Testament

Use these words to write a paragraph about the Old Testament.

Covenant	prophets	Torah	historical
Pentateuch	Sacred Scripture	wisdom	

Faith Focus

What do the writings of the New Testament teach us?

Faith Vocabulary

Gospels. The first four books of the New Testament that pass on the faith of the Apostles and the early Church about the life, death, Resurrection, Ascension, and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Gospel. The good news of God's love revealed in the life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament

Jesus Christ is the new and everlasting Covenant. The New Testament reveals who Jesus is and the meaning of his work on earth. It includes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters of Saint Paul the Apostle and other early Church writers, and the Book of Revelation.

The Four Gospels

The heart of the New Testament is the four Gospels. The word *gospel* means "good news." Each of the four accounts of the Gospel shares the events and meaning of Jesus' life, Passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

Each of the four Gospels in its own way teaches that:

- Jesus fulfills all the promises of the Old Testament.
- Jesus calls people to discipleship.
- Jesus is the Savior of all people.
- Jesus enables us to live with God forever.

Saint John sums up why his and the other Gospels were written. We read:

But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name. JOHN 20:31

Acts of the Apostles

In the Acts of the Apostles, which was written by Saint Luke, we learn about life in the early Church. We travel with the Apostles throughout the world. We listen and learn as they spread the Gospel of God's love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

The Four Evangelists. Jacob Jordaens (1583–1678), Flemish painter.



The Epistles and Other Letters

The New Testament also contains the epistles, or letters, of Saint Paul the Apostle and other early Church writers. These twenty-one letters teach about Jesus and how Christians are to live. By reading and listening to these letters, we go back to the beginning of the Church. We learn who we are and how to live as disciples of Jesus.

Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible. It was written to encourage Christians who were suffering to remain faithful to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the fullness of Divine Revelation. In Jesus, who is true God and true man, God most fully makes himself known. Jesus most fully reveals, more than anyone else did or will ever do, God and his love for us.



What do the writings in the New Testament reveal?



Our Catholic Identity

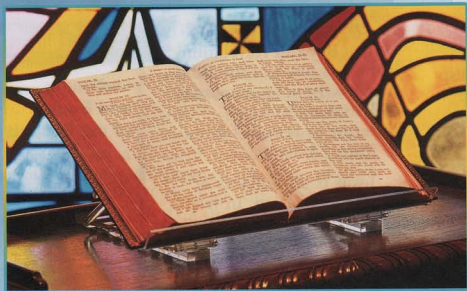
Lectionary and Book of the Gospels

At Mass on Sunday, the first two readings are read from the Lectionary. The deacon or priest proclaims the Gospel from the Book of the Gospels.

Jesus Christ, Savior and Redeemer

Design an emblem with words and symbols for Jesus Christ.

Our Church Makes a Difference



The Bible is the most widely read book in the world. Many Christian families have a family Bible. In it they write the key events of their family's faith story. They record Baptisms, marriages, and other important milestones in the faith history of their family.

Reverence for the Bible

The whole Christian life is strengthened by hearing and listening attentively and reverently to the word of God. Saint Jerome reminded us of the importance of the Bible in the life of Christians. He wrote, "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ."

Before the printing press was invented in the sixteenth century, scribes copied the Bible by hand. Artists painted pages of the Bible with colors and decorated the edges of the pages with gold.

At every celebration of the Eucharist, we read the word of God aloud, or proclaim it. We carry the Book of the Gospels with dignity in procession and proclaim the word of God from a place of honor. That place is called the ambo. This shows the faith of the Church in God's presence in his word.

When we gather with other members of the Church or as a family to read and listen to the Bible, Jesus is there. We listen and ask, What is God saying to us right now? How can the living word of God come alive in our hearts today?



When does your family and parish listen to the word of God?

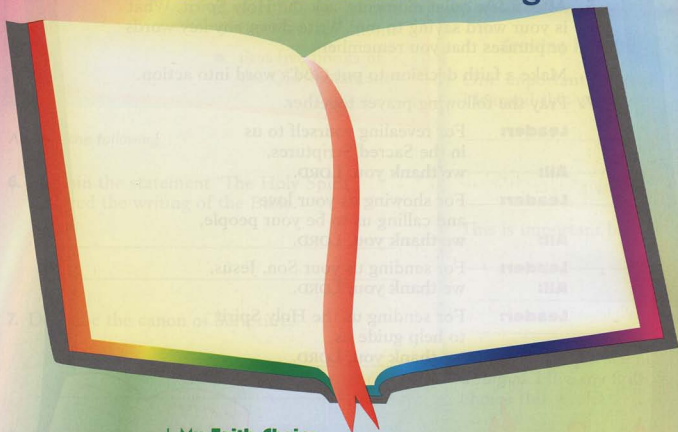
Priest holding the Book of the Gospels

What Difference Does Faith Make in My Life?

As you listen to the Bible, the Holy Spirit helps you understand what God is saying to you. He gives you the knowledge and courage to put God's word into practice.

Take the time to become more familiar with the Old Testament and the New Testament. Select a passage, read it, and think about what God's word means for your life. Write your thoughts on these book pages.

God's Word Is Life-Giving



My Faith Choice



This week I will show that I believe it is important to listen to and live God's word. I will

Your Word, Lord, Is a Light for My Path

Praying with the Bible is an important form of prayer. It is a form of meditation. In a prayer of meditation, we spend quiet time with God, reading and listening to his word and trying to understand how to live it.

1. Sit quietly. Close your eyes. Breathe slowly.
2. In your mind, picture yourself someplace where you can talk and listen to God.
3. Open your Bible and read a favorite passage.
4. Take time to talk and listen to God. Say, "Your word, LORD, is a light for my path" (based on Psalm 119:105).
5. After a few quiet moments, ask the Holy Spirit, What is your word saying to me? Write down any key words or phrases that you remember.
6. Make a faith decision to put God's word into action.
7. Pray the following prayer together.

Leader: For revealing yourself to us
in the Sacred Scriptures,
All: we thank you, LORD.

Leader: For showing us your love
and calling us to be your people,
All: we thank you, LORD.

Leader: For sending us your Son, Jesus,
All: we thank you, LORD.

Leader: For sending us the Holy Spirit
to help guide us,
All: we thank you, LORD.



We Remember

What I Have Learned

Match each faith term in column A with the phrase in column B that best describes it.

Column A

- ___ 1. Covenant
- ___ 2. Sacred Scripture
- ___ 3. Pentateuch
- ___ 4. Gospels
- ___ 5. wisdom books

Column B

- a. books in the Old Testament that give advice on how to live
- b. God's solemn agreement with his people
- c. the writings of God's people inspired by the Holy Spirit
- d. first four books of the New Testament
- e. first five books of the Old Testament

Answer the following.

6. Explain the statement "The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Bible."

7. Describe the canon of Scripture.

8. Compare the Old Testament with the New Testament.

To Help You Remember

1. The Bible is the inspired written word of God.
2. The Old Testament tells the story of God's Covenant with his people.
3. The New Testament reveals that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the new and everlasting Covenant.

Growing in Faith

One important thing I learned this week is

This is important because

What will people see me doing as I live my faith choice this week?

This Week . . .

In chapter 2, “The Word of God,” your child deepened his or her understanding of the Bible, or Sacred Scripture. The Bible contains the holy writings that the Holy Spirit inspired God’s people to write. This list of writings named by the Church is called the canon of Scripture. The Old Testament tells the first part of the story of the Covenant that God made with people and his promise to send a messiah and savior. The New Testament tells about the fulfillment of that promise in Jesus. Jesus is the new and everlasting Covenant that God made with all people.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on Sacred Scripture, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph numbers 50–133.

Sharing God's Word

Read together 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Emphasize that the Bible is God’s word to us.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed a prayer of meditation called *lectio divina*. Read and pray together this prayer on page 34.

Making a Difference

Choose one of the following activities to do as a family or design a similar activity of your own.

- Talk with each other about how the Bible can help guide you. Share practical ideas about how the Bible is a light for your family, guiding you to live as a follower of Jesus.
- Choose a Bible story that you are familiar with. Find it in the Bible and read it together. Talk about what it tells you about God.
- Invite each family member to name a favorite person in the Bible. Share with each other the stories about these people of faith.

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the “Faith First for Families” page at www.FaithFirst.com. Click on “Bible Stories” and discuss the Bible story with your child this week.



The Mystery of the Holy Trinity

3

We Pray

"Come," says my heart,
"seek God's face";
your face, LORD,
do I seek! PSALM 27:8

**Glory to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

*What is something in life
that is a mystery to you?*

Life has many mysteries.
A mystery of faith is
something we could not
know unless God revealed
it to us.

*What do you already know
about the mystery of who
God is?*

Celtic cross. The unbroken
circle reminds us that God
created us to be happy
with him forever.

One God in Three Divine Persons

Faith Focus

Who is the Holy Trinity?

Faith Vocabulary

Holy Trinity. The central belief of the Christian faith; the mystery of one God in three divine Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Trinity

The mystery of the **Holy Trinity** is the deepest and central belief of the Christian faith. The Holy Trinity is the mystery of one God in three divine Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is a truth about God we never could have known unless he revealed it.

Throughout his life on earth Jesus, the Son of God, taught about God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Just before he

ascended to his Father, the Risen Jesus met the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee. He said to them:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20

Every time the Church baptizes a person, we name the mystery of who God is. We baptize the person in the name of the one God who is the Holy Trinity.

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament we read the beginning of the story of God's revelation of himself. This story is filled with people of faith.

God first revealed himself at creation to Adam and Eve. Then God made an everlasting Covenant with Noah and with all living things.

Years later God revealed himself to Abraham and Sarah. They lived in a land and at a time when people believed in many gods. God revealed to Abraham and Sarah that he alone is God. He invited Abraham and

Sarah to put their faith and trust in him alone. God asked Abraham to leave his homeland. He said:

"Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you."

GENESIS 12:1

Abraham came to believe in God and trust in his plan for him. The descendants of Abraham were called Israelites. They kept faith in the one true God and shared that faith with others.



What is the mystery of the Holy Trinity?



John de Matha

Saint John de Matha founded the Trinitarians. The prayer and work of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity (Trinitarians) and the Sisters of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity proclaim the mystery of the love of the Holy Trinity for humankind. Saint John de Matha's feast day is February 8.

I Believe in the Holy Trinity

Check (✓) the ways you express faith in the Holy Trinity.

- ☐ Bless myself
- ☐ Pray the creeds of the Church
- ☐ Pray the Glory Prayer

☐ _____

(another way)



Faith Focus

What do the Gospels tell us about who God is?

Faith Vocabulary

Annunciation. The announcement to the Virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel that God had chosen her to be the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Many centuries after he revealed himself to Abraham, God invited the Virgin Mary to place her faith and trust in him. In the Gospel of Luke we read:

[T]he angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. . . . Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. . . . The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

LUKE 1:26-27, 30-32, 35

This event is known as the **Annunciation**. It gives us a glimpse into the mystery of the Trinity.



The Annunciation, stained glass

God chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior whom he promised to send. So special is the Virgin Mary's role in God's plan that she was free from all sin from the very first moment of her conception, or existence, and throughout her whole life. We call this Mary's Immaculate Conception.

Jesus Christ

Throughout his life on earth, Jesus, the Son of God, spoke clearly of the Father and the Holy Spirit. On one occasion Saint Philip the Apostle said to Jesus:

"Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." JOHN 14:8

Listen carefully to Jesus' answer.

"Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

JOHN 14:9

Later in his conversation with Saint Philip and the

other disciples, Jesus went on to say:

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you." JOHN 14:25-26

Jesus was speaking of one God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Many years after the return of Jesus to his Father in heaven, the Church named this central mystery of faith the Holy Trinity.



Why do we say that Abraham and Mary are models of faith for us?

Models of Faith

What did we come to know about God through Abraham, Mary, and Jesus?

Abraham

Mary

Jesus

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Faith Focus

In what ways do we profess the Church's faith in the Holy Trinity?

Faith Vocabulary

Nicene Creed. A creed, or brief statement of the faith of the Church, written in the fourth century.

creeds. Statements of belief; professions of faith.

The Creeds of the Church

The Holy Spirit, as Jesus promised, has always helped the Church believe in and explain her faith in the mystery of one God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit two early councils of the Church taught about the mystery of the Holy Trinity. These were the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 and the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381.

The Nicene Creed, which we profess at Mass, comes from these two councils of the Church. The creeds of the Church are official statements and summaries of the faith of

the Church. The two main creeds of the Church are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. We profess faith in the Holy Trinity when we pray the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.

Praying the creeds of the Church connects us with all the other faithful Christians, past and present. With the Church we continue to hear God's invitation to believe in him who is one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We can never fully understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity. But the Holy Spirit helps us grow in understanding this mystery of faith little by little throughout our life on earth.



Council of Nicaea. Cesare Nebbia (1534–1614), Italian painter.

When our life on earth is completed, we will live forever with God and all the saints in heaven. We will be drawn into the very life of God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We will see God

in a way we have never seen or known before. We call this the Beatific Vision. This is our great hope as Christians.



What is the Nicene Creed?



Our Catholic Identity

Holy Water

The Church professes her faith in the Holy Trinity in many ways. Blessing ourselves with holy water as we say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is a sacramental of the Church. Each time we bless ourselves, we remember our Baptism and profess our faith in the Holy Trinity.

WE BELIEVE IN ONE GOD

Use each letter in the word TRINITY. Write a word or phrase that tells something about the Trinity or about how you profess your faith in the Trinity. Use the words or phrases to tell a friend or family member what the Catholic Church teaches about the Trinity.

T	_____
R	_____
I	_____
N	_____
I	_____
T	_____
Y	_____

Our Church Makes a Difference

Legend of Saint Augustine

Many Christians have tried to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity. You may remember reading about Saint Augustine in chapter 1. There is a famous legend about him and his efforts to learn more about God.

One day Augustine was walking on the beach. The vast ocean inspired him to think about God. As he was walking along, he met a young boy who was taking water from the sea with a small bucket. Augustine

watched as the boy kept pouring the water, one bucket at a time, into a hole he had dug in the sand.

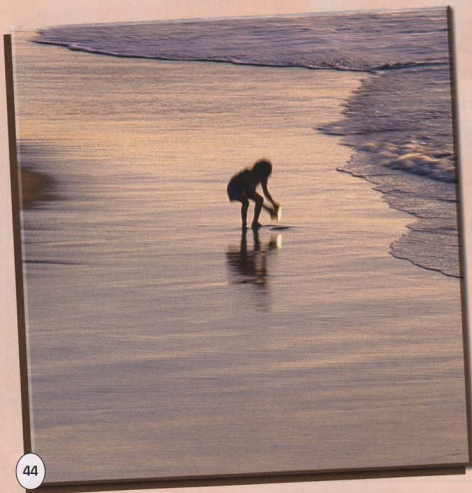
Augustine became very curious and asked, "Why do you keep pouring water into the hole?" The boy answered, "Isn't it plain to see? I'm putting this ocean in the hole."

Augustine began to laugh. "That's impossible," he told the boy. "The great sea is way too large for that small hole." With loving eyes, the boy looked up and said, "And God is too big for your little mind." Suddenly, the boy disappeared.

Little by little with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can come to know the mystery of God the Holy Trinity in whose image we have been created.



What lesson did Saint Augustine learn? How can that lesson help you come to grow in your faith in God?



What Difference Does Faith Make in My Life?

There is one God in three Persons—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Little by little, the Holy Spirit helps you understand this wonderful mystery about God.

Many people have helped you grow in your knowledge and love of the Holy Trinity. In the space below write one way you show your love for God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

I Show My Love

for God the Father by _____

for Jesus, the Son of God, by _____

for the Holy Spirit by _____

My Faith Choice



This week I will profess my faith in the Holy Trinity. I will

Renewal of Faith

Leader: At Baptism we first profess the faith of the Church in the Trinity. Each year at Easter the baptized renew the faith they professed at Baptism. Let us join together and renew our baptismal profession of faith.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

All: I do.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

RITE OF BAPTISM

We Remember

What I Have Learned

Circle whether each statement is true or false. Make false statements true.

1. The Holy Spirit is the mystery of one God in three divine Persons.

True

False

2. The Gospel account of the Annunciation tells us about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

True

False

3. Jesus never spoke to his disciples about the Holy Spirit.

True

False

Answer the following.

4. Who does God reveal himself to be in the Old Testament?

5. Who does God reveal himself to be in the New Testament?

6. What does it mean to say that God is a mystery?

To Help You Remember

1. The Holy Trinity is the central belief of the faith of the Church.
2. The mystery of the Trinity was most fully revealed in Jesus Christ.
3. We profess our faith in the Holy Trinity when we pray the Nicene Creed at Mass.

Growing in Faith

One important thing I learned this week is

This is important because

What will people see me doing as I live my faith choice this week?

This Week . . .

In chapter 3, "The Mystery of the Holy Trinity," your child learned more about the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is the mystery of one God in three divine Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The mystery of God the Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith. It is a truth about God that we never could have known unless he revealed it. God revealed this mystery over a long period of time. We profess faith in the Holy Trinity at Baptism. Each time we pray the Nicene Creed at Mass, we renew and profess our faith in this great mystery.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* paragraph numbers 232–260.



Sharing God's Word

Read together Matthew 28:16–20, the Gospel account of Jesus commissioning his disciples. Emphasize that we profess our faith in the Holy Trinity and remember our Baptism when we pray the creeds of the Church.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed a prayer renewing their baptismal profession of faith. Read and pray together this prayer on page 46.

Making a Difference

Choose one of the following activities to do as a family or design a similar activity of your own.

- When we pray the Nicene Creed, we profess our faith in the Holy Trinity. Make Nicene Creed puzzles to help you memorize this important creed of the Church. Write the Nicene Creed on a piece of paper. Cut the paper into small pieces. When you assemble the pieces, you will become more familiar with this creed.
- This week when your family takes part in Mass, be sure to bless yourself with holy water as you enter and leave the church. Pray the Sign of the Cross and remember that you were baptized with water "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- Talk about how your family is an image of the Holy Trinity. Name ways that your actions and words are signs of your love for God and for one another.

For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the "Faith First for Families" page at www.FaithFirst.com. This week pay special attention to "Questions Kids Ask."

