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# Let There Be Light

“Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; . . .”

GENESIS 1:3-4

## In this chapter, you will:

- consider the relationship between science and faith.
- explore belief in God as Trinity and as Creator.
- recognize that the first three commandments call people to put God first in their lives.
- appreciate how the Church celebrates its Trinitarian belief in God through its liturgy and sacraments.
- explore the value of prayers of adoration in developing a relationship with God.
- assess how to respond to the Creator's love and how belief in God affects one's attitude and behavior.

## WORDS OF FAITH

adoration	idolatry	sacrament
angels	liturgy	salvation
atheism	Matrimony	stewardship
Baptism	monotheism	Ten Commandments
creationism	original sin	
evolution	polytheism	

# FAITH AND SCIENCE

In the last chapter, you learned that humans can come to know God by using their human abilities, such as reason, to recognize God's presence in the created world and to respond to God's manifestation of himself. It is important to realize that the world in which we live does not always lead others to believe in God's existence. Unfortunately, it can sometimes lead people to disbelief.

For centuries, there has been an ongoing tension between scientific findings, based on rationality and provable facts, and religious teaching, based on faith. Both science and faith are supposed to point to "the truth." When they disagree or seem to disagree, the conflict can become emotional and disturbing.

For example, the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) published his findings that the earth revolved around the sun. The Church deemed these findings contrary to the Bible. The Ptolemaic view of the universe, that the sun revolved around the earth, influenced Catholic teaching at that time. The controversy continued well after the Italian explorer Christopher Columbus established that the earth was round instead of flat. In 1632 Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei published his findings supporting the Copernican theory. The Church condemned Galileo as a dissenter from Church doctrine and sentenced him to house arrest for the last years of his life. However, centuries of research and a greater understanding of how to read and interpret Scripture led the Church in 1992 to retract its condemnation of Galileo and acknowledge that his viewpoints were neither contrary nor threatening to the Christian faith.

Another figure in the debate between science and religion was English naturalist Charles Darwin. In 1859 in *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin presented his theory of **evolution** by natural selection—that all living things evolved from a single organism by natural means. Early advocates of this theory believed it called into question the theory of **creationism** based on a literal interpretation of the Genesis story. In this story God created the universe in six days and created all things—including humans—mostly as they are today. Hence, many people

thought that belief in evolution was in opposition to belief in God's existence. Some equated the term *evolution* with **atheism**, the belief that there is no God.

As time went on, numerous people began to write about a "middle way," a theory that reflected both the Judeo-Christian belief in God's creative power and the theory of evolution. One proponent of this theistic, or God-centered, view of evolution was the English theologian William Paley. His theory was known as *intelligent design*—the idea that the development over time of an organism's complexity is evidence for the existence of a cosmic designer.

*Galileo's use of the telescope opened the door to a new way of looking at the world.*

## Let's Talk!

1. What do you believe about the origin of the universe?
2. Is there really any conflict between a faith-filled way of saying something and a scientific way of saying it? Give reasons for your answer.



It is very important to understand that there is no conflict between the scientific view of evolution (science) and the Bible (faith). For example, the creation story in the first chapter of Genesis was written thousands of years ago, before the time of scientific thinking. It was intended to convey religious truths, not to give scientific explanations for the origin of the world. The Book of Genesis stresses that the one true God is the power behind all of life. He continues to be present in the midst of creation, guiding and sustaining it.

## Further Thinking

In the twentieth century, a Jesuit priest named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin devoted his life to working in the area of science and religion. As a paleontologist and geologist, Teilhard spent over twenty years working on scientific expeditions in Africa and China. His work with human fossils resulted in important scientific publications. Teilhard's view was based on both his faith and his scientific perspective of the world.

Basically Teilhard viewed Christian belief from an evolutionary perspective. For example, Teilhard believed that all living things—including humans—evolve from simple forms to complex forms with higher levels of consciousness. God is behind this evolution, moving it forward toward a future time when all creatures will live in harmony and peace, in union with God.

According to Teilhard, the existence of the soul is one “proof” of the existence of God. Christian love constantly challenges the human soul to further growth, toward eventual communion with God. According to Teilhard, as he wrote in *The Divine Milieu*, the goal of each individual is “to become a life in common with the life of Christ.” This view does not set the physical world (science) and the spiritual world (faith) at odds with one another. Rather, this God-driven evolutionary process eventually welds science and faith into one.

**“We are sometimes inclined to think that the same things are monotonously repeated over and over again in the history of creation. That is because . . . the transformation is too vast and too inward by comparison with our superficial and restricted outlook, for us to see the progress of what is tirelessly taking place in and through all matter and all spirit. Let us believe. . . . Under the commonplace envelope of things, . . . new earth is being slowly engendered.”**

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, *THE DIVINE MILIEU*.

For Teilhard, “everything forms a single whole.” There is no further conflict between the physical and the spiritual. We, at last, are truly one in Christ Jesus. (*See Galatians 3:28.*)

In addition to the ideas explained here—which are consistent with Church teachings—Teilhard also proposed certain theories that were problematic. The Church was not comfortable with all of his teachings. Since many of the objectionable views were interspersed with theories that were in line with Church teaching, the Church did not allow Teilhard's works to be published during his lifetime. Many subsequent Catholic theologians were influenced by some of Teilhard's insights, most of which were published by friends after his death. His insights helped theologians see the connection between scientific theory and Catholic belief.



*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was both a priest and a paleontologist.*

## Research

Using the library or Internet, find out more about the life and theories of Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, and Charles Darwin. Why did their theories trouble people of faith? In what ways can we reconcile these scientific findings with belief in God? Prepare a brief report of your findings. Be prepared to discuss what effect these three scientists have had on understanding what faith really is.

# — FAITH IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY —

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people felt that the theory of evolution challenged their belief about creation and God as Creator. Where do people stand on the issue of God and evolution today? Here are the results of a 2001 Gallup poll:



*The first cloned sheep, Dolly, lived only six years, half the normal lifetime of sheep.*

- 45 percent of people in the United States believe that God at some time in the last ten thousand years or so, created humans pretty much in their present form. In other words, these people believe in creationism—God created everything, as it is, in six days.
- 12 percent believe in the theory of evolution—that humans evolved gradually over millions of years from less advanced forms of life—without God having any part of it.
- 37 percent believe in the theory of evolution *with* God's guidance.
- 6 percent had no opinion on the question.

In 2002 Channel One asked young people which theory they thought should be taught in school: creationism, evolution, or both.

- 31 percent said creationism.
- 17 percent said evolution.
- 52 percent said both.

Thanks to many people of faith, Catholic theologians now see that evolution is not inconsistent with Christian faith. The creation stories found in Genesis are not meant to be taken literally as science. Evolution does not necessarily negate God; rather, it can be seen as one possible way that he might have chosen to create.

## Activity

After reading Genesis 1:1—2:4 and the handout your teacher will provide, choose sides for a class debate. In the debate, present the pros and cons of each position: atheistic evolution, creationism, and intelligent design (theistic evolution). Discuss how a person of faith could or could not hold each position. Then decide which position you hold and explain why.

## Scientific Discovery and Religion

Today, new scientific developments, such as genetic research and medical techniques for artificial reproduction, challenge us to think about what we believe. Although these modern issues are different from the issue of evolution, they do deal with the beginnings, or creation, of human life.

For centuries, people have thought of God as an all-powerful deity. People believed in him because there was so much in the universe they could not explain. They reasoned that God must exist because he was the only one capable of making the planets and stars, trees and flowers, animals and humans. But now that science is enabling humans to acquire some of these powers for themselves, the religious questions present themselves: Is God really so powerful? Could the universe have been made without God's intervention? Do we need God? Does he really exist?

God created humans in his own image; humans have an immortal soul that cannot be created by human means. Furthermore, all human life—from the moment of conception—is sacred and should not be manipulated or destroyed for scientific experimentation. It is only within the sanctity of marriage that sexual activity and procreation should occur.

We need to appreciate the life-giving discoveries of science in medicine, healthcare, environmental life, and communications. The issue is not that science or religion alone can provide the right answers. The issue is *how we use* what we know, and whether it is “scientific knowledge” or “spiritual knowledge.” We need to use what we know in the right way. And the right way respects all of life, including the earth itself. We are caretakers of God's creation and caregivers to one another—and to all life. The right way leads to peace and harmony among all people.

## Does God Exist?

You have already learned that atheism is the belief that God does not exist. Belief in many gods (as with the ancient Romans and Greeks) is called **polytheism**. Belief in one God is called **monotheism**. The faith of Jews and Christians alike is monotheistic. This belief is centuries old, coming from the ancient Israelites. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone” (Deuteronomy 6:4). “I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 45:22).

The percent of believers in the United States population has not changed much in the last sixty years. Depending on the poll, those who believe in God have consistently accounted for 94 to 98 percent of the population, while the percentage of those who don't believe in God has varied between 1 and 5. Over this time, when people were asked to rate how strongly they believed in God's existence, the percentage of people who were “absolutely certain” that God exists ranged from 72 percent to 87 percent. Despite the recent developments in science, a Gallup poll in 2000 found that 96 percent of U.S. citizens continued to say they believed in God or a universal spirit. According to the same poll, nine out of ten U.S. citizens believed that God loves them. Eighty-four percent thought God was actively involved in their lives.

### Let's Talk!

1. Suppose scientific experimentation were someday able to produce every living thing. Would that mean that God does not exist? Explain.
2. Humanity has acquired a great deal of knowledge. How do humans use this acquired knowledge?
3. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? When might they be the same and under what circumstances?

### Reflection

1. How strongly do you believe in God's existence? Why?
2. Do you believe that God loves you and is actively involved in your life? Why?




# WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Specifically, the creed says the following about God the Father:

- **Apostles' Creed:**  
I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
- **Nicene Creed:**  
We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

Have you ever tried to describe your best friend to someone else? Chances are, there was a lot about your friend that you weren't able to put into words. The same is true of God. Words don't begin to encompass all that God is. Nevertheless we can begin to talk about God by using descriptive images. These images compare God to things we know, by saying that he is *like* some things and *not like* other things. "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). "God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind" (Numbers 23:19).

You have already seen that you can learn about God through nature and the human ability to reason. In addition, you can learn a lot about God through personal and communal prayer. A very important way you learn about him is through the Bible. Likewise you can learn about God through your family and the Church.



## Research



1. Read the story of Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush: Exodus 3:1–8, 11–14. Note: The words "I AM WHO I AM" are an English translation of the Hebrew YHWH (Yahweh). For the Israelites this was the most holy, not to be spoken, name of God—a special name for God not used in everyday conversation.
2. This Scripture passage tells us that God is the God of all times. Find the verse that addresses each of the following.
  - God is the God of the past.
  - God is the God of the present.
  - God is the God of the future.



## Reflection

1. What thoughts or feelings do you think Moses had when he saw the burning bush? (At this time in his life, he was running away from the pharaoh to escape punishment for killing an Egyptian.)
2. How do you think you would react if you "saw" God or heard his voice after school today? Why?

## A TEEN'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD

As Moses learned, God is "from everlasting to everlasting." He never stops loving us nor does he stop inviting us to friendship with him. Many ordinary people experience God's presence in unexpected ways. Here is the account of one high school senior:

It was a dreary Saturday afternoon, and I'd decided I had nothing better to do than clean my room. But when I leaned over to pick up the stack of dusty yearbooks from my closet, I realized I was holding a record of my life from elementary through high school.

Cleaning can wait, I thought, as I carried the stack to my bed. Picking up a yearbook from my early school years, I came across a photo of my third-grade class. Suddenly I remembered "The Great Mail Race." For this activity, our teacher had us writing other third graders all over the United States. The guy I wrote turned out to be a Christian. We continued to keep in touch over the years and I even got to meet him last summer.

For most of the afternoon, I traveled through the years and years of memories. There were the field trips, the tests, and those horrible pop quizzes. And there was the wintry day when school was cancelled. My friends and I spent the afternoon making snowmen, sledding, throwing snowballs, and just having a great time.

Then there was Ms. Boyd, my math teacher. She not only taught

me math; she showed me what it meant to be passionate about something you believe in. And she was passionate about teaching! I could see it in her eyes and hear it in her voice. She also loved students. She went that extra mile to help me understand difficult assignments.

As I looked at those yearbooks scattered about my bed, I realized something about God. He was there, that invisible presence in each and every memory. He was there during all the difficult tests and quizzes. He was there when I just "happened" to pick a pen pal who was a Christian. He was there on that winter day when I had so much fun with my friends. And he was the one who placed a wonderful teacher like Ms. Boyd in my life.

In recent weeks, I'd worried a lot about going to college this fall. Would I be able to get all my assignments done? Would I make new friends? Would I get homesick?

But as I sat there surrounded by all my memories, I felt like God was saying, "Rachel, I've been with you over the past twelve years of school. Why wouldn't I stick with you over the next four?"

"Thank you, God," I whispered. "Thanks for being with me—in the past, in the present, and, yes, even into the future."

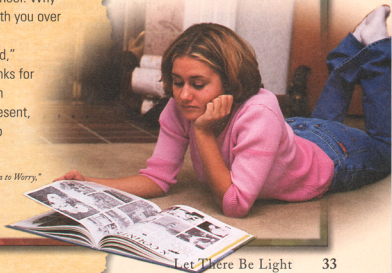
*Rachel Schlabach, "No Reason to Worry,"  
Campus Life (July 2001).*

### Let's Talk!

1. How do you think people of faith experience God's presence even, and perhaps especially, in difficult times? Explain.
2. How do you think people of faith can experience the presence of God in everyday situations like cleaning their rooms, taking out the garbage, sharing with a younger sibling, studying for a test, and so forth?

### Reflection

Describe ways you have experienced the presence of God in your life.



## Attributes of God

What else do the Scriptures tell about God? The Bible presents many attributes (characteristics) for him, including power, majesty, wisdom, love, mercy, and justice. He has many other wonderful attributes as well—for example, patience, truth, faithfulness, and goodness.

- **Power.** We believe that God is omnipotent; this means all-powerful. “[F]or God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). God created everything. He also rules everything.
- **Majesty.** We believe that God is the Lord of the universe, infinitely more mighty than earthly kings and presidents. “The LORD is king, he is robed in majesty” (Psalm 93:1). God is almighty “in heaven and on earth” (Psalm 135:6).
- **Wisdom.** We believe that God knows all things and has perfect judgment. He never makes a mistake. “For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:25).
- **Love.** We believe that God is perfect, unselfish, abounding, steadfast love. “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). God’s very being is Love.
- **Mercy.** We believe that God is compassionate and forgiving. He does not punish us as our sins deserve. Instead, he is “rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us,” even when we do wrong (Ephesians 2:4).
- **Justice.** We believe that God respects the true dignity of humans and treats all people fairly. “I am the LORD; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth” (Jeremiah 9:24). He deals equally with those who are rich and those who are poor.
- **Patience.** We believe that God is long suffering and “slow to anger” (see Exodus 34:5–6). “[Y]ou are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Nehemiah 9:17).
- **Truth.** We believe that God is Truth. His word can always be trusted. “O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true” (2 Samuel 7:28). Indeed, God is Truth itself.
- **Faithfulness.** We believe that God abounds in fidelity, or faithfulness. “The LORD . . . abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation” (Exodus 34:6–7).
- **Goodness.** We believe that God is perfect goodness. Indeed, God is infinitely good. His works are good, too. For this reason, we “give thanks to the LORD, for he is good” (Psalm 107:1).

It is important to remember that although these attributes are an attempt to describe God, they are not completely adequate. He is always more than humans can describe. That is why the Church sometimes calls God, “the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable” (The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom). Whenever we try to reduce God into human categories and definitions, we fall into a type of **idolatry**, or worship of a false god. We fail to worship the real God, who is always a transcendent mystery.

### Activity

God is a transcendent mystery, and yet God chooses to communicate himself to us in a personal relationship. Choose a medium, such as song, dance, or art, to express your feelings and thoughts about the mystery of God. Be prepared to share your work in class.

# THREE IN ONE

We believe in one God, but we also believe that there are three divine Persons in the one God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We call this mystery of three Persons in one God the **Trinity**. Whenever we make the Sign of the Cross, we profess our belief in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Catechism states, “the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life” (#234). Remember the definition of *faith*—a free and positive response to God’s initiative. Also remember the purpose of faith—to praise God with whom we have a loving relationship. The Trinity is the bedrock of Christian faith. It is important to look more closely at what we mean by *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. Understanding what we mean will help us get a better appreciation of how the Persons of the Trinity relate to us.

## The Mystery of the Trinity

Throughout the centuries, the Church has recognized God’s role in creation, redemption, and sanctification. God is Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Christians sometimes identify each of these aspects with a different Person of the Holy Trinity. Sometimes, they relate the Father to the work of creation, although the three Persons are involved in the work of creation. Sometimes they relate the Son of God to the work of redemption, although all three Persons are involved in the work of redemption. Sometimes they relate the Holy Spirit to the work of sanctification, although all three Persons are involved in the work of making holy.

Each divine Person in the Trinity shows forth what is proper to that divine Person as Father, Son, or Spirit. At the same time, we believe the divine Persons are inseparable in who they are and what they do. As it is written in the Catechism, “God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange” (#221). Jesus taught, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will make our home with them” (John 14:23).



### Let's Talk!

1. Define your concept of a good father.
2. How do you think the image of God as Father affects how you are supposed to act toward others, especially children?



### Reflection

1. Write about some of the ways that you experience God as a Father.
2. Write about your experience of Jesus. Who is Jesus to you? How can you be like Jesus for others? How have you experienced being a child of God through Jesus? As God’s child, list three ways you can imitate Jesus.
3. Describe a time you felt God’s Spirit working in you. In what ways did you feel inspired or empowered by the Holy Spirit?

## God the Father

God our loving Father is a continuing presence in our lives. He truly cares about us and is with us every step of the way throughout life, as described in the following Scripture passage.

“When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.


The more I called them,  
the more they went from me;  
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,  
and offering incense to idols.

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
I took them up in my arms;  
but they did not know that I healed them.

I led them with cords of human kindness,  
with bands of love.

I was to them like those  
who lift infants to their cheeks.  
I bent down to them and fed them.”

HOSEA 11:1-4



By calling God “Father,” we express many things about our faith. Firstly, we proclaim that God is the origin of everything and that he has authority over everything he has created. Secondly, we express our faith in God’s fatherly care for all his children. And thirdly, we witness to the fact that he is the Father of his only begotten Son, who in turn is the Son only in relation to his Father. Jesus himself said, “All things have been handed over to me by my Father: and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

God’s loving kindness and tenderness can also be described by the image of motherhood. The image “emphasizes God’s immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man” (CCC, #239).

## Activities

1. Reread Isaiah 66:13 in the text, and read Psalm 131:2. In a small group, discuss how comfortable or uncomfortable you are in relating to God with the qualities of a Mother. Discuss reasons for your reactions.
2. Using the handout your teacher will provide, read and summarize the Scripture passages referring to God as Father. Then write a poem or use another medium to describe God as Father.

## God the Son

God the Son is the second Person of the Trinity who took on human nature. The Gospels twice record the voice of God the Father calling Jesus “beloved Son”—at Jesus’ baptism and at the Transfiguration. Here is Matthew’s account of Jesus’ baptism.

**“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John [the Baptist] at the Jordan [River], to be baptized by him. . . . And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’ ”**

MATTHEW 3:13, 16–17

The baptism of Jesus is recorded also in the Gospels according to Luke and John. John the Baptist, after baptizing Jesus, declares, “I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).

At his Transfiguration, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up the mountain away from the crowds; there God the Father refers to Jesus as his Son. While they are there, Jesus is transfigured—changed in appearance. A bright cloud comes over them, shining on Jesus, and a voice from the cloud says, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him.” (Matthew 17:5). Jesus calls himself the “only Son of God” (John 3:18). And at the crucifixion of Jesus, even the Roman soldier declares, “Truly this man was God’s Son.” (Mark 15:39).

From his Resurrection on, the followers of Jesus believe in him as the Son of God, and early in its councils, the Church declared its faith in “the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father” (Nicene Creed).

The second divine Person of the Trinity, who became a man, took on human nature. He became one like us in all things except sin. Jesus was here, is still here, and will always be here. Listen to Jesus’ words:

**“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. ”**

MATTHEW 28:18–20



## Activities

1. The New Testament applies the title *Son of God* to Jesus 97 times. Using the handout your teacher will provide, read and summarize the Scripture passages referring to God the Son.
2. To reflect on God the Son, research the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary and pray with them to enhance your biblical appreciation of Jesus’ life and ministry.

## God the Holy Spirit

There are different ways God relates to us.

- God is transcendent, that is, beyond all possible experience and knowledge. He is greater than us; he is *outside* us.
- He is personal, that is, united through love with all of creation. This is the God we find in loving relationships with *others*.
- He is immanent, in other words, embedded within creation. God is *within* us.



Although all three Persons of the Holy Trinity relate to us in all of these ways, we sometimes identify the Holy Spirit (Sanctifier, Helper) as the God within. For example, the Church teaches that he dwells in the entire Church and in each baptized person. Paul tells the Christians in Rome, “the Spirit of God dwells in you” (Romans 8:9). Thus, the Holy Spirit is a personal being; he knows and loves the Father and the Son. He also loves the human race whom he created. He stands in sharp contrast to a society that often represents divinity as impersonal power or force.

We cannot see the Holy Spirit, just as we cannot see air or breath. And yet we all know what happens to a balloon or a tire when the air has been let out. The balloon or tire is deflated or flat. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit fills us with God’s own life. Through Scripture we come to know who he is. In the Old Testament the word *ruah*, which means “breath or principle of life,” is used over and over. The Holy Spirit is the breath—life—of God. The opening lines of Genesis tell of the creation of the world: “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1–2).

The Holy Spirit breathes God’s life within us. As it says in the Book of Numbers about Moses and the elders, “Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied . . .” (Numbers 11:25). The Holy Spirit is at work in us, giving us hope and courage. He changes us by creating in us a new spirit and a caring heart, “a heart of flesh” (see Ezekiel 11:19).

### Activity

Using the handout your teacher will provide, read and summarize the Scripture passages referring to the Holy Spirit. Then draw a picture or create a collage representing what the passages tell you about him.

The Holy Spirit opens us to the gift of faith, freeing us to respond fully to God's invitation of love. For example, in the New Testament, Mary agrees to become the mother of Jesus: "The angel said to her, '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 holy; he will be called Son of God'...." Then Mary said, "...let it be with me according to your word'" (Luke 1:35, 38).

And at the first Pentecost:

**"And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."**

ACTS 2:2-4

We learn from Scripture that Jesus is God and man from the moment of his conception. The Holy Spirit is in the Apostles and in the Church. He fills Church members with wisdom, faith, encouragement, truth, joy, love, and hope. He is an agent of holiness. As people of faith, we are temples of the Holy Spirit; he makes his home in us (1 Corinthians 3:16) and helps us pray.

Sometimes, people worry because they cannot see God directly. They ask: How can we really be sure that God is there, loving and caring for us? Because, in times of quiet attention, of quiet awareness, we look at our lives and we *know* that the Holy Spirit was there—and *is* there, and *will be* there.

## Activity

Without God's Spirit, we are lifeless—much like the dry bones in the vision of the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. Read Ezekiel 37:1-14. What message is there for you in this passage?



## Let's Talk!

1. What are five attitudes and behaviors we should have toward ourselves if we truly believe we are temples of the Holy Spirit?
2. What are some practical ways young people can act as a channel of the Holy Spirit for others?



# IT IS GOOD

In the first part of the creed, we state not only our belief in God's existence but also our belief in God as Creator. This belief conjures questions humans have asked for centuries: Where do we come from? What is our origin? Is the universe governed by blind fate or by a transcendent, intelligent Being? If the world does come from God who is good, why is there so much that is *not* good? Why are there tragedies? Why are there disasters in nature—like devastating hurricanes and earthquakes and tornadoes and floods? Why is there sickness? Why is there suffering? Why is there death?



To attempt to answer these questions, we must start at the beginning. At one time nothing existed. Then, God, in his infinite wisdom and power, created the universe, the world, and man. Here, the word *creation* doesn't just mean to make something. It means to make something *ex nihilo*, which means "out of nothing." Only God can create out of nothing. To make new things, humans have to use previously existing elements. For example, an artist makes a picture by using paints, canvas, and a paintbrush. A contractor makes a new building by using concrete, steel beams, wood, nails, screws, bricks, and other materials. We don't know how God created the world. Even the Bible doesn't present one definitive answer to this mystery. In fact, there are two accounts of creation in the Book of Genesis, and these accounts differ in their details.

The first story of creation is found in Genesis 1:1—2:4. God creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh. The author of this story did not intend to write historical or scientific facts. Rather, they were trying to convey truths of faith about God, creation, and his plan for his creation. While we cannot know precisely the authors' purpose for writing, we have a sense of what the authors wanted to affirm and what God wanted to make known to us through their words.



Through the first creation account, the authors:

- explained their belief that the one God is the Creator of all things in the universe. “God alone created the universe freely, directly, and without any help” (Catechism, #317). He created everything out of nothing.
- showed the unique presence of God in the creation of humans. Humans are special among God’s creation. They have dignity because they are made in his image (Genesis 1:27). Humans are not the same as animals, nor are they the same as **angels**. Both angels and humans have intellect and free will. Angels, however, are pure spirits, whereas humans have both a body and an eternal soul. Angels continually behold the face of God in heaven; they act as his servants and messengers.
- illustrated that the created world is good: “. . . indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). God created the world according to his wisdom and love. All creatures are called to share in his truth, goodness, and beauty.
- showed that humankind is to take care of the earth and all that is upon it. This we call **stewardship**.

## Activity

Working in a small group, come up with five ways that young people today can act as good stewards of the earth. Then formulate a stewardship creed by which you will live and abide. Decorate and post the creed as a reminder of your responsibilities.

## The Origin of Evil

The second story of creation is found in Genesis 2:4—3:24 and includes the story of the Fall. The author of this story seem to have had a purpose different from the author of the first story. He tells of a lost paradise in the Garden of Eden, and he attempts to answer the question: Why does evil exist in the world?

This second story of creation is about the first humans, called Adam and Eve, and their disobedience of God. The author explains that the created world is not perfect or complete. There is sin; there is evil. But God is not the source of evil; humans are. He created humans with free will, the ability to choose. Because humans are created with free will, they can also choose to sin by not following God's will.

According to the author of this creation account, God created Adam and Eve, in a state of holiness and friendship with him. The first humans lived in a lush garden where they did not want for anything. When tempted by the serpent (Satan, the devil, a powerful person of evil), they freely chose to disobey God, thus bringing sin and death into the world. In this story, Adam and Eve give in to temptation. They choose to sin by preferring themselves over God. We call their sin the **original sin**. Furthermore, we believe that this first, original sin has been passed down to all humans (except Jesus and Mary) ever since. Because of original sin, human nature is weakened. For that reason, we are often tempted to sin, to turn away from God, and to be less than he intended (CCC, #s 388, 399, 402-05).

To understand what God is revealing through the second creation story in the Bible, a look at the conclusion will help. He promises to be with the human race and save people from their own tendency to sin. Within the second creation story, we find evidence of the existence of Satan. We also find hints of God's promise of future **salvation**, which is God's forgiveness of sins and the complete reconciliation of humans with him through Jesus.

“I will put enmity between you [the serpent, the devil, evil] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

GENESIS 3:15

Regardless of what scientific discoveries are made in the future, the message in Scripture will always remain true: Humans, although basically good, are capable of committing terrible acts of evil against God and one another. But we believe that God sent his Son to free us from evil. He is infinitely creative and loving. He knows how to derive good from any situation of evil or suffering.



### Let's Talk!

Discuss this statement: The devil is a powerful person who sometimes tempts us to sin.



### Reflection

Write about a time when good came from a situation of evil or suffering in your own life or the life of your family.

# PUTTING GOD FIRST

Belief in God's existence and role as the supreme Creator of all things leads us to a further belief—that we have certain responsibilities, or obligations, toward him. Essentially, “our duty toward God is to believe in him and to bear witness to him” (Catechism, #2087). This duty was originally expressed in the **Ten Commandments**, the ten fundamental moral laws given by God to his people and recorded in the Old Testament. The commandments relate to loving God and others. The first three commandments read as follows.

1. I, the Lord, am your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.  
(See *Exodus 20:2, 3*.)
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.  
(See *Exodus 20:7*.)
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day. (See *Exodus 20:8*.)

The first commandment teaches us to put God first in our lives, to place our hope and trust in him, to believe in him and all that he has revealed. We have a duty to nourish and protect our faith, as well as help it develop and grow. The second commandment says that we should be careful about how we use the name of God, Jesus Christ, his mother Mary, and the saints. It is not right to swear, using God's name to condemn someone else. The third commandment tells us to worship and praise God on Sunday, to avoid unnecessary work on the Lord's Day, and to “avoid making unnecessary demands on others that would hinder them from observing the Lord's Day” (CCC, #2195).

In short, these commandments remind us that we owe respect and reverence to God. We are to adore, or worship, him alone. He is to be first in our lives—in our priorities, in our thoughts, in our words, in our actions, and in our hearts. Jesus summarized these three commandments in the Great Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). Love of God is to be the motive behind everything we do.

Perhaps you are thinking that these commandments were meant only for ancient peoples who worshiped many gods. Actually, they are quite relevant to people today. Our “false gods” are not necessarily the many gods of the Romans and Greeks, gods like Apollo or Pluto. Instead, they can be any of the things we consider more important than God.

## Let's Talk!

Who are some of your idols? How do you want to be like them? Who or what are some of the false gods of today? Why?



*The third commandment is a call to worship and praise God on the Lord's day.*

## Activity

Put together a list of questions that teens could use to examine their conscience in terms of the first three commandments.

## Modern-day Idols

Many young people today idolize movie stars, musicians, and sports heroes. They have posters of these people in their bedrooms; they have all their DVDs, CDs, or trading cards. They may even talk and dress like their idols. Having a favorite movie star or sports hero is not wrong in itself. However, it becomes sinful when it becomes more important than loving God or loving other people.

Some young people today pursue the “false gods” of popularity and money. In order to “fit in” and be liked, they focus on having the most possessions, driving the hottest cars, and spending a lot of money. Some teens think nothing of stealing, cheating, committing sinful sexual acts, or selling drugs in order to live the lifestyle they idolize.

Other young people may “worship” the latest fashion fad. They spend hours on their make-up, clothes, or hair, and are overly worried that others will judge them on these externals.



### Reflection

What is most important in your life (popularity, money, possessions, pleasure . . .)? Do you think your priorities are in line with your faith, or do you think they need some altering? Explain.

## Superstition as an Idol

For many people, the false god is superstition. They may ascribe magical, godlike powers to certain actions or charms. For example, some teens may believe that no harm will happen to them as long as they wear a special necklace. Others may carry around a rabbit's foot or four-leafed clover, believing that it will bring them good luck. Or they may place their faith in numerology, palm reading, New Age auras, or the horoscope.

The truth is: Whenever we try to control or limit God, we are sinning against the first three commandments. Whenever we neglect our relationship with him—by not taking time for personal prayer, participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or acting as Christians—we are placing something else ahead of God. Whenever we place so much emphasis on one part of life and neglect loving him and others, we are practicing idolatry.



*Superstitious practices are not always as harmless as they may seem.*

### Let's Talk!

1. What are some superstitions with which you are familiar? How do you think people can be less superstitious and grow more in real faith?
2. When do you think praying before a sports event is a form of superstition? When is it a healthy expression of faith?
3. In a recent movie or video that you have seen, what examples are there of people who are guilty of idolatry or superstitions?

# WORSHIP OF THE TRINITY

Catholics gather to praise and worship God in **liturgy**, the official public prayer of the Church. The original meaning of the word *liturgy* was a public work, or a service in the name of or on behalf of the people. In Christian terms, the word *liturgy* describes the participation of the whole People of God in the work of God.



*The majority of Catholics today are baptized as infants.*

Liturgy consists of the celebration of the sacraments, first and foremost the Eucharist, and the Liturgy of the Hours. A **sacrament** is an effective sign that conveys grace. Sacraments were established by Jesus and given to the Church through which God shares his life by the work of the Holy Spirit. In the sacraments Jesus continues his saving work. During his life, Jesus welcomed, fed, healed, and forgave people. Through the sacraments he continues to share God's life and love with his followers.

The Catholic Church celebrates seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. In addition to the sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours is a prayer that includes psalms and readings and is prayed several times a day as a way to mark time as holy and recall God's saving work in creation.

In its liturgy, the Church uses prayers, symbols, and ritual gestures to celebrate the Holy Trinity. The Trinity acts in and through those gathered.

- God the Father is blessed and adored for the many blessings of his creation and for the salvation and new life that he shares through his Son, Jesus.
- God the Son is present among the people gathered, and the saving work of Christ is made present by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God the Holy Spirit readies the hearts and minds of those present to encounter Christ. The Holy Spirit helps those gathered to recall their faith and unites them as Church.



## Reflection

Imagine that God is speaking to you and saying to you the words he said of his own Son: "You are my beloved son (or daughter), with whom I am well pleased." Think about these words. Then write your response to them.

In the Sacrament of **Baptism**, the first sacrament celebrated, the Church continues the mission of the Apostles to "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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism is the first of three Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Through the waters of Baptism, there is a new birth, a new identity, if you will. The baptized are no longer just the children of biological parents, but they become the adopted sons and daughters of God through Baptism. God forgives both original sin and any actual (personal) sins committed prior to Baptism. The Holy Spirit is received at Baptism (Acts 19:2, 6; 2:38), and those baptized become brothers and sisters of Jesus; they are incorporated into the Body of Christ as members of his Church. "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13). In essence, those who are baptized become members of the Christian family of God.



In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Church uses important words and symbols to help celebrate and remind people of their new relationship with God as Trinity.

- The person being baptized is immersed in water, or water is poured over the person's head; the water used is called the "matter" of the Sacrament. While the water is poured, the words of Baptism are pronounced: "N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." These words are called the "Form of the Sacrament."
- **Water** is a reminder of the waters God created at the beginning of the world, the waters that eventually gave birth to all material forms of life. The baptismal water washes away original sin. Through water it is recalled how God helped the ancient Israelites escape from Egypt, cross the waters of the Red Sea, and later cross the Jordan River to enter the promised land.
- Holy **oil**, called *chrism*, is a reminder that God has chosen and called each one to be his own. The baptized person is anointed with the Holy Spirit and given a mission to live as a follower of Jesus.
- The **candle** is a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world and that all those who are baptized are called to bring his light to others.
- The **white garment** is a reminder of purification and being clothed in Christ, to live in imitation of him.



### Let's Talk!

Discuss how people, particularly young people, can be made to feel welcomed to the Church, the Body of Christ, God's family.

### Activity

Make or decorate a candle whose shape, symbols, and color express what Baptism means to you.



## Let's Talk!

1. What are some ways that married couples can serve the Church?
2. What are the characteristics of a truly sacramental marriage, a union formed by God? (See CCC, #1638)



## Activity

Draw a design for a wedding ring that expresses what the Sacrament of Marriage means to you.

## Celebrating God as Creator

One way that Catholics gather to celebrate God as Creator is in the sacrament of **Matrimony**, or Marriage. This Sacrament at the Service of Communion celebrates the commitment of a man and a woman, both being baptized Christians, to love each other in imitation of the faithfulness that God has shown to humanity throughout history. The man and woman affirm God's image in one another and pray that he will bless their union as a new family in the Church. They also pray that they will be good parents if he wishes them to have children.

Marriage is a holy and equal partnership between a man and a woman. It finds its origins in the Genesis creation stories, as God created man and woman for a sacred partnership—a covenant relationship reflecting his covenant relationship with humankind and reflecting the union between Christ and his Church.

“This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.’  
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother  
and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

GENESIS 2:23–24

Through marriage, the couple embarks upon a life of commitment to each other and to God to love one another with self-giving love and faithfulness. The grace of the sacrament of Matrimony strengthens the couple to be true and to love each other as Christ loves the Church. The Catholic Church supports them in their promise of fidelity.

Likewise through marriage, the bride and groom share in God's own creativity. Each person of the Trinity helps them carry out their responsibilities. The bishops state: “By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love are ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory” (*Documents of Vatican II*, “The Church in the Modern World,” #48). Parents have the duty to pass on their faith to their children. They also have the obligation to provide for the health, safety, and education of their children.

Married couples are a great gift to the Catholic Church, serving it in many ways. Their mutual love and self-giving inspire other Church members to grow in unselfishness and faithfulness. “[B]elieving families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith” (Catechism, #1656). For this reason, the Catholic family is a *domestic church*. It is the place where a new generation receives life, expresses its faith, and grows in holiness.

Rings are often exchanged in marriage. Just as there is no beginning or end to the ring's circle, so there is no beginning or end to God's love for us. Thus there can be no end to a sacramental marriage, a union formed by God.

# PRAYERS OF ADORATION

One kind of prayer is **adoration**, or worship and honor given to God. Recall that the first three commandments deal with worship of and respect for him as the Creator and Sustainer of all that is. When prayers of adoration are prayed, there is affirmation of God as Creator of all. There is an acknowledgement of respect, honor, and reverence of him who is the Creator from the one who is created.

In the earliest prayers of the Bible, the psalms, or *song-prayers*, are examples of prayers of adoration:

**“The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?”**

PSALM 27:1

**“For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light.”**

PSALM 36:9

**“Bless the LORD, O my soul.  
O LORD my God, you are very great.  
You are clothed with honor and majesty,  
wrapped in light as with a garment.”**

PSALM 104:1-2

Other examples of prayers of adoration can be found in the Mass. During the first part of Mass, the Glory to God is prayed. Just before the Great Amen, which is prayed before the Lord's Prayer, the priest prays in adoration: “Through him [Jesus Christ], with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever.” The Doxology, or *Glory to the Father*, and the Lord's Prayer are also prayers of glory and adoration.

God as Father is acknowledged and adored in community but also in the silence of one's heart. Jesus has this to say about private, silent prayer:

**“ . . . whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. . . . your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”**

MATTHEW 6:6, 8

Growing in trust of God as a good Father and Provider, Creator and Sustainer is an important aspect of the prayer of adoration.

## Activity

In the Bible, adoration psalms tend to follow a specific literary structure. Choose one of the adoration psalms listed on the handout your teacher will provide. Show how the psalm follows, or does not follow, the typical literary structure.





## Let's Talk!

1. Read Matthew 6:25–34. What do you think this story is telling us about prayer?
2. Do you think God would be acting as a good Parent and Provider if he allowed us to be lazy and do nothing to better the world? Explain.

## Surrender to God

Learning how to trust God—to let him take charge of one's life—requires deep faith. It also requires prayer. On the one hand, we need to realize that God loves us and always wants what is best for us. His will is what is most important—not necessarily something we think we want at the moment. We need to “let go and let God.” Instead of worrying or living in fear of the future, we need to surrender ourselves to God's loving plan for us.

Yet, we need to remember that he gave us the duty of stewardship, that is, to do our part in taking care of creation and in helping to build his kingdom. To put it simply, when we pray, we cannot expect God to do all the work for us. There's still work we have to do for ourselves. Prayer doesn't allow us to be lazy.

For example, suppose there is a big test coming up on Friday. Student A prays to God, asking that she will pass the test. But she never studies ahead of time. Student B prays to God, asking that he will pass the same test. And he studies every day that week so he is prepared to take the test. Which person will likely receive a good grade on the test? You guessed it: student B.

Wise people tell us that prayer doesn't change God. He, after all, always knows and wants what is best for us. Instead, prayer changes *us*. Prayer makes us more open to the grace of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It opens us up to his will. It helps us do our part, to shoulder our own responsibility in making good things happen.



## Activity

After reading the story on page 52, use the handout your teacher will provide to read more about the legacy of César Chávez, especially on Mexican American immigrants. Then, using the Internet or library, do additional research on one of the following topics and present your findings to the class.

- The situation of migrant farm workers in your state
- The number and involvement of Mexican American Catholics in your diocese
- Why it is important that Catholics of all ethnic groups feel that they belong to the Church, and what we can do to help people of all ethnic groups feel welcome?



*Faith must be lived!*

## Your Relationship with God

It is important to act on your prayers—to translate your faith into everyday actions. God calls you to do this in your own way, in the situations in which you find yourself today. If you really believe in him, here is how your life will likely be affected.

1. You will be humble because you will never forget your place before God. You remember that you are the created and that he is the Creator. Your purpose is to serve him, and not the other way around.
2. You will live every day with a sense of thanksgiving for the gift of life, in imitation of Jesus, who always thanked his Father. You are ever mindful that everything you have comes from God, not just from your own efforts.
3. You recognize the human dignity of all people—regardless of age, race, gender, or nationality—that comes to everyone through the power of the Holy Spirit. You believe every person is made in the image and likeness of God and is therefore worthy of respect.
4. You accept your responsibility to take care of the world. You try to make good use of created things, not wasting them. You have a certain detachment from created things because you know they are not God and cannot make you completely happy. You don't worship created things; instead, you worship him alone.
5. You trust God in every circumstance. You truly believe that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28). He not only created you; he also sustains you through Jesus, his Son, and the gift of the Holy Spirit and helps you reach him—your destiny.

### Activity

Using a Bible and your journal, complete the handout your teacher will provide. Bring your journal to the closing prayer.

# A PERSON OF FAITH

## César Chávez



This Mexican American was born on March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona. The Chávez family lived in unrelenting poverty on a small farm. In 1939 when the Great Depression and unpaid taxes forced them off their land, the family became migrant workers. Migrant fieldwork results in a short, poor, and unhealthy life. The rate of hypertension, diabetes, and infectious disease is higher than in the general population. The per capita income is 50 percent lower than the national average.

The Chávez family traveled through Arizona and California to harvest crops by hand. During this time the family lived in tents or shacks in migrant labor camps. César attended sixty-five different elementary schools because of this nomadic existence, and he dropped out of school after the seventh grade so that he could work in the fields himself.

In 1946 Chávez married another migrant worker, Helen Fabela. Together they raised eight children. In 1952 Chávez met Father Donald McDonnell, who taught him about

the Church's social teachings and explained the right of workers to organize. From that time on, Chávez worked day and night to improve the lot of migrant workers by organizing them.

In 1962 with the assistance of Dolores Huerta, Chávez formed the National Farm Workers Association. By 1965 the union had 1,200 members. That same year the National Farm Workers joined the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee to stage a strike and a boycott against the grape growers in Delano, California. The strike lasted five long years and became the largest agricultural strike in California history.

At the basis of the strike was Chávez's firm belief in the dignity of all people, including the migrant farm workers. The farm workers, he taught, were entitled to decent wages, safe and sanitary working conditions, health insurance, and humane hours. In addition, he worried about the long-term human and environmental impact of the pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides used in farming. These beliefs formed "The Cause" ("La Causa") to which Chávez dedicated the rest of his life.

During the strike, Chávez worked tirelessly to advocate nonviolence based on the teachings of Jesus and Saint Francis of Assisi. The only weapons Chávez used were public marches, economic boycotts, and volunteer fasting, in addition to daily Mass. In *The Confessions of the Tortilla Priest* (National Catholic Reporter, 7 May 1993), Father Victor Salandini quotes Chávez himself: "It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of

courage . . . is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice." In fact, in 1967 Chávez led a twenty-five-day march that spanned three hundred miles from Delano, California, to Sacramento. Starting with sixty-five farm workers, the march swelled to ten thousand supporters and made newspaper headlines.

After the strike ended, Chávez's union grew rapidly; it also changed its name to the United Farm Workers Association (UFWA). On April 23, 1993, Chávez died of a heart attack. Over 35,000 mourners were part of the funeral procession.

In the funeral eulogy, Cardinal Roger Mahony said, "Deeply rooted in his Catholic faith and its social teachings, everything César did was underpinned by the strength of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . César really believed that God was with him and his band of pioneering organizers. His message to the workers was simple but powerful: God did not intend for them and their families to live and work as human robots, devoid of dignity, decent wages, and benefits most United States workers take for granted. . . . His vision always saw far beyond the immediate obstacles and crosses that he and his workers so often encountered. His faith was deeply grounded in God's words and promises, and like the prophets of old, he spoke truth and justice with penetrating words and images" (National Catholic Reporter, 7 May 1993).

## Celebrating Faith

Opening Song: "Holy Ground"

Leader: Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD! (Psalm 4:6)

All: **Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!**

Reading: In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him,  
and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not overcome it.

John 1:1-5

In silence, reread the journal entry you made.

Leader: Those who wish may now share their own spontaneous prayer of adoration to God. (*Allow time for sharing.*)

Leader: Let us conclude our prayer with the prayer our Lord taught us:  
Our Father...



# Review

1. How can the Catholic faith be best described: polytheistic, monotheistic, or atheistic? Why?
2. What are the six traditional attributes of God? What are additional attributes of God? Do these attributes adequately describe God? Why?
3. What does it mean to say that God is Father?
4. What does it mean to say that God is Son?
5. What does it mean to say that God is Spirit?
6. What are the first three commandments? What do they tell about humans' relationship and obligations toward God?
7. How does Baptism celebrate God as Trinity?
8. How does Marriage celebrate God as Creator?
9. What is a prayer of adoration?
10. How does belief in God affect a person's life?

## WORDS OF FAITH

**adoration**—worship and honor given to God as Creator and Sustainer of all that is

**angels**—created beings who are pure spirits with intelligence and free will, but without bodies, who act as God's messengers

**atheism**—the belief that there is no God

**Baptism**—the sacrament of new life in God and of incorporation into the Church performed with water and the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"; the first Sacrament of Initiation

**creationism**—the theory that the Genesis story in the Bible is literally true, that God created the universe and everything in it in six days and out of nothing

**evolution**—a process of continuous change from a simple form to a more complex form. As a theory of the development of life forms, evolution includes the idea, for example, that apes and humans have a common ancestor.

**idolatry**—worship of a false god

**liturgy**—the official public prayer of the Church through which Christ continues the work of redemption through the Church's celebration of the Paschal mystery

**Matrimony**—a Sacrament at Service of Communion, the sacrament that celebrates the sacred covenant between a baptized man and woman who promise to be faithful to one another until death. Marriage is ordered to the mutual love of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children.

# Enrichment

Choose one of the following to present to the class.

1. Saint Patrick used the shamrock or three-leaf clover to explain the Trinity. Create your own symbol for the Trinity by using a model as Saint Patrick did or by drawing a picture. Write a brief explanation of your symbol.
2. Interview your parents about your Baptism. Find out when and where (church, place) you were baptized, who your godparents were, who baptized you, and why you were baptized.
3. Select three of your favorite songs. Write out some of the words from each song, along with the song titles and artists or groups. Explain how each song either represents the values behind the first three commandments or goes against these values.

**monotheism**—the belief in one God only

**original sin**—the first decision by humans to disobey God. All people (except Jesus and Mary) are born with original sin, a wounded human nature that is tempted to choose wrong over right.

**polytheism**—the belief in many gods

**sacrament**—an effective sign, established by Jesus and given to his Church, by which God shares his life through the work of the Holy Spirit

**salvation**—God's action accomplished through Jesus of freeing people from sin and restoring them to friendship with God

**stewardship**—the responsibility God gave humans to take care of the earth and everything in it

**Ten Commandments**—the ten fundamental moral laws given by God to his people and recorded in the Old Testament