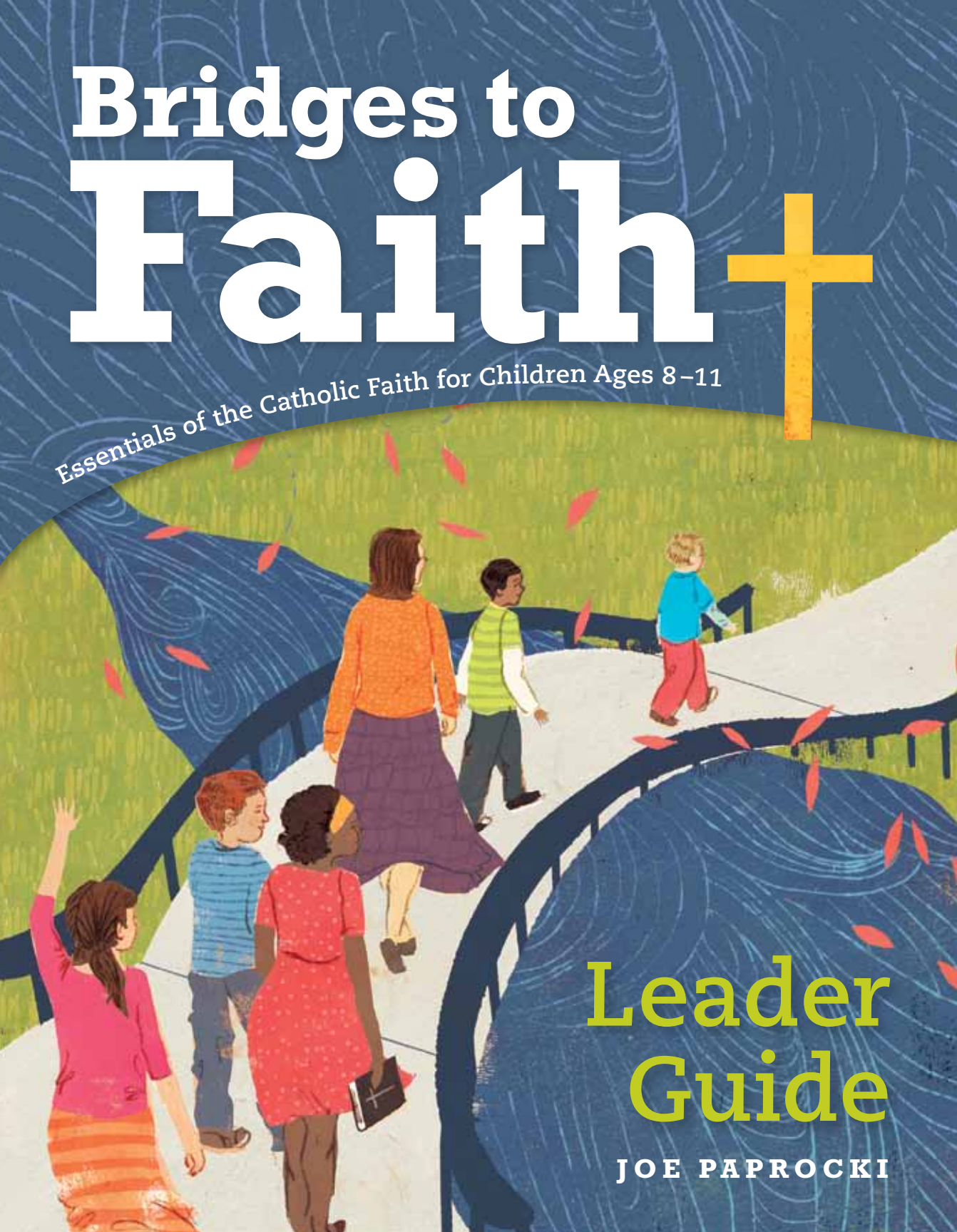


Bridges to Faith+

Essentials of the Catholic Faith for Children Ages 8–11



Leader Guide

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CHAPTER 1

Passing On Faith

Children's Book pages 9–14

Chapter Summary

We receive the Catholic faith as though receiving a special Christmas tree ornament, passed on from one generation to the next—to be treasured, protected, and passed on again.

Learning Goals

Children should be able to identify and summarize

- the four pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*—the Creed, the sacraments, the moral life, and prayer.
- the Nicene Creed.
- how we are called to be disciples of Christ.

PREPARE

Catechist Background

This session is about how we pass on our faith. The four pillars of the *Catechism* are introduced, and from the beginning of our faith journey at Baptism, we are called to be disciples and to teach others about our faith. The Creed, the sacraments, the moral life, and prayer are the four pillars that form the foundation of our faith.

(CCC: 185–197, 1113–1134)

Materials

- modeling clay (enough for each class member or for at least three volunteers)
- Bible
- Optional: audio player and a sacred hymn such as “Abba! Father”; “We Walk by Faith”; “I Have Loved You”; “Here I am, Lord”; or “I Say Yes”

ENGAGE

Welcome children. Have children quiet themselves. Then open with the Sign of the Cross and the following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we praise you for your faithfulness. Help us to be aware of your presence as we learn to trust and believe in you. Help us to stay close to you in all that we do. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Distribute clay to each child. Invite children to sculpt something using the clay. Allow a few minutes for children to work. Then have children show and tell, inviting children to describe what they have formed out of the clay.

Tell the group that one ancient image of God is of a potter—a person who makes things out of clay. **Say:**

Yet, LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you our potter: we are all the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:7)

Emphasize that the potter forms the clay, and not the other way around. Explain that this means that God is shaping us and asking us to pay attention and listen to nourish our faith.

EXPLORE

Have a volunteer read aloud the introduction on page 9. Ask children to name objects that are treasured in their families, such as pictures, quilts, and Christmas ornaments. List on the board their responses. Explain how our faith is a treasure to be passed on. **Say:** *When we stay close to God, we can build a good relationship with God and with other people. The Church helps us do this in many different ways. In this session, we will learn how God and the Church hand down our faith to us and help us become good Catholics.*

Have a volunteer read aloud Making Christians on page 10. **Say:** *Each of us is being formed into a disciple of Christ. Being made into disciples and helping others to become disciples is our most important responsibility. So just how is a Christian—a disciple of Christ—made? Let's take a closer look at this idea.*



Think and Write

Ask children to describe what they think a Christian is. Then have them complete the activity on page 10.

Have a volunteer read aloud Looking Ahead on page 10. **Say:** *We are told in this Bible passage that Christian life is based on four things: the teaching of the apostles, living together in community, the breaking of the bread, and prayer.*

Have volunteers read aloud *The Four Pillars of Our Faith* and *The Creed* on pages 11–12. Have children recall the four pillars and write them on the board. Ask children to tell what they know about the Creed. Write on the board children's responses.

Facts of Our Faith: *The Nicene Creed*

Read aloud the feature on page 11. Point out that we pray the Nicene Creed most Sundays at Mass after the Homily and that it is a summary of what we believe. Invite children to turn to the Prayer section in the back of their books to pray aloud *The Nicene Creed* together.

Read aloud *The Sacraments* on page 12. List on the board the sacraments: *Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders*. Discuss what children know about each sacrament.

Live It!

Have children work in pairs to discuss ways to make someone feel welcome in the parish community. Then have children write their own responses on page 12.

Ask volunteers to read aloud *The Moral Life* on page 12. Point out that all people sometimes do things that are wrong, but that our goal is to try our best to make good choices and live a moral life. Explain that by following the Ten Commandments, we can do this. Remind children that if we do things that are wrong, we can always ask God for forgiveness.

Facts of Our Faith: *The Commandments*

Have a volunteer read aloud the feature on page 12. Say that the commandments will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 13.

Live It!

Invite volunteers to share how they've witnessed someone helping another in their community. Then have children write their responses on page 13.

Have a volunteer read aloud *Prayer* on page 13. Discuss ways children communicate with friends and family. Ask children to describe different ways they or others they know communicate with God through prayer.

Think and Write

Work as a group to list on the board in two columns ways to talk to and ways to listen to God. Then have children answer the prompt on page 13.

REFLECT

Invite a volunteer to read aloud So What? on page 13. Have children comment, ask questions, or share insights with the group on what they've learned in this chapter.

Discuss the following questions with the group:

- What do you believe about God?
- Why do you think it can be difficult to live a moral life?
- With whom do you have the best communication? Why does your communication with that person work so well? How do you communicate with God?

RESPOND

Have volunteers take turns reading aloud Review on page 14.

Direct children to turn to the Glossary and review the terms found in this chapter.

Ask children to complete the React activity individually.

Assign children to complete the At-Home question with a parent or guardian. Have them write their responses in the book or on a separate sheet of paper. Open your next meeting with a discussion of the At-Home question.



If Time Allows

Kinesthetic

Ask children to play a game of charades using signs of our faith. For example, children might pray the Sign of the Cross or pretend to use rosary beads to pray. Invite the rest of the group to identify what children are doing.

Interpersonal

Challenge children to think about a problem they have faced in a relationship with a friend or family member. Ask them to write about the problem in a faith journal and describe how they might make good moral choices to solve it. Remind children that their writing will not be collected or read by anyone else.