

YOUUCAT

for
Kids

Catholic Catechism for
Children and Parents

With a Foreword by
Pope Francis



CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY

Instructions for Use

YOUCAT for KIDS – Catechism of the Catholic Church for children and their parents – is written in a language suitable for children and deals with the entire Catholic faith as it was presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC of 1997), without aiming, however, for the completeness provided in that volume.

The work is structured in question-and-answer format, providing – in the bold segments of the question-and-answer sections – a child-appropriate and, at the same time, Church-approved presentation of our shared faith. The explanatory passages following these segments contribute to a better understanding.

The bottom part of each page – in the coloured section – serves to inform parents and is meant to initiate a conversation about faith between adult and child. The bottom part also refers the reader to the more extensive and in-depth treatments in YOUCAT.

At the conclusion of the book, there is an index of subjects and persons to make it easy to find specific topics.

Symbols and Their Meaning



Quote



For reading aloud



From the bible



Info



Humour



From YOUCAT

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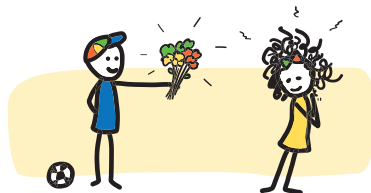
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Foreword



by Pope Francis



Dear children, Dear parents,

An 8-year-old boy from Canada once asked me the question: “What did God do before he created the world?” I thought about it and then replied: “Before God created anything, he loved. That’s what he did: he loved. God always loves. When he created the world, then, he didn’t do anything else except love.”

When flipping through the pages of *YOUCAT for KIDS*, I come across questions children ask their parents and catechists millions of times. That is why I consider this catechism as useful as the big Catechism, in which you can find answers to the most important questions of life: Where does this world come from? Why do I exist?

How and why shall we live here?
What happens after death? YOUCAT
for KIDS is a catechism very
different from the one I used to
have. YOUCAT for KIDS is suitable
for children and parents to spend
time together and, in doing so,
discover God's love more and more.

Dear parents, keep this little
catechism with you and take the
time to contemplate it together
with your children page by page,
mystery of faith by mystery of faith,
question by question. Help your
children discover the love of Jesus!
It will make them strong and brave.
I entrust you with YOUCAT for KIDS.

Do not get tired of questions or of
sharing your faith. Do not remain
silent when your children have
pressing questions, but always
have the strength to hand on the
faith, which you too received from
your parents. Be a living chain, so
that from generation to generation,
the gospel may always be present
in our families, our communities
and in the Church.

I bless you with all my heart;
please pray for me.

Francis

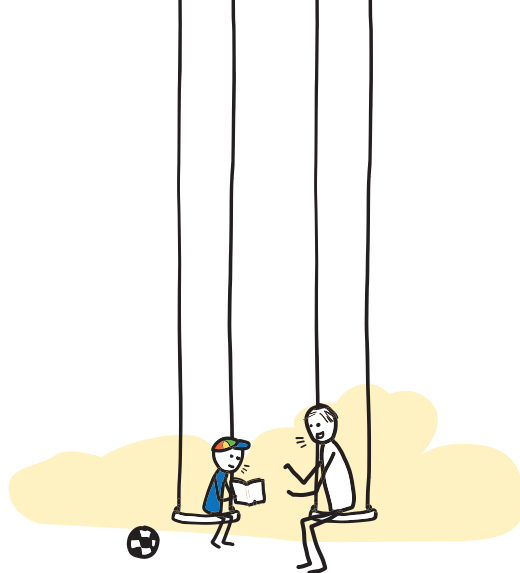
Preface

Dear parents, godparents and companions,

Repeatedly, parents and catechists have asked for a catechism for children. The genre “catechism” has existed in the Church for more than a thousand years. A catechism is a handbook containing everything children and adults need to know to, step by step, deepen their knowledge of the Christian faith and to develop a living relationship with Jesus Christ. A catechism is always approved by the Church. The Church guarantees the accuracy of its contents. The bible and the great councils of the Church provide us with our highest level of teaching. A catechism is an authoritative distillation of these sources.

In the autumn of 2013 parents, teachers, priests and children’s group leaders from Austria, Slovakia and Germany came together to write this handbook. We wanted it to be cheerful and modern; children from the age of 9 to 13 should feel addressed by it. We did not want to develop the book purely on a theoretical basis but, right from the start, we agreed to test our findings with groups of children. Soon we realised that nothing is more difficult than speaking about great things in a simple and clear manner.

The following became clear as well: a book about faith can only be an aid. It is not enough to hand YOUCAT for KIDS to a child and say, “You should read this,” hoping the child will find their way to God or deepen their faith all on their own. We realised that we needed to write a book for both children and their parents. Books can help – but in the end, the transmission of faith cannot be delegated to books or media. Faith can only be awakened by the oldest method in the world: from heart to heart, from person to person. The greatest books, the coolest movies cannot replace parents or grandparents saying: “I believe in Jesus. Can I show you how wonderful that is?” Or: “Come on, let’s find out more about our good Lord”.



We are convinced that the crucial place for the transmission of faith is not the classroom, it is not even in church. It might be the corner of the children’s room, a deckchair by the sea, a bench in the garden or the edge of the bed.

Nothing can replace conversation between people who like and trust each other. It is only in a space of loving closeness that one can share, disclose or discover the treasure of faith. We can openly ask questions, and learn with and from each other. Take an exciting guide on board with you – YOUCAT for KIDS.

Children are full of questions, such as “Why do I exist?” or “How do we even know that God exists?”, or “Why was Jesus nailed to the cross?” These are wonderful opportunities to introduce YOUCAT for KIDS. You can search for answers together. Evening prayers are the perfect occasion to browse YOUCAT for KIDS. You can, of course, pick a random question. The preferred way, however, is to stick to the suggested order of questions. The Christian faith has evolved over the last two thousand years and has been understood more deeply over time. We cannot, therefore, leave out a piece of information without the risk of missing or misinterpreting an important part. Sunday has to be seen in the light of resurrection. If you know about the resurrection of Jesus, you can explain Easter. If you understand the meaning of Easter, you know what is going to happen to grandma when she dies. One thing is intertwined with the other. It’s fun to discover God’s footprints. And not only the children will learn. How many times have parents said: “Only when I explained it to my child, did I discover it for myself!”



How to use YOUCAT for KIDS

We recommend you proceed in the following five or six steps.

- If you want to prepare yourself, have a look at the pages you are going to study with your child. What is it about? Do you understand the meaning of it? Can you relate to it? Do you need further information? Is there a scripture you might want to look up? Also, let the illustrations speak to you; your child will notice them first. The coloured sections at the bottom margin of the page are meant to inspire you. You might be able to share some of the thoughts in your conversation.
- When you are together with your child, first look carefully at a page with a question. There is a lot to discover and often there is something to laugh about too. Lily and Bob, the two cheeky kids, make sure of that.
- Now turn your attention to the question. Very often the illustration will be the starting point for a conversation between you and your child.
- You might want to close YOUCAT for KIDS for now. Your child has their imagination; you have your imagination. It is very important that the child is now given the chance to formulate a possible answer or to express their knowledge. If you are unsure about certain aspects, don't worry about it. Your child will enjoy taking this journey of discovery together with you.
- Only then should you look up the answer given by YOUCAT for KIDS. It is a "joint" answer from the Church, derived from the bible and from over 2,000 years of the history of faith. The answer, therefore, has a certain weight to it. Sometimes, the answer you have found with your child won't entirely match the experience of the Church. Not every matter needs to be dealt with immediately. Move on to the next question. In a broader context, things might become clearer.
- If you then manage to say an extempore prayer with your child at the end of your exchange, to bring the contents of your conversation before God, you have accomplished something marvellous!

One more thing: pray to the Holy Spirit about your conversation with your child. Even if it may seem strange to you at first, you will see how he enlightens the darkness...

By the way: we authors have not done anything different during the writing process from what you do: we have shared our faith. We projected a question onto the wall, then we tried to find a common answer that is in accordance with the bible and the teachings of the Church. We called our method "Community writing". The answers provided by YOUCAT for KIDS thus do not come from one author alone, but from all of us.

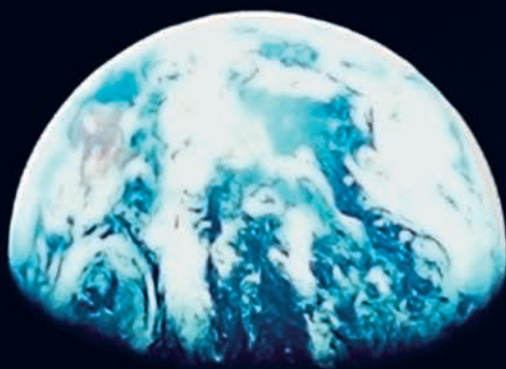
And we did something else: all those years, we have been praying that we would find a way to really help children and parents discover the message of Jesus for their lives.

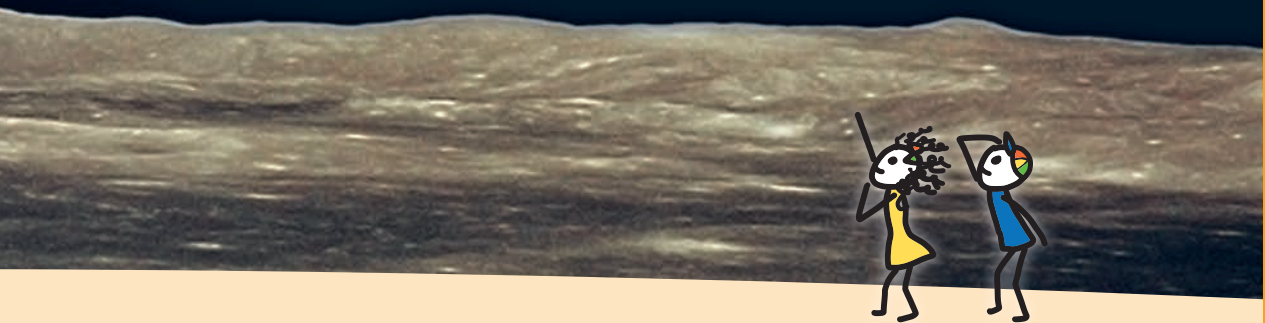
The authors of YOUCAT for KIDS

1

*Where does the world and everything
that exists come from?*

All
that is
comes from
God.





2

Why do I exist?

**You are here
because God wanted you.**

He knows you.
He loves you infinitely
and wants to make you happy.



i A God who is love: Jesus appeared to St Teresa of Avila in a vision and said to her: "I would create the whole world again, just to hear you say that you love me." We human beings are that important to God.

i Vision: We are speaking of a vision (from Latin *videre* = see) when God reveals himself to a person in a marvellous way.

”

It is a Christian duty for everyone to be as happy as he can.



Clive Staples Lewis
(1898–1963),
English writer and
literary critic.

3 How do we know that God exists?

**We know
that God exists
because we can see his footprints
all over the world.**

Look at all this:
the sun in the sky,
the stars at night,
the woods, mountains, seas and rivers,
the big and the small animals,
people on all continents.
God made all this.



Since it is in him that we live, and move, and exist, as indeed some of your own writers have said: We are all his children. **Ac 17:28**



The fish in the sea said to one another, "They say our whole life depends on water. But what is it? We have never seen it." So they asked a wise old fish to show them the water. The old fish said: "Oh, you stupid fish! You are living in it... and you've never realised it?" Just like the fish in the water, man lives in God. He

cannot live without his Creator and Sustainer. And yet he asks: "Where is God?" You need to know two things. First: God is everywhere, nothing exists without him. And secondly: God is not everything, but he is the Origin of everything. He is infinitely greater than everything there is.

Author unknown



4

Can we know God?

**Not without his help.
God is greater
than any images or thoughts
people make of him.
God is a big mystery.**

God wants us to get to know
and learn to love him.
That's why he shows himself to us.
We call it "revelation".



i **Revelation** means: God shows himself. In YOUCAT it says: "Just as in human love one can know something about the beloved person only if he opens his heart to us, so too we know something about God's inmost thoughts only because the eternal and mysterious God has opened himself to us out of love."

Y See also **Question 7:** Why did God have to show himself in order for us to be able to know what he is like?

**Too great**

It is told that **St Augustine** (354–430) was walking by the seashore one day contemplating on God. A child had dug a hole



in the sand and was running back and forth with a seashell to fill the hole with

water. "What are you doing?" Augustine wanted to know. "I'm going to pour all the sea into this hole!" the child replied. "That is impossible," the saint laughed, "the sea is too great!" The child then replied: "And you, Augustine, won't be able to fit the great God into your small mind!"

5

Can I get into contact with God?**Yes.****Talk to him!****Ask him to make himself noticed
in your heart.**

It's not only you who is searching for God –
God is already waiting for you.
Whether you are sitting on a bike
or waiting for the bus,
just talk to him.

**i Does God really make himself noticed?**

If you open yourself to God in silence and prayer, you will discover how God “speaks”, how he leads, guides, comforts, raises, heals you and pours out his love on you. God is not some “energy” behind clouds, God is somebody you can talk to – and who answers.

Read more about it in **Question 140**:
How can I hear God?

**A wonderful prayer:**

O Lord, you search me and you know me, you know my resting and my rising, you discern my purpose from afar. You mark when I walk or lie down, all my ways lie open to you.. Already you knew my soul, my body held no secret from you when I was being fashioned in secret. Your eyes saw all my actions, they were all of them written in your book.

Ps 138:1–3, 15–16

**i St Faustina lived in Poland.**

She reports Jesus saying to her: “Before I made the world, I loved you with the love your heart is experiencing today and, throughout the centuries, my love will never change.”

6

Believing in God - how do you do that?

Believing in God means:

I put all my trust in

the one who loves me the most.

I accept what God reveals of himself.

I try to do what he tells me.

Believing in God means

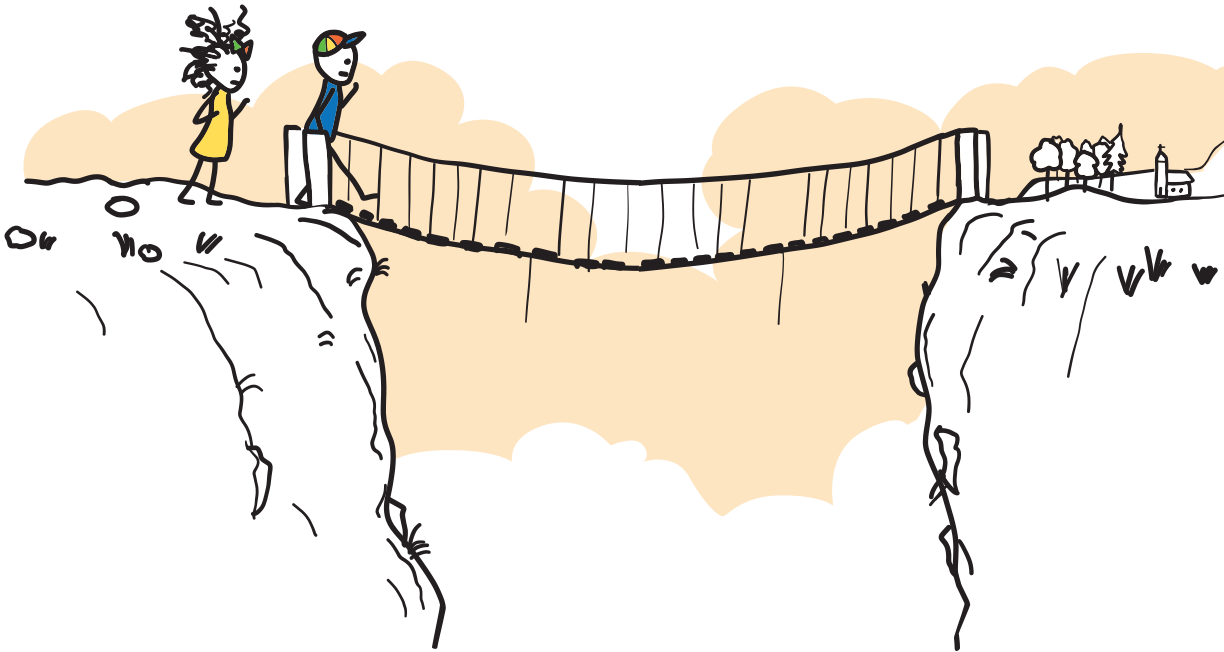
to feel secure in him.

God loves us.

We do not need to be afraid.

Together with him we can bring out

the best in us!



Your faith has saved you!

Jesus said this sentence over and over after he had healed people. He says it to a healed woman (**Mt 9:22**), he says it to a blind man (**Lk 18:42**), he says it to a leper (**Lk 17:19**).



The man who trusted God

The Lutheran pastor **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** was arrested and sentenced to death during Adolf Hitler's dictatorship in Germany. In jail, amidst fear of death, he wrote an absolutely incredible song:



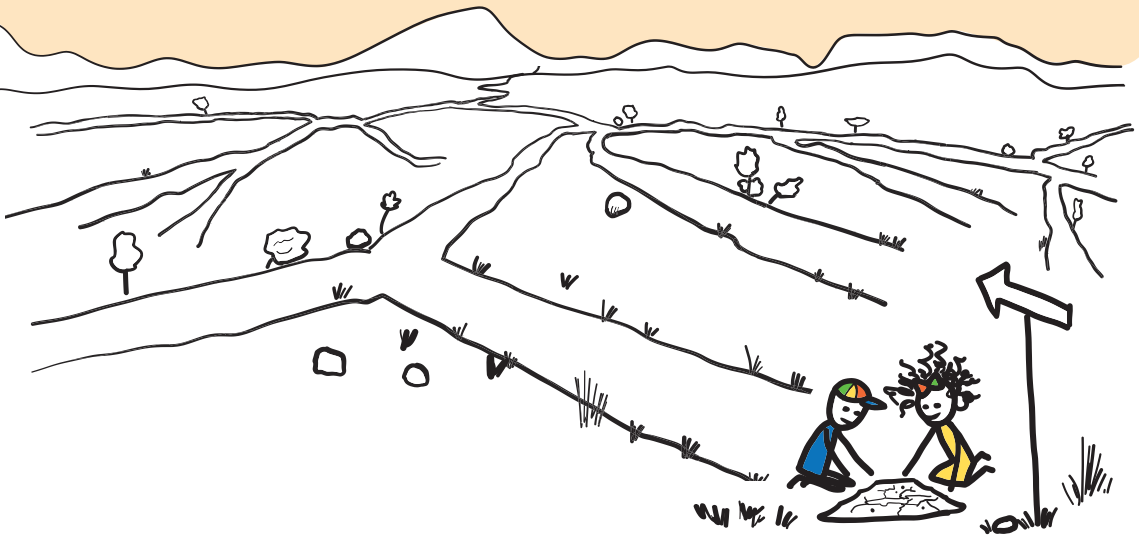
"By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
and confidently waiting, come what may,
we know that God is with us night and morning,
and never fails to greet us each new day."

7

Can't we believe whatever we want?

**Yes, but it doesn't help us very much.
 Christians do not make up their faith;
 they trust in Jesus Christ.
 He has brought us the truth from God.
 It can be found in Holy Scripture
 and in the living tradition of the Church.**

In the Church, all together,
 we live what Jesus taught us.
 We are called to bring this faith
 to all people.
 Even if God has his own ways
 with each one of us,
 faith is still a common cause.



Read more about this in

Question 8: How is knowledge of God passed on?

Question 9: Why do people say: "I cannot believe in God?"

Question 10: What is the bible?

Question 50: What does the word "Church" mean?



Ways to God

A journalist once asked the future Pope Benedict: "How many ways to God are there?" His reply was: "As many as there are people."



What Christians collectively believe, is written in the Creed. (see also **Question 13**). This common faith is so important that it is professed or sung by all, Sunday by Sunday, after the homily.

8

How is knowledge of God passed on?

**From the very beginning,
the people of God have passed on
their knowledge of God by storytelling;
it was written down in the bible,
it is celebrated in the liturgy
and proclaimed by the → Church.**

The people of God are a community where experiences with the living God are properly understood and passed on from generation to generation. Each → Christian, who lives his life with God, has a story to tell.

It's often the parents or grandparents who pass on the faith to their children and grandchildren.



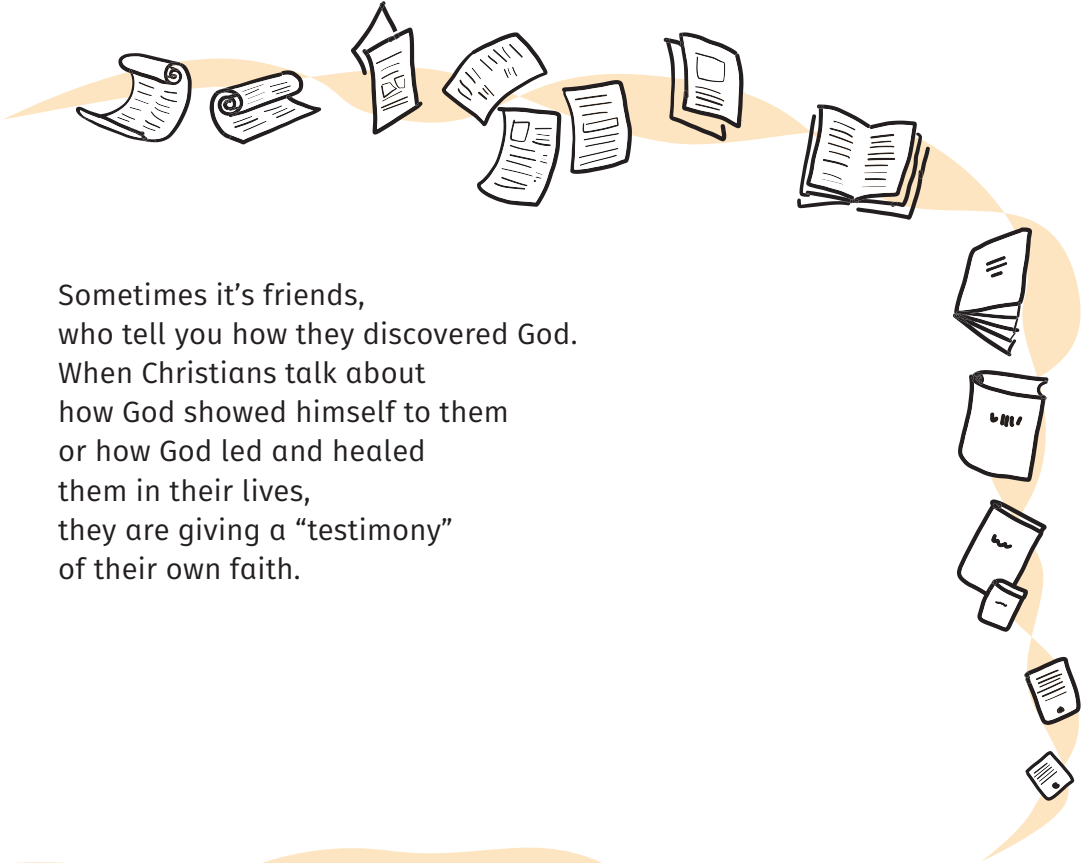
→ **i Church:** When people hear the word "Church", many only think of a building or an institution. In **Questions 50–52** you will find more on the nature of the Church.

→ **A Christian** is somebody who is baptised and thereby belongs to Christ. What baptism is, and what it does to us, is discussed in more detail in **Question 66**.

i A parent's or friend's **testimony of faith** is often more important than wordy explanations. Children need the example of grown-ups, and they need to hear of their personal experiences with God.

**Knowledge of faith**

Two mothers are talking about their groups for children in preparation for their first Communion. "Mine haven't got a clue! I asked them the names of the four evangelists and their answer was: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar!" The other mother says: "Be glad that they knew at least three!"



Sometimes it's friends,
who tell you how they discovered God.
When Christians talk about
how God showed himself to them
or how God led and healed
them in their lives,
they are giving a "testimony"
of their own faith.



i Narrative community

The people of God, who God revealed himself to more and more over the millennia, can be imagined as a "narrative community". At the shepherds' campfires, at the well where they met to draw water, in the shadow of trees, on the rooftops of houses, in the temple –

in every place holy stories about God were told. Not until later were they written down. They became the Sacred Scriptures of the people of Israel. Early Christians too lived from oral traditions before the gospels and other texts of the first Christians were written down.

They were added to the writings of the Old Testament. In the so-called "canon" they were recognised as the "Sacred Scriptures" of Christians.

9

Why do people say: "I cannot believe in God"?

Some people have not heard about God yet.
Some have false ideas about God
and therefore cannot believe in him.
Others have had bad experiences,
which keep them from believing in God.
Still others do not even try
or do not want to have anything to do with God.
But God loves every person and wants
us all to find him.

It sometimes takes a long time
until somebody realises
that it is God
who is knocking at their heart.
People can get really old
before they come to faith in God
and learn to trust in him.



Difficulty in believing

You should not think that people who are having difficulty in believing or who cannot believe in God are less worthy. God is the Creator of all people. He loves all people, without exception.



These "Gods" don't exist:

- 🗣️ A God who wants to catch us making mistakes.
- 🗣️ A God who needs our applause.
- 🗣️ A God who is no longer interested in the world.
- 🗣️ A God who is constantly offended.
- 🗣️ A God who mercilessly punishes.



10

What is the bible?

The → Bible is the most important book in the world.

Written in it are things we know about God.

The bible tells us

how much God loves us.

Through the words of Sacred Scripture
God directly speaks to us.

Sacred Scripture

is not a book of old fables.

When I am reading the bible I know

God himself is now speaking to me.

If the bible says, for example:

“You are light for the world” (Mt 5:14),

this also applies to us Christians of today.

God believes that we

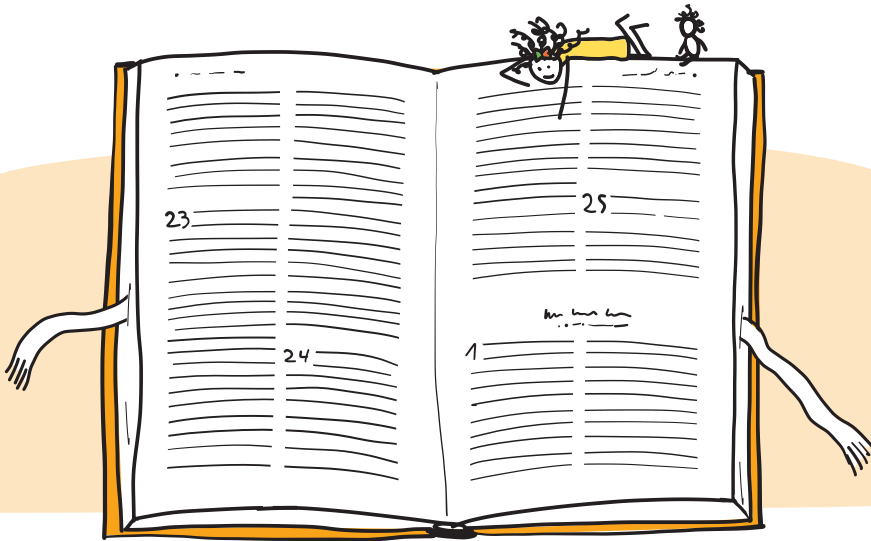
can make the world

a bright and beautiful place.



” What would happen if we treated the bible like we do our mobile phones? If we went back to retrieve it when we forgot it at home? If we took it out several times a day; if we read God’s messages in the bible like we read messages on the mobile phone?

Pope Francis



→ **Bible:** Greek
biblos = book.



Two Christians are talking to each other. One says: “Only when I’ve read the bible for ten minutes, can I fall asleep peacefully at night.” –

“That’s strange”, says the other. “For me, it’s the other way around: when I’m reading the bible for ten minutes at night, I can’t sleep peacefully any longer!”



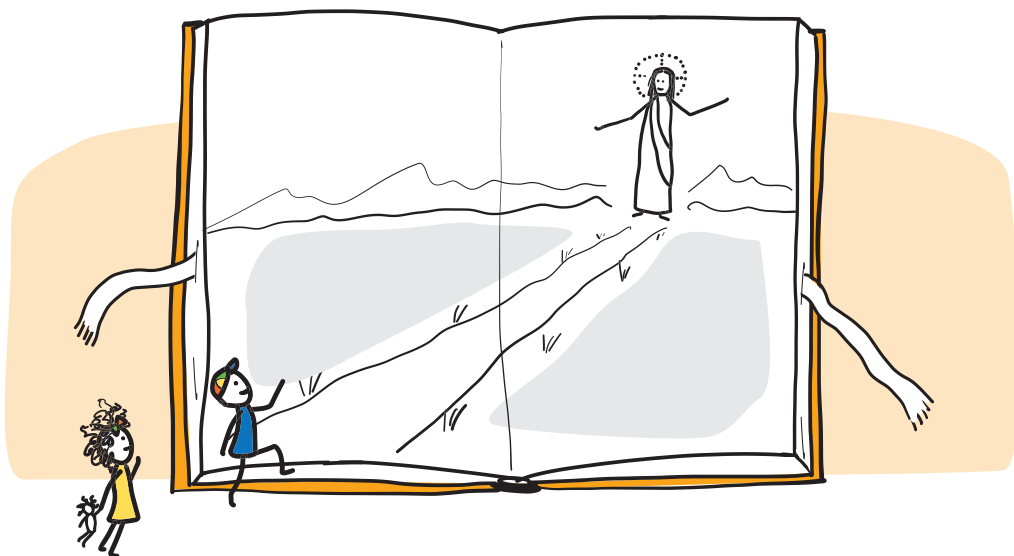
Challenge

Go to a good library and let them show you the many wonderful children’s bibles they have!

11 Is what is written in the bible true?

**Everything in the bible,
what we really need to know about God
and our way to God,
is true.**

With → God's help,
the writers of the bible
tell what they have come to know about God
and what the people of God
have experienced with him.
They tell it in their own language
and with the knowledge of their time.



→ The Church calls this **Inspiration**. What she means by it is that the writers of Sacred Scripture wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit; they came to the knowledge of the truth of God and man by a sort of guidance "from above". For example: the writers of the bible did not try to write the story of creation

as a scientific representation of the creation of the world. Their intention was not to describe how God had created the world but to say that

- He *did* create it.
- He created it *out of nothing*.
- He created it *for us* and entrusted it to our care.

” The most important book in the world

The atheist playwright **Bertolt Brecht** (1898-1956) once was asked what



the most important book in the world was. He replied: "You will laugh: the bible!"



ISAIAH 51:20 461

... of the ... and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the ...

HOLY BIBLE

KING
JAMES
VERSION

With Helps

Size of God
Word Letter

12 What stories does the bible tell?

**The bible has two big parts,
the Old and the New Testament.
It starts with the creation of the world,
it tells us how people got to know God
and ends with the coming
of a new heaven and earth.**

The Old Testament tells us
how God created heaven and earth.
We read that he created man,
and how man → turned away from God and lost paradise.
Men did great evil, started to lie,
killed each other
and thus despised the will of God.
After their fall, though, God did not abandon human beings.
He led the people of Israel out of slavery into freedom.
He gave them → the Ten Commandments to help them live a good life.
He sent them → prophets,
wise men and women.
They made the will of God known to man.
They announced the Messiah,
the Saviour of the world.



→ The expression **“to turn away from God”** is synonymous with **“to sin”**. St Teresa of Avila once said: **“It is impossible for a person who prays regularly to remain in serious sin; because the two are incompatible, one or the other will have to be given up.”** On sin and

the forgiveness of sins: **Question 55:** How do you recognise sin? and **Question 56:** What does sin do to us?

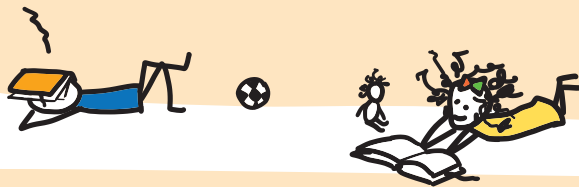
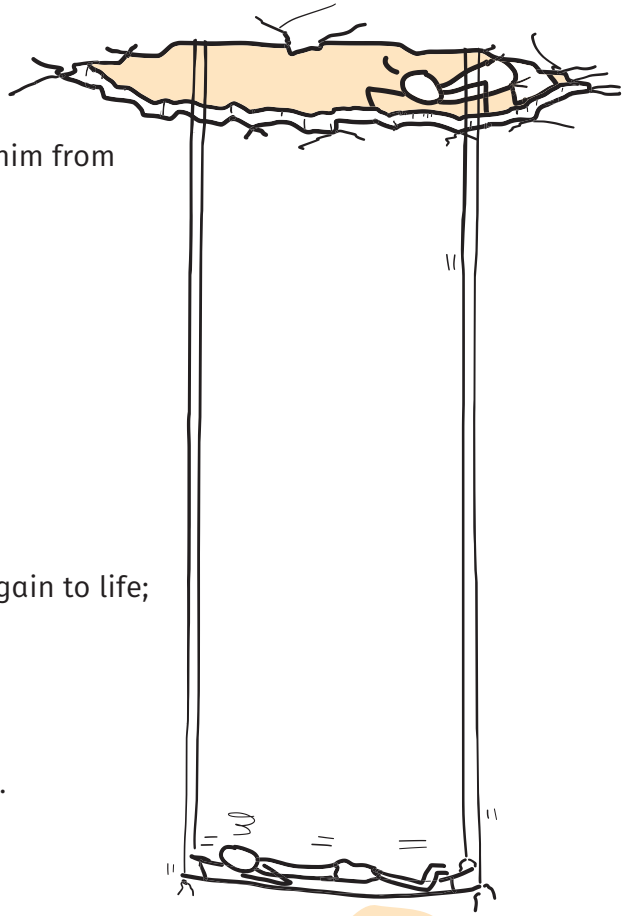
→ **Ten Commandments:** see **Part 3** from page 163 onwards.

→ **Prophets:** The word “prophet” comes from Greek and basically means messenger, foreteller, spokesman. In the Old Testament, God calls prophetesses and prophets to communicate his will to his people or to individuals. Sometimes people are called by God against their will to reveal God’s plans.

This Messiah is Jesus Christ.
The New Testament tells us about him from
beginning to end:

How he became man;
how he healed the sick, 
how he forgave sins,
how he raised the dead,
how he taught us
to love even our enemies;
how he suffered
and died for us;
how he defeated death and rose again to life;
how he sent us his → Holy Spirit;
how he is the Lord of his Church
and awaits us at the end of time.

He did and does all this for me too.
That's why I can say:
He is my Lord too.



→ **Gods:** Naturally, there are no “Gods” (also called idols), but there is only one God.

→ **Holy Spirit:** Read more about him in **Question 47:** Credo/ Holy Spirit.



Read the Gospel of Mark (**Mk 2:1-10**) aloud to your child one day: it's amazing! Just imagine what people were willing to do to get to Jesus and experience his healing power. A sick

man has such great friends, they even open up a roof and break through the ceiling to let the man, lying in a bed attached to ropes, down in front of Jesus.



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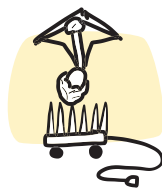
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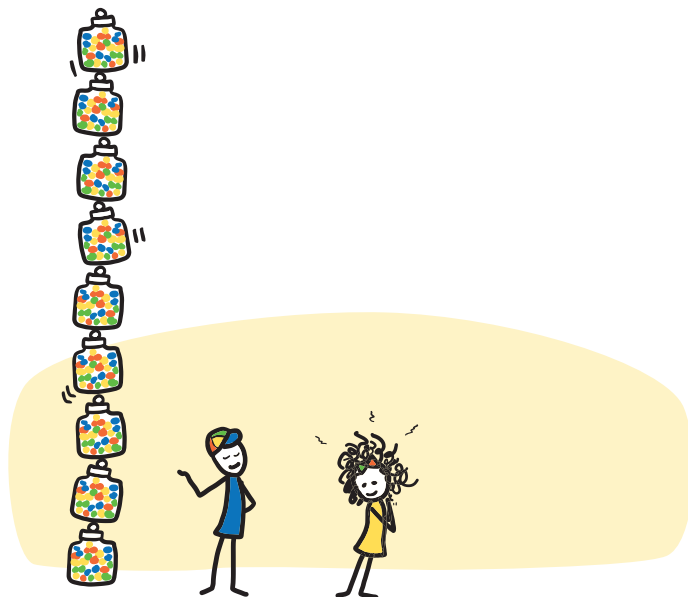
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Abbreviation of Biblical Books

Gn Genesis	1 M 1 Maccabees	Jon Jonah	Ph Philippians
Ex Exodus	2 M 2 Maccabees	Mi Micah	Col Colossians
Lv Leviticus	Jb Job	Na Nahum	1 Th 1 Thessalonians
Nb Numbers	Ps Psalms	Hab Habakkuk	2 Th 2 Thessalonians
Dt Deuteronomy	Pr Proverbs	Zp Zephaniah	1 Tm 1 Timothy
Jos Joshua	Qo Ecclesiastes	Hg Haggai	2 Tm 2 Timothy
Jg Judges	Sg Song of Solomon	Zc Zechariah	Ti Titus
Rt Ruth	Ws Wisdom	Mal Malachi	Phm Philemon
1 S 1 Samuel	Si Ecclesiasticus	Mt Matthew	Heb Hebrew
2 S 2 Samuel	Is Isaiah	Mk Mark	Jm James
1 K 1 Kings	Jr Jeremiah	Lk Luke	1 P 1 Peter
2 K 2 Kings	Lm Lamentations	Jn John	2 P 2 Peter
1 Ch 1 Chronicles	Ba Baruch	Ac The Acts of the Apostles	1 Jn 1 John
2 Ch 2 Chronicles	Ezk Ezekiel	Rm Romans	2 Jn 2 John
Ez Ezra	Dn Daniel	1 Co 1 Corinthians	3 Jn 3 John
Ne Nehemiah	Ho Hosea	2 Co 2 Corinthians	Jude Jude
Tb Tobit	Jl Joel	Ga Galatians	Rv Revelation
Jdt Judith	Am Amos	Ep Ephesians	
Est Esther	Ob Obadiah		

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→ Solution of the quiz on page 113:
 It is the bishop of Myra, St Nicholas!
 He lived in the 4th century in what today is Turkey.
 He is often given the name "Santa Claus".

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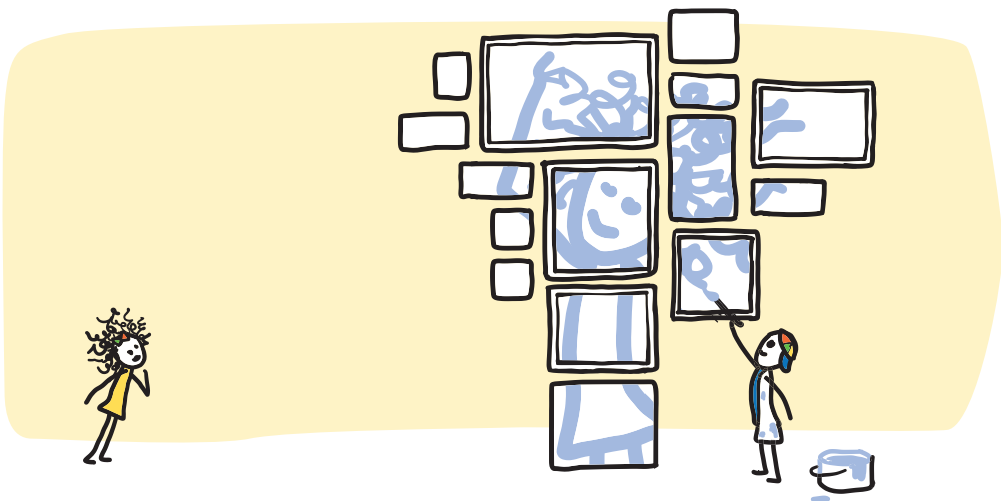
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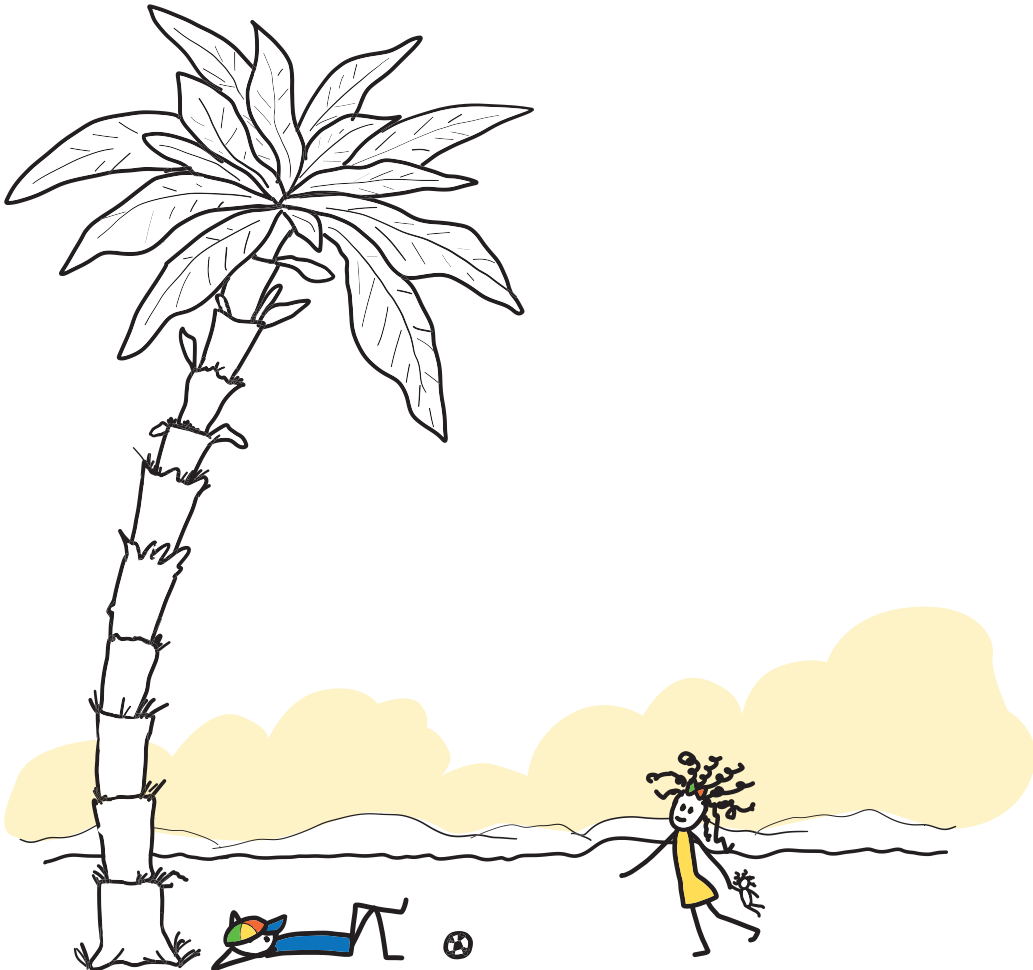
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Art in the YOUCAT for Kids

Master Bertram of Minden

(1345-1415)

The Creation of the Animals

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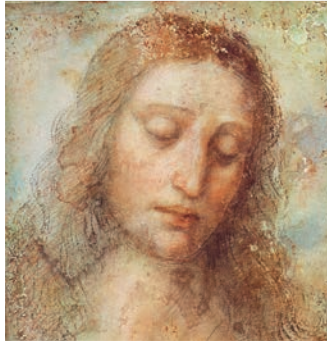


Lombard artist

(15th century)

Study for the Last Supper

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Fra Angelico

(1395-1455)

The Annunciation

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Giotto di Bondone

(1287-1337)

The Last Judgment

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Konrad von Soest

(1370-1422)

Wildunger altarpiece,
Pentecost

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Jaume Ferrer Bassa

(around 1285-1348)

Pentecost

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Mihály Munkácsy

(1844-1900)

Ecce homo

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Gaudenzio Ferarri

(1475-1546)

Christ Rising from

the Tomb

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Benvenuto Tisi

Garofalo

(1481-1559)

Ascension of Christ

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Eugene Burnand

(1850-1921)

Peter and John

Running to the Tomb

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Rembrandt van Rijn

(1606-1669)

The Return of the

Prodigal Son

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Albrecht Altdorfer

(1480-1538)

Alexander at the battle

of Issus

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