



Faith and Life Series

Family Guide
Volume 2
Grades 5—8

I Believe

Lesson Focus | Faith is a gift from God that enables us to believe in him and the truths he has revealed. Some truths, called mysteries, can never be fully understood, cannot be known without God’s revealing them, and cannot be believed without God’s gift of faith. There is nothing we do to earn this gift. It is a free gift, which we can choose either to accept or reject. The Creed is a statement of what Catholics believe by faith. It summarizes what has been revealed by Christ and his apostles, according to the teaching of the Church.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Ask your child what good gifts God has given him. Ask him how he knows those gifts have come from God.
- Read Hebrews 11:1–3 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: You know that all those gifts have come from God because of the gift of faith, the gift that helps you believe all that God has revealed. The Creed summarizes those beliefs.

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. What is Faith with a capital F? (*The body of beliefs we hold as Catholics.*)
 2. What is faith with a small f? (*A God-given power by which we believe in him and all that he has revealed.*)
 3. What is a mystery of faith? (*A divinely revealed truth that can never be fully understood.*)
 4. What is the Creed? (*A prayer that expresses the chief truths of the Catholic Faith. When we pray the Creed we profess our belief in the Faith.*)

4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. What can you do to keep your faith strong?
 2. What should you avoid doing so that you won’t risk losing your faith?
 3. Who do you know that has a very strong faith? How do you know _____’s faith is strong? How would you like to be more like _____?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father (see Appendix).

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Hebrews 1:1.
 2. At night, pray the Act of Faith (see Appendix).
 3. Online or at the library, learn about one of the early-Christian martyrs such as Saint Perpetua or Saint Polycarp. Have your child write and illustrate a story about the saint or act out with siblings or friends a play about the saint’s martyrdom.

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets.
—Hebrews 1:1

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 1, pp. 11–14
- Sacred Scripture: Gen 1—3; Mk 14—16; Lk 1:26–35; Jn 6:40; 20:23; Acts 1:1–11; 2:1–6; 2 Tim 4:1
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 153–65, 185–202, 222–57



notes

The Trinity

Lesson Focus | By reason alone, we can know that God exists. Only because God has revealed himself to us, however, can we know that God is a Blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Divine Persons sharing one nature, all equal, all eternal, and each possessing the perfections of God. This is one of the great mysteries of faith.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Give your child a puzzle with half of the pieces missing. Ask him to put it together. When he discovers he can't complete the task, explain what the puzzle would have looked like.
- Read John 16:5–15 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week's lesson for your child:
Example: *Understanding the Blessed Trinity is a little like trying to solve a puzzle with some of the pieces missing. By reason alone we can know God exists, but we wouldn't know he is a Blessed Trinity—three Divine Persons with one nature—if he hadn't revealed it to us. It's a mystery of faith, something we know by faith but will never be able to understand fully.*

3 | review

- Review this week's lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. What are some of God's divine attributes? (*1. All holy; 2. Almighty; 3. All knowing; 4. Unchanging; 5. All present.*)
 2. Who is the First Person of the Trinity? (*The Father.*)
 3. Who is the Second Person of the Trinity? (*The Son.*)
 4. Who is the Third Person of the Trinity? (*The Holy Spirit.*)
 5. Are all three Persons of the Trinity God? (*Yes.*)
 6. Is there more than one God? (*No.*)
 7. Did any Person in the Trinity exist before the others? (*No.*)

4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week's lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. If God is all knowing, is there anything about you that he doesn't know? What are some things he knows about you?
 2. If God is all merciful, is there any sin you can commit that he can't forgive? What is something for which he has forgiven you?
 3. If God is all present, is there any place where you can't talk to him? Name some places where you talk to him. Where else could you talk to him?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Psalm 139:14.
 2. Search online for icons of the Trinity. Using one of them as a model, help your child draw his own icon, and display it in his room.
 3. Help your child write a poem, song, or letter to God, praising him for what he loves most about him.

*I praise you, for
I am wondrously
made. Wonderful are
your works!
— Psalm 139:14*

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 2, pp. 15–19
- Sacred Scripture: Is 6:3; Ps 102:25–27; 139; Amos 5:8; Mt 28:19; Mk 1:10–11; Jn 16:5–15; Rev 4:8
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 31–35, 199–202, 206, 234, 238–60, 268–78, 293–95



notes

God Gives Us the Law

Lesson Focus | To help his children know how to do good and avoid evil, God gave us the Ten Commandments, also called the “Decalogue” (Greek *deka*, ten + *logos*, a word or speech). He also gave us Jesus, who taught that obedience to the law requires love of God and neighbor. Finally, he gave us a conscience to help us know right from wrong in specific situations. To help us, however, our consciences must be formed according to God’s law, Jesus’ example, and Church teaching. Forming our consciences rightly and obeying God is how we show God we love him and how we find happiness.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Tell your child about a time when you made a bad choice and disobeyed God. Explain what consequences followed your choice and how you felt afterward.
- Read Genesis 3:1–19 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: *Although Adam and Eve knew right from wrong, they chose to disobey God. They didn’t listen to his commandments or their conscience. When we sin, we do the same. The consequences of that are never good, because God’s law is the only path to true happiness.*

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. What is another name for the Ten Commandments? (*The Decalogue.*)
 2. What is the conscience? (*The faculty by which we judge whether an action is good or evil.*)
 3. Why did God give us free will? (*So we can choose to love and follow him.*)
 4. How did Jesus perfect the Ten Commandments? (*By giving us the Law of Love.*)
 5. What are the Ten Commandments in order? (*See Appendix for full list.*)



4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. Tell me about a time you did not listen to God’s law or your conscience. How did you feel afterward? What were the consequences of your choice?
 2. Tell me about a time you did listen to God’s law and your conscience. How did you feel afterward? What were the consequences of that choice?
 3. What are three things you can do every day to form your conscience rightly?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Matthew 5:8.
 2. Have your child write a “Choose Your Own Adventure” story about a boy or girl who faced a difficult choice. Include two endings, one that tells what happened when a good choice was made and one that shows what happened when a bad choice was made.
 3. In the morning before school, pray the Prayer to My Guardian Angel (see Appendix) together and ask your guardian angels to help you make good choices that day. If, during the week, your child makes a bad choice, remind him to ask his guardian angel for help making good choices.

*Blessed are the pure
in heart, for they
shall see God.
—Matthew 5:8*

notes

Lesson 2

The First Commandment in Our Own Day

Lesson Focus | The First Commandment teaches us that there is one true God and we are called to worship him. Superstition, impiety, and publicly disagreeing with the Church’s teachings (heresy) are all ways we can violate this commandment. We also violate it when we put someone or something before God—when we give a created person or thing the kind of love and devotion that is due only to God. We honor this commandment when we worship God in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Ask your child how he would feel if you scheduled a special outing with him, then changed your mind at the last minute to watch a television show. What would he think?
- Read Mark 10:17–22 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: *If I canceled special plans with you, only to watch TV, I would be saying to you what the rich young man said to Jesus: something else is more important to me than you. But the First Commandment teaches that we must never say or act that way toward God. He must always come first.*

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. What does the First Commandment call us to do? (*To believe in, hope in, and love God above all else, and to worship him.*)
 2. What is superstition? (*The belief that creatures and things have supernatural powers.*)
 3. What is impiety? (*Lacking reverence or proper respect for God.*)
 4. How are heresy and apostasy different? (*Heresy is the rejection of a teaching of the Faith and apostasy is a rejection of the Faith.*)
 5. What is idolatry? (*The sin of worshipping something other than God.*)
 6. What is detachment? (*Letting go of things when God asks it of us.*)



4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. What is an example of superstition? Impiety? Heresy?
 2. Can you think of a time you’ve put something before God? When?
 3. If we skip our prayers or Mass, what does that say to God? Why is that a problem?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Exodus 20:2–3.
 2. Talk about things your child or your family does that might get in the way of evening or morning prayers (watching television too late, playing video games for too long, sleeping in, etc.). Resolve to give up that activity for one week, then do it less after the week is over.
 3. As a family, go to Mass on one extra day this week.

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.
—Exodus 20:2–3

notes

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 2, pp. 17–20
- Sacred Scripture: Ex 32:1–28; Ps 139; Mt 6:24–30; Mk 10:17–22
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1356–81, 2084–2136, 2544–47

Knowing God through Creation

Lesson Focus | Man knows God by both reason and faith. Reason tells us that he exists, that he has created a well-ordered world, and that he is powerful, beautiful, and knowable (to an extent) through his creation. Faith helps us believe what God has revealed about himself in Scripture and through the Incarnation—when God became man. We know he is a Trinity, all loving, all knowing, and present everywhere. Reason also helps us understand the things about God that we know by faith, while faith helps order our reason rightly.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Show your child a watch, cell phone, computer, or other household item with many working parts. Ask him if the item could have made itself. Does it have a designer? What can he know about the designer from the item? What can he not know?
- Read Matthew 16:13–20 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:

Example: *Just as we know this item has a maker, we know that the world, which is vastly more complex, must have a maker too. From looking at the world, we can know some things about its maker. We can know other things only by faith. Reason and faith together help us to know God.*

3 | review

Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:

1. How do we know God wants to be known? *(He reveals himself to us by faith and reason.)*
2. What does God reveal about himself in the Bible? *(That he is everywhere, knows everything, and is pure spirit; that he is love.)*
3. What does Jesus reveal to us about God? *(That he is a Holy Trinity.)*
4. Define the gift of faith. *(The supernatural power we receive from God that helps us believe in all he has revealed through the Bible, Jesus, and the Church.)*
5. How do humans image God? *(We have intelligence, understanding, and free will, as well as a spiritual and immortal soul.)*

4 | apply

Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:

1. When you look at the world that God made, what does it tell you about him?
2. What is something that you know by faith to be true, and that your reason helps you understand?
3. How can you use your reason to understand your faith better?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:

1. Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:7.
2. Hold a mock trial, in which your child must argue the case for God’s existence using arguments grounded in both reason and faith.
3. Set aside five minutes every evening to read a short passage from the New Testament.

*We walk by faith,
not by sight.
—2 Corinthians
5:7*

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 1, pp. 13–17
- Sacred Scripture: Gen 1; Mt 16:13–20, 28:19; Acts 1:12–26, 15; 1 Tim 3:14–16; Heb 11
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 27–28, 31–48, 153–65, 218–314, 688, 2810–12



notes

Divine Revelation

Lesson Focus | God slowly revealed himself to men through the long centuries of human history, beginning with Adam and Eve, then continuing through the Jewish people. His fullest revelation of himself came through the person of Jesus Christ and what he revealed to his apostles. Public revelation came to an end with the death of the last apostle, John. It consists of Sacred Scripture (the Bible) and Sacred Tradition (God’s Word handed on by Jesus to his apostles and their successors). The Pope and the bishops are the guardians of both.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Have your family Bible on the table as you begin. Tell your child about a time when a passage or story from the Bible helped you, inspired you, or guided you.
- Read 2 Timothy 3:16–17 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: *The Bible speaks to us in every situation because it is God’s Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and part of God’s public revelation. We can trust that Sacred Scripture is God’s Word because Sacred Tradition shows it be so. Like faith and reason, the two work together.*

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. Why is the Bible free from error regarding religious truth? (*Because although men wrote it, the Holy Spirit inspired everything they wrote, protecting the writings from error.*)
 2. Who is the primary author of Scripture? (*The Holy Spirit.*)
 3. What are the two sections of the Bible? (*The Old Testament and New Testament.*)
 4. What types of books make up the Old Testament? (*The historical books, the wisdom books, and the prophetic books.*)
 5. What types of books make up the New Testament? (*The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Paul’s letters, letters to all Christians, the book of Revelation.*)
 6. How do the Old and New Testaments work together? (*The Old Testament prepares us for the New, and the New helps us to understand the Old.*)

4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. What have you learned from the Bible that helps you understand the world better?
 2. What have you learned from the Bible that has helped you love God and others better?
 3. How has Sacred Tradition helped you to understand better what you’ve read in the Bible?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16–17.
 2. Encourage your child to begin his private prayers by reading and meditating on a short passage from the Gospels.
 3. Learn online about Hebrew and Greek, the languages in which the Bible was originally written. Find the alphabet for one and try learning the letters.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
—2 Timothy 3:16–17

notes

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 2, pp. 18–23
- Sacred Scripture: Mt 26:17–30; Mk 14:13–26; Lk 22:8–39; 2 Tim 3:16–17
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 50–95, 103–55, 185–97, 880–96



Lesson 1

Christ’s Abiding Presence

Lesson Focus | The Gospels tell us that Christ founded the Church. Through her, he is with us always. The apostles received from him the authority to make decisions, proclaim the gospel, administer the Sacraments, and forgive sins. Christ also established a hierarchy to govern the Church and set rules. Because Christ founded her and is her head, and because the Holy Spirit guides her, the Church is a divine institution. Although her members are human, she isn’t something men have made, and men don’t have authority to change her.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Ask your child what it means to love someone. If you knew that someone you love needed you, would you leave that person alone? Would you abandon that person?
- Read Matthew 16:13–20 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: *Jesus loves each and every one of us so much that he would have died for each of us alone. He would never abandon us. That’s why he gave us the Church. Through her, he is with us always.*

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. How do we know Jesus intended to found the Church? (*He told the apostles he would found his Church on Peter, and he talked about the authority the Church would have.*)
 2. Why did Jesus found the Church? (*To shepherd his people and be with us always.*)
 3. How is the Church human? (*She is made up of and governed by human beings.*)
 4. How is the Church divine? (*Christ is her founder and head; she is of divine origin, and she has divine guidance and authority.*)
 5. How is Christ present in his Church? (*In the Eucharist; in the authority given to the Pope and the bishops; in the person of the priest, who acts “in persona Christi”; in her members who have been baptized and who conform themselves to him, etc.*)

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 1, pp. 11–14
- Sacred Scripture: Mt 3:13–19; 16:13–20; Jn 21:10–19; Acts 1:1 —2:4; 1 Cor 12:12–27
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 669, 787–96

4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. In other organization, members vote on the rules and what the organization believes. But not the Church. Why do you think this is? What problems would arise if Catholics got to vote on what the Church teaches? How would that compromise Her mission?
 2. What do you think your role in the Church is right now? What could it be someday?
 3. We’re called to see Christ in one another, as well as in the Church’s priests and bishops. How hard is that? What does that mean for how we should treat one another?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Matthew 28:20.
 2. Pray Saint Augustine’s prayer to the Holy Spirit (see Appendix.)
 3. Pay a short visit to your parish’s Adoration Chapel or tabernacle.

Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age. —Matthew 28:20

notes



Lesson 2

The Birth of the Church

Lesson Focus | Ten days after he ascended into heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to his apostles. This day, called Pentecost, is considered the birthday of the Church. It is the day on which the Church was made known to the world. Long before Pentecost, however, God began the work of building the Church. She was prefigured in the Old Testament by Israel and made manifest on earth when Christ was born.

1 | begin

- Pray the Glory Be with your child.
- Look up online the number of Catholics in various countries around the world. If you can, find a map showing the concentration of Catholics in various countries.
- Read Acts 2:1–11 aloud.

2 | summarize

Summarize this week’s lesson for your child:
Example: *The coming of the Holy Spirit was, in a way, the beginning of the Church. Pentecost was the origin in space and time of a Church that covers the entire globe. But that day was also an end—an end to God’s work of preparing the world for his Church.*

3 | review

- Review this week’s lesson by asking your child the following questions:**
1. Define deposit of grace. (*All the grace necessary for salvation, which Jesus merited for us by His death and Resurrection, and which is given to us through the Church.*)
 2. Define deposit of Faith. (*The content of revelation entrusted to the Church by Jesus and handed on through Scripture and Tradition by the apostles and their successors.*)
 3. Define vicar. (*A representative; one serving as an agent for someone else.*)
 4. Define ekklesia. (*Greek word for “assembly”; used in the New Testament for “church.”*)
 5. What are the three stages for God’s establishment of the Church? (*1. In the Old Testament, the Church is prefigured in God’s promises to Adam, Abraham, Noah, and Moses, the nation of Israel, and the kingdom of David; 2. In his life and death, Jesus laid the foundation for his Church; 3. From Pentecost forward, the apostles and their successors have had authority from Jesus to spread the gospel to all men.*)

4 | apply

- Help your child apply this week’s lesson by asking the following questions:**
1. What similarities do you see between the nation of Israel and the Catholic Church?
 2. Do you think the Church could have endured intact through so many centuries and spread to so many places without God’s help? Why or why not?
 3. How can you help the Church fulfill the Great Commission: to make disciples of all men?

5 | conclude

- With your child, pray the Our Father.

6 | follow up

- During the week, do at least one of the following activities with your child:**
1. Memorize Mark 1:17.
 2. Make a map of the missionary journeys of the apostles in the early Church.
 3. During your family’s evening prayers, pray for Catholics around the world who face persecution for their Faith.

And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.”
—Mark 1:17

References

- Student Textbook: Chapter 2, pp. 15–18
- Sacred Scripture: Gen 3:15; 9:8–11; 17; Ex 3—25; 28:40; 2 Sam 22; Mt 21:1–9; Acts 2:1–11
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: 54–55, 62–63, 84, 128–30, 731–41, 758–69, 2003



notes