

Together as a Family • Chapter 1

In chapter 1, “Gathering as Church,” your child learned about the importance of gathering as the Church, the Body of Christ. Whenever the Church gathers to celebrate the liturgy, we manifest and make present in a specific time and place the mystery of God’s love. Christ has made his Church a priestly people. Through Baptism and Confirmation Christ gives the faithful a share in his priesthood. The act of gathering for liturgy allows us to enter into the saving work of Christ.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the understanding of the Church as the priestly People of God and the Body of Christ, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 781–796.

Reflecting

When have you gathered with others and been aware of Jesus’ presence? Include times when there was a strong feeling of fellowship or enjoyment of one another’s company. Emphasize that Jesus is always with us when we gather in his name.

Sharing God’s Word

Read together 1 Corinthians 1:1–2. Paul describes the Church with these words, “you who have been sanctified in Jesus Christ, called to be holy, with all

those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now use your own words to describe the Church.

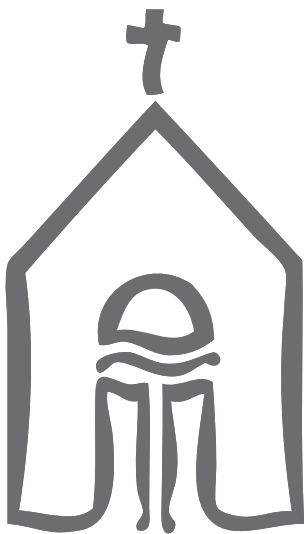
Praying

In this chapter your child prayed the Our Father, a prayer we commonly pray when we gather as a Church. Pick a regular time each day that you can pray this prayer together. Remember that the Church calls the family the church of the home.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ When you take part in Mass this week, keep track of everything you see that shows how your parish gathers. After Mass, join another family for breakfast or brunch and discuss everything that you noticed.
- ◆ Look in your parish bulletin or in a newspaper for examples of people working together for a good purpose. Talk about how each group makes a difference. Also discuss how we can accomplish more when we work together.
- ◆ Mealtime gatherings can be some of the best times for families. This week, make a point to eat dinner together without any distractions. Turn off the television and do not answer any phone calls. Just spend the time focusing on each other and enjoying one another’s company.



Together as a Family • Chapter 2

In chapter 2, “Proclaiming God’s Word,” your child learned that God revealed himself to us through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. At the heart of our faith is the reality that God wishes to be in relationship with us and that he has taken the initiative by telling us about himself, inviting us to hear and accept his call to love. That is why the Liturgy of the Word is such an integral part of each and every liturgical celebration. It is there that we learn how to be both hearers and responders to God’s offer of grace.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on Divine Revelation and Sacred Scripture, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 50–184.

Reflecting

How can we show reverence and respect for the Word of God? First talk about how we show reverence and respect for the Word of God during Mass. Then move on to talking about how we show reverence and respect for the Word of God at home, at school, at work, and in all parts of our lives. Emphasize that God reveals himself to us through Sacred Scripture.

Sharing God’s Word

Read together Matthew 13:3–9, 18–23, the parable of the Sower. Talk about what we can do that can help us become “rich soil.” Emphasize that listening to and responding to the Word of God is central to being a Christian.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed John 6:63, 68. Read and pray these verses together. You might like to pray these verses together at a regular time every day this week.

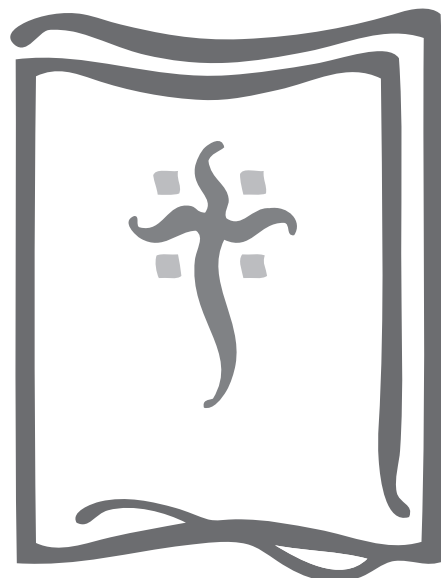
Making a Difference

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

- ◆ When you take part in Mass this week, keep track of all the ways we show reverence for the Word of God. After Mass, share what each person noticed.
- ◆ Read pages 26 and 27 of the *Candidate Book* together and set some time aside to practice active listening. Mealtime might be a good time to work together on strengthening your active listening skills.
- ◆ Ask each person to share a favorite story or passage from Scripture. Be sure to explain what about this passage is meaningful to you.

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For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the “Faith First for Families” page at www.FaithFirst.com. This week share some of the ideas on the “Gospel Reflections” page as a family.



Together as a Family • Chapter 3

In chapter 3, “Renewing Baptismal Promises,” your child learned the significance of the commitment they will be making when they renew their baptismal promises at Confirmation. In the baptismal promises a believer is asked to reject Satan and all that is evil. Then they profess a threefold statement of faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The renewal of baptismal promises is made on a number of occasions, such as before being confirmed, during Easter, and on one’s deathbed before receiving Viaticum. In renewing our baptismal promises, we pledge to embrace the dying of Jesus so that we might know his Resurrection, his triumph over sin and death.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the understanding of the graces of Baptism, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1262–1284.

Reflecting

The Sign of the Cross is the first prayer most of us learned. When we pray the Sign of the Cross, we profess our faith in the death of Jesus and in the Blessed Trinity. In addition, we recall our Baptism through which we were joined to Christ and became members of his Church. What is the significance of blessing ourselves with the Sign of the Cross?

Sharing God’s Word

Read together John 3:16–17. In this passage Jesus explains to Nicodemus that choosing to be a disciple is choosing between light and darkness. What does this mean? Talk about how sometimes it is easy to make good choices to live as a disciple of Christ and at other times it can be very difficult.

Praying

This week your child focused on the significance of praying the Sign of the Cross. Be sure to begin and end all family prayer with the Sign of the Cross and an awareness of this prayer’s profound significance.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ When you take part in Mass this week, keep track of all the times we pray the Sign of the Cross. After Mass, ask everyone to share what they noticed.
- ◆ Get the family photo albums and look at pictures of the Baptism of family members. Share memories of those days and talk about the people who were there. Be sure to talk about why the Baptism of a family member is such a special day for everyone.
- ◆ We first receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit at Baptism. One of those gifts is the gift of courage. As Nicodemus discovered, choosing to live as a follower of Christ at times takes courage. Share with each other times in your lives when you acted with courage to live as a disciple of Jesus.

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For more ideas on ways you can support your child during sacrament preparation, visit the Confirmation page of the “RCL Sacraments” section of www.FaithFirst.com. You will find the baptismal promises there for you to review.





In chapter 4, “Laying On of Hands,” your child learned the meaning and importance of the gesture of laying on of hands in the rite of Confirmation. In the rite, the prayer of the bishop invoking the gift of the Holy Spirit on the candidates mentions the Holy Spirit’s sevenfold gifts. These gifts express how rich and multifaceted the presence of the Holy Spirit is in the life of the members of the Church. The bishop’s laying on of hands while saying this prayer is a symbol of God’s warm embrace of those with whom he share his own divine life in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the Holy Spirit in the liturgy, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1091–1112.

Reflecting

What are some examples in the Bible in which someone uses touch or the laying on of hands to symbolize God’s action in another’s life? Try to think of examples of blessings from the Old Testament, healings by Jesus, or the Apostles praying for the Holy Spirit to come upon someone.

Sharing God’s Word

Read together Acts of the Apostles 8:14–17. Talk about how the disciples might have felt after Pentecost. Imagine what it might have been like to have Peter or John lay hands on you, invoking the Holy Spirit.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed the Glory Prayer. Choose a time each day that you can pray the Glory Prayer together as a family. Remember to begin and end the Glory Prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ This week when you take part in Mass, take note of all the gestures that are part of the Mass, such as bowing, genuflecting, kneeling, standing, or sharing a sign of peace. After Mass have everyone name all the gestures they noticed. Then talk about what each of these gestures communicates.
- ◆ Sometimes our actions speak louder than words. Talk about how your family uses body language to communicate with each other. Discuss when you hug, kiss, or put an arm around someone, how you greet each other, how you say good night, and so on.
- ◆ Invite any family members who have experienced the laying on of hands in the Sacrament of Confirmation to share their memories of that experience with the rest of the family.

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For more ideas on ways you can support your child during sacrament preparation, visit the Confirmation page of the “RCL Sacraments” section of www.FaithFirst.com. There you will find a complete list of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.



In chapter 5, “Anointing with Chrism,” your child explored the gift and mission the baptized receive when anointed with Chrism. The rite of anointing with oil has been part of our religious history from the earliest time of the Jewish people. In the Bible anointing is an important symbol of a person or object being consecrated to become a sacred instrument of God’s plan. In the ritual of anointing in the rite of Confirmation, a candidate’s identity as a Christian is “sealed” with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who makes it possible to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on anointing with Chrism, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1293–1301.

Reflecting

Think of a time when you have experienced the beneficial effects of some sort of oil or ointment. What was it like to receive this everyday kind of “anointing?” How did the oil or ointment feel? What were its effects? When have you seen oils being used at church?

Sharing God’s Word

Read together Luke 3:21–23. These verses contain a reference to a verse in one of the Servant poems, Isaiah 42:1. The Servant poems are a series of poems in the Book of Isaiah that describe a servant of God who comes to save the people by doing God’s will, but who suffers persecution and is rejected and misunderstood by those he came to serve. The Church has come to recognize this Servant in Isaiah prefigured Jesus Christ.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed a spontaneous prayer to the Holy Spirit. Pray together the Prayer to the Holy Spirit. You can find this prayer on page 113 of the *Candidate Book*. Choose a time of day when you can pray this prayer each day with the whole family.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ The Church uses three oils in the sacraments—Sacred Chrism, Oil of the Sick (Infirm), and Oil of the Catechumens. These oils are usually in an ambry, which is a place where the oils are kept. Find out where the ambry is in your parish church.
- ◆ Read John 14:15–31. Talk about how the Holy Spirit helps your family live as a Christian family.
- ◆ Discuss how your family continues the mission of Jesus Christ as “anointed ones.”

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For more ideas on ways you can support your child during sacrament preparation, visit the Confirmation page of the “RCL Sacraments” section of www.FaithFirst.com. There you will find a complete list of the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Together as a Family • Chapter 6

In chapter 6, “Exchanging the Gift of Peace,” your child explored the biblical meaning of God’s peace and how it is expressed in the Church’s liturgy. The disciples of Jesus are sent into the world to be peacemakers, to spread the effects of Salvation to the ends of the earth throughout all history until Christ comes again in glory at the end of time. In order to equip us for such a daunting mission, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Peace, who empowers us to be instruments of the reconciliation accomplished by Jesus’ death and Resurrection.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on peace and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1832 and 2302–2317.

Reflecting

What is the importance of letting go of hurts in the process of building peace? Share personal stories about times when you have been wronged and how you felt when you finally let go of the hurt. What does being a peacemaker mean to you?

Sharing God’s Word

Jesus taught the disciples that when they enter a house, the first thing they are to do is share *shalom*, the gift of God’s peace, with those they greet. Read together Luke 10:5–6, 8–9.

Praying

In this chapter your child prayed the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi. Choose a time of day when you can pray this prayer together as a family each day.

Making a Difference

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

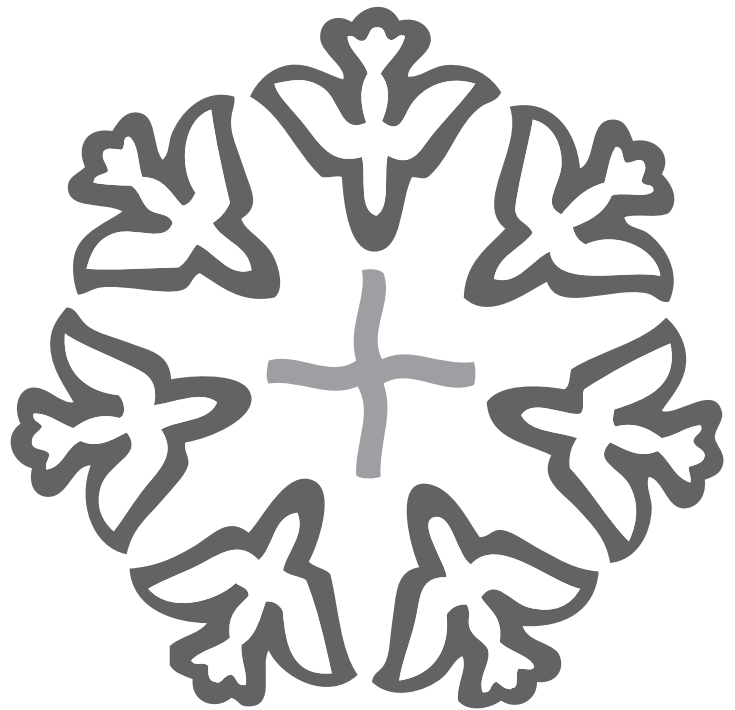
- ◆ Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”

(Matthew 5:9). Talk together about who the global leaders of peace are today. Once you have determined who these people are, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for their efforts.

- ◆ Brainstorm ways your family can be peacemakers with one another. Choose one thing that everyone will agree to do.
- ◆ This week choose to give up all forms of violent entertainment. Do not watch violent television or movies. Do not listen to music with violent lyrics, and put away all the violent video games.

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To find out more about Saint Francis of Assisi, go to www.FaithFirst.com and enter the saint’s name in the search engine.



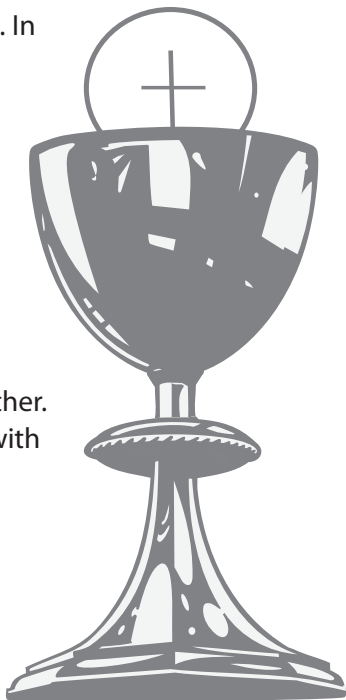
Together as a Family • Chapter 7

In chapter 7, “Sharing in the Eucharist,” your child learned how Confirmation will empower them to fully participate in the Eucharist. In the power of the Holy Spirit, we are strengthened to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the Eucharist. Such participation has both an external and internal dimension. We are helped to participate externally by joining in the community’s parts of the Eucharistic celebration. Internally, the Holy Spirit helps us offer ourselves in the same spirit of obedience and self-sacrifice that Jesus offered himself to the Father. Sharing in the Eucharist strengthens us to live in solidarity with others, especially the poor.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the Sacrament of the Eucharist, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1322–1419.

Reflecting

Pope John Paul II often spoke of our obligation to live the virtue of solidarity. He inspired us to stand with the poor and powerless, and act for and with them to “lift them” out of their sufferings. The virtue of solidarity is vital to our lives as Christians. Salvation has come to us because of Jesus’ solidarity with us. In what way does your own experience of solidarity with those who suffer help you better understand the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins?



Sharing God’s Word

Read Luke 22:14–20 together. What are the similarities with this account of the Last Supper and our experience of the Eucharist today?

Praying

In this chapter your child reflected on the Beatitudes. Choose a time when you can pray the Beatitudes together as a family each day. You can find the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–11. Conclude by asking the Holy Spirit to help your family live the Beatitudes.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ As a family, volunteer to bring up the gifts during Mass.
- ◆ Brainstorm ideas for how your family can work together to reach out to the poor. Then choose one of the ideas and do it together. Afterward, talk about how this experience helped you come to a better understanding of the virtue of solidarity.
- ◆ Look in the parish bulletin to see all the ways your parish reaches out to the poor. Then choose one ministry that you would like to know more about. Invite a person involved in this ministry to meet with your family and share stories of their experience.

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For more ideas on ways your family can live your faith, visit the “Faith First for Families” page at www.FaithFirst.com. Click on “Family Prayers” and pray the prayer together this week.

Together as a Family • Chapter 8

In chapter 8, “Sending Forth on Mission,” your child learned how we are sent forth at the end of Mass to boldly carry on the mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. Soon after the Ascension of Jesus his followers began to call themselves “anointed ones” (Christians). They recognized that they had the calling, or vocation, to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus. They had been given the Holy Spirit to make it possible to fulfill their calling. We too are called to share the Good News of Jesus. Confirmation “seals” us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who makes it possible for the Church to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.

For more on the teachings of the Catholic Church on the mission of the Church, see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 849–856.

Reflecting

From your experience, what is the most effective way that a person can publicly witness to their faith in Jesus? Are you influenced solely by what somebody says, or do you need to see that a person “practices what they preach?”

Sharing God’s Word

Read Acts of the Apostles 4:32–35 together. This passage describes how the first followers of Jesus lived together. What do these first Christians have in common with Christians today?

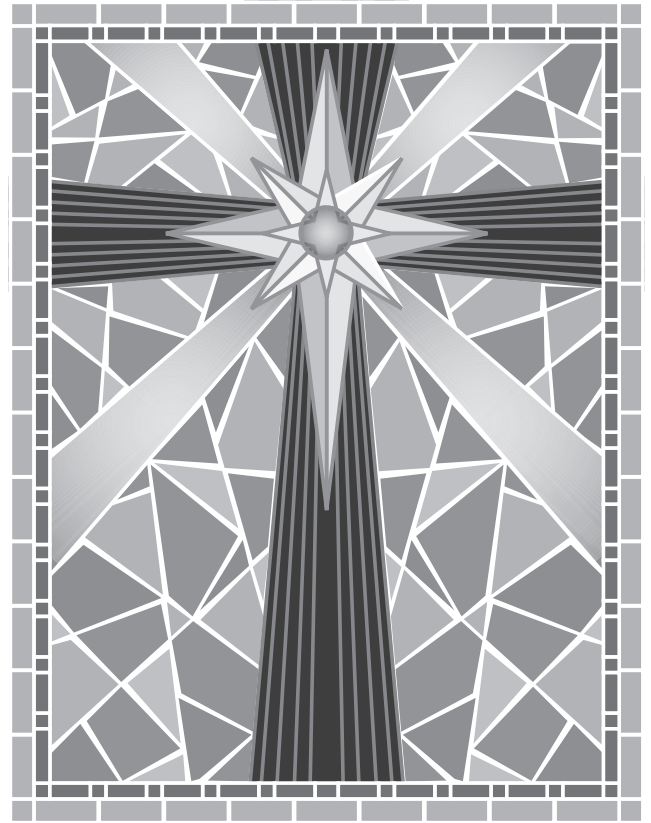
Praying

In this chapter your child prayed Acts of the Apostles 1:8. Choose a time when you can pray this verse together as a family each day.

Making a Difference

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

- ◆ Discuss the following questions: In what ways does your family share the Good News



of Jesus with others? With whom do you share this Good News?

- ◆ This week, instead of saying “good-bye” or “have a good day” to each other when leaving, remind each other of our mission as disciples of Jesus. Try saying, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”
- ◆ On page 95 in the *Candidate Book* you can find the prayer the bishop and the assembly pray during the rite of Confirmation as he extends his hands over the candidates. Together as a family pray this prayer for the candidates each day during these final days of their preparation for Confirmation.

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You can find the entire rite of Confirmation on the Confirmation page of the “RCL Sacraments” section of www.FaithFirst.com.