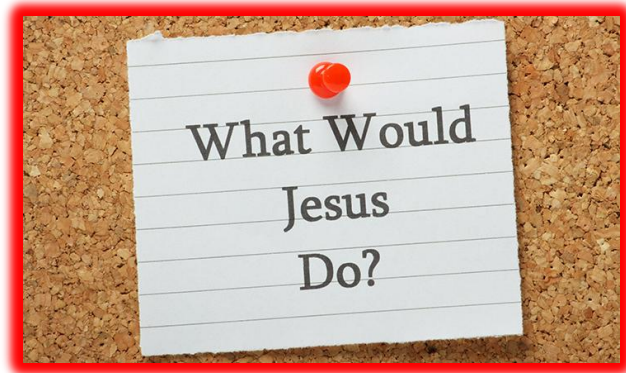


St. Laurence Catholic Parish
Elementary Children's Faith Formation (CCE)
Week 14 Lesson Plan



Unit 3 – How does Jesus Christ teach us to live a moral life?

EQ #3: *Why and how does Jesus Christ expect me to love and respect myself and others? (Part 1)*

CATECHIST PREPARATION

To prepare for this week's lesson:

- **Background/Lesson Goals:** *(Confession: There is A LOT of information here, Catechists, but please stay with me!) 😊*

We will continue our Morality Unit this week and next by discussing how Jesus teaches us to love and respect ourselves and others. Specifically, **you will be presenting the children's annual *Safe Environment* curriculum, called *Circle of Grace*, mandated by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.**

Each year, every learner (Grades K through 12) in the Archdiocese is expected to be presented with their appropriate grade-level material in this regard. This is one of the many responses to the comprehensive [CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE](#) issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ("USCCB") in June 2002. This initiative was launched in direct response to the Church's sexual abuse crisis in this country. These lessons are *not* optional.

As Cardinal DiNardo states, the *Circle of Grace* program,

"... is centered on helping children and young people understand their own sacredness, the sacredness of others, and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. It also teaches a *culture of respect and faith* that goes beyond mere protection."

As we should recall from the story of *Creation* in the *Book of Genesis* (see [Genesis 1: 25-28](#)), we believe that *all* human beings, as God's crown jewels of His Creation, are created in the likeness and image of God Himself ("*imago dei*"), meant for nothing more than to reflect His love and light into the world and to be in relationship with Him. In this, God also grants humanity responsibility for the good stewardship (or care) for *all* of Creation, including each other. From these realities flow our inviolable dignity as human

beings from the moment of conception until the time of our natural death. God alone is the author of all life which we are called to care for in all of its forms and conditions.

Our inherent human dignity affects how we are called to live out relationships with each other and also how we are to care for ourselves, i.e., with *respect*. God intends for *all* of our relationships to be experiences of divine love (remember the reflecting God's love purpose for our creation?). Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of not only our own value in the eyes of God, but also that of others. Remembering this helps us to LOVE *divinely* (as God does) and to see the world, and those who share it with us, as our Creator does.

All grade levels will be presented with their *Circle of Grace* (COG) lessons this week with you, the Catechist, leading your learners in recognizing how God (through the Holy Spirit) is *always* present with them in their *Circle of Grace*. God wants us to be healthy and safe from harm. The *Circle of Grace* curriculum begins with the Kindergarten level, which is deemed developmentally appropriate and the earliest that some of this content should be introduced to children. That said, however, it is *never too early* to discuss with your learners how they are a unique and unrepeatable part of God's own Creation, *known, loved into existence and precious in His eyes*. Our understanding of the depth of God's love for us and our inherent dignity as human beings is the foundation for all of the Church's [Theology of the Body](#) teachings which affect our self-worth and how we express love for ourselves and others in healthy ways.

The Kindergarten through Grade 3 COG lessons deal with empowering the children to identify unsafe or uncomfortable situations, determining who the trusted adults in their lives are, and teaching them how to ask for help from trusted adults when circumstances warrant. We should encourage our learners to rely upon the promptings of the Holy Spirit (i.e., that internal *gut* feeling that can serve to alert or alarm them when a situation is possibly dangerous or harmful) in order to guide them in this regard. The 4th/5th Grade COG lessons will focus on internet safety and how to properly navigate media usage by keeping harmful images and situations out of their *Circle of Grace*.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The *Circle of Grace* grade-level lessons have been provided by the Archdiocese and are intended to be *carefully* followed. **This is not an opportunity to go off script, but rather follow the lessons and their content as provided.** These lessons are meant to be presented to your learners by a mentor catechist in a specific order, as there are certain prompts and activities that need to be navigated through and important topics to be discussed in class. While discussion/interaction is invited and of course encouraged, it should be focused and fruitful to the lesson content without preventing all of the material from being presented.

If you commit to reading through the lessons *beforehand* and preparing yourself for these lessons, you will be able to easily cover this important content with your learners. While the Kinder through Grade 3 lessons intentionally are very similar in content with concepts building upon themselves each year, the Grades 4 and 5 lessons specifically target technology usage. In our present age with more online learning and extensive access to the internet for children of *all* ages, you may find some of the resources provided below (in the additional resources section) appropriate for an internet safety discussion with your learners as time permits.

Remember, if your learners have previously attended CCE classes on campus any time since January 2018 for Kindergarten or above, they are already familiar with some of the COG concepts. Be sure to tap into their recollections when presenting your lesson and give them an opportunity to share what they remember.

- In order to prepare your adult heart and mind to present this lesson to your learners begin by:

Watching the [CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS](#) video and reviewing both the [COG Quick Reference Guide for Facilitators/Catechists](#) and the [Circle of Grace Catechist Training Summary](#), even if you have implemented the *Circle of Grace* curriculum previously.

If you have never implemented the *Circle of Grace* lessons in class before, please listen to the [COG Training](#) audio. Even if you have taught *Circle of Grace* before, a refresher may be worthwhile, time permitting. While dating back to our first implementation of this program in 2018, it will provide you with the basics of understanding regarding the *Circle of Grace* program and also inform you of our [Reporting Responsibilities](#) should something be revealed by a child in class. Certain sections of relevance on the audio recording can be located as follows:

- **Intro/Background:** From :25 to 9:15
- **Training Content:** From: 35:40 to 1:09
- **Final Overview/Summary:** From 1:35:10 to 1:39
- Review the appropriate grade-level learning targets from the *Catechetical Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation* (CFLFF) posted on the Catechist website at <https://stlaurence.org/the-catechist> for your age group. Keep these targets in mind as you prepare for and progress through the weekly lesson, making discussion points based upon these specific age-appropriate targets.
- Reflect upon a favorite Scriptural passage that you would like to share with your children about how God is always present in our lives, and explain why the passage is important to or resonates with you. Or, you might like to consider any one of the following:
[JOHN 14: 15-21](#), [JOHN 14: 25-27](#), [ROMANS 8:26](#), [1 CORINTHIANS 3: 16-17](#),
[1 JOHN 4: 11-13](#), [PSALMS 139: 3-7](#)
- Create a [Prayer Table](#) (or check out [How to Make a Prayer Table for Kids](#)) in a special corner of the classroom. Keep a Bible reverently displayed there to be used for readings in your lessons. When proclaiming *The Word* to children, it is more impactful to read directly from the Bible and not just from their workbooks. This gives them the sense that this is not just any book.
- Establish a comfortable learning space in your classroom for your session.

Supplies you may want to have on hand before beginning the Lesson:

- A *Catholic* family or children's Bible (go to [USCCB](#) for approved Bible translations); on campus, we use the [ST. MARY'S PRESS CHILDREN'S BIBLE](#), a classroom set of which is located in the "CCE" storage cabinet.
- An electronic device with reliable internet access (i.e., an in-class mounted TV or TV cart if a video will be watched as part of the lesson)

-

- **(Optional):** Materials necessary for any of the craft ideas selected during the EXTEND segment of the lesson. **For the *Circle of Grace* lesson session, you will *not* implement any EXTEND activities *unless* you have completed your COG grade-level lesson and activities in their entirety.**



presence in our lives and explain WHY it is important to you or resonates with you) ... Guess what? Our friend Jesus and the Holy Spirit are *always* with us to help us make good choices and to help keep us safe from harm.”

EXPLORE

(Pre-assessment of faith concepts)

Ask/Discuss, “What can you tell me about how we show love and respect for both ourselves and others?”

- ❖ As the children share their ideas, have them jot a few down on a sticky note (with their name) and then place them on the wall in your discovery space. (For younger children, you may act as the ‘scribe’). Retain the sticky notes to have an understanding of what your child or children already know or don’t know. This will be helpful as you move along through today’s lesson.
- ❖ To facilitate thinking and discussion above, use some of the following prompts relevant to your grade-level *Circle of Grace* lesson:
Who created us? Why were we each created? How do we know? Were we all created to be the same? Who are the “Children of God”? Why are human beings so special in God’s Creation? What does God want for His children (i.e., all human beings)? How do we do work towards what God wants for us? Who is our role model that helps us do what God expects of us? What is respect? Who deserves respect? What are some ways that we show respect – to God; to ourselves; to others? How do you know if an action is respectful? What is ‘grace’? What is a *Circle of Grace*? Does everyone have a *Circle of Grace*? Why is it important to know about our *Circle of Grace*? Who is always present with us in our *Circle of Grace*? What are boundaries? Why are boundaries so important? What are secrets? Are all secrets good? What kinds of things do we want to be with us *inside* of our *Circle of Grace*? What kinds of things should we keep *outside* of our *Circle of Grace*? Who helps us know if something belongs inside or outside of our *Circle of Grace*? Why? What is trust? What is a ‘trusted adult’? Who are *your* trusted adults? What should we do if we are uncomfortable with something near or inside of our *Circle of Grace*? How would you specifically do that? How can we help others stay safe in their own *Circles of Grace*? *Plus, any others you can think of...*

EQ “Essential Question”

(This question serves as a cognitive bookend for the children – i.e., it is the targeted “so what” or “take-away” of the lesson being presented. If your learners can articulate a relevant answer to this question by the end of the session, you have done your job. 😊)

Share and post the physical representation of the lesson’s EQ in your classroom (Note: Each classroom is equipped with a set of *EQ posters* corresponding to those posted on the weekly *Lesson Schedule*):

Why and how does Jesus Christ expect me to love and respect myself and others?

EXPLAIN

IMPORTANT NOTE: The *Circle of Grace* curricula for Grades K-3 have been intentionally condensed into a single lesson format. While one lesson technically, the K-3 grade-level lessons do contain a lot of material, *particularly* in the 3rd grade curriculum. The Grade 4 and 5 lessons were written originally and intended to be completed in one class session.

That said, only you as the class facilitator know the learners in your class best and can determine the pace in which the *Circle of Grace* material should be presented to them. Be reminded that each Unit (including Unit 3) has a Review/Evaluate session built in where no new content is introduced. We would suggest, then, that if the COG discussions in your class lap into the next class session the following week, that's OK. Just present the COG material in back-to-back weeks and use the Review/Evaluate time at the end of the Morality Unit (i.e., Unit #3) to cover the last Unit lesson on the schedule – i.e., the *Dignity of the Human Person* lesson.

These lessons are meant to be presented to your learners by a catechist and are not lessons which should be turned over to the children to be completed by themselves, as there are certain prompts and activities that need to be navigated through and important topics to be discussed as a class.

- Grade 1:** **CIRCLE OF GRACE GRADE 1 LESSON:** *Your Circle of Grace and Others, Parts 1 & 2* (A hard copy can be found in the grade-level *Circle of Grace* folder placed in your class bin)
- Grade 2:** **CIRCLE OF GRACE GRADE 2 LESSON:** *Being Safe in Your Circle of Grace, Parts 1 & 2* (A hard copy can be found in the grade-level *Circle of Grace* folder placed in your class bin)
- Grade 3:** **CIRCLE OF GRACE GRADE 3 LESSON:** *Sacredness and Boundaries* (A hard copy can be found in the grade-level *Circle of Grace* folder placed in your class bin)
- Grade 4:** **CIRCLE OF GRACE GRADE 4 LESSON :** *Social Media and Our Circle of Grace* (A hard copy can be found in the grade-level *Circle of Grace* folder placed in your class bin) + *Alive in Christ, Chapter 4 (In God's Image)*
- Grade 5:** **CIRCLE OF GRACE GRADE 5 LESSON:** *Coping with Stress and Pressure* (A hard copy can be found in the grade-level *Circle of Grace* folder placed in your class bin)

EXTEND

(IMPORTANT: The *Circle of Grace* grade-level lessons noted above should provide more than enough content for your teaching session this week. Only if, once you have completed the *entire* grade-level COG lesson and related activities with your learners, you still have some time remaining in class, then gather back together as a class and have each child share, in turn, what they learned about their *Circle of Grace* and how knowing about it can help them show love and respect for not only themselves, but others as well. Then, come up with a list of *at least three new things* that you learned, were surprised by or think others should know

about how the Holy Spirit is always present in our lives to protect us from situations or people who should not be in our *Circle of Grace*).

Only if time permits after the *entire* COG curriculum lesson/activities have been covered, *extend the lesson together by completing at least one of the activities provided below*). These activities might also make good filler to circle back to for the Unit 3 review/evaluate session in a couple of weeks.

Lower Elementary (K-3):

- **Videos:**
 - Watch [GOD MADE ME](#) or [GOD'S STORY: GOD MADE PEOPLE](#), or
 - Sing either [GOD MADE YOU AND ME SING-A-LONG](#) or the [THANK YOU LORD FOR MAKING ME SONG](#) together
 - Practice the [COG MEDITATION](#) together
- **Crafts/Activities:**
 - Make the [GOD MADE ME UNIQUE SNOWFLAKE](#) or [I AM A CHILD OF GOD MIRROR](#) craft, or
 - Complete one of the [GOD MADE ME SPECIAL ACTIVITY SHEETS](#)

Upper Elementary (Grades 4-5):

- **Videos:**
 - [CYBERSMART FOREVER](#) (5:00 - This video is an *excellent* teaching tool – animated and provides pauses in the content to allow for discussion), or
 - [ONLINE PRIVACY FOR KIDS: INTERNET SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR KIDS](#) (3:18), or [NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK PARODY SONG - WHO DO YOU SHARE YOUR DETAILS WITH?](#) (2:34)
- **Activities:** Review, discuss, commit to and sign the [COG CODE OF CONDUCT](#) or practice the [COG MEDITATION](#) together as a class

EVALUATE/REFLECT

Restate today's Essential Question (EQ) – *Why and how does Jesus Christ expect me to love and respect myself and others?*

Summarize what's been learned during this lesson, emphasizing those concepts which may have been missed or misunderstood in the EXPLORE step above.

- **Say,** "In the story of *Creation* found in the *Book of Genesis* (see [Genesis 1: 25-28](#)) of the Bible, we learn that God created (and continues to create) *all* human beings – past, present and future. As God's creations, we are *connected to each other* as the *Children of God*. Every one of us has been especially *loved into existence by God Himself*. God wants nothing more from us than to love Him back and to be in a relationship with Him.

God creates each and every human being (even those we don't know or maybe are not fond of) as a *unique* and *unrepeatable* person. We are each special and *greatly valued* in God's eyes. There is only one of each of us - there will never be another you! (Think about all of those special gifts or traits that make you you!) As God's children, we are all created in God's image – that is, we are meant to be reflections of God's love in this world and

shine His light onto others. He expects us to see and treat each other as He sees each of us – i.e., with dignity (value) that is deserving of love, kindness and respect!

God wants nothing but good things for each of His Children. He wants to protect each of us from harm and has placed His rules or commands (remember those? can you name a few?) in our hearts to help guide us. When we make choices that show respect for ourselves or others, we are honoring God and growing closer to Him.

We must remember that God is *always* present with us in our lives – i.e., when we are happy of course, but most especially when we are sad, scared or even confused. One way that we can find help from God is by remembering our *Circle of Grace*, which is *God's love and goodness that always surrounds us and all others*. Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*. God helps us know what belongs in our *Circle of Grace* by allowing us to experience peace, love or contentment when something or someone good comes into our *Circle of Grace*.

God desires to help us especially when we are hurt, scared or unsafe. The Holy Spirit prompts (alerts) us that something does not belong in our *Circle of Grace* by giving us “a funny or uncomfortable feeling” that something is not safe. This can be an “ick” feeling in the pit of our stomachs that tells us something is not right. This feeling is there because God wants us to always be safe. When we are confronted with something or someone that makes us feel unsafe in our *Circle of Grace*, God wants us to speak up and talk to trusted grownups in our lives about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe from harm. Things that do not belong in our *Circle of Grace* can include actual people and things that we come into contact with, as well as situations that we encounter, or uncomfortable things that we hear or see or are exposed to. In all of these circumstances, Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit, guides us towards responses or actions that will keep us safe from harm and allow us to respect ourselves and/or others.

- **Say**, “Think back to the passage that I read from the Bible at the beginning of our lesson today. What did it tell us about how God is always present in our lives and why?”
(Discuss together, affirming appropriate answers and reinforcing lesson teaching points)
- **Separately reflect on these questions:** *Think about a time when perhaps something uncomfortable tried to enter your Circle of Grace? What was it and what did you do? How will knowing more about your Circle of Grace help you decide what to do if that happens again? How does Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) help you to respect yourself and others by using your Circles of Grace?* (After some reflection time, have the children turn and share their answers with a partner or the class).

CLOSING PRAYER

Gather together in your dedicated prayer space and ask your learners to quiet their minds and hearts as you pray together. Begin with the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#) and recite a favorite prayer, choose one from the [COMMON PRAYERS BY GRADE](#), practice the [CIRCLE OF GRACE MEDITATION](#), sing the [MADE IN THE IMAGE SONG](#), or ask the children to offer up their [INTERCESSORY INTENTIONS](#). Conclude by praying the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#).

or,

Beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross, sing one of the *Circle of Grace* closing prayer songs, [THIS IS HOLY GROUND](#) or [PRAYER FOR PEACE](#).



BONUS (optional)

- **What We Pray:** The [COME HOLY SPIRIT](#) prayer is a traditional Catholic prayer that opens our hearts and intentionally invites the Holy Spirit in to be more present in our lives. It is a prayer to have the Spirit live within us and guide us with His wisdom. Reflect upon this prayer, memorize it and make it a part of your daily prayer routine.
- **Saint of the Week:** *Saint Damien of Molokai* and *Saint Maximilian Kolbe* are modern day Saints who sacrificed their own well-being in order to care for and respect the lives of others in difficult circumstances.

Choose one of these two Saints and research their life's story by watching one of the videos or reading an article below, or by finding your own stories of their lives in a book or on the internet with the help of a parent or guardian. Then, reflect upon the questions that follow:

[ST. DAMIEN OF MOLOKAI](#) or [SAINT DAMIEN FOR CHILDREN](#) (picture book reading) or [FR. DAMIEN](#)

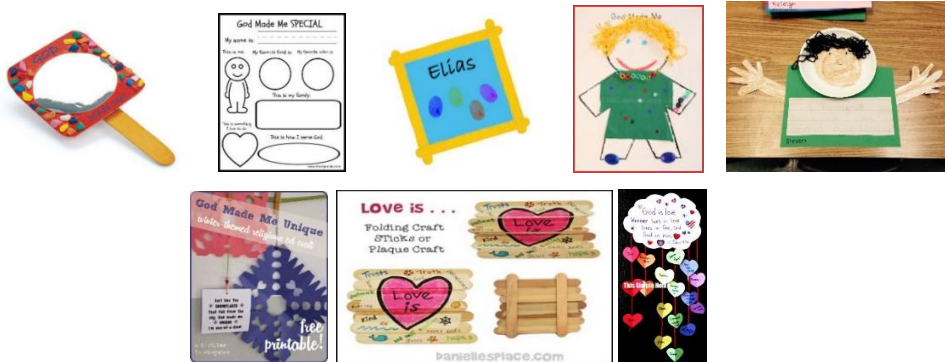
[ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE](#) (Older children) or [SAINT STORIES FOR KIDS: MAXIMILIAN KOLBE](#) (Animated – younger children)

- What was so remarkable about the Saint that you researched (i.e., what are they best known for)?
- How was the Saint that you researched able to accomplish God's work in such challenging and difficult circumstances?
- What have you learned from the Saint that you researched and how might you apply this to your own life (i.e., what inspires you most about them)?

Want to extend your lesson in class or at home about this topic? Check out these additional resources which can be used at the Catechist's discretion, if desired:

- **Catechist Preparation Videos/Resources:** [CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE](#), [MY ONLINE CIRCLE OF GRACE](#), [CIRCLE OF GRACE SLIDE SHOW PRESENTATION](#), [GRADE 2 LESSON 1 TEACHING VIDEO](#) (10:54), [GRADE 2 LESSON 2 TEACHING VIDEO](#) (6:59), [IMPORTANT TOPICS BOOK LIST](#), [THEOLOGY OF THE BODY](#), [SEVEN THEMES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING](#)
- **Videos:** [COME HOLY SPIRIT](#) prayer (1:16), [GOD MADE ME](#) (2:23), [GOD MADE YOU AND ME SING-A-LONG](#) (2:21), [YOU ARE SPECIAL](#) (26:14), [EVERYONE IS UNIQUE](#) (1:26), [GOD'S STORY: GOD MADE PEOPLE](#) (3:57), [IN HIS IMAGE](#) (4:05), [BOSS KIDS-CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE](#) (12:42), [WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD](#) (5:30), [MADE IN THE IMAGE SONG](#) (3:09), [COG MEDITATION](#) (:29), [CYBERSMART FOREVER](#) (5:00 - This video is an *excellent* teaching tool – animated and provides pauses in the content to allow for discussion), [INTERNET SAFETY TOP TEN](#) (3:15), [WHAT DO KIDS REALLY THINK ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY?](#) (2:37), [KEEPING KIDS SAFE ON THE INTERNET](#) (8:24 – uses the *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* story), [ONLINE PRIVACY FOR KIDS: INTERNET SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR KIDS](#) (3:18), [RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR KIDS](#) (11:45 - Covers topics of protocols for first mobile devices and cyberbullying), [2ND & 3RD GRADE INTERNET SAFETY](#) (7:33 - Good for *all* Elementary grades), [SAFE ONLINE SONG](#) (5:57), [NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK PARODY SONG - WHO DO YOU SHARE YOUR DETAILS WITH?](#) (2:34), [E-SAFETY RAP](#) (2:04)

- **Crafts/Activities:** [I AM A CHILD OF GOD MIRROR](#), [GOD MADE ME SPECIAL ACTIVITY SHEETS](#), [FINGERPRINT MAGNET](#), [GOD MADE ME TEMPLATE](#), [GOD MADE ME UNIQUE SNOWFLAKE](#), [GOD MADE ME CUSTOMIZED BOOK FOR BOYS](#), [LOVE IS](#), [GOD IS LOVE MOBILE](#), [SHARE GOD'S LOVE OBJECT LESSON](#), [COG CODE OF CONDUCT](#), [LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD WORKSHEET](#), [EXTRA EXTRA WORKSHEET](#)



- **Picture Books:** (* Copies of these titles are available from staff. Just ask to reserve one!)
 - *Everyone Belongs* * (USCCB); also narrated at [EVERYONE BELONGS](#) (x5)
 - *When God Made You* * (Matthew Paul Turner) (x1)
 - *I'm Not Just a Scribble* * (Diane Alber) (x1); also narrated at [NOT JUST A SCRIBBLE](#)
 - *Horton Hears a Who* * (Dr. Seuss) (x1); also narrated at [HORTON HEARS A WHO](#) ("a person's a person...no matter how small!")
 - *You Are Special* * (Max Lucado) (x1)
 - *Before I Was Me* * (Frank Fraser) (x1)
 - *God Gave Us You* * (Lisa Tawn Bergren) (x1)
 - *Green Street Park* * (USCCB) and *Drop by Drop* * (USCCB) (x1)
 - *Angel in the Waters* * (Regina Doman) (x1)
 - *In the Image of God: A Story of Identity and Value*, by Joe Caruso (x1)
 - *God's Masterpiece: An Adventure in Discovering Your Worth* by Elisabeth Hasselbeck (x1)
 - *Paris Finds Her Purpose*, by Demi-Leigh Tebow (x1)
 - *God Made Us Different* (Lindsey Coker Luckey)
 - *The World Needs Who You Were Made to Be* (Joanna Gaines)

