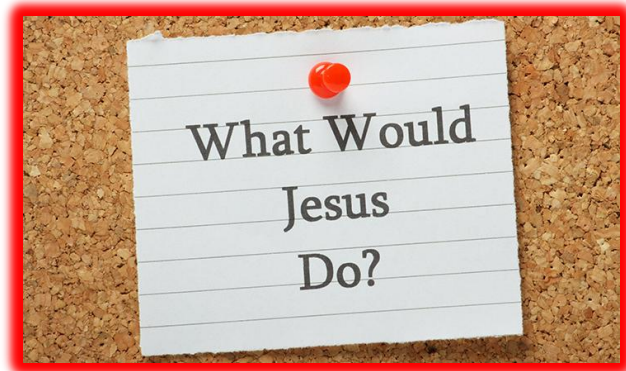


**St. Laurence Catholic Parish**  
**Elementary Children's Faith Formation (CCE)**  
**Week 14 Lesson Plan**  
(Home Study Version)



## 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-Circle of Grace)*

### PARENT CATECHIST PREPARATION

*To prepare for this week's lesson:*

- Establish a dedicated time and comfortable learning space for your family discovery session.
- Create a [Prayer Table](#) (or check out [How to Make a Prayer Table for Kids](#)) in a dedicated place in your home.
- **Background/Lesson Goals:** *(Confession: There is A LOT of information here, parents, 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. This will be accomplished by 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.

**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 reason 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 Parent Catechist, leading your child(ren) 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 at 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 preschoolers 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 children 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 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> 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 condensed by the publisher into an 'at home' version for relative ease of implementation in one sitting and not over multiple weeks (as would occur on campus). **These lessons are meant to be presented to your learner by a mentor catechist (parent or guardian). This is not a lesson which should be turned over to a child (of any age) to be completed by themselves**, as there are certain prompts and activities that need to be navigated through and important topics to be discussed by parent and child. If you commit to reading through the lessons *beforehand*, you will be able to easily cover this important content with your child or children.

Since the Kinder through Grade 3 lessons intentionally are very similar in content with concepts building upon themselves each year (in fact Kinder & 1<sup>st</sup> share the identical

lesson in the 'at home' format) we would suggest using the Grade 2 curriculum if you have multiple children in your family in this age range. If you have time, you can review the underlying grade level lesson plans for your family members and highlight concepts which perhaps can deepen an older child's understanding or break it down further for a younger learner in a more concrete way. Ideally, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade learners would be presented with their individual grade-level lesson content. While 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 *all* family members.

Remember, if your child(ren) have previously attended CCE classes on campus since 2017 for Kindergarten or above, they already are familiar with some of the COG concepts. Yay! Be sure to tap into that when presenting your lesson and give them an opportunity to share what they remember about the *Circle of Grace*.

**Once you have completed this lesson with your child or children, please complete the [COG PARENT VERIFICATION FORM](#) and return it to my attention at [jhastreiter@stlaurence.org](mailto:jhastreiter@stlaurence.org).**

- In order to prepare your adult heart and mind to present this lesson to your child(ren), begin by:

Watching the [CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS](#) video and reviewing the [CIRCLE OF GRACE PARENT PACKET](#) which outlines the goals and objectives of the curriculum and provides additional resources.

It would also be helpful to read over your child's grade level *Circle of Grace* Newsletter found below, discussing age-appropriate topics (you might be surprised by some of these!) and practical guidelines for approaching these subjects in a meaningful way with your child. We would challenge you to use these handouts as conversation starters at home with your child(ren), discussing how very special they each are as God's wonderful, unique and unrepeatable creation, thereby affirming how all relationships in life are called to be sacred or holy.

[KINDER Newsletter](#)  
[1ST GRADE Newsletter](#)  
[2ND GRADE Newsletter](#)  
[3RD GRADE Newsletter](#)  
[4TH GRADE Newsletter](#)  
[5TH GRADE Newsletter](#)



If you have upper elementary children (Grades 3-5), you may be interested in some faith-based resources regarding their physical development (for both you and your child) as they begin to grow and move towards puberty. It is never too early to begin those all too important discussions at home, framing them within the lens of our Biblical/Catholic understanding of the creation of the sexes, each with their unique purpose and complementarity. This would be particularly helpful *before* your child



the [COMMON PRAYERS BY GRADE](#) or pray the [COME HOLY SPIRIT](#) together as a family.  
Conclude by praying the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#).

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## **ENGAGE**

### **(Mental warm-up)**

**Say**, “Over the past two weeks, we have been discussing God’s rules (can you name any of them for me?) and how they guide us in showing love and respect for both God and others. Today, we will talk about how God wants nothing but good things for each of us, His children. God wants us to be healthy and for us to be protected from harm. He does this with the help of the Holy Spirit. Let’s listen to one of my favorite passages from the Bible about God always being present with us in our lives ... *(Read your favorite passage from the Bible about God’s 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.”

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## **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 your child or 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:  
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...*
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## **EQ “Essential Question”**

(This question serves as a cognitive bookend for your child or children – i.e., it is the targeted “so what” or “take-away” of the lesson being presented that your child should be able to articulate at the end of your session today).

Share and post a physical representation of the lesson’s EQ in your study space:

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

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## **EXPLAIN**

(The *Circle of Grace* grade-level lessons have been condensed by the publisher into an ‘at home’ version for relative ease of implementation in one sitting (and not over multiple weeks as would occur on campus). **These lessons are meant to be presented to your learner by a mentor catechist (parent or guardian). This is *not* a lesson which should be turned over to a child (of any age) 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 family.

**As a reminder, the *Circle of Grace* curriculum is *not intended* for Preschoolers, but rather begins with Kindergarten learners.**

**If you have multiple family learners in the Kindergarten through Grade 3 age range, we would suggest using the Grade 2 *Circle of Grace* lesson** in your family ‘one-room schoolhouse’ approach, being sure to introduce new concepts for those younger and reinforcing repeated concepts for those older. **For families with a single learner and/or upper elementary learners – 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> – the corresponding grade-level curriculum referenced below should be utilized for the best learning outcome).**

**PREK3:** *Allelu!* Lesson 3 (*God Made Me to Be Wonderful!*) Parent Activity Sheet (in the folder you picked up); *Allelu!* [Lesson 3 Home Session Activity Plan](#)

**PREK4:** *Allelu!* Lesson 18 (*We Love God and Each Other*) Parent Activity Sheet (in the folder you picked up); *Allelu!* [Lesson 18 Home Session Activity Plan](#)

**Kinder:** [Circle of Grace Kinder Lesson: Lessons 1 & 2: What is a Circle of Grace? & The Stoplight and a Safety Plan](#)

**Grade 1:** [Circle of Grace 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Lesson: Your Circle of Grace and Others, Parts 1 & 2](#)

**Grade 2:** [Circle of Grace 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Lesson: Being Safe in Your Circle of Grace, Parts 1 & 2](#)

**Grade 3:** [Circle of Grace 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Lesson: Sacredness & Boundaries, Parts 1 & 2](#)

**Grade 4:** *Alive in Christ*, Chapter 4 (In God’s Image) + [Circle of Grace 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson: Social Media & Our Circle of Grace](#)

**Grade 5:** [Circle of Grace Grade 5 Lesson: Coping with Stress and Pressure](#)

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## **EXTEND**

(As a family, gather back together 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. Together as a family, 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*. Then, *extend the lesson together by completing at least one of the activities* provided below).

### **Early Childhood (PREK):**

- Video
  - Watch [GOD MADE ME](#), or
  - Sing either [GOD MADE YOU AND ME SING-A-LONG](#) or the [THANK YOU LORD FOR MAKING ME SONG](#) together
- Crafts/Activities [I AM A CHILD OF GOD MIRROR](#) or one of the [GOD MADE ME SPECIAL ACTIVITY SHEETS](#)

### **Lower Elementary (K-3):**

- Video
  - [GOD'S STORY: GOD MADE PEOPLE](#), or
- Practice the [COG MEDITATION](#)
- Crafts/Activities Make the [GOD MADE ME UNIQUE SNOWFLAKE](#) or [I AM A CHILD OF GOD MIRROR](#) craft

### **Upper Elementary (Grades 4-5):**

- Video
  - [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](#) together

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## **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 his 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, turn and share your answers with another family member).

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## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Gather together in your dedicated prayer space and ask your children 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 your child/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)

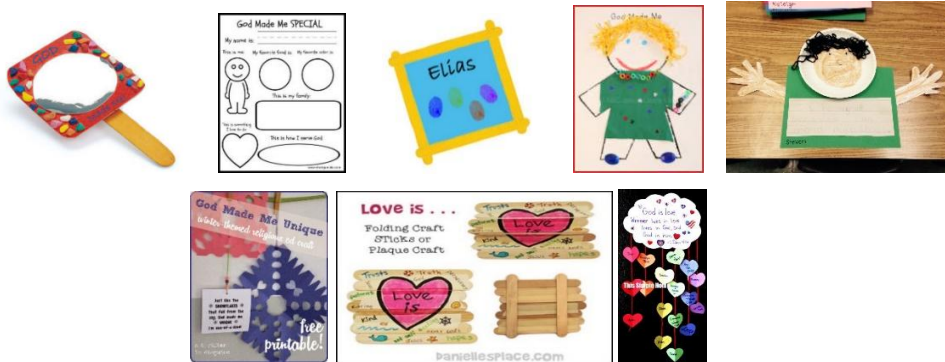
- What was so remarkable about the Saint that you researched (i.e., what are they best known for)?
- How was the Saint that you researched able to accomplish God's work in such challenging and difficult circumstances?
- What have you learned from the Saint that you researched and how might you apply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

***Want to extend your family's formation about this topic? Check out these additional resources which can be used at the Parent Catechist's discretion, if desired:***

- **Parent 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](#)
  - *God Made Us Different* (Lindsey Coker Luckey)
  - *The World Needs Who You Were Made to Be* (Joanna Gaines)
  - *When God Made You* \* (Matthew Paul Turner)
  - *I'm Not Just a Scribble* \* (Diane Alber); also narrated at [NOT JUST A SCRIBBLE](#)
  - *Horton Hears a Who* \* (Dr. Seuss); also narrated at [HORTON HEARS A WHO](#) ("a person's a person...no matter how small!")
  - *You Are Special* \* (Max Lucado)
  - *Before I Was Me* \* (Frank Fraser)
  - *God Gave Us You* \* (Lisa Tawn Bergren)
  - *Green Street Park* \* (USCCB) and *Drop by Drop* \* (USCCB)
  - *Angel in the Waters* \* (Regina Doman)

