



EXISTENCE OF GOD

Sixth Grade



Instructions for Using "The Way" Program

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus has complete unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Even though He was the one we can see, and He was here on Earth as a physical body, He is in complete unity with the rest of the Trinity as ONE God.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

We only believe in One God. There are not multiple Gods that do different things. Instead the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is so great they are One, and we believe and worship only this One God.

Follow the simple instructions below:

1. Watch Video on the website: .
2. Review the "relates to..." section to the left. This is helpful to understand what to convey to your child is important about this lesson. It will help make the lesson both an intellectual and a lived lesson.
3. Read through and familiarize yourself with the sample script.
4. Teach your child the lesson, either using your own words or the sample script.
5. Either discuss the questions with your child (best option), or have your child write out answers to the questions.
6. Have your child do the activities and/or do the activities with them.
7. If working with a parish return the appropriate material in the way they have requested.

Sample Script:

The ancient Greek philosophers, when considering the first or primary things of the universe, would often consider the questions of where did all this come from or how did this all begin. Some would begin by looking around them, recognizing that this thing or that thing came before another particular thing, but there seemed to be an infinite number of things that came before this thing. An example to help here is, a child can trace his existence to his parents, his parents can trace their existence to their parents, their parents to their parents, so on and so forth.

So, the philosophers would say that there must be something or someone who started it all and who himself was not generated by another but rather always was, fixed outside the constraint and change of time and space. Different philosophers would have different names for this being, but we have come to know this being as God.

Through the gift of revelation, we have come to know God as everything the philosophers thought of and so much more. We know God to be a God of love, a God who is outside of space and time but is also intimately interwoven in space and time through creation while also desiring to be in community and relationship with that same creation. Further, with the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, we come to see and to know God all the more fully.

God is more clearly revealed as a Trinity, eternally existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three, what later our Tradition (made up partly of those Church Fathers and theologians who pray over and study the faith) would call persons of the Trinity, are distinct in who they are as persons. This is to say that each person, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has distinct characteristics or modes in which they operate.

So, God the Father is distinct in person as He is the Creator, existing as pure spirit. God the Son, who takes on human flesh at the Incarnation is Jesus Christ, is distinct in person as the Redeemer, restoring the relationship between God and man through His saving action on the cross. God the Holy Spirit, who is the eternal expression of love between the Father and the Son, is the Sanctifier that strengthens and imparts wisdom on the Church and her people to be alive in the faith. These distinctions help us to explain the persons of the Trinity.

However, while the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, they are not three distinct Gods. They are one God who eternally exist as the divine persons of the Trinity. This is to say that the three persons of the Trinity, while distinct as persons, are not distinct in nature for the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the same nature, namely God. So, it is proper to profess that we believe in one God who is three persons. Our Nicene Creed, professed at each Sunday Mass and Solemnity, speaks the best to our Trinitarian God.



Questions:

- What are some things the philosophers used to speak of God that we hold true about God?
- What has revelation told us about God?
- Name the persons of the Trinity and briefly explain their distinctions.
- Does each person have a distinct nature? What does this tell us about God?
- Where, at Mass, can we learn more about the Trinity?

Activities:

Discuss, as a family, what person of the Trinity you each feel closest to and share why.

Print off a copy of the Nicene Creed. Study it and pray with it as a family. What about the Trinity did you discover that you didn't realize before?



GOD THE FATHER

Sixth Grade



Sample Script:

One of the ways that God the Father reveals Himself to us is through the handing on of the Ten Commandments. Specifically, we come to see God in the first three of these Commandments through the things that He asks us to observe. By coming to know what these three are asking of us, we come to understand a little better about who God is.

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is the fullness of revelation of God, and the fulfillment of the ten commandments. It is in Him we have the greatest understanding of why we have the commandments, to know, love, and serve God in this life, so as to be with Him in the next.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The commandments help us to live the lives that we are created to be.

First, God tells us that He is One and that we should have no other gods before Him. Our God is not a god among many or a god that offers us the best deal. No, God is One. He alone is eternal, existing forever and always. He is the first cause of all things and the primary point of our existence. Anything else that would purport to be god or that we ourselves hold up to be god is idolatry (or the worship of another other than God) and is thus sinful. God is our Creator and creates us freely from His loving position as God, creating us to experience this gift of life that He has given to us. We grow in faith by worshiping God for His gift of life to us and please Him when we order our lives around Him, placing Him as our all-important center and inviting Him to participate in the good of

our lives and allowing Him to eradicate that which is sinful or bad.

Second, God tells us that we are not to use His name in vain, meaning that not only are we not to swear using the name of God, but that we are not to use His name in any kind of loose way, rather only speaking His name in prayer or in reverence. We revere the name of God again as our loving Creator from Whom all grace and power and blessing flow and reserve the highest spot of honor for Him with our words and actions so that our relationship with Him might grow and that we might announce to the nations (to the people we work with, go to school with, spend any amount of time with) that He is God of all things. When we reverence God by upholding His Holy Name, we grow in faith by acknowledging His greatness and witness before others God's dignity in how we treat not only His name but also the things that come from Him. Most especially, reverencing God's name helps us to appropriately reverence the names of our brothers and sisters, recognizing that every human we see is a child of God that is due respect and dignity as being in the image and likeness of God.

Third, God tells us that we are to keep holy the Sabbath, the day of worship. Through the lens of our Christian perspective, we are called to keep Sunday as a holy day in which we worship God by attending the Mass of the Church and by spending the day relaxing from our weekly labors. We should find ways throughout the day to do something extra to learn about the Father; offering additional prayers to go along with the prayers we usually offer and finding some time to read the Bible. We should spend more time with our family and friends, learning more about them and what is going on in their lives. Our faith life here grows as we learn more about God and grow in relationship with Him, worshiping Him both in the Holy Mass and with our lives as we actively seek Him throughout our day. We seek to please God with our thoughts and actions as well, and by spending more intentional time with others, we come to treat our family and friends with greater respect and dignity, worshiping God by loving His children and living a holier life thus ourselves.

God the Father gives us the ten commandments as a guide for our lives. While it can feel like these are rules made up by someone that wants to control us, because we know God to be revealed by Jesus as the good Father, we know that these rules are to help us. Think of some of the rules we have as a family. Sometimes these rules are hard to follow but we have these family rules to protect us, to keep us safe, and to make our lives better. That is what the Father does for us as well.



Questions:

- Why does God want us to worship Him?
- What does it mean to not use God's name in vain?
- What are ways that we do or can keep holy the sabbath?
- Why does God give us rules to follow?
- What are some of the rules you have in your family and how are they like the ten commandments?

Activities:

Come up with a list of ten rules you would have for you family if you were a parent. Explain why you would have each rule.

Create a schedule for a Sunday that shows multiple ways to worship and be with God on that day.



GOD THE SON

Sixth Grade



Instructions for Using "The Way" Program

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is the face of God in the world. His human nature enables us to see how God is and gives us a glimpse into the reality of divine love.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Hypostatic Union also shows us our intrinsic value in the eyes of God and likewise should direct us in seeing that same value in all others.

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Sample Script:

Jesus Christ is pretty special. One of the most special things about Jesus is that He is both fully God and fully man. The term for this “fully God, fully man” reality in Jesus is called the Hypostatic Union. This union of the divine nature of God and the human nature of man truly exists in the one person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

This make up of the person of Jesus Christ tells us a couple of things about both humanity and God while also helping us to understand the mission of Jesus Christ. We as people, created beings made up of body and soul and thus have the capacity and truly the necessity to operate in both the physical and spiritual realms, are hardwired for relationship. In order to truly be who we are called to be and to find fulfillment in life, our body and our soul need to find a certain harmonious relationship together. When this is continually attended to and strived after, we find order in our lives.

Being made in the image and likeness of God, we find that our order and fulfillment ultimately resides in uniting ourselves back to our Creator. Peace and harmony belong to God so it is no wonder that ordering ourselves to Him brings us to a similar place of peace and harmony in our life. God desires us to be with Him and this becomes all the more clear with the sending of Jesus His Son. Man is created to be with God in a harmonious relationship that not only brings us through our earthly journey but points to the reality of our existence after we die; namely heavenly union with God for all eternity.



Questions:

- What is the Hypostatic Union?
- As humans, what do our bodies consist of?
- Do we need to be in relationship with our soul? Why?
- Where do we ultimately find peace in life?
- Jesus coming as fully God, fully man tells us some things about this life and the life to come. Please name two or three things.

Activities:

Talk about what it means, from our Catholic Christian viewpoint, to have our body and soul in a harmonious relationship.

Considering some of the Gospel stories of Jesus' life and work, pick one of your favorites and describe some of the characteristics in the scene that you see in God, in humanity, in both.



GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Sixth Grade



Sample Script:

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus calls us to be holy, to “be perfect just as our Father in Heaven is perfect”. Holiness is a graced walk with the Holy Spirit who guides us in aligning our will to the will of the Father. Jesus is the prime example of this.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The holy men and women known as Saints serve as role models and intercessors for us, showing us how to love God and love neighbor throughout our lives.

Up and down throughout the ages, the Holy Spirit has inspired countless men and women to lead lives that have proclaimed the glory of God. These men and women have offered their lives to God in countless ways as a witness to others of the presence of a living God who desires to be in relationship with all people. Whether through living lives of service to others (St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)) or being a great leader and teacher (Pope St. John Paul II) to desiring union with God from the start of one’s life (St. Catherine of Siena) or converting later in life to realize the fulfillment of all desire (St. Augustine), the Saints tell the reality of God among His people and help us to direct all that we are to focus on our ultimate destination; total union with God.

In general, the Holy Spirit leads the Saints to pursue and achieve virtuous and heroic things for the glory of God. Far from a manipulative or controlling operation,

the Holy Spirit inspires men and women to strive for the greater things of God, calling these souls to use their gifts and talents in particular ways. Their willful response to the Holy Spirit is powerful, bringing forth great fruit that yields a number of souls that are turned towards God.

This is pretty amazing and I know that it can sound like something that is only for these chosen souls. But think again! The Holy Spirit is actively calling each and every person to that same call of holiness, which is pretty neat to think about. You probably remember that each of us is created in the image and likeness of God, with our own unique set of gifts and talents meant to be uniquely used to build-up a particular part of the Kingdom of God. And while we are each called to holiness, we are each called to holiness by cultivating and using our unique set of gifts and talents which shows us that our particular brand of holiness will look different than a St. Teresa or a St. Augustine. The Holy Spirit is calling us to be holy in a way that is unique to our skill set.

We need to listen to the Holy Spirit in prayer to hear His voice and discern how He is calling us to live a holy life with our gifts for the betterment of the Kingdom. When we operate within the gifts and talents that we have, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, we are fully alive in having the Holy Spirit communicate to our hearts and ultimately to the hearts of all.

Our relationship with God is so very important. We must know Jesus' voice so that we can hear Him talk to us and recognize the direction of the Holy Spirit calling us closer to Himself. Further, of added assistance here are the Saints, who serve as role models of living holy lives. No matter what you and I might be dealing with or struggling with, we often can find several Saints that dealt with similar issues and circumstances that can provide us insights as to how to go about working through our situation in a holy way, walking alongside God.

The Saints are also powerful intercessors that pray for us and assure us that we are not alone in our dealings. These holy intercessors unite us to God by our connection with the Holy Spirit through the Church, as the Saints who have ran the race well, finishing their earthly journey, are assisting those of us still on earth fighting to win the reward of Heaven by leading a holy life. Just as the Holy Spirit led the Saints to stay close to Him, He is leading us to stay close in prayer, Sacraments, and attention and service towards others.



Questions:

- What do the Saints tell us about the reality of God?
- We are all called to holiness. How does the Holy Spirit inspire each and every one of us?
- How do we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit?
- How can Saints serve as role models for us?
- What does it mean for the Saints to act as our intercessors?

Activities:

As a family, pick out a Saint and read his/her story (<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints> is a good site). What was most striking? How did you find God's presence in this saint's story?

Begin, as a family, praying for the intercession of this Saint.



DIVINE REVELATION

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is the central figure of the scriptures and establishes the Church to assist in giving His life giving message to all generations after His death, resurrection and ascension.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Scriptures and Tradition help us to stay true to the faith that Jesus has given to us, while God also speaks privately to us in the Scriptures to encourage our own faith and grow in love and knowledge of God.

Sample Script:

When Jesus Christ had conquered sin and death by dying on a cross and by rising from the dead, He didn't want to just stop there and leave us all on our own. His intention was always to remain with us in the Holy Spirit through the life of the Church. Further, He wanted to be so closely connected to us that He didn't just want to leave us the three years of work He put in but wanted us to continue to search for and delve deeper into the meaning of God and our relationship with Him. To put this another way, Jesus left us the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, to continue the exploration of God in Scripture and in the Tradition of the Apostles that is handed on down from generation to generation in pursuit of leading all people to the fullness of truth. The Scriptures are written down and collected together as the Bible, the Tradition is handed down from generation to generation through the Church to help us understand the Scriptures.

This combined reality of Scripture and Tradition makes up the Sacred Deposit of Faith, which gives us in the Catholic Church the whole revealed truth. The Deposit of Faith allows the faithful to have confidence in what we profess and believe in. It affords us a certain knowledge in what we can say about God and His Church, assisting us in our relationship with the Divine.

Here, we draw closer to the life of faith as what we believe takes shape and form and becomes something that is not just a thought or an idea, but rather is a Person who offers us love and fulfillment.

The Deposit of Faith is protected and handed on by the Church's Magisterium or teaching office. Jesus entrusted this office to the Apostles who today are the Bishops, with the Pope as the head authority. This grace given to the Pope and the Bishops comes through ordination by the Holy Spirit and allows for an authentic interpretation of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition so that the faithful may be led in a trustworthy manner towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

This gift of faithful interpretation is important so that it does not lead you and I astray as we seek to learn and grow in the faith and in our relationship with God and His Church. Having a correct interpretation of Scripture and Tradition allow us to worship God correctly and approach Sunday Mass with proper attention and intention which ensures that both our physical and spiritual well-being are ready to meet the Lord with praise and adoration. A correct interpretation also allows for our private devotional life to be in good order so that we reach out for and encounter God with humility and openness and not with a false or prideful motive that seeks our own interpretation or spin in order to try to get what we want from the Word.

It is important to point out too that our confidence in having the right interpretation of Scripture allows us the freedom to dive into the Word of God often and prayerfully receive the Lord. The authentic voice of Jesus exists here and He calls us to experience the truth that He has in store for us. We come to know Him and as we come to know Him we come to learn more about ourselves, what we are strong in and what we are weak in as well. This growth of understanding about who we are as a son or daughter of God affords us the grace to live life as God has intended. The more we come to the Scriptures to explore our relationship with God, the more we grow in what is most valuable and most worthwhile in this life

.What is most valuable in this life is to realize that this life is meant to be lived in love. Our study of Scripture (and Tradition, and the Church) shows us that the center of this love is God, this love is shared with others, and this love plays itself out best with us when we discover that we are made for holiness which allows this love to continually and constantly move back to God and neighbor. Reflecting on the Word of God in Scripture opens us up to receive the truths of God's love for us and shows us the way that He is calling us to live a holy life. So amazing it is to consider, that with Scripture being the living Word of God, that these printed words of the Bible speak directly to my situation right now and shows me the way to walk to encounter Jesus and to love the other before me. May we constantly pray over and reflect upon the Sacred Scriptures often in our life!



Questions:

- What makes up the Sacred Deposit of Faith?
- What does the magisterium do for us when it comes to God's revelation?
- Why do we want to make sure we have the right interpretation of the Scriptures?
- Why is it important that we read the Scriptures?
- What is the difference between Scripture and Tradition?

Activities:

Write a paragraph about why it is important that we have the magisterium to help us interpret the Scriptures.

Explain the difference between an official interpretation of the Scriptures and what God may say to you personally when you read the Scriptures.



CREATION

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus, through His saving action of dying on the Cross, destroyed the distorted view that sin and death held over all of creation. Jesus availed humanity the opportunity to encounter God with renewed grace by being able to see all of creation with unveiled eyes; namely by having the ability to see the Creator's design in all.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Signs of Intelligent Design exist all around us. The order, the harmony, the precision; these and many more examples throughout creation, especially in the human person, causes us to praise God for His gifts to us and recognize Him in worship.

Sample Script:

As humans created in the image and likeness of God, we are called to share in the life of God. God's love for us desires that we share in His love by living a life that is centered on His love. Opening ourselves to God through worship and prayer, allows us to come to know who God is and to experience His love for us. Coming to know who God is helps us to understand the care and concern that we need to have for our neighbors, showing them that God loves them and desires all to be in community with Him. Most interesting is that the more that we come to know who God is and are able to live a life centered in love, the more we grow in our own understanding of who we are as children of God destined for eternity.

There are many ways in which we come to know God in the world around us. While worship at Sunday Mass and daily personal prayer are most important and should be attended to often, the created world around us speaks of the presence of God. God's creation carries with it the stamp of His love which allows Him to be experienced and encountered. Having this certain knowledge of the presence of God in our life and in the world around us provides for multiple ways in which

we can communicate with God and grow in relationship with Him.

Let's look at some of the ways that we can come to know God in our world around us. One of the ways that we come to know God is through beauty. Beauty finds its origin in God, meaning that the source of what it means to be beautiful begins in God. God Himself is harmonious and orderly, as beauty possesses within itself a certain harmony and order that attracts us, calling us to admire and praise the person or animal or plant. Beauty is seen also in our own creations of art, dance, music, athletics, and so on. Beauty tends to draw us in and capture our attention. We can each probably think of many examples of what is beautiful. Think of those things that you find to have beauty. What is beautiful about these? How do you see God in these things?

Another way that we come to know God is through goodness. Like beauty, goodness finds its origin in God. Goodness supports all that is holy and directs all things to God. The kindness shown between one person to another; the care shown towards your neighbor's dog; hard work done to complete your homework... these and so many other examples build-up the practice of being good and virtuous (that pursuit of the good), which directs us to God and a life lived in holiness that brings you and me fulfillment and happiness both now and for all eternity.

Truth is another way that we come to understand and know God. And like beauty and goodness, truth finds its origin in God as well. Jesus reveals that He is the way and the truth (cf. John 14:6) and this reality is seen through the presence of truth in creation. All in this world that speaks reality and clarity tells us of the ways things are, which is a direct characteristic of who God is. God does not deceive; He is reality and so all that communicates this real reality by saying what is true offers us each a glimpse of God present among us.

What does this all mean for us? God is certainly present in our world, closely tied to you and me through creation and even within our very selves. The beauty, the goodness, and the truth we spoke of briefly in this lesson, these three things can each be seen within us. We find beauty in ourselves by looking at the order we possess in our body and see the symmetry with which we are put together. We find goodness in our heart and mind telling us to show love to our family and friends and encouraging us to be kind to others and to spread joy with our attention and smile. We find truth in the peace we experience from saying what needs to be said, even when it is difficult, especially when talking about our faith. God loves us and desires to be known. What a blessing it is knowing that we don't have to go far to learn about Him.



Questions:

- How can creation show us about God?
- Where does goodness find its origin, and why?
- Where can we find God present?
- How can truth lead us to God?
- What sort of life does God desire we live, and why?

Activities:

Either draw a scene from creation, or take a picture of a part of creation that you find beautiful.

Write a paragraph about how that scene, image, or part of creation reminds you of God.



DIGNITY OF HUMANITY

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus met and encountered people right where they were at. His perfect acknowledgement of the other person and listening to their needs serves as our example for how we should be engaging others.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

We are never alone in the Catholic Church. The Holy Spirit is ever prompting and calling our name to remind us of our dignity and worth even when we don't feel very dignified and worthy.

Sample Script:

If I asked you to make a list of your wants and your needs, would the lists be identical? If you are honest you will admit that they wouldn't be. There is a difference between wants and needs.

Every human being is created in God's image and likeness, instilling deep within each person an inherent dignity. The Catechism states: "Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature." (CCC 1930) The most basic and fundamental of these rights is to the right to life, and the right to have your life protected from the time you are conceived in your mother's womb until the time of your natural death. The protection of life includes the right to food, shelter, clothing, an education, health care and the ability to work and raise a family. These are the basic needs of every human being. At first glance we might see these needs as being only physical. But each of these basic needs affects a person psychologically and spiritually too. The human person is a union of body and soul, and so we must consider the whole person when addressing human basic human needs.

There are many situations where people are denied or deprived of one of these basic human needs. People can be treated unfairly because of their background, level of education or ethnicity. Perhaps their work site is unsafe, or they are working long hours for little pay. Maybe they have a mental or physical disability, and are denied the opportunity to develop the gifts that they have fully. Maybe a natural disaster destroyed their home, and they don't have any resources to help them get back on their feet. The list can go on and on.

The Catechism reminds us that, "Everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self,' above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity." (CCC 1931). Catholic Social Teaching refers to this as "solidarity." Basically, you could say this means adopting an attitude where you look at other people as "us," not "them." In Genesis, after Cain killed Abel he asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Jesus tells us over and over again in Scripture that the answer to that question is yes! The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.29-37), the Judgment of the Nations (Matthew 25. 31-46), and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16. 19-31) are just a few examples. Jesus died for the sins of all humanity. God doesn't exclude anyone, and as members of his Body, the Church, we are called to follow that example. We have a basic responsibility to our families, our communities and all of society. We are responsible for other people, and have a duty to build societies and situations that respect the human dignity of everyone.

The Catechism also states that "The goods of creation are destined for the entire human race." (CCC 2452). This doesn't mean that we don't have a right to private property, or that we can't have nice things. It means that we have to balance our desire for possessions and goods with the needs of others. It means balancing our wants with the basic needs of others. Several scripture passages provide instruction about the proper attitude we should have toward material goods. The Seventh Commandment states that "You shall not steal." (Exodus 20.15) The Tenth Commandment states that, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house...nor anything that belongs to him." (Exodus 20. 17)

What is the proper attitude toward the possessions of other people? It is okay to admire their possessions, or even to wish that you could have that too. However, these commandments warn against going beyond that to actually taking the object from the person, or becoming jealous and envious of them because of their possessions. These attitudes and actions lead us to sin. The property of another person is to be respected and treated as you would respect and treat that person. In some ways, the person's property is an extension of their dignity.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches us what our attitude should be about our own possessions. In the parable, Lazarus is a poor beggar who often begged at the door of the rich man. The rich man dined on fine food while Lazarus starved. When they both die, Lazarus is rewarded with eternal comfort, while the rich man is sent to a place of eternal suffering. The Rich Man is condemned because he lived in great comfort and did not share any of his wealth with Lazarus. He did not recognize or attempt to uphold Lazarus' human dignity. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches us that everything we have is a gift from God. It was given to us not solely for our use and comfort, but so that God would receive glory and praise. Our attitude should be one of gratitude for God's provision in our life. And we should freely share that provision for the good of other people. The Catechism states: "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself." (CCC 2404) In the ownership of property too, we are called to uphold the human dignity of others. This too is acting as our brother's keeper!



Questions:

- What is the difference between a want and a need?
- What do basic human needs like food and water have to do with the dignity of a person?
- How should we regard material possessions?
- What is something specific you can do in your own life to be a more generous steward of the goods God has entrusted to you, so you can use them not only for yourself but to help others?
- What does it mean to look upon your neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self'?

Activities:

Write a reflection on these words of St. Basil the Great: "The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of him who is naked; the shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot; the money that you keep locked away is the money of the poor; the acts of charity that you do not perform are so many injustices that you commit." How does this quote challenge you to be more aware of the needs of the poor?

Choose either Luke 10.29-37 or Matthew 25. 31-46 and write a paragraph about what it teaches you about human dignity.



SIN

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus came to set all people free from their enslavement to sin and self. When we seek to live a virtuous and balanced life, and run away from excessiveness and deficiency, we model our life after our Loving Shepherd.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Doing good and avoiding evil keeps us in friendship with our brothers and sisters. We help ourselves to be free from sin by participating in the life of the Church through the grace of the Sacraments.

Sample Script:

Our lives are meant to be lived in balance. This balance is to order us and lead us to a life that is fulfilled. This is how God created us and has intended for us to live this life. Unfortunately, sin has thrown our life off in so many ways, including what we seek to bring us fulfillment and the ways that we attempt to find this fulfillment in our life. Coming to understand the balance, and the imbalance, that life offers is helpful for us in our quest to find our life of fulfillment, happiness, and peace.

Our first consideration is looking at the life of vice. Vice is a lock in a world that is out of order, often trapping a person in one or a multitude of sins. These sins are to the person a god, but not a loving and caring god; rather the particular sin drains the person, demanding more and more so the person can feel fulfilled but only for a time before needing to return again for more of whatever the sin is. The person is imprisoned in the particular sin, unable to escape the hold this false god has on one's life.

Vice thus offers the soul, much like sin itself, a very unbalanced approach to life. The person caught in the sin of vice is often excessive and/or deficient in the life one is called to live. The imbalance of one's life is often seen as a tornado, spinning uncontrollably in many different directions very quickly or on the contrary, idling and seemingly stuck with no signs of movement, leaving one feeling hopeless and without direction.

Our next consideration is looking at the life of virtue. Virtue is a way of freedom that exists in one's life lived with order and control, living a life that is doing one's best to steer away from sin. Far from being perfect, the virtuous person is keenly aware of sin, actively avoids sin and the near occasion of sin, and clings close to the loving and caring God. The person is balanced in his or her approach in life and operates freely living under the rule of a loving God who offers direction that leads towards fulfillment and holiness.

Virtue thus offers the soul a holy and balanced approach to life. The virtuous person is neither excessive nor deficient in life, following the middle way that exhibits graces of peace, joy, and tranquility. The balance of one's life is compared to a boat on calm waters, gently and steadily navigating the sea with control and comfort. When troubles come their way, they confidently follow the path before them, knowing that God is walking with them to lead and guide. The person of virtue recognizes the voice of God in his or her life and knowing the ways of God, is able to properly discern the way that they are to go.

Also important to understand, is that when we talk about balance, we are not saying that we have to balance our relationship with God as just one more part of our life that is of no more significance than any other part of our life. Far from that very wrong idea, we must understand that God is the central point of our lives upon which everything else is balanced. In other words, unless God is first, and is the foundation of our lives, it is not possible to balance anything else. Our lives should be on fire for Christ (St. Catherine of Siena). "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, than all these things will be given unto you" (Mt 6:33).

The question for each of us to always reflect on is: how do I maintain a life of virtue? Undoubtedly, life in our 21st century makes living the virtuous life difficult. We seemingly live in a culture that promotes and often celebrates the great vices of human history: pleasure, power, prestige, and wealth. We see it advertised, we see it in our entertainment, and we see it in the news. Because of this "in-your-face" publicity, we see it lived at our school, with our friends, and sometimes even in our families. We come to desire it, even as our loved and trusted ones promote this lifestyle and even end up encouraging you and me to take it on. Now, it is worth pointing out that there are undoubtedly good things about pleasure, power, prestige, and wealth, but the issue becomes when we hold these things up solely as gods and seek them as ends in and of themselves. We learn from Jesus, very ironically, that, "the first shall be last and the last shall be first", and "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth". What should this tell us about our priorities in life? That service for the love of God and love of other and not self-seeking pleasure, power, prestige and wealth should be our priority. Modern philosophers who criticize the Church because they don't believe in God or want you to either will tell you that life is about seeking self-fulfillment and getting as much pleasure out of life as possible (because there's nothing after this). But created realities around us and the miracles and lives of the Saints tell us otherwise. I don't need proof of God's existence because I see it daily in my life when I open my heart to Him. When I live a life of virtue, I feel God's joy within me. When I miss the mark because I engage in vice, I feel the loss of God within me, and I feel miserable.

Virtue, again, is so important in navigating the waters of life. The virtuous life allows us to seek things in their proper order. We need to be people that place God at the center of all things and when we accomplish this, we achieve a level of detachment that says I am OK with some things, but I am also OK without those things; God is my sole possession and it is He who ultimately fills me up (Matthew 19:23-30 speaks well of this). As mentioned, vice and sin are majorly problematic because they eventually possess and enslave us. Virtue keeps the good things of this world in their proper order and allow us to be free in pursuing the life that God has for us; one centered in love and fulfillment that orders us as we were created.



Questions:

- How does living a virtuous life lead us away from sin?
- What is a vice?
- Does being balanced in life meaning there is a limit to what you can have?
- What are two actions you can take to help you live a virtuous life?
- Name at least 3 virtues.

Activities:

How have technological advances affected temptations in your life? Think about how many things in society have become acceptable but are actually sins.

Write a letter to your future self about the temptations in your life and how you are turning to God to assist you in grace.



CALL TO HOLINESS

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus, as fully God and fully man, shows us the supreme example of how to live a holy life. The cardinal virtues form the foundation to live and act as Jesus did.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Striving to live a virtuous life orders us to be the holy daughter or son that we are called to be and inspires others to live virtuously as well.

Sample Script:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, in paragraph 1803, states that “a virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.” The practice of and living a life of virtue is the hallmark of someone seeking holiness. Doing the work of living and striving to live virtuously is to intend to live like God.

Looking at the four cardinal virtues, also referred to as the foundational pieces that help to form the human virtues, these are praised for the pivotal role they play in the formation of man. Human virtues in general form attitudes, dispositions, and habits of intellect and will that shape and guide the man to be morally sound and trustworthy in matters great and small. These four foundational virtues are as follows:

Prudence seeks the good in every moment and decision and offers the best way to go about carrying out the good. Prudence has been said to be the driver of all the virtues, balancing our decisions to neither be excessive or deficient. An example here might include the sixth grade student who is hungry an hour before football. Mom brings home an 8 slice pizza. Prudence says to eat 3 pieces to sufficiently full and satisfy and nourish to get through practice. Deficiency says to not eat anything, going hungry and not having sufficient energy for football. Excess says to eat 7 pieces and get uncomfortable and sick during football. Prudence seeks the safe middle way, which is the path to virtue.

Justice seeks to give God and others their due in a consistent manner. Justice before God consists in following the precepts of the Church, going to Mass on Sunday and going to Reconciliation at least once a year, to name a few. Justice to one's neighbor seeks after the common good which truly seeks to treat others as they are to be treated, namely in love and respect. It is the will of justice to give other's their due under the loving mission of God.

Fortitude seeks to stand firm in convictions that are in line with the good. Standing up for what you believe in in the face of adversity or hostility or even death show a soul who is strong in the virtue of fortitude. Fortitude is a model virtue for any one wanting to learn more and emulate the martyred saints. Imagine, standing before the many different types of instruments used to kill the countless number of men and women and children, imagine the virtuous strength to look past the executioner, the pain, and the death and to be able to confidently choose Jesus Christ and His Church... Fortitude is a powerful gift.

Temperance seeks to balance the desire for and the use of material goods and earthly pleasures. Temperance keeps the order of our passions and thus helps us to obtain correct focus on the areas of our life. The virtue of temperance reminds us to see the good in all things and to use these things in their proper context. We are reminded that God is to be the center of our lives, with everything else finding it's proper place in our lives only once this principle is adhered to.

From these foundational virtues spring forth any number of virtues that help to order and perfect the life of man. The cardinal virtues are the pillars that direct us in living good, moral lives. These virtues are supported by and enhanced by the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.



Questions:

- What is a virtue?
- How do you define and practice prudence?
- What does justice look like in reference to God? In reference to others?
- What does fortitude look like?
- Describe temperance.

Activities:

Name a virtue that you can work on together as a family. How do you plan to work on it?

Pick out one of the cardinal virtues and commit a month of your life to daily practice this virtue with your family, friends, etc. Keep track of things that you did and any inspirations you experienced during the process.



SALVATION

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus restores and strengthens us in grace through the Sacraments. Especially in the Eucharist, we encounter Jesus face-to-face and receive what we need to be holy.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Catholic Church teaches that grace is a gift given that we can either receive or reject. In receiving grace, we grow in faith and thus closer to God in relationship. In rejecting grace, we follow our own path and move further away from God and His friendship.

Sample Script:

Salvation is a gift that is offered to humanity through God's endless and eternal love for His people. Offering His Son, Jesus Christ, to take on our sins whom willfully sacrificed Himself so that we might be restored in union with the Father, we see in Jesus not just a Savior working isolated in a moment in time. Rather, Jesus takes on our human flesh and lives life like you and I and gives us the perfect example of how to faithfully live and follow the Christian life.

In order for you and I to be the son or daughter God has intended us to be, we need to live lives that are holy. For you and I to be holy, we need to realize a couple of things. God calls every single person who has ever been created to be holy. So since God is calling you and I to be holy, we know that He is giving us the necessary tools that we need in order to finish the job. We can't say things like holiness isn't for me or I can't be holy like Mother Teresa. Holiness is for all of us and while it may be true you can't be the next Mother Teresa that is only because God gave you a different call than her so that you can live holiness as He is calling you. You and I need to come to understand the different tools that God gave us in order to live out properly the vocation to holiness in our own life. While sometimes it can be quite evident what God has given to us, other times our tools and gifts get hidden, requiring us to do some exploring and discovering.

So again, living out a holy life is living a divine life that is in friendship with God and offers a living witness of His loving presence for the entire world to see. We begin to live our call to holiness by coming to know God. Time and again the most consistent way to come to know God is through our worship and prayer of God. One reason our Mass is set-up the way that it is is so that we can experience and encounter God in a number of different ways. We call out to Him asking for forgiveness for our sins, we hear His word in the readings from Scripture and in the singing of the Psalm, we come to know more about God in my life and in the lives of others through the homily, we encounter the reality of Jesus Christ present in the Eucharist in His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, we offer our prayers of petition and thanksgiving which call out to God about the events of our life, thanking Him for the gift of salvation, and so on. God speaks to us through worship, inspiring our hearts and minds to continue to offer Him more of ourselves so that we might grow closer to Him. Our worship reaches a climax as we receive Jesus in the Eucharist and encounter grace Himself, inspiring us to live lives after His model.

However, we must do our part to hold onto the grace that we received and to continue the practice of maintaining and building up this grace through worship and prayer and study of Scripture and lovingly serving each other. When we act in such a holy way, we keep at bay the evil powers that seek to steal grace from us and detour us from living a life of grace by following a life of sin. By giving into sin and living in a state of sin (continually giving into a particular sin and living with this unrepented sin), we lose sanctifying grace and become blind to actual grace, choosing death over and against life. Here, our friendship with God is destroyed, choosing against love and wanting to live a life alone apart from God. Jesus' victory on the Cross is ignored and we turn away from life-filling love, choosing selfish self-centered love that pulls us away from salvation. This is the devastation of sin and there is no one sadder about this loss other than God. Thanks be to God, all is not hopelessly lost so long as we have breath in our lungs and are able to choose God and turn away from our sin. Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost, namely our own sinful selves. Through His saving action of dying and rising and the sending of the Holy Spirit to be with the Church, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is given to us sinners to repent of our sinfulness, restore our relationship with God, and convert our ways onto Him. With the Sacrament of Reconciliation we receive the gift of Sanctifying Grace and rejoin the journey of a life seeking holiness, walking in community with the Lord, and Mother Mary, and the Saints, and those holy people in our lives who are seeking to be just like Jesus Christ, loving God and loving neighbor in all that they think, say, and do.

Questions:

- What is a consistent way to get to know God?
- What is God calling us each to be?
- Does God provide anything for us to be what He calls us to be?
- How do we hold onto the grace that God gives us?
- How is our friendship with God destroyed?

Activities:

Write down a number of things that you recognize as good, holy characteristics that you see in your family and friends. What do you admire about these traits? What are some traits that you have? Are there any traits you see in others that you would like to practice and take on?

Interview your mom, dad,, grandma, grandpa or close family member about their favorite character from the Bible or Saint in the Catholic Church. What about this favorite inspires them to be Catholic? How does this holy woman or man draw them closer to Jesus Christ and His Church?



MARY, OUR MOTHER

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus calls all to be humble and to have child-like trust in God. Following Jesus' example of being docile to the will of God provides us with no better witness.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Mary's yes to the angel comes from practicing a life of prayer and listening to the voice of God through Scripture, coming to know and to place all of her trust in God.

Sample Script:

Mary, without any doubt, is a pivotal player in bringing about and sustaining Christianity at the very beginning of its inception. Mary gives her one hundred percent yes to God's message as delivered by the angel Gabriel, consenting to the grace of the Holy Spirit to overshadow her so that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, might take on flesh and enter our human scene so that mankind's relationship with the Holy Trinity might be restored. Mary was there throughout Jesus' life, walking with Him as He taught and healed and proclaimed the Kingdom of God. Mary was also there after Jesus' passion and death and resurrection, helping to announce the Kerygma or the basic Gospel message to the young Church and bring souls closer to God. So, to call Mary a pivotal player goes without saying.

Mary's example some 2,000 years ago has a lot to say to us today. Mary's witness to Jesus and to Christianity as a whole offers the perfect example of what an authentic disciple looks like. Her constant virtue and grace in the accounts that we have of her life point everything back to and focuses on Jesus Christ. We are called to live the same way and should reach out consistently for Mary's intercession to accompany us in being her Son's disciple.

Mary's model of faith is seen in so many ways, but let us focus in on a couple. First, she possessed a humble and pure heart that was ever-ready to receive God. Mary had a deep relationship with God that she nurtured with a consistent prayer life and observance of the practices of her Jewish faith. Her humbleness allowed her to be receptive to the Holy Spirit while her pure heart allowed her to properly recognize the voice of the Lord and His will for her in her life. Mary's example calls to mind the importance for us to be childlike in our relationship with God (see Matthew 18:2-6). This childlike call asks us to be open to the teachings of Jesus and the Church and to follow these with trust and faith, knowing that our loving God will not lead us astray.

Secondly, Mary demonstrated a commitment to listening to and following Jesus in His life. This could not have been easy, especially as His mother, having to hear the number of people who doubted and walked away from Him as well as having to contemplate the horrific things that Jesus was going to undergo for our salvation. Mary's example shows you and me that when Christianity becomes difficult or is unpopular or is being made fun of that we are called to stand firm in our faith, realizing that God the Father out of love for us sent His Son Jesus Christ to show us that love through His life and death and win for us eternal life in our choice to live fully for Him. By faithfully choosing Christ each day, and praying for the grace of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Mother Mary, we can be sure that we will be given the grace to stay committed to our faith and to stand up for our loving God in whatever may come up through our life.

Thirdly, Mary's example shows us that we each have a role to play in the Church. Mary, with the Apostles and other disciples after the resurrection were working together to build-up and continue the Catholic Church that Jesus had set-up for all to abide in (see Acts chapters 1 - 2). One would think Mary wouldn't need to take part in such things; she is the Mother of God right?! Every Christian has the call to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and Mary was no exception. We need to follow Mary's example and speak the words and perform the deeds and live the life of a good Christian and proclaim the reality of the love of God for us through His Son Jesus Christ. Mary in these above ways, and in so many other ways, is a tremendous role model of faith for us!



Questions:

- According to the lesson, what is "the kerygma", and what is Mary's role in the kerygma?
- According to the lesson, what are three ways Mary's model of faith is seen?
- How can Mary still assist us today?
- What do the Acts of the Apostles tell us?
- Why is the Hail Mary so important to pray?

Activities:

Mary shows us that we each have a role to play in the Church. Have you ever considered your role? Write down some of the ways you can think of that people serve in the Church. What roles are interesting and attractive to you?

After you have named some roles, schedule a time to meet with people at your parish who perform these roles so you can learn more about these. Write down 5-7 questions that you could ask and see if you could have a tour of some of the physical locations this role covers at the parish.



THE CHURCH

Sixth Grade



Sample Script:

Think of a time in your life when you planned something out and you were able to see your plan work. You were probably pretty happy to see this thing work from start to finish? Seeing our plan come together and watching the good things that come forth from the success of this plan is quite satisfying indeed!

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus founded the Church as the primary means through which his salvation and grace come to those he redeemed.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Catholic Church holds the Holy Spirit in the seven Sacraments and gives these to her people so that you and I might be guided in coming to know and live the authentic faith.

Jesus Christ came to fulfill God the Father's plan for our salvation and to remind the Father's beloved creation that the Holy Trinity loves us and desires to remain with us always. Since humankind's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden through Original Sin, God the Father has sent a number of messengers to call back the people. Eventually, when He wasn't getting a response, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to ensure all the face of God, preaching and teaching the love and truth of the Kingdom of God. While Jesus named twelve Apostles and had many disciples who were all followers, Jesus was ultimately betrayed and rejected and forced to suffer and die. The difference this time of the people turning away from God was that Jesus, being fully God and fully man, was able to actually

take on all of humanity's sickness from sin and crucify sin, offering in Himself the sin He had taken on so that humanity's debt of destroying their relationship with God through their Original and personal sin would be paid in full. Jesus thus destroys sin and death, conquering these and canceling the separation caused by sin and the consequences of humanity's pride so that we might be restored in our relationship with God.

Next, Jesus rises from the dead and eventually ascends into Heaven, sending forth the Holy Spirit to descend upon the Apostles, the first leaders in the Church. The power of the Holy Spirit of God dwells here in the Catholic Church and by the handing on by Jesus to the Apostles the work of proclaiming the Gospel, of leading the people, and of performing the ministry of service, the Church is handed on through the decades and centuries by their teaching, governing, and sanctifying. The Apostles, who handed on the Church's beliefs in faith and morals, exist today in an unbroken line of succession in our bishops that uphold the development of the Church's Tradition, or her teachings, so that there is a continuity of belief among the faithful so that we can, as authentically as possible, come to know the living and true God. All of this, from the work of God the Father in the beginning to the saving action of Jesus down to our Church today show God's plan for humanity to be one with God in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The teaching authority of the Church is given by Christ directly to Peter and the apostles (Mt 16:16-19, and Mt 28:16-20), the authority to forgive sins (John 20:22-23), and the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide them (John 14:26, and Jn 16:13). With the replacing of Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus and hung himself out of self-pity with Matthias by the other apostles (Acts 1:16-26), and in the words and symbols used in Mt 16:16-19, it is clear that Jesus intended that the prophetic, teaching, and governing offices of the Apostles be carried on by successors chosen by them. This teaching office, called, the Magisterium, consists of the Pope, together with the Bishops united with him when they teach the truth handed down from the apostles in what is called, "the deposit of faith", which is the teachings of Christ and the apostles. The Magisterium is the authentic interpreter of the deposit of faith.

For you and me, this is important to know because it details for us the authenticity of the Catholic Church and supports her claim as possessing the fullness of truth. God's call for humanity to be one with Him finds its possibility in Jesus Christ and is supported by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church through her ministers and people. Further, the power of God is supportive of this effort because the Church, from our human perspective, is far from perfect, making many mistakes and committing many sins throughout her history. If the Holy Spirit was not guiding the Catholic Church, there is no way it would have lasted this long with so many sinful issues. However, the sinfulness of individuals in the Church, even the sinfulness of Popes, bishops, and priests, does not contradict the promise of the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the Church. Jesus never said that any of these people would be sinless (impeccability). Even Judas, who was an apostle, and therefore a pre-cursor of the bishops, betrayed Jesus. So, we can expect that if even Jesus picked men who would sin, we can bet that others in the Church will, too. What he did promise them and us was that the Church, in her Magisterium would teach free from errors on matters of faith and morals (infallibility). History has shown that sometimes errors in theological doctrine crept in some regions where the Church existed teaching for periods of time, which affected large number of the faithful, but in the end, they are always corrected in the long run, usually through councils, which are official gatherings of the Pope and bishops to determine major issues in the Church. Since the Council of Jerusalem (seen in Acts 15), there have been twenty-one councils. The last one was held from 1962 to 1965, called the Second Vatican Council.

We must remember that God is in charge and continues to call all of us, from the Pope, to you and me, to the lowliest person, to conversion and holiness and provides each and everyone who desires this relationship with God with the grace to make such a thing happen. God wants us to love and to be in harmony with Him; to live saintly and holy lives that find us full in this life that point us and others to the reality of eternal life after we die here. In order to achieve our goal of eternal life, we need to allow the mission of God to become our mission and do what we can, living the life of the Church, to do our part in assisting to bring God's plan of relationship together for each and every one of us.



Questions:

- What is the Magisterium, who does it consist of, where does it get its authority, where are these passages in the bible, and what is its function?
- Look up the Council of Jerusalem in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. What major issue(s) did the Council of Jerusalem resolve? How did they resolve it (them)? How did they let the rest of the Church know what they decided?
- Who handed on the beliefs and morals of the Catholic Church as it exists today?
- What is infallibility?
- Who is the apostle that replaced Judas?

Activities:

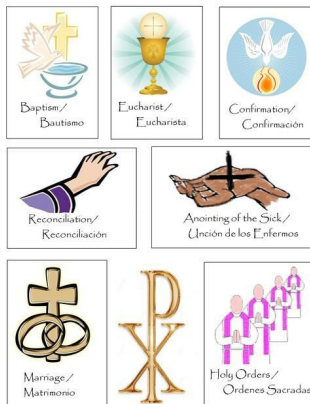
With your family, review paragraphs 880-887 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and discuss the hierarchy of the Church and how Jesus put this structure in place to guide His people. How do we see this hierarchy working today? List all the ways that you see the Church's hierarchy working in our local area.

Visit the Diocese of Kalamazoo's website at www.diokzoo.org/bishop-bradley. Review the page and click on some of the links and list 5 things that the Bishop does to spread the message of Jesus Christ to the faithful of the Diocese.



SACRAMENTS

Sixth Grade



THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS
LOS SIETE SACRAMENTOS

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is always active and His saving grace is available in a variety of ways. The Church's use of sacramentals points us towards the main encounters with grace that are found in the Sacraments.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Sacramentals, such as the Rosary, help you and I to stay connected to our Catholic faith by reminding us to pray, to consider Mary and the Saints, and to stay in communication with God.

Sample Script:

The Sacraments of the Church are intentional points of grace that show us God's presence in our life and invite you and I to explore with greater depth the love which God has for us. The Sacraments often occur during the "big" moments of our life. The Church, fully alive and guided by the Holy Spirit, wants us to have the necessary grace and strength to live these "big" moments in the best way that we can. When we are baptized as infants, we are given the grace to begin our earthly life journeying with the Lord. When we get confirmed, we are strengthened with grace and given the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to intentionally choose God as we make decisions about our life, relationships, and vocation or calling on how to live. When we enter into matrimony, you and your spouse are joined as one to love and support each other through all that life brings. When we receive the anointing of the sick, we are given assurance of God's presence with us as we prepare to make our final journey to our heavenly homeland.

While a majority of the Sacraments are received just once (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders (in most cases), and Matrimony (in most cases)) or situationally (Anointing of the Sick), the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are Sacraments that should be received as frequently as possible as these keep us in the presence of God (Eucharist) while also restores us to God's presence if we leave the path and fall into sin

(Reconciliation). However, even with the Eucharist, which we could receive daily if we go to daily Mass, there are still moments in our life in which the Sacraments are not immediately before us.

The Church has approved sacramentals, which are "sacred signs which bear a certain resemblance to the sacraments, and by means of which spiritual effects are signified and obtained through the prayers of the Church". Sacramentals include things such as holy cards, Rosaries, and holy water, which like the Sacraments, point to a spiritual reality that when used opens you and I up to grace. Sacramentals help us to keep God present in our minds and hearts during the daily moments of our life. These keep us focused on God and assure us of His love for us while keeping us ready to receive the most powerful graces that come to us through the Sacraments. While sacramentals remind us of God and of His presence, they also help us to prayerfully reach out for ourselves and for others.

Some examples as to how we use sacramentals and how they help us to pray for ourselves and others include finding holy cards of our favorite saints and praying for their intercession to help us be holy as they were or asking their help in praying for a family member or friend. When we pray the Rosary, and seek the most powerful intercession of our mother Mary, we learn about the life of Jesus and how His life and words are speaking to you and I today to be the holy daughters and sons we are called to be. When we bless ourselves with holy water, we remember our baptism and that we are children of God and called to be His by turning from sin and choosing Him. These and others show forth the grace that is available to us through the use of sacramental in our life. By participating and using sacramentals to keep our connection to God and the life of the Church, we open ourselves to more fully participate in the Sacraments of the Church and avail ourselves to best be in relationship with the life and love that God created you and I to be a part of.



Questions:

- Name some of the big moments in one's life that God encounters people in the Sacraments.
- Which Sacraments are received just once?
- Why are some Sacraments meant to be received multiple times?
- Discuss what a sacramental is and what a sacramental does.
- Does every Catholic receive every Sacrament?

Activities:

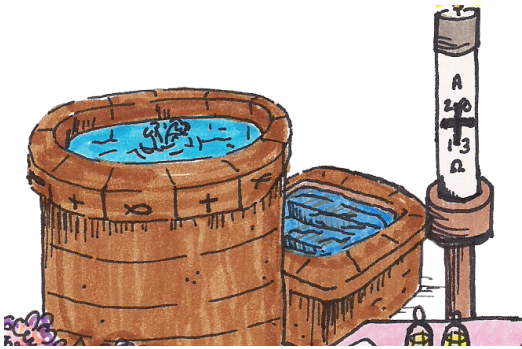
Talk with your parents about the importance of receiving the Eucharist and Reconciliation. How have these Sacraments been important in their life? What are some of the struggles (if any) that they have with receiving these Sacraments? Write down their answers and then consider your own answers to these questions.

As a family, plan a period of time (over a couple of weeks or months) to offer to God as a sacrifice in which you go to Mass more than once a week and maintain a regular schedule of going to Reconciliation (twice a month, as an example). Follow these practices faithfully and with intention.



BAPTISM

Sixth Grade



Sample Script:

Baptism is the gateway sacrament, which means it opens the doors to receiving many gifts and sacraments which will give us everything we need to live courageously as Christians. One of these gifts is sanctifying grace, which is similar to a superpower--it can never be taken away and it allows us the capacity to act with the level of love like Jesus did. That is no small thing, especially when we look at the heroic actions of the saints! In Baptism God also frees us by forgiving us of our sins, and gives us an indelible mark on our soul--this is a seal on our soul that means we belong to Christ, and no sin that we commit can take it away. These gifts God gives us in Baptism, and we never want to forget that we have them!

RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus was just as much at work in the Old Testament as in the New, calling people to repent and return to God through the words and actions of the Fathers and the Prophets.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The presence of grace from the Sacrament of Baptism ensures us of the ever-presence of God working in our life and desiring us to be in right relationship with Him.

In the Old Testament there are several prefigurements of Baptism that are especially recalled at the Easter vigil Mass. They are past events recorded in Scripture that anticipate the sacrament of Baptism. The first event in the Old Testament to prefigure baptism is the great flood for which Noah built his ark. By the flood God cleansed the earth of sin and death, and similarly in Baptism we are forgiven of all sin and given new life, like a flood washing over our soul!

The second event the Church recognizes that anticipates Baptism is the parting of the Red Sea. When the Israelites were running from slavery while pursued by the Egyptian Pharaoh and his army, God parted the sea so that his people could escape and the water swelled down on the Pharaoh's army. God's chosen people were freed by passing through the water, and it symbolizes freedom from the slavery of sin that we receive in Baptism, wrought by Jesus' death on the Cross. The Son of God became man to take on all of our sins, so that we are no longer bound to them and can share in new life with God.

The third event in the Old Testament to prefigure Baptism is the Crossing of the Jordan River. It is momentous--more than 40 years after crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites are ecstatic to enter the Promised Land, the land God has reserved for them, comparable to living in a 5 star all-inclusive resort the rest of your life. They anticipate the happiest way of life they can imagine, and when they must cross an enormous river, the waters part for them. They march triumphantly across. This symbolizes Baptism, and even greater happiness awaits us when we are Baptized. We can look forward to eternal life in heaven, a life greater than we can imagine. These prefigurements of Baptism in Scripture can teach us about the sacrament itself, and can remind us of the incredible gifts we have already received!



Questions:

- What gifts are we given in Baptism?
- What does 'prefigure' mean?
- What are the 3 prefigurements of Baptism found in the Old Testament?
- What does it mean that Baptism is the gateway sacrament?
- What does Baptism remove?

Activities:

Pick one of these events to read in the Old Testament to refresh your memory, and think of how you would explain how that event symbolizes Baptism to another person in your family.

Briefly read or research the life of a saint who heroically demonstrated the gifts we receive in baptism to remind you of the life you are capable of! Some great examples are St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Joan of Arc, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Therese of Lisieux.



CONFIRMATION

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus used specific matter or materials and form or words in His teachings and works. The Sacraments follow the same line of thinking; you need specific matter and form to bring about the reality of a specific Sacrament.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Bishop, when confirming, uses holy oil and speaks the words of "be sealed with the Holy Spirit" to administer Confirmation and thus allow the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to come explicitly to the confirmed.

Sample Script:

When the sacraments are given, certain elements are important to each of them; they take place in a church, there's a certain order of events and the same things are used when the sacrament is received. For example, in the sacrament of Confirmation each candidate will approach the bishop or priest with their sponsor right behind them, and the bishop will anoint the person's forehead with oil while he says, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." This happens at every Confirmation. If we don't understand the meaning of these, it can seem like nothing more than a silly ritual. What's the point of the oil and the laying on of hands by the bishop in the sacrament of Confirmation? How is the sacrament actually conferred or given?

When we investigate the rite of the sacraments, which are the liturgical traditions we celebrate in the church such as the rite of Confirmation I already described, each sacrament has 'form' and 'matter': the 'form' is the words that are said which are most important, and for the sacrament of Confirmation they are, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit". Those are the words the bishop or priest says in the rite. The 'matter'

is what is used to confer the sacrament--in Baptism it is water, in Confirmation the holy oil. The form and matter are external, physical things, but they confer the spiritual reality, which is the sacrament received. It is by the physical anointing and the words that the invisible reality, the graces and new state of our soul, is conferred.

Confirmation completes Baptism--it is a strengthening of the graces that God has already given us in Baptism. Where this strength comes from is the Holy Spirit himself! In Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way, in that he is poured into us and remains with us! Jesus promised that he would give the Holy Spirit to us when he told his apostles, "you will receive my power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit in us allows us to tackle challenges that come when we strive to imitate Jesus; some may not understand why we forgive others or pray, or others may ask difficult questions, or we may endure hard suffering and need God's help to trust him amidst it. For these the Holy Spirit strengthens us with seven Gifts; wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude or courage, piety, counsel, and awe of the Lord. We need these Gifts that we receive in the sacrament of Confirmation in order to stay strong in the faith we were given at Baptism!



Questions:

- What happens when the sacrament of Confirmation is given? What are the words that the bishop/priest says?
- What does each sacrament have?
- What is the form for the sacrament of Confirmation, and what is the matter?
- What does Confirmation complete? Who do we receive in the sacrament of Confirmation?
- What are the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Activities:

If there are any Gifts of the Holy Spirit you don't understand the meaning of, research their meaning. Then think about which Gift you think you need the most in order to better imitate Jesus.

Read Acts 2:1-41. Imagine you were in the room with the apostles. Would you have chosen to be baptised that day?



SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus loves us so much, that there is nothing that can separate us from Him. In fact, His love continually seeks us out, calling our name so that we meet turn and return to Him.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Sacraments of Healing are available to any of the faithful at anytime. The Church makes available these Sacraments through the priest alone as He stands in the place of Jesus Christ Himself when administering these gifts so that the soul is speaking directly to Jesus.

Sample Script:

Forgiveness is one of the most important elements of the Christian life. God is the model of forgiveness, as we see over and over again in Scripture. Many times God made a covenant with the whole world, meaning he wanted all people to be a part of his family. It began with Adam and Eve: he made a covenant with them, yet they turned their back on him and broke their end of the covenant. God nevertheless loved humanity, so he made a covenant with men through Noah, and the visible sign of this covenant was the rainbow. But Noah and his family also sinned against God. Yet, God still kept his promise never to flood the world again, and he still wanted to make everyone in the world his family.

He made covenants through Moses and King David too, and can you guess what happened? Man broke his end of the covenant, God kept the promises he made, and still loved man. So much that he sent his Son to become man, to heal man's broken covenant--only a man could represent humanity, and only God could fix man's brokenness. So he healed man's relationship with God through forgiveness. Throughout his public ministry Jesus forgave the sins of people he encountered, and finally in taking all the sins of humanity onto himself and paying the price for them in dying on the Cross, he restored our relationship with God.

God wants to forgive us even now, which is why he established to forgive sins through a priest. The sacrament of Reconciliation is available to us so that we can ask God for forgiveness and make our relationship right with him. We never need to be afraid because there is no sin that God won't forgive if we are truly sorry for it. Afterwards we have the awesome chance to show others the love that God has shown us by forgiving our family members, friends and classmates.



Questions:

- What is a covenant?
- Why does God want to make a covenant with all people?
- What happened in each covenant that God made with man? What was God's reaction?
- Ultimately why did God the Father send his Son into the world?
- Which sacrament did God make available to us so that we could receive his forgiveness now?

Activities:

Make a habit of praying the Our Father each day. In the Our Father, we are reminded to forgive as God has already forgiven us.

Think if there is any person in your life that you need to forgive. How can you react as God has?



EUCCHARIST

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

The Catholic Church expresses the availability of God in our lives, showing that His loving presence intends to be intimately involved in our lives.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Eucharist, and thus Jesus, is always with us and reminds you and I that each experience of our life, the good, the bad, and the ugly, is worthy of His love and mercy.

Sample Script:

God makes himself present to us in different ways, and in them we encounter different degrees of his presence. First, God created all things, and because all things share in the life that he has, his presence is everywhere and in all things. We especially encounter God's presence in the liturgy, like in the Scripture readings where we encounter the living Word, or in the people, for Jesus says, "where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). During the

liturgy the priest is “in persona Christi” which means “in the person of Christ”, whereby he truly represents Christ, and possesses the power and place of Jesus himself. These are all ways that God is present, but it is only in the Eucharist that we encounter Jesus fully present, his Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. All of Jesus is present in the Eucharist.

Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper in anticipation of his death, where he gave his whole self--Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity--for mankind. The Eucharist is a memorial that encapsulates the Paschal Mystery where Jesus is still truly present to us. At Mass, the bread transforms into Jesus’ Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity when the priest or bishop, “in persona Christi”, says the words, “This is my body” and, “This is my blood...” even as it still appears to be bread and wine. St. Teresa of Calcutta put it, “The Cross shows us how much Jesus loved us then; the Eucharist shows us how much he loves us now.”

The word “Eucharist”, in Greek “eucharistia” means thanksgiving. At Mass the priest also leads the Congregation in a prayer of thanksgiving for this incredible gift. We can also make a personal prayer in our hearts, at Mass or anywhere, thanking Jesus for loving us so much so as to give himself to us in the Eucharist now.



Questions:

- Where do we encounter God’s presence?
- Is God present in the same way in his creation as the priest during Mass?
- Where is the one place Jesus is fully present to us?
- Why did Jesus institute the Eucharist?
- What does the word Eucharist mean?

Activities:

Even though we cannot see Jesus as he is until we reach heaven, he is nevertheless fully present in the Eucharist, veiled under the appearance of bread and wine. Take a little time to reflect and journal about the fact that you receive Jesus during Mass. What is a way you could be more fully present during Mass (paying better attention, participating in the prayers or even some personal prayer time before or after Mass) while he is fully present to you?

Discuss what must have the apostles thought at the Last Supper. Imagine Jesus’ request to them of taking and eating in remembrance of him. The faith that Jesus asked of them at the Last Supper is what he asks of us at Mass.



DIVINE WORSHIP

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus, in uniting God and man in His very person, also united Heaven and earth. When we attend Mass, the Mass we live and pray participates in the Mass in Heaven that eternally praises the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Our prayer offered and grace received at Mass have eternal ramifications: praising God, seeking Jesus' mediation in our life, being united with the Saints, praying for the suffering souls in purgatory to name just a few.

Sample Script:

After Jesus ascended to heaven, his followers, the members of the Church throughout the ages, have been obedient to the call to continue His saving work by announcing the Good News of salvation to all the world. Through our baptism we become members of the Body of Christ, the Church. The Church has existed for almost 2000 years, so the Body of Christ has members both here on earth and in heaven. Christ is the head of the Body, and the members are one body, even though we live subject to the laws of time and space and the members in heaven do not. This unity is expressed in the term "communion of saints," which is one of the articles stated in the Apostles Creed. The faithful, whether living or dead, form the one Body of Christ, his Church.

This unity is experienced in the Liturgy, the formal prayer of the Church. It is in the liturgy that the Church ratifies the New Covenant established by Jesus. When we celebrate the various rites that comprise the Church's liturgy, whether the Mass, the Sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, Stations of the Cross, etc., our act of worship is united with the eternal worship of the saints in heaven. The Body of Christ is one, and it acts as one in worshipping God.

The Mass is the center of our worship and the most complete experience of this unity. It is here that we celebrate the sacrifice that established the New Covenant, “the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.” (CCC 1067) By power of God the Last Supper, the cross and the empty tomb are re-presented (made present) to us. We are really there. We believe that every Mass celebrated here on earth is brought into the heavenly liturgy. The veil between earth and heaven is lifted briefly, and we join the angels and saints in heaven at the heavenly banquet. The Church triumphant (the saints) and the angels in heaven are united with Jesus in eternity. The Church on earth is united with Jesus through Word and Sacrament. Heaven and earth are united in the timeless sacrifice of the Eucharist. Because we only know the limits of time and space it is hard for us to grasp this reality.

Both Scripture and Tradition support this belief:

- The author of the Letter to the Hebrews describes the Christian community as surrounded by “so great a cloud of witnesses.” (Hebrews 12.1) Who would those witnesses be but those who were faithful to the covenant and have now passed from this life into heaven.
- The Catechism says that, “In the earthly liturgy we share in a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy” and that “with all the warriors of the heavenly army we sing a hymn of glory to the Lord; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them.” (see full text CCC # 1090)

From the prayers of the Mass:

- At the beginning of Mass, in the Penitential Rite, as we confess our sinfulness we link our prayers to the prayers of those in heaven: “I confess to Almighty God...and I ask Mary, ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.”
- Preface to Eucharistic Prayer Two: “And so, with the Angels and all the Saints, we declare your glory, as with one voice we acclaim:” (we all pray) Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hosts....)
- Preface to Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation I: “As so, filled with wonder, we extol the power of your love, and, proclaiming our joy at the salvation that comes from you, we join in the heavenly hymn of countless hosts, as without end we acclaim: :” (we all pray) Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hosts....)
- Preface to Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II: Therefore, as we give you ceaseless thanks with the choirs of heaven, we cry out to your majesty on earth, and without end we acclaim:” :” (we all pray) Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hosts....)
- Eucharistic Prayer One: “In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God: command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us, who through this participation at the altar receive most holy Body and Blood of your Son, may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.”

There is so much going on at Mass that requires spiritual sight. We can’t physically see the presence of the heavenly hosts, but we are truly united with them in Jesus. All the Sacraments, because they bring us into deeper union with Christ, also unite us with the members of His Body, the Church in heaven and on earth.



Questions:

- Why is the Mass the center point of our worship?
- What is the communion of saints? How are we united with the saints?
- What similarities do you recognize within the various prayers mentioned above?
- Look at Revelation 4:1-11 together as a family. Find here an example of some of the heavenly liturgy. What are some of the things you notice?
- What similarities do you see between Mass on Sunday and what is happening in heaven?

Activities:

Write a short couple of paragraphs describing what is going on at Mass. Include who is present, physically and spiritually, who is being worshipped, and how each role (participant, lector, priest, musician, etc.) is praising God.

Spend about 30 minutes in prayer, asking God to help you understand the Mass more fully. Are there any parts that are difficult for you? Ask God to help you have more understanding in these difficult areas.



LITURGICAL LIFE

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is present in each moment of our life. This reminds us that no matter what we are going through, whether happy or sad or lonely or joyful, Jesus is here to walk with us.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The different liturgical colors we experience in the life of the Church tell us of the life and teaching of Jesus that God gives us for our growth in holiness and right instruction.

Sample Script:

For each of the five liturgical seasons, the priests wear different colored vestments. Very often the Church is also decorated in different colors to reflect the spirit of the season. The colors help our hearts and minds to enter into a different state of liturgical celebration. Traditionally, the color of Advent and Lent is purple. The color purple represents penance, humility, and a melancholic temperament. Since both Advent and Lent are solemn seasons of preparation, the colors reflect this attitude of humble repenting from our sinfulness and returning to God with even greater love and devotion. The color red is typically worn on certain feast days, usually when we celebrate a martyr. It's also worn on Good Friday and Pentecost Sunday. Red symbolizes the blood of the martyrs as well as the blood Christ shed for us on the cross. It's a reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made for us and the holiness of the men and women who laid down their lives for Him. Red also represents the fire of the Holy Spirit Who inspires us with zeal for our Lord, which is why it is worn on Pentecost Sunday.

Ordinary time is celebrated with the color green. Green represents everlasting life, hope, and the Holy Spirit. Ordinary time is meant to inspire us to grow in holiness throughout the year. It reminds us to look to our heavenly home and rely in the grace of the Holy Spirit to transform us. Christmas and Easter are traditionally celebrated in white or gold colors. The color gold represents the joy of these seasons! White symbolizes light, innocence, purity, joy, triumph, and glory. Christmas and Easter are two pivotal seasons for the Church. By Christ entering the world on Christmas day, He fulfilled God's promises to the Israelites to save them from their sins and extended the glories of His kingdom to all of humanity. Christmas is a beautiful expression of how much God loves you and me. He loves us enough to become one of us.

Easter is the most important season of the entire year. It's because of Christ's resurrection from the dead that we can all hope for eternal life with God in Heaven. It's the joyful time when we celebrate Christ's final triumph over sin and death! White and gold are meant to encapsulate these spirits of joy and triumph in our liturgy. One last color you will see in the liturgical year is the color "rose." This color looks like pink and also represents joy like gold does. It's more of an anticipation of getting close to the joyful times of Christmas and Easter. The two days in particular when rose is used is Gaudete Sunday which is the third Sunday in Advent when we are one week away from Christmas and Laetare Sunday which is the fourth Sunday of Lent once we are close to Easter.

Just to recap. There are 6 colors: purple for Advent and Lent; red for certain feast days, Good Friday, and Pentecost; green for Ordinary Time; white and gold for Christmas as well as Easter; and lastly rose for Gaudete and Laetare Sunday. These color help to guide us through the seasons of the year and recognize their charisms.



Questions:

- Which colors correspond to which liturgical seasons and feasts?
- What do each of the color represent?
- How do these colors help us to enter into the liturgical life of the Church?
- In a liturgical year, does every season appear only once on the liturgical calendar?
- Why do we celebrate special days in Mary's life as well as Jesus'?

Activities:

Examine each of the colors and think of an object or event associated with that color that gives it a fitting meaning for each of the seasons. An example could be the evergreen tree for the green vestments during ordinary time. The correlation being that the tree remains green all year round and can therefore represent the everlasting life that ordinary time is meant to remind us of. The idea of this activity is to help you create mental and visual ties between the colors and the seasons with things you relate to.

Put together a very brief presentation as if you were explaining this lesson to someone who knew nothing about Church Tradition, just focusing on the rational behind the colors of each Season.



CHRISTIAN LIFE

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus lives out the the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy by centering Himself in the will of God. God's love is available to all and Jesus gives us the Works of Mercy as the delivery vehicle by which His love comes to all.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

Living out the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy allow us to participate in the life of grace that brings forth fulfillment and holiness in our lives as Christians.

Sample Script:

The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy offer a roadmap for loving our neighbor and loving God as well through the process. When we intentionally reach out to our neighbor in love, we give praise to God for living the holy Christian life that He calls us to live. A plan to live out the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy will assist both our Christian life and our sisters and brothers in need.

Examples of ways to live out the Spiritual Works of Mercy could look as follows:

- Counseling the Doubtful: Counseling the doubtful consists in working with those who are struggling in their faith. We need to learn to listen to family and friends and others in need and offer hope to the other, either through our words or our deeds, so that their doubt can tend towards assurance of the living and loving God.
- Instructing the Ignorant: Instructing the ignorant allows us to offer insight to those that might have a misunderstanding or misconception about the faith. This is done in a loving and gentle way that doesn't make one feel low, but rather offers direction and insight that builds on the truth that the ignorant party may already possess. The greater clarity that you can offer affords the receiver more clarity regarding the things of this life.

- **Admonishing the Sinner:** Admonishing the sinner calls forth, in a spirit of fraternity, friendly correction that something that is being done or willfully omitted is wrong. True care for another's soul is evident here as this correction seeks to help the other walk the path of righteousness by changing one's ways towards that of Jesus.
- **Comforting the Sorrowful:** Comforting the sorrowful yields a spirit of presence with the other that allows the other to know that he or she is not alone. Further, it offers the reminder that Jesus walks alongside us in our sufferings, as He Himself suffered so much for us. Comforting the sorrowful offers the other a message of hope that all we endure for the Lord is a moment of grace.
- **Forgiving Injuries:** Forgiving injuries allows for the grace to let go of any hanging on of past hurts and, in freedom, to truly forgive the other as a brother or sister. It is an appropriate moving on and commending the situation and all involved to God, who has the power to do what needs to be done. In forgiving injuries, we reflect the love of God in a special way and truly treat the other as we want to be treated.
- **Bearing Wrongs Patiently:** Bearing wrongs patiently finds us working through any difficulties with grace and walking with God who meets us where we are at. While wrongs are difficult to bear, the virtue of patience and the presence of God lets us continue on with strength and reminds us that God deals the same way with us.
- **Praying for the Living and the Dead:** Praying for the living and the dead lets us unite with our brothers and sisters in the Church to assist them by storming God with our desires. Here, more and more grace is able to intervene for a soul and in a real spiritual sense, we are connecting with and accompanying the other through their time of need.

Examples of ways to live out the Corporal Works of Mercy could look as follows:

- **Feed the Hungry and Give Drink to the Thirsty:** While not always put together, for our purposes these allow us to nourish the other who is hungry or thirsty in any way. Through a conscious effort to being present to and listening with our ears and heart, we can hear and possibly satisfy the hunger and thirst of the other.
- **Shelter the Homeless:** Shelter the homeless allows us to provide a place of refuge for those without a home. I think as a sixth grade student we can shelter the homeless by inviting the lonely kid at school into our life (sitting with them at lunch, for instance). Jesus is always calling us into His home and we can do the same for others.
- **Visit the Sick:** Visiting the sick allows us to give our time and attention to another who is ailing in mind or body. Loneliness is a common feeling for others in such states and our presence can be a God-send for folks, lifting their spirits.
- **Visit the Prisoners:** Visit the prisoners allows for the ministry of presence, or simply spending time with another, to be a great offering of one's self. Prisoners have very little; visitors offer such a gift of their time freely given so that the prisoner can have their burdens mercifully lifted just a bit.
- **Bury the Dead:** Bury the dead is the corporal work of mercy that shows the dignity of the human person all the way until the end. The body is created by God and is the temple of the soul, so reverence and respect for the body of the dead offers God a pleasing sacrifice as the soul returns home. This preparation of the body is truly a preparation for the resurrection as foretold by Jesus.
- **Give Alms to the Poor:** Give alms to the poor reminds us of our call to give to others so that they may have life. We are called to share our blessings, for all things in one way or the other come from God. We thus cannot withhold from our brothers and sisters who have not.

These Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy show forth the presence of God in all of our lives and call us to serve the less fortunate with love and service as they are children of God with the same dignity as you and I. We are called to see the face of Jesus Christ in every soul, no matter the situation. These Works of Mercy are to be memorized, practiced, and prayed over so that we can excel in being givers of these gifts so all can encounter the love of God present and guiding our life.



Questions:

- What about Counseling the Doubtful is easy for you? What is difficult? Consider a way or two that would help you to grow in performing this Spiritual Work of Mercy.
- How should Admonishing the Sinner be handled, with gentle kindness or with charitable pushing? Briefly describe why you chose what you chose.
- Why is it important, especially for a Christian, to Forgive Injuries?
- Explain how Sheltering the Homeless could look for a sixth grade student.
- What is the idea behind Visiting the Imprisoned? What is our faith teaching us by respecting those imprisoned?

Activities:

Research different Catholic or Christian organizations that do intentional outreach with the Corporal Works of Mercy. How do these talk about seeing Jesus Christ in the other? If they don't speak of this, write how their service points to the loving presence of Jesus to those in need.

Call your parish church and ask the pastor or appropriate parish staff member to tell you about the Spiritual Works of Mercy performed. Ask how does this work support the christian life of the souls involved? Consider these works yourself with your parents and with their approval and participation, find a spiritual work that you can participate in.



PRAYER

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus' words and teaches present in Scripture are alive and speak to us today, and thus frequent reflection and meditation with the Bible should be common in our prayer life.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The maintenance by the Magisterium of Scripture and Tradition assures us of the presence of Holy Spirit walking with faithful souls towards sainthood throughout the Church's history. Our prayers and works are important for our sanctity, and others, within the Church.

Sample Script:

Reading through the Bible is an awesome way to pray. The Catholic Church believes and teaches that the Bible is not just a book like any other, it's actually the living Word of God. These are not just dead words that only have meaning to people two thousand years ago, it is the Living Word that speaks to you and me today! When we open the Bible to read, we are encountering God who is trying to speak to us and tell us something important. Because of this living reality of the Bible, the best way for us to read this book is in the context of prayer, talking with God, and asking Him to help us to understand what He wants to say to us.

The Bible contains true stories of how God guides the life of man. These stories and lessons still speak to us today, helping us to understand how God works in our lives. A good example is how we very often think our lives and careers need to start right away. We rush around trying to find our vocation and what God wants us to do. In the story of Abraham, however, we learn that sometimes God asks us to wait and be patient until the right time. Abraham and his wife Sarah were very old. It was long past the time when they could have children. It must have been easy to think that it wasn't God's plan for them to have kids. They even made a lot of mistakes and Sarah even lost trust in God sometimes throughout their long journey. God had

made them a promise, however, and He remained faithful to them. Abraham always trusted in God's promise. God told them that they would be the parents of a great nation and that their descendants would be more numerous than the stars!

After many years of waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled, they finally gave birth to their son, Isaac. God had answered their prayers and kept His promise. A few generations later, the number of Abraham's descendants were already reaching hundreds and soon thousands. Eventually, God did make Israel a great nation just as He promised, but then He did something even more amazing. When Jesus came and gave us the Catholic Church, He allowed everyone to be a child of God and a member of His people! Because of this, every Christian who ever lived is also a spiritual descendent of Abraham, making them as impossible to count as the stars in the sky. It is a continual fulfillment of God's promise all those thousands of years ago. This story reminds us that God is always faithful and His plans are even greater than what we can possibly imagine. Sometimes we just need to be patient and wait for God to act at the right time.

The Bible is filled with amazing stories of God working in people's lives. When we read through them, they teach us how God may want to work in our lives as well. Through the words of the Bible, God speaks to us just as truly as those same words spoke to Abraham.

It's important to set aside this personal time with God in prayer. By letting God into our personal lives, we allow Him to do amazing things like what He did with Abraham. In personal prayer, God is able to reveal His plan for us, give us strength in times of hardship, and comfort us when we are hurt. I'm sure you know how important it is to have a healthy body. Having a healthy body allows you to live a full life where you are able to be happier and better take care of the people around you. Because of this, it's important to take care of your body by feeding it the right foods and exercising it every day.

It's also important to make sure you have a healthy soul. We need to make sure we are feeding our soul the right things by reading good spiritual books, receiving the graces of the Sacraments, and doing good works. We also need to make sure we are exercising our souls by frequent prayer and works of mercy towards our neighbor. These things just take a little bit of time each day, but when we do tend to the garden of our souls, our interior life begins to blossom and flourish. When we feed and exercise our souls, we come alive! Our life takes on purpose that guides us in making our decisions and we find a constant wellspring of strength through the love of God in our hearts. Just like exercising our bodies lets us live a good life here on earth, exercising our souls lets us live an amazing life in Heaven for eternity.

Having a healthy spiritual life relies heavily on praying frequently. Praying often allows God to guide us to know what to do and give us the strength to do it. There are so many different ways to pray and there is never a bad time to pray. We can engage in spontaneous prayer which just accepts God's constant invitation to be with us at every moment of the day and night. We can practice meditative prayer which focuses on an image or text which guides us to reflect on God and our relationship with Him. Contemplative prayer is speaking to God in the silence of our hearts and focusing on His presence and speech to us. Of course, there is always vocal prayer when we speak aloud to our Lord.

These different forms of prayer, including reading the Bible, form the foundation of our relationship with the God who made us. They help us to learn God's plan for our lives, and build up our souls, so that we can do amazing things.



Questions:

- Why is reading the Bible important? How does it help our spiritual lives?
- Why is our spiritual life important through personal prayer important?
- What are the different kinds of prayer we can practice?
- What does Abraham's story tell us?
- Does God always answer our prayers when we pray for something in our life?

Activities:

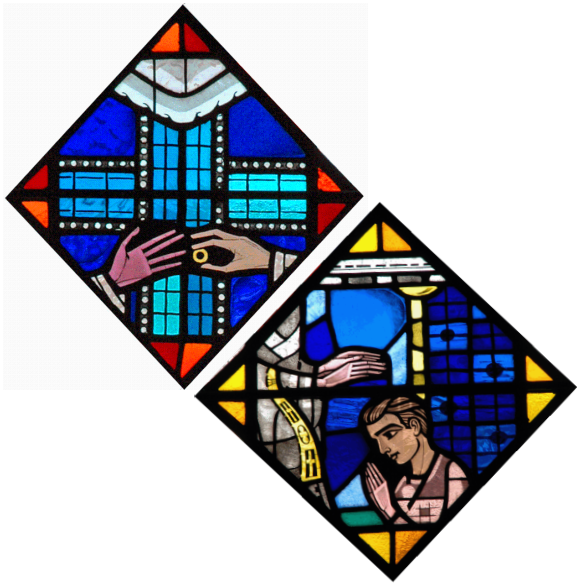
Take a little bit of time each day this week to read from the Bible. A good place to start is the Gospel of Mark. Talk to God about how what you're reading each day relates to you and His plan for your life.

Make a "prayer plan" for your day and try to commit to it for the next month. It should be something simple like 10 minutes of silent contemplative prayer each day when I wake up, or 5 minutes of reading the Bible before going to sleep. You don't want to try and do everything at once! Just try to make a plan to build up your spiritual health by making time to do the things that are good for your soul a little bit each day. Talk to a trusted adult like a parents, teacher, or priest about their prayer life and how they build up their spiritual health. How does it help them specifically?



SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus is the face of God the Father and seeks to fulfill the will of Father in that mankind and God might be one in self-sacrificing love. The Sacraments of Service are an image of this plan.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Catholic Church seeks to assist all men and women to finding fullness in their lives by lovingly giving themselves to serving others through the Sacraments of Service.

Sample Script:

Just as God has created each person unique with specific gifts and talents, God calls each person to a specific state in life, a vocation, to which their gifts and talents are ordered toward. We can choose our state in life, but God calls us to the state where he knows we will be happiest and fulfilled. Each vocation serves our number one calling in life to holiness, in that our vocation helps us to become who we are created to be.

The most common calling is to a vocation of married life, and when lived well beautifully represents the love of Trinity. Marriage is a covenant, a binding promise between man and woman where they become each other's family. This covenant is lifelong - permanent until death - where in the man and woman help each other through life and grow in holiness. Marriage exists for the good of the spouses and the procreation of children who they raise and teach. The love between the Mom, Dad and child mirrors the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A heroic vocation that God calls some men to is the priesthood. This role is vital for the Church – without priests, we would not have access to the Sacraments! A priest's main role is giving the Sacraments acting "in persona Christi" which means "in the person of Christ" by the Sacrament of Holy Orders he truly represents Christ so Christ is present and acting – he possesses the power and place of Christ himself. This doesn't mean he pretends to be Christ like actors in a play. Rather, when the priest takes action it is Christ's action. Only a priest or Bishop can do this, and it is because they receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Like a wedding cake, there are 3 tiers of Holy Orders: 1. Bishop 2. Priest and 3. Deacon. Only the Bishop holds the fullness of the priesthood. A priest who is not a bishop receives the invisible character (or imprint) of "priest" on his soul, but his powers to function as a priest rest with his Bishop who grants his priests "faculties" or permissions to publicly celebrate Mass, hear confessions, preach, serve as an exorcist or in some additional capacity. While the Deacon assists the priest in the liturgy and preaches. Each of these roles is necessary and a blessing for the Church and the person who receives this Sacrament.

Another state of life that God calls some too is religious life. This is open to both men and women, and it allows a person to put greater focus on their relationship with God on earth. Instead of making vows to another person (as in marriage) the religious makes vows to God directly and uses their gifts and talents to build God's kingdom in whatever unique way they are called. Two famous women religious include St. Therese of Lisieux, and St. Teresa of Calcutta. It is a severe life of service, often free of many worldly distractions.

The vocation to priesthood or religious life, though less common, also serves as a means to holiness for those called to them and often a very joyful life as well.



Questions:

- What does each vocation serve to help us do?
- What is the marriage covenant? What does the family beautifully represent?
- What does "in persona Christi" mean?
- What are the 3 tiers of Holy Orders?
- What state in life makes vows to God, not to another person?

Activities:

Make a chart of the 3 tiers of Holy Orders, writing what each involves.

Research the lives of either St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa of Calcutta, or another famous religious that you know to learn more about that state of life.



THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Sixth Grade

Share Your
Faith in Christ



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus' proclamation of the Gospel calls all at all times to consider the ways of God and hold these ways fast in their life.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Catholic Church offers a wholistic approach that speaks to every aspect of man's existence so that he might be full.

Sample Script:

Each and every Christian is called to evangelize. Evangelization is introducing people around us to the person of Jesus Christ and sharing the Gospel message. Christians need to evangelize out of a twofold prompting: out of love for God and love for their neighbor. Since we love Jesus and know the great price He paid for us by laying down His life for us, the Church naturally desires and is obliged to share this message with the world. Secondly, since we care about the wellbeing of our brothers and sisters, we want them to be saved from death by believing in Jesus Christ. These two realities make it always important to spread the Good News. We need to share our love of Jesus Christ with everyone around us, so we can help each other reach Heaven together.

Evangelization does not mean we need to stand in the city streets making bold speeches. That might be the call of some people, but no words that we say will carry any weight if they are not supported by actions. If we try to share the Gospel message and inspire love of Jesus Christ, but we ourselves are not rejoicing in the Good News and set of fire by our devotion to Jesus, people will not be inspired. We need to make sure we are first and foremost engaging in prayer, works of mercy, and

frequent participation in the Sacraments. Once we do this, we become a living testament to Gospel and a walking witness of the life of Jesus. The reason that the Saints are so attractive is because they were able to live so much like Jesus. Our call to be Saints is a call to be more and more like Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that we never speak about the Gospel. We should always be ready to share the good news with the people we encounter. The essence of the good news of the Gospel comes in four parts. First, the knowledge that God made us to be in relationship with Him. Second, that through choosing sin, we have broken that relationship and brought death into the world. Third, the savior, Jesus came to save us from our sins. God became man in order to die for our sake, but He was not conquered by death. Instead, Jesus rose from the grave to give us hope for our resurrection to new life! Fourth, by believing in Him, repenting from our sins, and following Him, we can embrace the salvation that He has won for us. This essential message is what we need to share with people by our words and deeds. First and foremost, we need to love the people we share this message with, because it out of love that we want them to be saved.

By courageously the Gospel message out of love for our neighbor, we can help participate in the saving work of Jesus by helping people gain access to Heaven.

The life of a Christian should bear resemblance to the life of Christ. This doesn't mean that we wear sandals and travel around the country on foot like he did. It means praying so that we can have a real relationship with the Father, that we do works of mercy for others, and that we study Scripture and share what we hear at Mass with others. Being a living witness of the Christian life is the best way to share who Christ is with others.



Questions:

- What are the two reasons the Church is obliged to share the Gospel?
- How do we Evangelize?
- Why is it so important that we Evangelize?
- What do we help people gain when we evangelize?
- Why are we called to be Saints?

and healed that relationship through His life, death, and resurrection, 4. we can respond to Jesus' invitation by our life in His Church and the Sacraments. It doesn't have to be long, wordy, or smart sounding. The most important part is that it comes from the heart and professes the truth honestly.

Activities:

Practice sharing the Gospel message with a friend or parent. Write out the way you feel comfortable phrasing the essential four parts: 1. God made us for relationship with Him, 2. sin as broken that relationship, 3. Jesus came

Take some time to reflect on the Gospel message in prayer. If you want, you can reflect on Peter's proclamation in either Acts 3:11-26 or Acts 10:34-43. Do you truly believe in the Good News? That Jesus came to save you and that He wants you to be with Him in Heaven? Thank God for your belief and ask Him to help your unbelief.



THE SAINTS

Sixth Grade



RELATES TO JESUS:

Jesus' life points entirely to God and to others. This is the life of a disciple and brings about fullness, happiness, and ultimately sanctity.

RELATES TO MY FAITH:

The Catholic faith is entirely pointing towards the other and shows that one's life of virtue is not kept solely for him but rather for the betterment of all, bringing as many as possible into holiness.

Sample Script:

The Bible tells us that God created mankind "in His image and likeness." Being created in God's image and likeness is a great gift that no other creature on earth has. Three of the many gifts that come from God creating us in this way is: first the gift of our free will, second being made to live in a loving community with other human beings, and third being made to live in relationship with God. A Saint is someone who knows they are made in the image and likeness of God. They use their gifts as much as they can and make it the center of their lives.

The first gift of our free will allows us to make the right choices even when it may be difficult. Our free will allows us to make sacrifices and give of ourselves to people we love. This power lets us be heroes and lead amazing, inspiring lives. God always uses His free will to do good. He used His free will to create us even though He didn't have to. God the Father also used His free will to send His son Jesus, who is both God and man, so that He could free us from our sins and so that we can be with Him in Heaven. God does these things for us because He loves us, and He gave us the gift of our free will so that we can love just like He does. A Saint uses his or her free will to do the right thing and what God asks them to do as much as they can.

The second gift that comes from being made in God's image and likeness models the Trinity. You know that the Trinity means that God is three persons in one God. That means He is a community of love within Himself. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all love each other more than you can imagine! God made us to have our own communities of families, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and even the whole human race! He doesn't want us to be by ourselves. He wants us to have other people to love. We all live together and our decisions of free will have the power to affect one another. Sometimes, we make the wrong choice which doesn't just affect ourselves, but also the people around us. However, our free will gives us the power to choose to make the lives of the people around us better, and to give them great acts of love and kindness as gifts! A Saint is someone who chooses to love the people around them and help them to lead better lives.

The third gift of being made in the image and likeness of God, is that we are able to have a real relationship with God. While the plants and animals follow God's will, they don't get to have the same level of intimacy and love that God and mankind share. Because of this gift, we are able to receive the love of God in a special way called grace. Grace is a something God gives to us with His free will that helps to make us good and holy just as God created us to be. Just like any other gift or present we receive on special occasions like Christmas or your birthday; God doesn't force us to take the gift. He doesn't even force us to use it. Our free will gives us the ability to accept God's gift of grace and make good choices with His help. Because of our relationship with God, we are able to know His great love for us and also respond to that love, by doing little things every day that show God we love Him too. A Saint is someone who knows they are loved by God and does everything they can to love Him in return.

Every human person is loved by God super abundantly, and every human person has a desire in their heart to love God and be with God forever in Heaven. The Saints are people just like you and me who know they are loved by God and want to love God in return, so they chose to use their gifts from God to make good and heroic choices. Some of them did amazing things, like St. John Paul the Great who was the pope of our Church for many years, traveled around the world, and inspired millions of people to be holy. Other Saints did little things with great love, like St. Therese of Lisieux, who lived as a nun in a convent and chose to do small gestures to show her fellow sisters that she loved them even if they were sometimes unkind to her.



Questions:

- Why is it important to know we are made in the image and likeness of God?
- What are some of the gifts from being made in the image and likeness of God? Why are they important?
- How does a Saint use each of the three gifts?
- What has God given us that gives us the ability to accept God's gift of grace?
- Who is called to be a Saint?

Activities:

With your child, spend some silent time in prayer meditating on the creation story (Genesis 1-2:4). Pay particular attention to 1:26-31 when the story culminates with the creation of man in God's image and likeness. Ask God to share with you what this means for your life. Write down any thoughts you may have afterwards.

Spend some time reflecting on how your choices have affected those around you. How much of those effects are negative and how many of them are positive? Ask God what ways you can have more positive effects from your choices.

Take a short walk outside, if only for 10 minutes. Reflect on how every aspect of creation gives God praise. Think about how you can use your free will to praise God in your life. Reflect on how amazing it is that you can have a unique relationship with the God of the universe.