

Home-Learning Guide

The *Finding God* for Junior High Home-Learning Guide provides you with an opportunity to work with your junior-high child to grow together in faith. Whether you are doing home catechesis with your children or are seeking to be more deeply involved in their faith growth, the Home-Learning Guide will give you the tools you need.

The Home-Learning Guide can assist you if you find yourself in one of the following situations:

- In cooperation with your parish director of religious education, you have chosen to work on *Finding God* for junior high lessons with your child at home as part of the parish religious education program.
- Because of travel, illness, or injury, your child misses parish religious education sessions, and you wish to work with him or her at home in the interim.

GOING THROUGH A CHAPTER WITH YOUR JUNIOR-HIGH CHILD

By following the step-by-step process outlined below, you can go through the chapters of your junior high child's book, helping him or her to grow in faith. Follow these simple steps:

Begin each unit by inviting your child to read aloud the two-page introduction that describes the focus of the unit.

In each chapter, follow these four simple steps:

Step One: ENGAGE (the first page of the chapter)

Before beginning, review the information on the charts that follow, which tells you what to help your child know or do on each page. Set aside space for this important time. Work together on the first page of the chapter, inviting your child into conversation about aspects of his or her life that are connected to the theme of the chapter. Have your child complete the activity at the bottom of this page.

Step Two: EXPLORE (the second through the sixth or seventh page of each chapter)

Work with your child on the four or five pages of this section. Take turns reading aloud the two main articles in each chapter. Occasionally, invite your child to read an article quietly. Have your child highlight or underline key words and phrases that you wish to emphasize. Keep in mind the information from the charts that tells you what to help your child know or do on each page. When you are finished with the two main articles, go back and read the Sidebars and TidBytes (shorter features) throughout the chapter. Take time to look at the artwork, illustrations, and photographs and to talk about how they connect with the content on the page.

Step Three: REFLECT (the seventh or eighth page of each chapter)

Invite your child to prepare for reflective prayer with you. Slowly read the text on the prayer page(s), pausing after each sentence and praying along with your child. Encourage your child to imagine himself or herself in God's presence and to talk with God as one would talk with a friend. Allow some quiet time for both of you to do this. Together, take a minute or two at the end of the reflection to spend some silent time with God.

Step Four: RESPOND (the ninth page of each chapter)

Work with your child to read and complete the What's What?, Say What?, So What?, Now What?, and Here's What the Catholic Church Teaches features. These features help you and your child to review the main points of the chapter and invite your child to consider how he or she can apply what was learned to daily living. Be sure to have your child locate in the Glossary the definitions of the words listed under Say What? Since the 10th page of each chapter is an activity page for working in groups, you can skip this page.

End each unit by working together with your child on the Faith in Action feature (two pages at the end of each unit) to explore ways of putting into practice what was learned in the unit.

Unit 2: Jesus, Chapter 1

Following Jesus: Jesus, Son of God

The Gospel of Mark begins with the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The rest of the Gospel reveals the meaning of that statement. In Mark's Gospel people do not understand who Jesus really is until after his Crucifixion. Jesus, the Son of God, became one of us so that by entering into communion with him, we might become children of God. Saint Athanasius said it this way: "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God."

The Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Without losing his divine nature, he assumed human nature. That is why he is the one and only mediator between God and us.

Jesus was born in a stable to a poor, humble family and was raised a Jew. He was born with a human soul and with limited human knowledge. He had to learn about the human condition from experience, just as we learn. He had to work for a living. He was a Jew who lived his life obedient to the Law. He knew happiness, and he knew pain and suffering. The Incarnation is the mystery of the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of the Son of God.

ENGAGE

On page 65, help your child

- relate the concept of personal identity to discovering through the Gospels who Jesus really is.

EXPLORE

On pages 66–71, help your child

- summarize what Mark's Gospel reveals to us about who Jesus is.
- explain how Jesus is both true God and true man.
- explain why the early Christians saw Jesus as God but not as man.
- give examples of Jesus' human qualities.
- describe how Mark stresses the Incarnation in his Gospel.
- define *Son of God* and *disciple*.

REFLECT

On page 72, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 73, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Celebrating Church: Getting to Know Jesus

Jesus is the Son, which means he has a unique and eternal relationship with God, his Father. Jesus is Lord. He is God like the Father. Jesus is not only truly God; he is truly man. The mystery of the divine and human natures in the one divine person of Jesus Christ is called the Incarnation. In Jesus' life, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension, all of God's revelation reached its fullness.

Jesus can help us deepen our personal relationship with God because he is God as well as one of us. We can begin to know God by looking at all that he created. All creatures bear some resemblance to God, their Creator, especially human beings who are created in God's image and likeness. The Church teaches that we should look upon every person, without exception, as another self. Because we are not born with everything we need for developing our physical and spiritual life, we need to receive the things we lack from others and to share our talents with them. We all share an equal dignity as human beings. This requires that we work to reduce social and economic inequalities between us. Although loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves may seem difficult, we believe that what God tells us to do, he makes possible by his grace.

ENGAGE

On page 65, help your child

- relate getting to know a friend with getting to know Jesus.

EXPLORE

On pages 66–71, help your child

- describe some of the various images that the New Testament teaches us about Jesus.
- explain that Jesus came to teach us how to live in relationship with the Father and one another.
- express an understanding that Jesus is truly God and truly man.
- relate the story of how Saint Paul was called by the risen Jesus.
- describe how accepting Jesus changes people's lives and calls us to love one another.
- define *Incarnation* and *Lord*.

REFLECT

On page 72, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 73, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Unit 2: Jesus, Chapter 2

Following Jesus: Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins his ministry preaching the Kingdom of God. Everyone is called to enter the kingdom. The kingdom belongs to the poor and lowly, that is, people who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus makes care for the poor a condition for entering his kingdom. Jesus also invites sinners to conversion by showing them his Father's boundless mercy. Jesus' invitation to enter his kingdom comes through his parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching.

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do what is good. Three virtues, called the Theological Virtues, are given to us by God: faith, hope, and love or charity. Faith allows us to believe in God and in all that he has said and revealed to us through Jesus and the Church. Hope allows us to desire the Kingdom of Heaven and sustains us during difficult times. Charity allows us to love God above all things for his own sake and to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Jesus makes charity the new commandment. The practice of all the virtues is brought to life and inspired by charity, which binds them together.

ENGAGE

On page 75, help your child

- relate his or her concept of kingdom to the Kingdom of God.

EXPLORE

On pages 76–81, help your child

- describe the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus.
- identify who is called to be part of the Kingdom of God.
- give examples of Jesus' parables.
- describe the qualities of children that Jesus wants us to have.
- explain the virtues of faith, hope, and love.
- give examples of ways we can practice the virtues of faith, hope, and love.
- explain why Jesus is often described as a shepherd.
- define *Kingdom of God*, *parable*, and *social justice*.

REFLECT

On page 82, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 83, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Celebrating Church: Jesus, God and Man

The first Christians had to deal with questions such as “If there is only one God, how could Jesus be God as well?” and “How could we be saved through Jesus if he was a human being like us?” Although some Christians attempted to answer these questions, they were not always successful. The Church's response to each erroneous teaching served as the foundation of some of our most basic doctrines—Jesus is fully God and fully man; Jesus is like us in all things but sin; and Mary is the Mother of God.

God chose to reveal himself to us over time, but the difference between God and us is so great that it is impossible for us to bridge that gap. In Jesus, however, who is both God and man, that gap is overcome. We know God through knowing Jesus. The transmission of the Christian faith from one generation to the next consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ to others. Faith comes from God alone, but it is in Jesus' Body, the Church, that we live out that faith and become holy.

ENGAGE

On page 75, help your child

- relate physical eyesight to seeing things through the eyes of faith.

EXPLORE

On pages 76–81, help your child

- describe how different councils of the Church corrected mistaken beliefs.
- express an understanding that Jesus is fully divine and fully human.
- express an understanding that the one God is revealed in the writings of both the Old and the New Testaments.
- explain how sin separates us from God and how Jesus, through the Church, brings us closer to God.
- describe how Saint Paul and Saint Athanasius spread the Church's teachings about Jesus.
- define *ecumenical council*, *Messiah*, *Mother of God*, and *Second Vatican Council*.

REFLECT

On page 82, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 83, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Unit 2: Jesus, Chapter 3

Following Jesus: Jesus' Forgiveness

Jesus, who forgave the sins of the paralytic man and restored him to bodily health, has given the Church the ability to continue his work of healing and forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Jesus' call to conversion is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

In the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, the penitent repents, expressing sorrow for the sins committed. Then the person confesses his or her sins to the priest. Finally, the person expresses the intention to make reparation for the sins, followed by the priest's absolution. A person must confess all serious sins remembered after carefully examining his or her conscience. The confession of less serious faults is not necessary, but it is strongly recommended.

In the Sacrament of Penance, we also receive peace, serenity of conscience, and an increase of spiritual strength to lead a Christian life.

ENGAGE

On page 85, help your child

- relate his or her own experience in dealing with challenges to facing the obstacle of sin.

EXPLORE

On pages 86–90, help your child

- tell the story of Jesus healing the paralyzed man.
- explain why and how sin is an obstacle that we all face.
- describe how repentance and forgiveness heal us.
- recognize that repentance is at the center of Jesus' teaching.
- explain what happens during the Sacrament of Penance as well as the effects of the sacrament.
- explain how ordained priests of the Church have the authority to forgive sins.
- describe how to make an examination of conscience.
- define *miracle*.

REFLECT

On pages 91–92, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 93, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Celebrating Church: New Life Through the Cross

Through Jesus' death on the cross, we are reconciled to God. His death, Resurrection, and Ascension are the fulfillment of all revelation. Jesus died for us while we were still sinners, enemies in a sense. He asks us to love as he does and to make ourselves a neighbor to everyone, even to our enemies. Because we are created in God's image, Christian love requires us to treat everyone equally. The love that Jesus showed us in his death on the cross makes that possible. No form of social or cultural discrimination is compatible with God's design for us.

We cannot blame Jews today nor indiscriminately blame the Jews at the time of the Passion for Jesus' Crucifixion. Scripture does not teach that Jews are rejected by God or that they are to blame for Jesus' death. The Jewish faith is already a response to God's revelation in the old covenant. God's gifts and the call of God can never be taken back. So we have the deepest respect for the Jewish people.

ENGAGE

On page 85, help your child

- relate the experience of playing games to the challenges of life.

EXPLORE

On pages 86–91, help your child

- describe the challenges faced by people living in the Middle Ages.
- explain how Saint Francis used the image of the crucified Jesus to teach people to care for the poor and suffering.
- relate an understanding of why Jesus died on the cross.
- recognize that the Jewish people are not responsible for the death of Jesus.
- define *crucifixion*.

REFLECT

On page 92, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 93, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Unit 2: Jesus, Chapter 4

Following Jesus: Jesus' Healing

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus preaches about the Kingdom of God and heals the sick throughout Galilee. In his compassion toward the sick and his many healings, Jesus is showing that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. In Mark 6:6–13, when Jesus sends out his disciples to proclaim the kingdom, they also anoint with oil people who are sick and cure them in Jesus' name. Throughout the centuries Jesus' followers have continued to pay special attention to people who suffer in body and in spirit.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick helps those who are seriously ill to grow in faith and trust in God and to realize that they are not alone. The grace of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick unites the sick person to the passion of Christ. It gives the person the peace and courage to endure suffering in a Christian manner, and it forgives sins. It restores health or, if that is not to be the case, it prepares the person for passing over to eternal life. The sacrament can be received again if the illness worsens or if another illness occurs. Only a priest or bishop can administer this sacrament, using oil blessed by the bishop or the celebrating priest.

ENGAGE

On page 95, help your child

- relate his or her own experience in dealing with “bumps in the road of life” to the healing presence of God in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

EXPLORE

On pages 96–101, help your child

- describe how Jesus and the disciples showed concern for the sick.
- describe what happens during the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.
- describe how Jesus healed people.
- describe how Jesus is present to those who suffer today.
- explain how the Church calls us to respond to those who are sick or dying.
- define *Anointing of the Sick*.

REFLECT

On page 102, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 103, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Celebrating Church: Sharing the Good News

God desires that all people be saved and come to know the truth that is Jesus Christ. The transmission of the Christian faith, therefore, consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ. Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew's Gospel to go and proclaim the Good News to all nations. In order to cooperate with God's universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary. The Church as a whole, as well as all of the Church's members, are sent to announce, to bear witness to, to make present, and to spread the Good News.

Church history provides numerous dramatic examples of missionaries risking their lives to spread the Gospel. The missionary task of the Church, however, is the responsibility of all Catholics, not just those who travel to faraway lands. In our everyday lives, we are called to reveal Jesus to others through our words and actions. This missionary endeavor takes time and patience. It involves a process of enculturation. That means the Gospel needs to take root in the culture of the people to whom it is preached, whether that culture is a foreign land, a school, a workplace, a neighborhood, or a particular age group.

ENGAGE

On page 95, help your child

- relate examples of sharing personal good news to sharing the good news of the Gospel.

EXPLORE

On pages 96–100, help your child

- describe Jesus' final command in the Gospel of Matthew to make disciples of all nations.
- give examples of missionaries.
- explain why Saint Thérèse, the Little Flower, is the patroness of missionaries.
- express an understanding that disciples are called to bring the good news of Jesus to the entire world.
- express an understanding of the connection between evangelization and social justice.
- identify three goals for spreading the Gospel.
- define *culture*, *evangelization*, *mission*, and *prayer of intercession*.

REFLECT

On pages 101–102, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 103, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Unit 2: Jesus, Chapter 5

Following Jesus: Jesus' Journey Through Death to Resurrection

In Mark 8:29, Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah. Despite the clarity of Peter's declaration, the disciples continue to misunderstand who Jesus is. They don't understand Jesus' words that to follow him means to take up the cross. That is why in Mark's Gospel there are no disciples at the foot of the cross, only a Roman centurion. His words at Jesus' death, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39) echo the opening words of the Gospel: "the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God]." (Mark 1:1) For Mark, Christ's cross and Resurrection are clearly at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the central truth of our faith. The first element we encounter in the story of the Easter events is the empty tomb. Its discovery by the women on Easter morning was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. Today we recognize the presence of the risen Jesus in a unique way in the Eucharist, as well as in his Church, in the Word of God, in the sacraments, and in each other, especially in those who are poor and needy.

ENGAGE

On page 105, help your child

- relate his or her own experience of having an "Aha!" moment to our understanding of who Jesus is through the Paschal Mystery.

EXPLORE

On pages 106–111, help your child

- describe the stories in Mark's Gospel that teach us who Jesus is.
- identify Jesus' death on the cross as the moment in Mark's Gospel when the true meaning of Jesus' kingship is revealed.
- summarize the story of Jesus' Resurrection.
- discuss where we can find Jesus today.
- explain the meaning of *Savior* and *Redeemer*.
- explain what happened to all those who died before Jesus came to save us.
- define *Paschal Mystery*.

REFLECT

On page 112, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 113, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.

Celebrating Church: Our Hope in Jesus

Christ's Resurrection was a historical event, as attested to by the empty tomb and the witness of the disciples. The Resurrection did not lead everyone to believe immediately. Some doubted. People were not led to believe because they were told about the Resurrection. No one witnessed the Resurrection. No Evangelist describes it. Their faith was born, as is ours, from the direct experience of the risen Jesus.

Jesus' Resurrection was not a return to earthly life as was the resuscitation of Jairus's daughter or the raising of Lazarus from the dead, both of whom would eventually die again. In his Resurrection, Jesus passed from a state of death to another life beyond space and time. The entry of Christ's humanity into the glory of God remains a mystery that transcends and surpasses history.

At the day of judgment, Christ will return to transform all creation and establish the Kingdom of God in its fullness. At that time we will be reunited with our transformed bodies and live, as Jesus does, forever. Heaven is the state of living in God's presence forever. Hell is the state for those who choose to reject God's mercy and who choose eternal separation from God.

ENGAGE

On page 105, help your child

- relate the celebration of birthdays to our hope for eternal life in Jesus.

EXPLORE

On pages 106–111, help your child

- explain that belief in Jesus' Resurrection is the foundation of our hope.
- express an understanding of the resurrection of the dead.
- identify Jesus Christ as the source of our hope.
- tell the story of Thomas's encounter with the risen Christ.
- describe false teachings about the end times that are rejected by the Church.
- define *hope*, *euthanasia*, *indulgence*, *Last Judgment*, and *Particular Judgment*.

REFLECT

On page 112, help your child

- pray reflectively on God's presence, his invitation, and our response.

RESPOND

On page 113, help your child

- identify ways to act on God's invitation in everyday living.