

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 3: The Church, Chapter 1

Following Jesus: God with Us

The name Jesus means “God saves.” The angel tells Joseph in Matthew 1:21 that Mary’s child is to be called Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. The angel also refers to the child to be born as *Emmanuel*, which means “God with us.” Throughout Matthew’s Gospel, we are reminded that Jesus is God, living and working among us. Through Jesus, the covenants made with Abraham, with Moses, and finally with David are brought to completion.

As young people get further into their teenage years, the way they understand themselves and the way they relate to their friends, to their parents, and even to God begins to change. They are challenged in their faith as they move from a faith they received from their parents to a faith they freely choose. In the stormy years of adolescence, the belief that Jesus is truly “God with us” can serve as a strong anchor. Jesus himself grew through adolescence and became a man of prayer who was concerned for others, loving even his enemies. As young people face difficult situations in life, remembering that Jesus is “God with us” can tell them they do not face these challenges alone.

ENGAGE

On page 119, help your child

- relate the experience of knowing the meaning of his or her name to knowing the meaning of Jesus’ name.

EXPLORE

On pages 120–124, help your child

- explain that Jesus’ name means “God saves.”
- describe how God has been with his people throughout history.
- identify Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenant.
- identify adolescence as a challenging time when God’s presence is needed.
- relate the stories of the rich young man and the house built on rock as stories about our true foundation.
- define *Emmanuel*.

REFLECT

On pages 125–126, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 127, help your child

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

Celebrating Church: The Beginnings of the Church

Ten days after Jesus’ Ascension, as Luke describes it, Jesus Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples, resulting in the birth of the Church. The mission of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which the Spirit builds up, animates, and sanctifies. The Spirit reveals Christ to us, unites us to him, and brings us to life in him.

Peter is the unshakable rock on which the Church is founded. Because of Peter’s faith, Jesus gave him and his successors the authority to absolve sin, to make clear what we believe, and to make decisions about how to best live the Christian life. Thus the Church is founded on the apostolic faith and is shown to be authentic by the love its members show for one another. Jesus nourishes his Church through the Eucharist.

Mary is the perfect embodiment of obedient faith and the model disciple. She never ceased to believe in the fulfillment of all God promised. She was the first person to understand the meaning of Jesus’ life and ministry.

ENGAGE

On page 119, help your child

- relate finding a job to the experience of the early Church taking on new responsibilities.

EXPLORE

On pages 120–124, help your child

- explain what the Holy Spirit did for the apostles on Pentecost.
- describe how the Holy Spirit affects our lives.
- compare and contrast the ministries of Peter and Paul.
- recognize that Jesus is calling each of us to use our talents and abilities to follow him.
- explain why Saint Stephen is known as the first Christian martyr.
- describe the life of the early Church.
- identify Mary as the first and greatest disciple.
- define *deacon*, *Magnificat*, *martyr*, and *meditation*.

REFLECT

On pages 125–126, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 127, help your child

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

Unit 3: The Church, Chapter 2

Following Jesus: The Values of the Kingdom

The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. They confront us with decisive moral choices. They invite us to purify our hearts and to seek the love of God above all else. They respond to the desire for happiness that God has placed in the human heart. They teach us that true happiness is not found in riches, fame, power, or in any human achievement, but in God alone.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us to value and respect human life. Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person is made in the image and likeness of the living and holy God. For that reason, the following actions are considered gravely contrary to the moral law:

- the murder of a human being, although legitimate defense to protect human life is allowed.
- direct abortion. Children, from the moment of conception, have the right to life. The embryo must be defended and cared for like any other human being. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.
- euthanasia, in whatever form or for whatever motive.
- suicide. The taking of one's own life is contrary to the ideals of justice, hope, and charity.

ENGAGE On page 129, help your child

- relate the idea of going the extra mile to the Beatitude's challenge to go beyond the letter of the law.

EXPLORE On pages 130–135, help your child

- explain that Matthew's Gospel compares Jesus to Moses.
- summarize the purpose of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.
- describe the concept of the Kingdom of God.
- explain how Jesus' teachings about anger and the treatment of enemies call us to view all life as sacred.
- define *Beatitudes*, *abortion*, and *euthanasia*.

REFLECT On page 136, help your child

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

RESPOND On page 137, help your child

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

Celebrating Church: The Church Takes Shape

After serious disagreements about Jesus' human and divine nature had been resolved at ecumenical councils, the early Church concluded the following: God has been fully revealed in Jesus, and there will be no further revelation after him; Jesus, while remaining truly God, truly became man; this understanding of Jesus, as expressed in the Nicene Creed, is one of the sources of unity in the Church.

During the first centuries of the Church, a hierarchical structure was developed. The common priesthood of the faithful, which we all share, differs from the ministerial priesthood in that ordination confers the grace to serve the People of God through teaching, worship, and pastoral governance. Bishops receive the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. They receive their office from the apostles, who passed on their role as pastors of the Church to their successors. A bishop is the visible head of a local Church (a diocese) and shares responsibility for guidance of the whole Church with the pope, the Bishop of Rome. Priests share in Holy Orders with the bishop and share with him responsibility for his local Church. Deacons are ordained for service to the People of God through ministry of the Word, worship, and the service of charity.

ENGAGE On page 129, help your child

- relate the experience of student leadership to the leadership of the early Church.

EXPLORE On pages 130–135, help your child

- describe how the early Church came to a deeper understanding of Jesus.
- express an understanding of the roles of the hierarchy.
- explain the roles of priest, prophet, and king.
- explain the purpose of saying the Creed at Sunday Mass.
- name different feasts that honor Mary.
- explain the meaning of Peter's name.
- define *Assumption*, *Holy Orders*, *infallibility*, *laity*, *Magisterium*, and *Nicene Creed*.

REFLECT On page 136, help your child

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

RESPOND On page 137, help your child

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

Unit 3: The Church, Chapter 3

Following Jesus: Life in Jesus

Political authority is legitimate only when it is committed to achieving the common good through morally acceptable means. The state is responsible for defending and promoting the common good by respecting the fundamental rights of the person, seeing to the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of society, and ensuring peace and security for all. We are all called to participate in supporting institutions that improve the conditions of human life.

The parable of the sower speaks of the dangers of temptation. A moral virtue that can help us overcome temptation is temperance. Temperance moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures us mastery over our instincts and helps keep our desires within limits. Self-mastery is a lifelong task that can be especially challenging during adolescence. The education of the conscience is also a lifelong task. Prayer and reflection on Scripture, as well as celebration of the sacraments, are essential to the process.

ENGAGE

On page 139, help your child

- relate the experience of feeling that something was unfair to the concept of justice.

EXPLORE

On pages 140–144, help your child

- explain that a just leader rules with values that promote virtue and protect the common good.
- identify King Herod as an unjust ruler.
- explain that Jesus taught people how to live with justice and love.
- relate the story of the Holy Family's journey to Egypt to the Exodus story.
- describe the world of Jesus.
- tell the story of the parable of the sower.
- explain that Jesus and the Church can help us overcome temptation.
- define *common good*, *dignity of the human person*, and *Satan*.

REFLECT

On pages 145–146, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 147, help your child

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

Celebrating Church: The Church, Source of Light

Jesus told the apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations. The Church, with love for all people, responds to God's desire that all people come to know the truth and that they be saved. The ultimate purpose of this mission is to bring people to share in the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Church is one. The source of the Church is the one God and Jesus Christ, the Church's founder, who united everyone to God as the Body of Christ.

The Church is holy. The spirit of holiness was given to the Church by Jesus, who loved the Church as his bride and gave himself up for her to sanctify her. The Church shares in the life of God.

The Church is catholic and universal. Jesus, who is fully present in the Church, has given the Church to the whole world.

The Church is apostolic. The Church continues to hand on the teaching of the apostles through their successors, the bishops, in union with the the pope.

ENGAGE

On page 139, help your child

- relate unique personal characteristics we have as individuals to the Marks of the Church.

EXPLORE

On pages 140–144, help your child

- describe how the Church remained a light to the world during the Dark Ages.
- explain how the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.
- describe how Saints Benedict and Scholastica founded Western monasticism.
- explain why Popes Leo and Gregory were named "Great."
- explain how Catholics are called to "conquer the world" with love.
- define *apostolic*, *holy*, *monastery*, *monasticism*, *one*, *participation*, and *spirituality*.

REFLECT

On pages 145–146, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 147, help your child

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

Unit 3: The Church, Chapter 4

Following Jesus: Leading in Jesus' Name

The ordained ministry is conferred and exercised in three degrees: bishop, priest, and deacon. A bishop receives the fullness of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which makes him a member of the episcopal college and makes him the visible head of a particular Church (a diocese). Bishops are the successors of the apostles and members of the college of bishops. Priests, together with the bishops, share in the ministries of teaching, worship, and governance. They are given charge of a parish or a specific office in the diocese by the bishop. Deacons are ministers ordained for the service of the Church, serving in the ministry of the Word, worship, and caring for the needs of the poor.

The Church is apostolic, formed by Christ when he established the assembly of the 12 apostles. Christ governs the Church through Peter and the other apostles, who are present in their successors. The pope, the Bishop of Rome and Peter's successor, is the visible source of the unity of both the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful.

ENGAGE

On page 149, help your child

- relate the question "May I help you?" to the concept of service.

EXPLORE

On pages 150–154, help your child

- describe how Jesus called the first disciples at the beginning of his public ministry.
- explain how Baptism calls us to participate in the common priesthood of the faithful.
- identify the three degrees of Holy Orders and describe the Rite of Ordination.
- explain what Jesus meant when he called Peter the "rock" on which he would build his Church.
- describe the roles of the pope, bishops, and priests.
- describe the instructions Jesus gave to the 12 apostles.
- define *bishop*, *catholic*, *liturgy*, *ministry*, *pope*, *priest*, and *subsidiarity*.

REFLECT

On pages 155–156, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 157, help your child

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

Celebrating Church: The Church Matures

In 1054 a major division separated the Christian Church into East and West. Although the effects of this division last until today, the Church continues to profess faith in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. The reconciliation of all Christians in the one Church of Christ is an essential goal of all the baptized.

As the Middle Ages progressed and the need for reform in the Church became obvious, new religious orders contributed greatly to the reform and renewal of the Church. Some orders, called Mendicant Orders (from the Latin *mendicare*, meaning "to beg"), left the confines of the monasteries and relied upon the generosity of others for their survival. Although every Christian life is religious, some Christians desired to live their call to be disciples of Jesus in a unique way that came to be called religious life. Today, as then, people in religious life, through their commitment to the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, strive to help all Christians see discipleship as achievable.

ENGAGE

On page 149, help your child

- relate changes in his or her own life to the reform of the Church during the Middle Ages.

EXPLORE

On pages 150–155, help your child

- identify the significant events in Church history that occurred during the Middle Ages.
- explain how people in religious orders live lives of holiness through vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.
- identify religious orders founded in the Middle Ages.
- describe the hurts for which Pope John Paul II called all Catholics to ask forgiveness.
- contrast the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire.
- explain why Mary is called the Queen of Heaven.
- define *Mendicant Order* and *Summa Theologiae*.

REFLECT

On page 156, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 157, help your child

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

Unit 3: The Church, Chapter 5

Following Jesus: Life Together in Jesus

Through the marriage covenant a man and a woman establish a partnership with each other for their entire lives. Jesus raised this covenant to the dignity of a sacrament, the Sacrament of Matrimony. In his preaching Jesus taught that God willed from the beginning that the marriage union was unbreakable. He also taught that what God had joined together no one could put asunder. In the family one learns fraternal love, generous forgiveness, endurance, the joy of work, and, above all, prayer and the offering of one's life. The home is the first school of Christian life. The Second Vatican Council called the family the domestic Church.

Love seeks to be definitive; it cannot be an arrangement “until further notice.” The mutual giving of two persons, and the good of their children, demands total fidelity from the spouses and requires an unbreakable union between them. The fidelity of God to his covenant and that of Christ to his Church is reflected in the Sacrament of Matrimony. God loves us with an irrevocable love, and his love supports and sustains married couples. By their faithfulness they are witnesses to God's faithful love.

ENGAGE

On page 159, help your child

- relate the experience of sticking with commitments during difficult times with the marriage promise to love “for better or for worse.”

EXPLORE

On pages 160–165, help your child

- describe the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel as an expression of God keeping his promise.
- describe a Catholic marriage as a covenant.
- explain how married couples model the relationship between Christ and the Church.
- identify Matrimony as a Sacrament at the Service of Communion.
- identify forgiveness as a requirement for Christian marriage and family life.
- define *domestic church* and *Matrimony*.

REFLECT

On page 166, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 167, help your child

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

Celebrating Church: The Church in Renewal

During the period from 1500 to the present day, the Church underwent many changes. Although periods of change, such as the conflict that arose from the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, can be very painful, they can also be times of renewal, as they challenge the Church to clearly articulate the Gospel of Jesus to the present age. During the late Middle Ages, most notably at the Council of Trent, the Church articulated many of the beliefs that had come under attack by the Reformation. The renewal of Catholic life that came about from the Council of Trent formed the Church into the 20th century.

At the Second Vatican Council, another period of renewal, the bishops focused on Mary's role in the Church. By saying yes at the Annunciation, Mary gave her consent to the Incarnation, thus beginning her collaboration with the whole work of salvation that her Son would accomplish. As Mother of the Church, she is mother of all the members of the Body of Christ. Mary has a special place in the life of the Church. We honor her and ask her to pray for us to her Son and to help us worship the one true God.

ENGAGE

On page 159, help your child

- relate the process of “doing things over” to the concept of renewal of the Church.

EXPLORE

On pages 160–164, help your child

- identify examples of challenges the Church has responded to since the Middle Ages.
- explain how the Council of Trent, the Second Vatican Council, and the New Evangelization were responses to challenges the Church faced.
- explain Mary's role in the Church.
- identify Saint Ignatius of Loyola as the founder of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.
- explain what it means to think of ourselves as “living stones” in Jesus' Church.
- define *Rosary*.

REFLECT

On pages 165–166, help your child

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

RESPOND

On page 167, help your child

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