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God, Our Creator and Father

Unit Opener: Pages 2–4

- ▶ Say: ***The title of this book is Finding God.*** Discuss with your child where you each find God in everyday life. Point out that other people can help us find and know God in new ways. Read aloud the unit title. Say: ***The first unit helps us understand that God is our Creator and Father and that we grow closer to him by loving and serving others.***
- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 2. Draw your child's attention to the picture. Ask: ***What is Saint Augustine doing?*** (studying, writing) Say: ***Saint Augustine's writings have helped bring many people closer to God.*** Ask: ***Who has helped you draw closer to God?*** (Possible responses: teachers, family members, church leaders)
- ▶ Point out the heart on page 3. Say: ***This symbol is associated with Saint Augustine because he often wrote about God's love. He helped people understand God's love and encouraged them to have courage and hope in God.***
- ▶ Invite your child to take turns with you in reading aloud the paragraphs on page 3. Explain that although Augustine did not always make good choices, the Church came to recognize him as a saint.
- ▶ Read aloud the Be Inspired feature. Discuss what it means to have a restless heart and to "rest in" God.
- ▶ With your child, add Augustine's feast day, August 28, to your family calendar. Discuss how you might celebrate Augustine's feast day when it arrives. Say: ***Now let's read about God our Creator's love.***
- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 4. Say: ***Wonderful things happen when we love one another. Even more wonderful things happen when we open up to the love of God!***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud God Is Love. Then read aloud the introduction and directions for Resting in God. Remind your child of your discussion about what it means to rest in God. Have your child complete the activity and share his or her answer.
- ▶ Draw your child's attention to the Reading God's Word feature while you read it aloud. Say: ***Saint Augustine studied the same Scriptures we do. This passage helped shape his understanding of God.*** Ask: ***What word is repeated several times?*** (love) ***What did Augustine believe God was?*** (love)

God Creates Us

Engage: Page 5

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- ▶ Read aloud Genesis 1:24–31. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Show your child a mirror and explain that the only way we can see our own face is to see a reflection of it. Say: ***We cannot see the presence of God, but we see a reflection of it in his creation.*** Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs. Have him or her brainstorm aspects of creation that reflect each of the following characteristics of God: beauty, power, majesty, creativity, and care.
- ▶ Say: ***God speaks to us through creation. Let's ask him to help us remember this.*** Pray aloud the prayer and conclude by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 6–7

- ▶ Ask your child to close his or her eyes and imagine the world without his or her favorite things. Ask: ***What if the world were only a mass of darkness, wind, and water?*** Discuss your child's answer.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 6. Say: ***The word Genesis means "beginning" in Greek, and the word abyss means "a vast, bottomless ocean."*** Then read aloud the rest of the page. Ask: ***What are some examples of other things that God has created?*** (light, sky, land, life)
- ▶ Remind your child that Genesis is the first book of the Bible, then read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***Through faith, we can look at the order and beauty in the world around us and understand that God created everything.***
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the first section on page 7. Ask: ***What is the mission of each Person in the Trinity?*** (The Father created the world, the Son became man to save us, and the Holy Spirit gives us grace to believe.)
- ▶ Read aloud the last section. Point out the vocabulary words. Find the Sign of the Cross and the Glory Be to the Father on pages 246 and 247 and pray them aloud. Say: ***The Sign of the Cross reminds us of our Baptism, when our foreheads were marked by the cross to show that we belong to Christ.***
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Review with your child what the function of the *Gloria* is.

Art Exploration: Page 8

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a person arranging or taking care of flowers.
- ▶ Say: ***What do you see in this picture?*** Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including the person's actions and the beauty of the flowers.
- ▶ Say: ***Being among God's creatures is a great way to be near God. We can see and feel God's love in flowers, trees, animals, butterflies, and streams.***
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 8. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the sections God Creates the World and God Continues to Care for the World. Ask: ***What would happen if we didn't protect God's creations?*** (Possible responses: Pollution would increase. The beauty of nature would be harder to see.) Say: ***God created us because he loves us, just as he loves all his creations. It is our responsibility toward God's creation to care for it.***
- ▶ Read aloud Taking the Pledge. Have your child complete the activity and share his or her response with you.
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Say: ***The Eucharistic Prayer is the liturgical expression of praise and thanksgiving for all that God has done in creation.***
- ▶ Provide art supplies for your child. Ask him or her to consider which of God's gifts in nature helps him or her feel God's presence. Invite your child to draw or paint a picture of it. Display the artwork in your home.

Reflect: Pages 9–10

- ▶ Together look at page 9. Ask: ***How would you describe the attitude of the person in this picture?*** (contemplative, reflective, thankful for the world he sees) Say: ***Through reflective prayer, we are invited to hear God speak to us and to develop a friendship with him.***
- ▶ Read aloud the paragraphs on page 9. Ask your child to close his or her eyes. Encourage your child to answer the questions silently as you read them aloud. Conclude the prayer time by praying the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph on page 10. Read aloud the activity instructions and allow your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers, then read aloud the Did You Know? feature.

Respond: Pages 11–12

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 11. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Ask your child to suggest other ways he or she can show love and respect for things in creation.

- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ As a family, read and discuss With My Family on page 12, then discuss how your family can complete the activity together. Pray aloud the prayer. Say: ***We can praise and thank God with our actions, not only with our words. Let all our actions show respect and care for others and for all creation.***

God Saves Us

Engage: Page 13

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- ▶ Read aloud James 1:12–15. Then say: **The Word of the Lord.** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Ask your child to name his or her favorite foods. Say: **Just as we have desires for certain foods, we also have desires for other things that we think would make us happy. The problem is, not everything we desire is good for us.** Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on the page. Say: **When we feel tempted, Jesus is nearby, giving us strength to make good choices.**
- ▶ Say: **Let's ask Jesus to help us make good decisions when we are faced with temptations.** Pray aloud the prayer, concluding with *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 14–15

- ▶ Together, look at the headlines in newspapers, magazines, or online. Identify good-news headlines and bad-news headlines. Ask: **What kinds of problems did the headlines describe?** (Accept reasonable responses.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud page 14. Point out the term “human condition.” Ask: **What is the contradictory nature of the human condition?** (Although people often make bad choices that inflict pain on others, they also make good choices and work to help those in trouble.) **What is sin?** (humans’ rejection of God and opposition to his plan)
- ▶ Read aloud the question at the bottom of the page and have your child write his or her answer in the book. Discuss what he or she wrote.
- ▶ Read aloud page 15. Say: **The word reconcile means “to restore to friendship.”** Ask: **What were the effects of Adam’s sin?** (Sin entered the world, and with it came death.) **What does Jesus bring to the world?** (victory over sin and death)
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature and discuss it. Ask: **Why is it wrong to hurt ourselves or others?** (God creates all life and calls it good, so we should not harm those whom he has given life.)

Art Print: Page 16

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Saint Peter Claver.
- ▶ Ask: **What do you see in this picture?** Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including Saint Peter Claver’s appearance and what he is doing in the picture.

- ▶ Say: ***Saint Peter Claver was an advocate for enslaved people. He had faith in Jesus' mission, just as we should when faced with hard choices.***
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 16. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud the first section. Ask: ***How did Saint Peter Claver help the enslaved people of South America?*** (He provided physical and spiritual care. He comforted them and tried to persuade their overseers to treat them humanely.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Our Humanity. Ask: ***Can you think of other ways in your daily life in which you can live as Saint Peter Claver did?*** Have your child write his or her goal on the lines.
- ▶ Provide art supplies and invite your child to make a poster that promotes positive actions and living as good Christians. Suggest that he or she think of images or slogans that might encourage family members to take positive action. Display the poster in your home.

Reflect: Pages 17–18

- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph on page 17, then invite your child to get comfortable and focus his or her attention inward during reflective prayer.
- ▶ Invite your child to close his or her eyes as you slowly read aloud the second paragraph on page 17, pausing after each sentence to allow time for personal reflection. Then have your child open his or her eyes. Together, pray aloud the responsive prayer in the Prayer box. Conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph and the activity directions on page 18. Read aloud each problem and brainstorm solutions with your child. Point out that each problem may have more than one correct solution.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***When Jesus became man and died for our sins, he gave us new life, restored our friendship with God, and brought the promise of everlasting life.***

Respond: Pages 19–20

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 19. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Invite your child to suggest specific ways in which he or she can comfort and include someone who is being excluded.
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ As a family, read and discuss With My Family on page 20. Obtain or view online a copy of your parish bulletin and complete the activity together. Then pray aloud the prayer.

God's Revelation

Engage: Page 21

- ▶ Together with your child, recall stories about parents and grandparents. Say: ***These stories make up our family history, or the story of how our family came to be.*** Ask your child to recall names and stories he or she is familiar with from the Old Testament. Say: ***In this session, we will learn about the history of our faith through the Old Testament stories.***
- ▶ Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Acts of the Apostles 7:1–8. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Point out that when we want to develop relationship with others, we tell them about ourselves. Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 21. Say: ***God revealed himself to us, beginning with Abraham, because he wants to be in a relationship with us.*** Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 22–23

- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 22. Point out the vocabulary words. Ask: ***What three words do you think best describe Abraham?*** (trusting, obedient, holy)
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***In this passage we learn that God's covenant with Abraham is continuing through time.***
- ▶ Have your child read aloud page 23. Ask: ***To whom are the books of the Old Testament important?*** (Jews, Christians, and Muslims) Emphasize that Christians believe that the Old Testament is God's Revelation, which finds its fulfillment in Christ.
- ▶ Say: ***Saint Jerome was an important early translator of the Bible. This is what he discovered in his study and prayer.*** Read aloud the Did You Know? feature.

Art Print: Page 24

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Moses with the tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
- ▶ Ask: ***Whom do you see in this picture?*** (Moses) Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including what Moses is holding. Say: ***Moses is important to us because he delivered the Ten Commandments.***
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 24. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.

- ▶ Have your child read aloud the first section. Read aloud the activity directions and provide your child with a Bible so he or she can find and read the passages listed in the activity. Allow time for your child to complete the activity, then discuss his or her answers to each question. (1. In a fire flaming out of a bush; 2. Rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them to a land of milk and honey; 3. To go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt.)
- ▶ Say: ***In today's culture we no longer use stone tablets to communicate.*** Have your child write the Ten Commandments in a modern way so that they can be shared with many people, such as on a billboard, TV commercial, or website. Encourage your child to illustrate his or her modernized version of the Ten Commandments. Encourage your child to share the picture with family members.

Reflect: Pages 25–26

- ▶ Together look at page 25. Ask: ***How would you describe the girl in the picture?*** (happy, worshipful, trustful) Say: ***We pray the Lord's Prayer to give praise and glory to God and to ask for what we need.***
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph on page 25. Pray aloud the Lord's Prayer together. Invite your child to pray silently to God about whatever is on his or her heart. Conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first section on page 26. Say: ***The Ten Commandments are like a set of rules. Rules and laws are designed not to hinder us but to help us make a peaceful world.*** Invite your child to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers and how the Ten Commandments apply to your lives.

Respond: Pages 27–28

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 27. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Invite your child to suggest specific ways in which he or she can honor God and show kindness to others.
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child follows along. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ As a family, read aloud With My Family on page 28. Discuss and complete the activity together. Then pray aloud the prayer. When you have finished praying, say: ***It's wonderful that we are part of a story that is so much larger than ourselves. God's big story unites us with one another. We help tell that story with our lives.***

God Directs Our Lives

Engage: Page 29

- ▶ Read aloud the session title and say: ***Jesus' concept of happiness is quite different from the world's.*** Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- ▶ Read aloud Matthew 5:1–10. Then say: ***The Gospel of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.* Ask: ***What was so different about Jesus' view of suffering?*** (He taught that we are near to God when we suffer.)
- ▶ Say: ***Let us thank God for being near to us in all circumstances.*** Pray aloud the prayer, concluding with *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 30–31

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud page 30. Ask: ***Who did Jesus say was the greatest in the kingdom?*** (a child) ***Why do you think he said this?*** (A child is humble and recognizes his or her dependence on parents.)
- ▶ Give your child a note card. Invite your child to write what he or she thinks Jesus wants to teach him or her in Matthew 18:3–4 on one side. On the other side, invite your child to write what he or she will do as a result of this teaching. Encourage your child to put the card on your refrigerator as a reminder of Jesus' lesson.
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***As God's people, it is important for us to love and trust God.***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud page 31. Ask: ***Why are the Beatitudes important to follow?*** (They help us live as members of God's kingdom and act as signs of God's goodness.)

Art Print: Page 32

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Saint Philip Neri listening to the confession of Pope Clement VIII.
- ▶ Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, noting the actions and dress of the people.
- ▶ Say: ***We feel good when we can talk to a trusted friend and when we can be that friend to someone else.*** Have your child turn to page 32. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Read aloud page 32. Ask: ***How did Philip inspire others?*** (He encouraged people to be happy and to receive the sacraments.) Read aloud the activity directions and allow time for your child to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answer.

- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Discuss people you know who try to live their lives like Jesus, such as clergy or teachers.
- ▶ Draw an outline of your child on a sheet of paper. Invite your child to decorate his or her outline with talents and attributes that he or she is proud of, such as “I’m a good singer” or “I’m a good listener.” Then ask your child to write one way he or she can use those talents to help someone.

Reflect: Pages 33–34

- ▶ Together look at page 33. Invite your child to share how the picture makes him or her feel. Say: ***The Beatitudes give us direction on how to live our lives each day. Now we are going to pray a prayer that also gives us direction for daily living.***
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph on page 33. Pray aloud the prayer while your child prays along silently. Conclude by praying aloud the Glory Be to the Father, found on page 247.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud The Meaning of the Beatitudes on page 34, then read aloud the activity directions. Look on page 269 to find the Beatitudes, then work with your child to complete the activity. When you are finished, ask: ***What three words do you think best describe a person who lives the Beatitudes?*** (Possible responses: generous, kind, caring)

Respond: Pages 35–36

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 35. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Discuss with your child possible volunteer opportunities that will allow him or her to help people who are less fortunate.
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child prays along silently. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ As a family, read aloud With My Family on page 36. Discuss and complete the activity together. Pray aloud the prayer together. After the prayer, say: ***The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are wonderful gifts that help us know how God wants us to live every day.***

Celebrating Ordinary Time

Engage: Page 37

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Say: ***In this session, we will learn about Ordinary Time—the part of the year when we strive to understand Jesus better and think about how to follow his ways.*** Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture.
- ▶ Read aloud Acts of the Apostles 5:12–16. Say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Find and show pictures of traffic signs to your child and ask what they signify. Say: ***Signs tell us what we can expect to encounter ahead. The signs that Jesus and the Apostles performed tell a story of a God who desires to be close to us.*** Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 37. Ask: ***What do we call the outward signs that the Church celebrates?*** (the sacraments)
- ▶ Say: ***Faith is not practiced only on Sundays or feast days. We live our faith every day as we walk with Jesus.*** Pray aloud the prayer, then pray *Amen.*

Explore: Page 38

- ▶ Invite your child to talk about the sacraments he or she has celebrated, such as Baptism, the Eucharist, and Penance and Reconciliation. Say: ***The sacraments draw us closer to God and help us understand how he wants us to live our lives.***
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph on page 38. Ask your child each of the three questions following the first paragraph. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Read aloud How Can I Grow? and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss why the sacrament your child drew is so meaningful to him or her.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***We pray to Jesus and ask him to be with us and guide our steps to live as he did. When we ask this of Jesus, God blesses our lives.***

Reflect: Page 39

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 39. Ask: ***What are some examples of sacramentals?*** (sacred oils, prayers, the Rosary) Say: ***We incorporate sacramentals into our everyday lives to help us remember how much God loves us and how he is ever present in our lives.***
- ▶ Read aloud God Touches My Life and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answer.

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: ***Vestments and altar cloths reflect the current season's designated color. White is for Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday, Christmas, and Easter; red is for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Pentecost; green is for Ordinary Time; and violet is for Advent and Lent.***

Art Print: Page 40

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a person surrounded by symbols or objects that represent peace.
- ▶ Ask: ***What do you see in this picture?*** Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail.
- ▶ Have your child turn to page 40. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first two sections on page 40. Say: ***During Ordinary Time we focus our attention to the gift of the sacraments.*** Remind your child of the seven sacraments.
- ▶ Read aloud Ordinary Joy and give your child time to complete the activity.
- ▶ Say: ***One kind of sacramental object is the rosary.*** Give your child beads, a simple cross, and thread to string a decade of their own rosary. The decade should include one large Lord's Prayer bead, 10 Hail Mary beads, and one small cross for the Glory Be to the Father. Turn to pages 252–253 in the book to teach your child how to pray the Rosary.

Respond: Pages 41–42

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 41. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus. Discuss with your child possible opportunities to show kindness to younger children in your family, at church, or at school.
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer as your child prays along silently. Pray the Sign of the Cross together.
- ▶ As a family, read aloud With My Family on page 42. Discuss the activity together and make plans to complete it the next time you attend Mass together. Pray aloud the prayer. After the prayer, say: ***The liturgical calendar holds all of the days of the year together in God, just as the branches and fruit are held together by the vine. Our faith reminds us that we are connected in many ways!***