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The Church, Our Community in the Spirit

Unit Opener: Pages 86–88

- ▶ Invite your child to think about the last time he or she worked on a jigsaw puzzle. Say: ***Just as every single piece of a jigsaw puzzle is necessary to complete the picture, so also is each and every Christian necessary for the community of the Church. We are united in our belief in Jesus and his presence in our lives.*** Invite your child to turn to page 86 and read aloud the unit title. Say: ***In this unit, we are going to learn more about the community of the Church and how we belong to it.***
- ▶ Draw your child's attention to the picture on page 86. Ask: ***What is Saint Ignatius doing?*** (writing) Say: ***After being injured in battle, Saint Ignatius devoted himself to serving God. Part of that devotion involved writing the Spiritual Exercises.***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 87. Ask: ***How do we imitate Jesus?*** (by being kind to others, serving the community, volunteering at church) Reinforce that Saint Ignatius helped people find the courage to follow God's will for them. Say: ***Saint Ignatius founded the Jesuit community to serve the Church and teach Jesus' Word.***
- ▶ Read aloud the Be Inspired feature. Discuss the meaning of the phrase "to give and not count the cost."
- ▶ Invite your child to look at the title of his or her book, then compare it to the section heading on page 88. Explain that Saint Ignatius teaches us that God is always present to us and that we can practice becoming more aware of his presence and responding to him. Invite your child to read aloud Finding God in All Things.

- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions. Give your child a few moments to reflect on what gives him or her joy and what makes him or her aware of God's presence. Then invite your child to write those things on the lines provided. Together, say aloud, "God, I give you thanks for . . ." and complete the sentence using what your child wrote in the activity. Repeat this process for each of the three activity lines.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***Just like Saint Ignatius's gratitude prayer, psalms are good models for prayers of praise and thanksgiving.*** Together, pray the psalm again with joyful voices.

The Church Is One

Engage: Page 89

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Invite your child to share some ways in which he or she is different from his or her siblings or other people in your family. Say: ***We have differences, but that doesn't mean we can't get along. In fact, differences make life more interesting. In the Church, we have diversity but also unity.*** Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 89. Review the four unifying Marks of the Church. (one, holy, catholic, apostolic)
- ▶ Say: ***Let's ask Jesus to help us love all members of our community.*** Pray aloud the prayer, then conclude by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 90–91

- ▶ Invite your child to name some people in your parish who are in leadership roles or who serve the community. Discuss how these people serve God's kingdom.
- ▶ Read aloud Different Roles for Church Members on page 90. Ask: ***Which members of the Church form the clergy?*** (the pope, bishops, priests, and deacons) Ask: ***What is the role of the laity?*** (The laity are called to be holy, to witness to Christ in the world, and to foster gospel values in society.)
- ▶ Read aloud Unity in Beliefs. Help your child locate the Apostles' Creed in his or her book in order to complete the activity. Provide assistance in finding the relevant passages if necessary.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***As members of the Church, we are united in Jesus. The differences among us do not keep us apart but rather strengthen our unity.***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud The Pope's Role in the Church's Unity on page 91. Ask: ***Who is a visible sign of unity in the Church?*** (the pope, together with the bishops) Read aloud The Servant of the Servants of God. Ask: ***Why do you think Gregory called himself the "servant of the servants of God"?*** (He served the people of God, who are called to serve others.)

Art Print: Page 92

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a community praising God together.
- ▶ Encourage children to describe the picture in detail, including the expressions on the faces of the people and the ways they are offering praise to God. Say: **People all over the world praise God every day. God is without race, and he is Lord of all peoples.**
- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 92. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Unity and Diversity in the Church. Ask: **Why is the body a good way to describe the unity and diversity in the Church?** (Like a body, the Church is one unit with many parts.)
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions. Complete the activity together.
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Together, investigate opportunities to attend a service or watch a video in which people celebrate the liturgy in a language different from your own.
- ▶ Using household items and art supplies, help your child make his or her own musical instrument. Invite him or her to write a song about unity and diversity in the Church. Encourage him or her to use the instrument to perform the song for your family when the song is finished.

Reflect: Pages 93–94

- ▶ Together, look at the picture on page 93 and discuss how it reflects diversity in worship.
- ▶ Read aloud the first paragraph. Say: **As members of the Church, we are united in our belief, regardless of where we live and what language we speak. Let's pray the prayer that expresses these beliefs as they were taught by the Apostles and are still taught by the Church, using the Apostles' Creed.** Pray aloud the Apostles' Creed while your child prays along silently.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer on page 93. Give children time to reflect on the prayer. Read aloud the second paragraph on page 93. Close prayer time by saying: **The Apostles' Creed reminds us to practice Jesus' teachings in our daily lives.**
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Examining the Eastern Tradition on page 94. Invite your child to read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Together, compare and contrast the Eastern Church's practices concerning the sacraments with the practices of the Catholic Church.
- ▶ Say: **Though there are differences in how we and the Eastern Church celebrate, there is unity in the Eucharist and in many of its accompanying prayers, as well as in the participants of the congregation.** Read aloud Comparing the Liturgies and give your child time to complete the chart. Discuss the similarities and differences between the traditions.

Respond: Pages 95–96

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 95. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus and discuss what it means to be welcoming of all people.
- ▶ 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 and discuss With My Family on page 96, then make plans to complete the activity. Pray aloud the prayer together. Say: ***As you encounter different people, bless them. Remember that Jesus welcomed everyone and that the Church is one.***

Called to Holy Orders

Engage: Page 97

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud John 21:15–19. Then say: ***The Gospel of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first paragraph on page 97. Ask: ***Why might someone who loves us ask us the same question three times in a row?*** (to invite us to think carefully about something) Next, ask: ***How do we show that we are committed to something?*** (We practice it every day.) Talk with your child about what he or she practices every day, and why. Point out that being a Christian works the same way. Then invite your child to read aloud the second and third paragraphs.
- ▶ Say: ***Priests serve God by tending to us, God's lambs. Let's pray for our priests.*** Pray aloud the prayer, making sure to pray for your parish priests by name. Close by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 98–99

- ▶ Together, name the sacraments. Invite your child to read silently the first paragraph on page 98. Ask: ***What do Holy Orders and Matrimony have in common?*** (Both of them build the Kingdom of God and contribute to personal salvation.) Invite your child to read the second and third paragraphs. Ask: ***What special service do priests provide?*** (They continue Jesus' presence on earth by carrying on the tradition begun by the Apostles.) ***How is the Sacrament of Matrimony a service to others?*** (The love between married people is a reflection of Christ's love for his Church.)
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Invite your child to ask any questions he or she might have about the Church's teaching on Matrimony. Emphasize that although divorce is not part of God's plan for Matrimony, divorced Catholics still play important parts in the life of the Church.
- ▶ Say: ***Now let's learn about the Sacrament of Holy Orders.*** Take turns with your child reading aloud The Sacrament of Holy Orders on page 99. Then read aloud The Rite of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Invite your child to read aloud the first two sections on page 71. Ask: ***What does a man receive through the Rite of Ordination?*** (a permanent, spiritual mark; a character)

Art Print: Page 100

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of the pope meeting with other members of the clergy.
- ▶ Ask: ***What do you see in this picture?*** Encourage your child to identify the pope and what appears to be happening at the meeting. Say: ***Like the Apostles, Church leaders are chosen to be witnesses to Jesus Christ and carry on his work.***
- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 100. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud The Apostles Choose a New Member. Say: ***The Sacrament of Holy Orders celebrates the commitment of Church leaders to live like Jesus, spread the Word of God, and serve the community.***
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***Jesus used a rock as a symbol of something strong upon which to build the Church. Peter, whose name meant "rock," would be the foundation of the Church.***
- ▶ Invite your child to imagine that he or she was present when the Apostles picked Matthias. Have your child make a sketch of what was happening as the Apostles reached a decision. Encourage your child to capture the emotions of the Apostles in their expressions.

Reflect: Pages 101–102

- ▶ Together look at page 101. Ask: ***Why do you think a place like the one in the picture would be a good place to pray?*** (Possible responses: It is peaceful; it would help me focus on God's blessings in his creation.)
- ▶ Read aloud the paragraphs on page 101. Say: ***This prayer is a prayer of petition, asking God for the selflessness to serve him and others completely.*** Pray aloud the prayer, pausing briefly at the end of each line to allow your child to reflect silently. Allow a few moments after the prayer for your child to pray silently to Jesus, then conclude by praying *Amen*.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Knowing Your Church Leaders on page 102. Read aloud the activity directions, then work with your child to complete the chart.
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. Explain that the title of *basilica* is an honor given by the pope to certain churches to recognize some particular distinction of the church, its location, or its people.

Respond: Pages 103–104

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 103. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus and discuss how your child can show kindness to someone today.
- ▶ 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 and discuss With My Family on page 104, then make plans to complete the activity. Pray aloud the prayer together. Say: ***Let's be thankful for the love and guidance we receive from Jesus and from all our teachers and leaders.***

The Domestic Church

Engage: Page 105

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Ephesians 5:28–33. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first paragraph on page 105. Ask: ***What does the saying “my better half” mean?*** (Possible response: It is an expression of love for the goodness of one’s spouse.) Invite your child to read aloud the second paragraph. Say: ***The purpose of sacrifice in a relationship is not to harm one person while helping the other. Its true purpose is to deepen the couple’s love for each other while following in Jesus’ footsteps.***
- ▶ Say: ***Let’s open our hearts to Jesus and ask him for the help we need to walk in love with one another and with Jesus.*** Pray aloud the prayer. Close by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Pages 106–107

- ▶ Share a memory of your child when he or she was younger. Point out that each family is unique and special, just as God makes each person unique and special.
- ▶ Read aloud page 106. Ask: ***How do you learn about God and Jesus here at home?*** (Possible responses: by praying before meals and before bedtime, going to church together, being attentive to my parents’ teaching) ***How did Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi serve the Kingdom of God?*** (They raised a family. They worked to help others in the community.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud The Sacrament of Matrimony on page 107. Ask: ***Why is the Sacrament of Matrimony a sign of a special vocation?*** (God has called the couple to live a life of love in a community.)
- ▶ Read aloud Celebrating Matrimony. Explain that Matrimony is sometimes called a covenant, like the covenant between God and Abraham that your child learned about in Unit 1.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God’s Word feature. Discuss what it means to honor marriage.

Art Print: Page 108

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of Mary and Joseph finding Jesus in the Temple after worrying about his disappearance and looking for him.
- ▶ Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, including how Jesus looks while speaking to the adults and how Mary and Joseph look. Say: ***Jesus knew that teaching***

God's Word was part of his mission, and that gave him wisdom and understanding beyond his years.

- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 108. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Jesus in the Temple as a Child. Say: ***Although Jesus worried his parents by staying behind in Jerusalem, he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient. God wants us to be respectful and obedient to our parents.***
- ▶ Read aloud Lost and Found and give your child time to complete the activity. Share your own memories of the experience your child wrote about.
- ▶ Read aloud the Sacred Site feature. Ask: ***What is the ark of the covenant?*** (a vessel that contained the Ten Commandments.) ***Which of the Ten Commandments is relevant to this story?*** (Honor your father and mother.)
- ▶ Invite your child to draw your family tree. Provide him or her with magazines and newspapers. Invite your child to look for pictures that symbolize what your family means to him or her. Encourage your child to decorate around the family tree with these symbols. Display the family tree in your home.

Reflect: Pages 109–110

- ▶ Together look at the picture on page 109. Discuss what the family in the picture is doing. Invite your child to find a comfortable, relaxed position. Say: ***Let's take this time to thank God for all his wondrous gifts. Although we are not going to eat right now, we are going to reflect on the prayers we say at mealtime.***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 109. Then pray aloud Grace Before Meals together. After a few moments of silence for personal reflection, pray aloud Grace After Meals together. Encourage your child to reflect on God's generosity.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Building the Domestic Church on page 110. Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Encourage your child to share his or her ideas with your entire family.
- ▶ Read aloud the Link to Liturgy feature. Ask: ***How does the liturgy relate to family life?*** (A family can form a community of prayer that mirrors the community of prayer formed when we celebrate the liturgy.)

Respond: Pages 111–112

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 111. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus and discuss how your family can cultivate respect, love, and closeness.
- ▶ 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 and discuss With My Family on page 112, then complete the activity. Pray aloud the prayer together. Say: ***Let's remember to show respect, love, and kindness to everyone in our family.***

God Calls Us

Engage: Page 113

- ▶ Read aloud the session title. Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud 2 Timothy 1:9–14. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first paragraph on page 113. Ask your child what talents he or she has that might be used to serve God and other people. Say: ***God sometimes surprises and challenges us with what he calls us to do.*** Invite your child to read aloud the second paragraph. Ask: ***How can we practice listening for God's call to us?*** (praying regularly, receiving the sacraments, listening at Mass)
- ▶ Say: ***Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us know our place in God's plan.*** Then pray aloud the prayer. After children reflect silently, conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

Explore: Pages 114–115

- ▶ Invite your child to make a list of his or her special talents. Discuss how he or she can share those talents with the Church community.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the first paragraph and the Scripture passage on page 114. Ask: ***What was the problem in the Corinthian community?*** (People weren't using their spiritual gifts well, and the community suffered as a result.) Invite your child to read aloud the remainder of the section. Say: ***Saint Paul emphasized that everyone has gifts to offer his or her own community.***
- ▶ Read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***Samuel, a Hebrew prophet and leader, heard a direct call from God. He listened and offered himself to God. This passage reminds us to be open to God's call.***
- ▶ Read aloud The Blessed Virgin Mary's Calling on page 115. Ask: ***What does Immaculate Conception mean?*** (Mary was preserved from Original Sin.) ***What was Mary's call?*** (to be the Mother of God) ***What does Assumption mean?*** (Mary was taken into heaven, body and soul.)
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Explain that having Mary as a patroness means asking for her help and protection.

Art Print: Page 116

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture of a group of craftspeople working together, using their skills to serve God and/or other people.
- ▶ Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail, identifying the project that the people are collaborating on and the role that each person has in that project.

- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 116. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud The Universal Call to Holiness. Say: ***To be holy means that we do God's will in all things out of love for him.***
- ▶ Read aloud Assembling a Sculpture. Ask: ***The talents of many people were necessary for this project.*** Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her experience.
- ▶ Provide examples of jobs that serve God and community. Invite your child to draw pictures of people doing these jobs. Provide string and ask your child to attach his or her drawings to a mobile signifying the Church.

Reflect: Pages 117–118

- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 117 and describe the picture. Then invite your child to close his or her eyes and imagine being in a quiet place. Say: ***Imagine that Mary is with you and ready to listen.***
- ▶ Read aloud the paragraph on page 117. Pause for your child to reflect and imagine a conversation with Mary. Pray aloud the prayer. Afterward, pause for a few moments to allow your child to reflect. Then turn to page 246 and pray the Hail Mary together.
- ▶ Turn to page 118 and invite your child to read aloud the first paragraph. Then read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Sacred Site feature. Say: ***Shrines to Mary, like this one in Cuba, are found all over the world. Many people visit these sites to honor Mary as someone who answered God's call.***

Respond: Pages 119–120

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 119. Review the Word I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus and brainstorm ways your child can serve your parish community.
- ▶ 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 and discuss With My Family on page 120, then complete the activity. Pray aloud the prayer together. Say: ***Let's remember Mary's example when we answer God's call and try to follow his plan for us.***

Celebrating Christmas

Engage: Page 121

- ▶ Invite your child to quiet himself or herself and prepare to hear Sacred Scripture. Read aloud Jude 17–23. Then say: ***The Word of the Lord.*** Invite your child to respond, *Thanks be to God.*
- ▶ Invite your child to think of family members whom he or she resembles. Say: ***Sometimes we resemble other people in our looks or personality traits. To be holy means to resemble God's traits.*** Invite your child to read aloud the paragraphs on page 121. Ask: ***Who revealed God's traits to us?*** (Jesus) ***How can we imitate Jesus?*** (by loving and helping others and being in constant conversation with the Holy Spirit)
- ▶ Say: ***Let's pray together to ask Jesus to be with us during Christmas.*** Pray aloud the prayer. Conclude by praying *Amen.*

Explore: Page 122

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud We Celebrate God's Gift During Christmas on page 122. Point out that Christmas is a time to think about God the Father's gift to us—his Son, Jesus—and to honor this gift by answering his call to lead holy lives.
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions. Discuss ways in which Jesus lived a holy life. Invite your child to complete the activity. Discuss his or her answers.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Reading God's Word feature. Say: ***God, the Most Holy, calls us to be holy ourselves. We must try to be holy in all that we do.***

Reflect: Page 123

- ▶ Ask: ***When do we honor people in our family?*** (birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day) Say: ***The Holy Family sets the example for how our own family should live. We have a special feast day to honor the Holy Family.***
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud Mass During Christmas on page 123. Say: ***The Holy Family is Jesus' family: Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, but Mary and Joseph raised him as their child.***
- ▶ Read aloud What We Experience. Discuss images you see in church during the Christmas season. Then read aloud the activity directions and invite your child to complete the activity.
- ▶ Read aloud the Did You Know? feature. Say: ***Joseph needed to work to support Mary and Jesus. To do this, he labored as a carpenter.***

Art Print: Page 124

- ▶ Find in a magazine, in a book, or online a picture that shows a Nativity scene.
- ▶ Encourage your child to describe the picture in detail. Say: ***Although Jesus lived thousands of years ago, the story of his birth is still a relevant and important part of our lives today.***
- ▶ Invite your child to turn to page 124. Read aloud the introduction and discuss the question.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud We Celebrate the Coming of Jesus. Say: ***The first Sunday following Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Family. This feast day is an opportunity to honor Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, as well as our own families.***
- ▶ Read aloud The Gift of Jesus. Say: ***Jesus told the people that money and power could not bring them happiness. They had to put aside their greed and selfishness and love God and one another. Only then would they find peace and happiness.***
- ▶ Read aloud the activity directions and give your child time to complete the activity. Discuss your child's ideas and supply a few of your own.
- ▶ Together with your child, make a diorama of the birth of Jesus. Encourage your child to include everything he or she remembers from the story, such as sheep and shepherds, the star of Bethlehem, and the manger.

Respond: Pages 125–126

- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the Faith Summary on page 125. Review the Words I Learned in this session. Read aloud Ways of Being Like Jesus and discuss how you can show respect and kindness to others during Christmas.
- ▶ 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 and discuss With My Family on page 126, then make plans to complete the activity the next time you are at church. Pray aloud the prayer together. Say: ***During the Christmas season this year, let's find some ways to honor the Holy Family.***