

Family Book

The

GIFTS *of*

LIFE

and LOVE

Muriel Loftus and Lawrence DeMong, OSB



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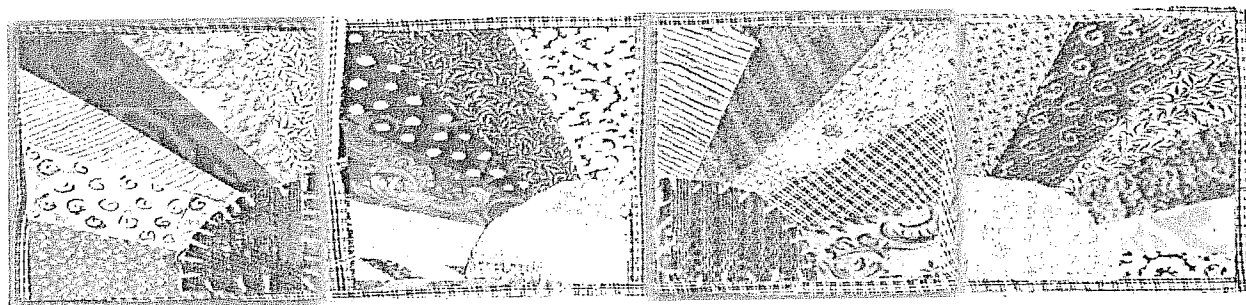
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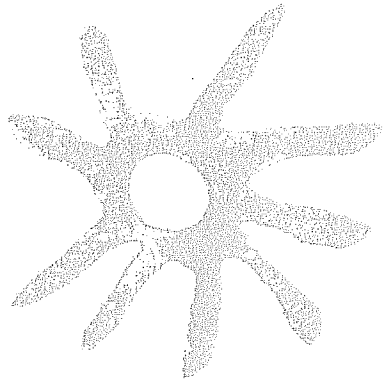
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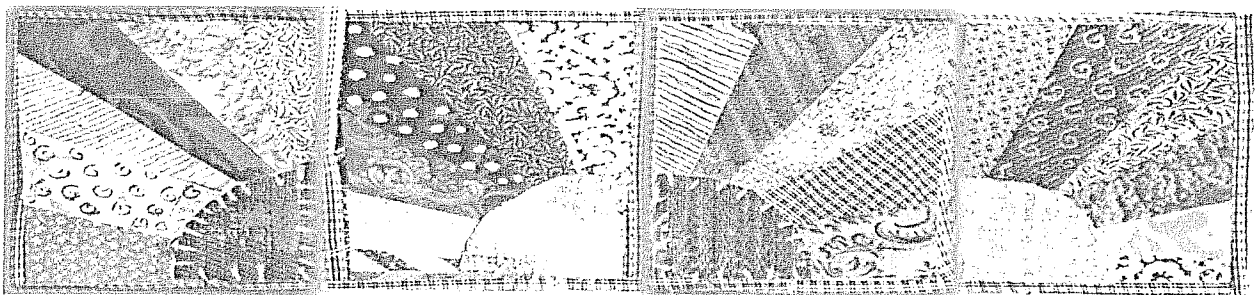




Dedicated to the beloved memory of

Christiane Brusselmans

November 1, 1930 – October 29, 1991





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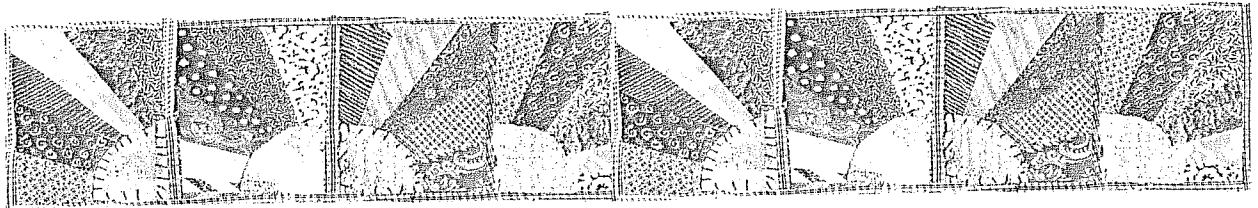
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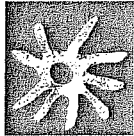
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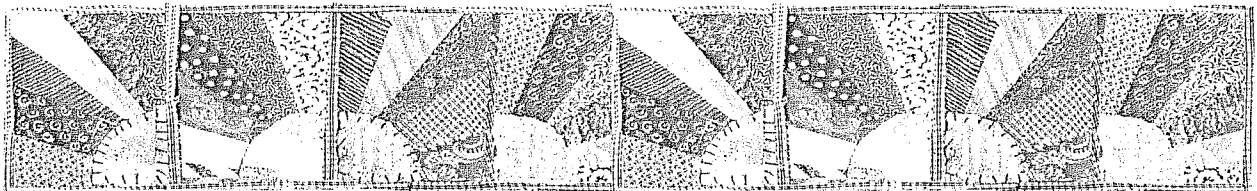
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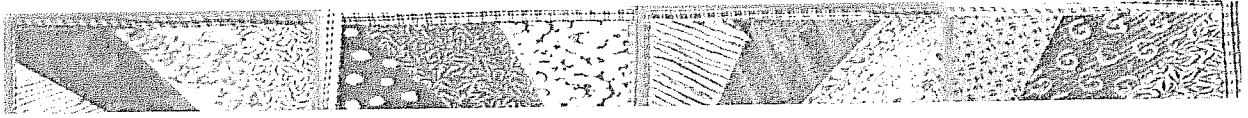


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Dear Parents,

One of a family's most delightful experiences is following the stages of a child's growth: the first smile, the struggle to crawl and to walk, the first words. You coax, encourage and congratulate every new success. Babies who enjoyed mealtimes in the safe cradle of your arms move to the high chair. Finally comes the time when you invite them to join the rest of you at the big table. This is part of the process of growing up in a family.

We move through various stages of growth in the family of the Church, too. To respect our need to develop understanding and to grow to maturity, the Church has restored the process of growth and journey in the Rite of Christian Initiation. In a single celebration, usually at the Easter Vigil, people journey through Baptism and Confirmation to the climax of this process: joining the community at the table of the Eucharist.

You are invited to share your faith with your child in a simple way. This book suggests some ways of doing this. You may not feel comfortable with all its ideas, so feel free to choose, to adapt, to change so that it fits your family. As you progress, you may be pleasantly surprised at your child's readiness to take the initiative in preparing family rituals, leading prayer, and reading the Bible.

Your child is growing up in the family of the faith. You and your parish community are saying to your child: "Come, join us at the table." We have designed this book to help you and your family support your child's journey in faith. May you enjoy this journey together!

Signed: Muriel and Fr. Lawrence

Muriel Fr. Lawrence



1. Called by name

The focus or aim of the first theme is to:

- help the children remember that God called them by name at their Baptism;
- present the cross as the symbol of Christian identity.

A Word to Parents

“I have called you by your name, you are mine,” says the Lord in the words of Isaiah (43:1).

“Everyone’s name is sacred,” adds the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. “The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it” (#2158).

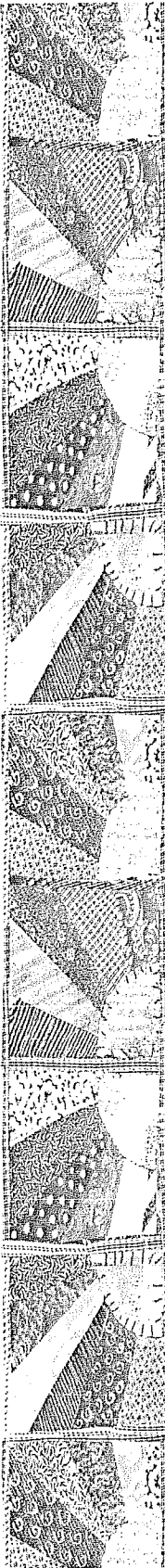
We have all experienced our names spoken in love, anger, or scolding. What joy to hear our name called as God calls, in affirmation! Our names are holy, called out by God, calling us to be holy.

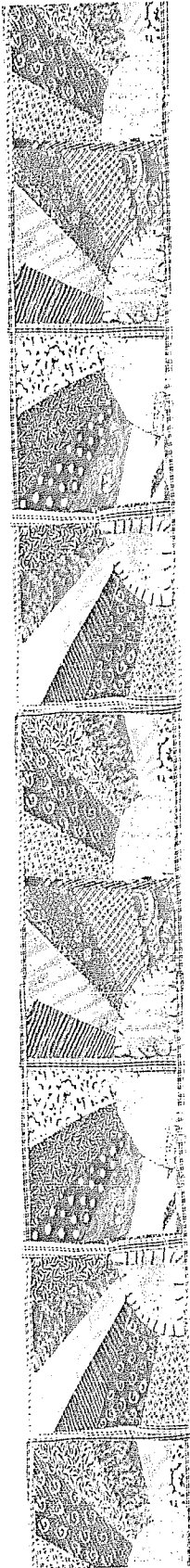
Just as our names give us our identity, so also does the cross. The original Christian symbol did not include the corpus or body of Jesus, because Jesus is no longer on the cross. He asks us to take up the cross and follow him, be like him. The empty cross symbolizes not only his death, but also his Resurrection, his victory over death, his great love. John writes to his people:

“See what love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are” (1 John 3:1).

This is our great challenge: to claim Jesus’ identity for ourselves and to say through our words and actions:

“My first name is CHRISTIAN.”





What's in a name?

"Chantal is her name!" said the father when he saw his newborn baby. "I knew our baby would be a girl!"

"Jane and I had decided on Chantal if she was a girl, and Justin if he was a boy," explained the proud dad to the doctor and nurses who surrounded the new mother. "We chose Chantal because it sounds so musical. Before she was born, I talked to her. I called her Chantal."

"Look at that!" The doctor pointed. "Your baby already knows her name!" All could see how she looked at her father's face when she heard his voice.

"Chantal!" he said with enormous love in his voice, "you are mine!"

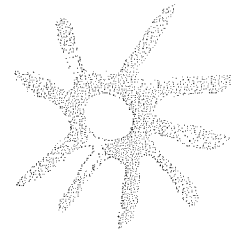
"Here, Jane," he laughed, "Chantal is yours, too," and he laid her on her mother's tummy. "After all the songs you sang to her, I'm sure Chantal will be a singer too!"



FOR PARENTS

- Talk about the story and the importance of our names.
- Tell your child how you chose his or her name.
- Together, try to find out more about the meaning of the name.
- If it is a saint's name, look for a story about the saint.
- Your local parish may have a library that can offer you a helpful book.

God calls us by our names



A long time ago, a long time even before Jesus was born, there lived a wise and holy man named Isaiah. He wrote beautiful poems to bring God's message to the people. Because he spoke for God, he was called a *prophet*. Isaiah loved God very much and he wanted the people to know how precious they were to God. Sometimes, though, they were afraid and sad and thought that God had forgotten them.

One day when Isaiah was talking to God in prayer, he thought: "I know what I will do. I will write a poem about God's love." And that is what he did. We can read God's message to the people in the Book of God's Word, the Bible. Through Isaiah, God said:

Do not be afraid . . .

I have called you by name,

You are mine.

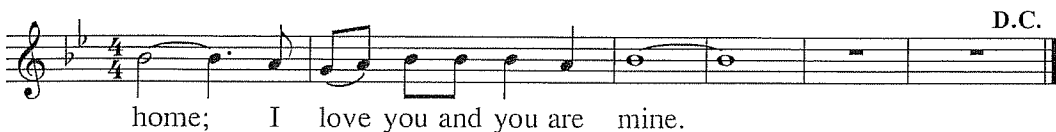
(Isaiah 43:1)

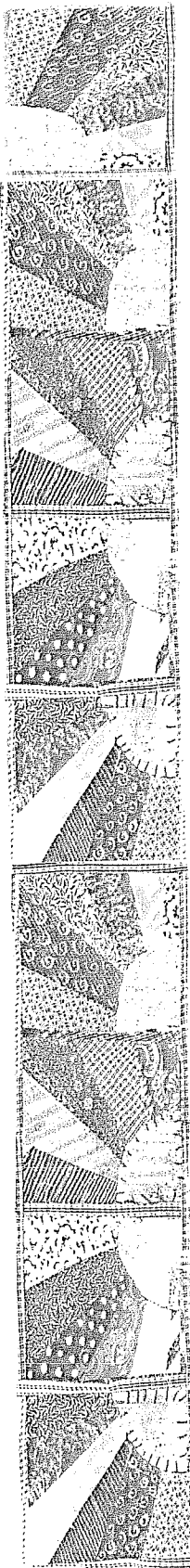


You Are Mine

Words and Music by David Haas

Refrain





FOR FAMILIES

- Light a candle and think quietly about God's words in the Book of Isaiah.

Imagine God saying this to you!

How do you feel?

The Bible tells many stories about people whom God called by name. Do you remember the story of the boy Samuel?

- What happened one night when he was sound asleep?
- Who was calling his name?
- What did Samuel answer?
- Three times Samuel heard a voice in the night calling: "Samuel, Samuel!" When he heard it the fourth time, he answered:



S _ _ _ _ , L _ _ _ ,

y _ _ _ s _ _ _ _ _ i _ l _ _ _ _ _ .

Using your Bible

Here's how to find Isaiah 49:15-16.

First, look up the Book of Isaiah in the table of contents of your Bible and turn to it. Look for chapter 49 and then find verses 15 and 16 in that chapter, as shown.

Now see if you can find the story of Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:1-9. (The First Book of Samuel, chapter 3, verses 1 to 9.)

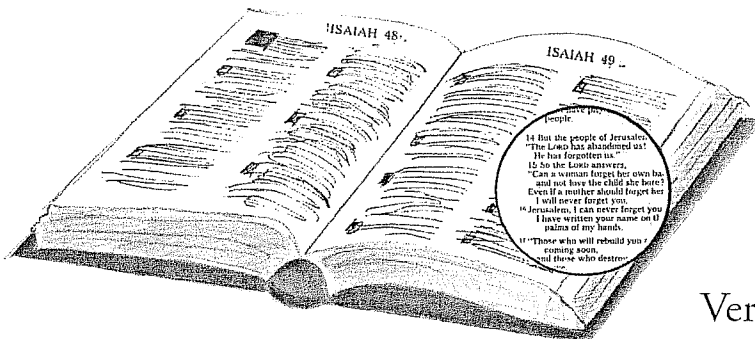
Called by name – your Baptism



The Church, the community of Jesus' friends, first welcomed you on the day of your Baptism. The priest asked your parents what name they were giving you. Then came the special welcome! Father made the Sign of the Cross on your forehead, saying: "_____, the Christian community welcomes you with great joy."

Then he invited your parents and godparents to sign you in the same way. Later, the priest used your name again when he poured water on your head, saying, "_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Chapter



Verse

FOR FAMILIES

- Invite your child's godparents for supper or dessert. If they live far away, you may ask them to write a letter to your child, sharing their memories of the Baptism.
- Get out your child's Baptismal candle, certificate, photographs, etc., and share memories.
- Have your child fill in his or her name in the blanks on page 11 and then in the Baptism story on page 13. Invite your child to decorate the page.



You Are Mine

Words and Music by David Haas

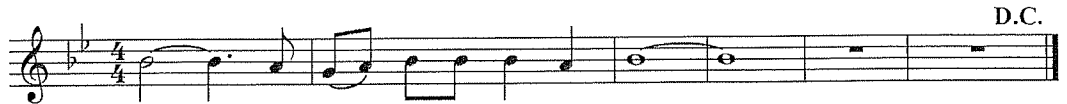
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Do not be a - fraid, I am with you. I have called you



each by name. Come and fol-low me, I will bring you



home; I love you and you are mine.

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MY BAPTISM STORY

My Baptism was the first step of my journey
to the Lord's table.

My name is:

I am a child of:

.....

I was born on:

in:

I was baptized on:

at:

My godparents are:

.....

The celebrant was:



Prayer

FAMILY PRAYER TIME

- Make a Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead at bedtime and at other special times.
- You could say such words as, "_____, God loves you and we love you."
- God knows each one of us by name. Read the prayer and talk about the pictures on this page. Do they tell about how special you are?

Before I was born,
you made each little part of me in secret.
While I was hidden in my mother's womb,
you watched me grow.
You saw my bones begin to form
and join together.
From the first moment of my life
you knew me!
I praise you, Lord,
and I am filled with wonder.
For everything you do
is strange and marvellous!



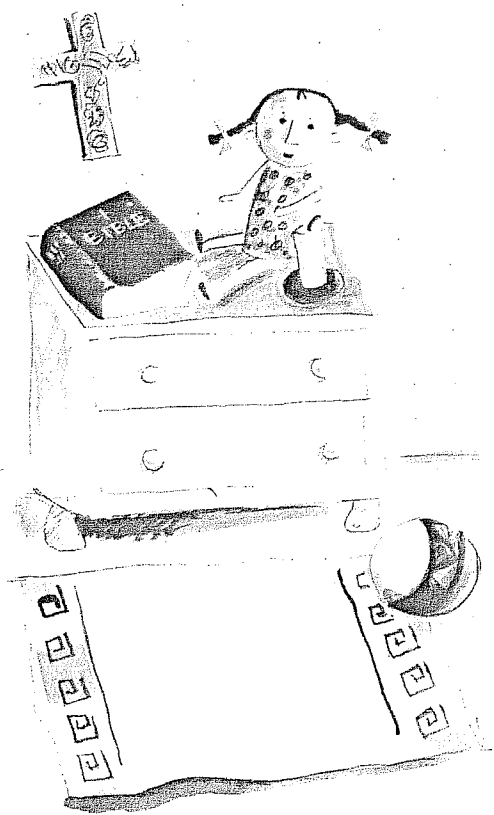
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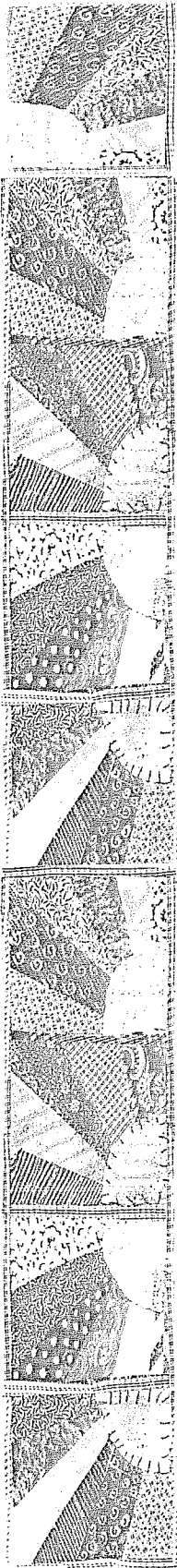
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Things to do

☒ Choose an area in your home for a prayer center. This could be a corner of a room, or simply a spot beneath a religious picture or statue. Find a candle, a cross, a special place for the Bible, and perhaps a small rug on which you can sit while you pray. (Never light the candle unless an adult is with you.)

☒ Invite your child and other family members to write or print their names with glue on colored paper. Then pour glitter on the paper. The glitter will cling to the glue and the names will be “written” in sparkles. Place these on or around your prayer table.





2. Sealed with the Holy Spirit

A Word to Parents

If there's anything that's "once-for-all" in Christianity, it is God's love for us. In Baptism "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). So important is it that we understand the wonder of the Spirit of Jesus living in us, that we celebrate it with a special sacrament. Not only are we "called by name," loved individually and known to God in detail—every hair counted—we are sealed with God's own Spirit.

The word *seal* is used in different ways. We seal an envelope to close it; we seal a faucet to keep it from dripping. Christians have still another meaning for the word *seal*. To be sealed with the Spirit of Jesus suggests that we are marked, chosen forever. Confirmation celebrates this new energy, the fire, the candle in the darkness, that reaches out in love, creates links, builds a community of peace, weaves webs of welcome over every wall in the world. We need to claim that power.

FOCUS

The focus or aim of this second theme is to:

- help the children reflect on the wonder of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life and in our lives;
- present the sacrament of confirmation as a celebration of our being sealed with the Holy Spirit.



Jason's story

Jason was so excited. His heart was beating as fast as it had when he ran away from his second foster home, but he had been scared then. This time Jason's heart was pounding because he knew that this man and woman loved him no matter what. They really wanted him in their family.

"Are you ready to sign the adoption papers?" asked the lawyer kindly. "Yes, I am," said Mrs. Timchuk. "So am I," added her husband, Larry. "That is, if Jason wants us as his parents."

Jason couldn't speak. He just nodded his head. A smile lit up his face as his new parents signed the papers.

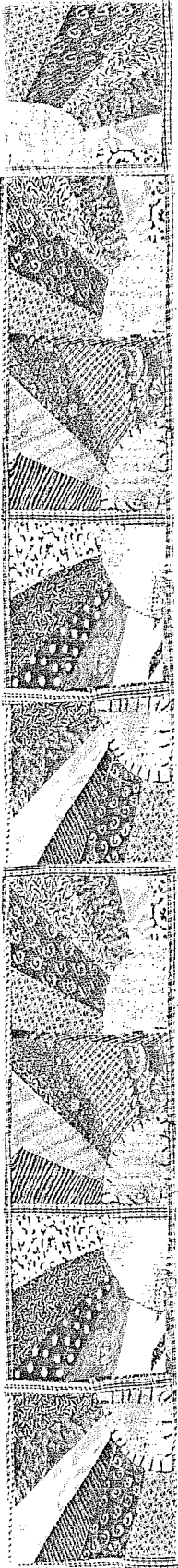
"Sealed!" said the lawyer. "You're a lucky boy."

He shook Jason's hand and showed him the papers. Jason saw his new parents' names and ran his finger over the bumpy letters made by the lawyer's special seal. Jason looked at his new mom and dad and spoke softly, "I'm yours now."

FOR FAMILIES

Talk about the story.

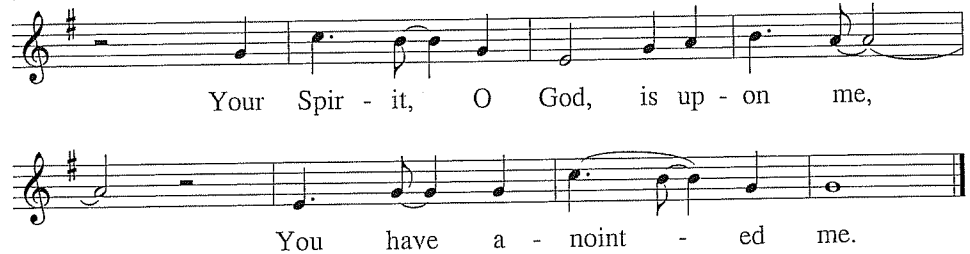
- What is happening? If you were Jason, how would you feel?
- What did the lawyer do when he said "Sealed!" How do you think Jason felt then?



You Have Anointed Me

Words and Music by Mike Balhoff,
Gary Daigle, Darryl Ducote

Refrain



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The Spirit is at work in Jesus' life

The story of Jesus helps us understand what happens when our Baptism is sealed in the Spirit.

From the beginning of his life, Jesus was filled with God's Spirit, God's breath.

Now he shares the Holy Spirit with us!

Let's look at Jesus' story to see how the Holy Spirit was with him all through his life.



FOR FAMILIES

- Read or tell the following Scripture stories to your child.

The Spirit comes to Mary (Luke 1:35)

When it was time for Jesus to come into the world, God breathed on Mary of Nazareth. The Gospel tells us that an angel brought this message to Mary:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God.”

And so Jesus was born.

The Baptism of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11)

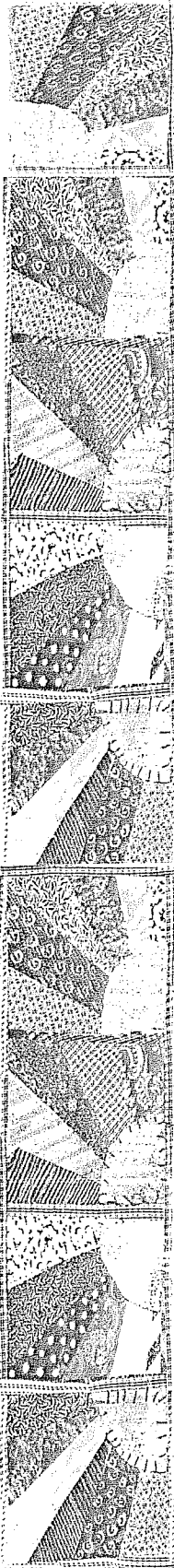
Jesus had just been baptized by his cousin John. As Jesus came up out of the water, John saw the Spirit coming on him in the form of a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, saying: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” All through his life, Jesus remembered what happened on that day.

Jesus announces his mission (Luke 4:14-18)

One day Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. He was given the scroll of Isaiah when he stood up to read. He opened the scroll and found the place where it says:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18).





Jesus' promise at the Last Supper (John 14:18, 26-27)

Jesus was sharing his last meal with his friends. He knew he was to die soon. And of course, his friends were very sad and afraid. But he promised not to leave them alone: "I will ask my Father to send you another Helper," he said, "who will be with you forever." And then he promised: "The Holy Spirit will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said."

After Jesus' death and Resurrection (Acts 1:8)

The Bible has many stories about Jesus appearing to his friends during the forty days after his death. Before he returned to his Father, he made another promise to them. He said: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth."

Pentecost: Jesus keeps his promise (Acts 2:2-4)

"And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared tongues as of fire, resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak other languages."

FOR PARENTS

- Help your child understand that the Holy Spirit is not a "powerful wind" or a "flame of fire." These images of God's presence were used in the Old Testament. The storyteller used them in the Acts of the Apostles to describe this marvellous event.

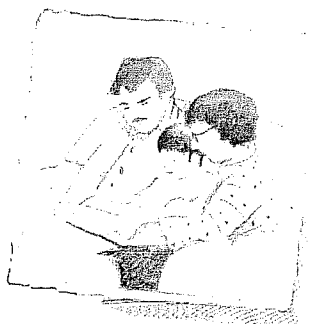
The Holy Spirit in the early church (Acts 2:42-47)

The story of the first Christians shows how they lived in the Spirit of Jesus. They shared what they had with those in need, and every day they prayed and broke bread together in their homes. People used to say: "See how these Christians love one another."

Living as Jesus' friends today

FOR FAMILIES

- Talk about the pictures.
- What are some things our family does which show that we are followers of Jesus?

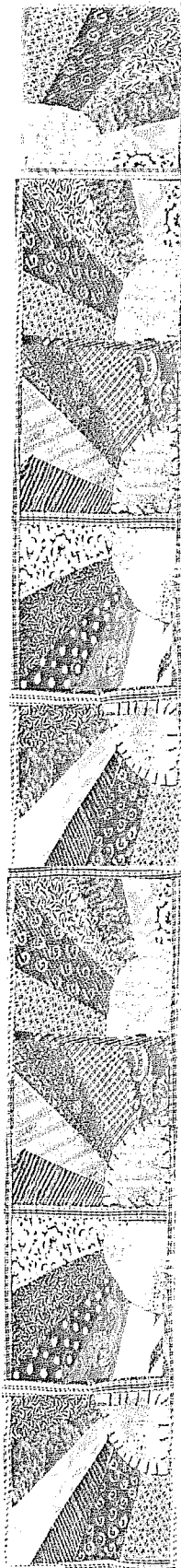


Leader:
Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your
faithful,

All:
And enkindle in them
the fire of your love.

Leader:
Send forth your Spirit,
O Lord,

All:
And renew the face of
the earth.



Confirmed with the Holy Spirit

When we are confirmed, our church community prays that the Holy Spirit will always be our helper and guide. The bishop or priest stretches his hands out over us and prays that we may receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This “laying on of hands” is a special way of asking for God’s blessing.

When the bishop or priest anoints you, he calls you by name and says, “_____”, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” You answer, “Amen!”

While he signs you on the forehead with chrism, your sponsor stands by you with a hand on your shoulder. This shows that you will never be alone in following Jesus.

“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
These words of anointing remind us that God seals our Baptism with the special help and power of the Holy Spirit.

FOR FAMILIES

- Go over the Rite of Confirmation with your child, demonstrating the anointing with chrism.
- Put your hand on your child’s forehead and sign with your thumb.

Ask:

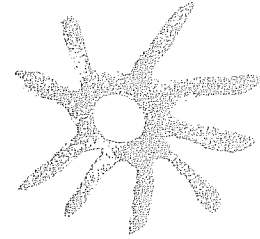
- What will you answer to the words “Be sealed with the Holy Spirit”?

Amen.

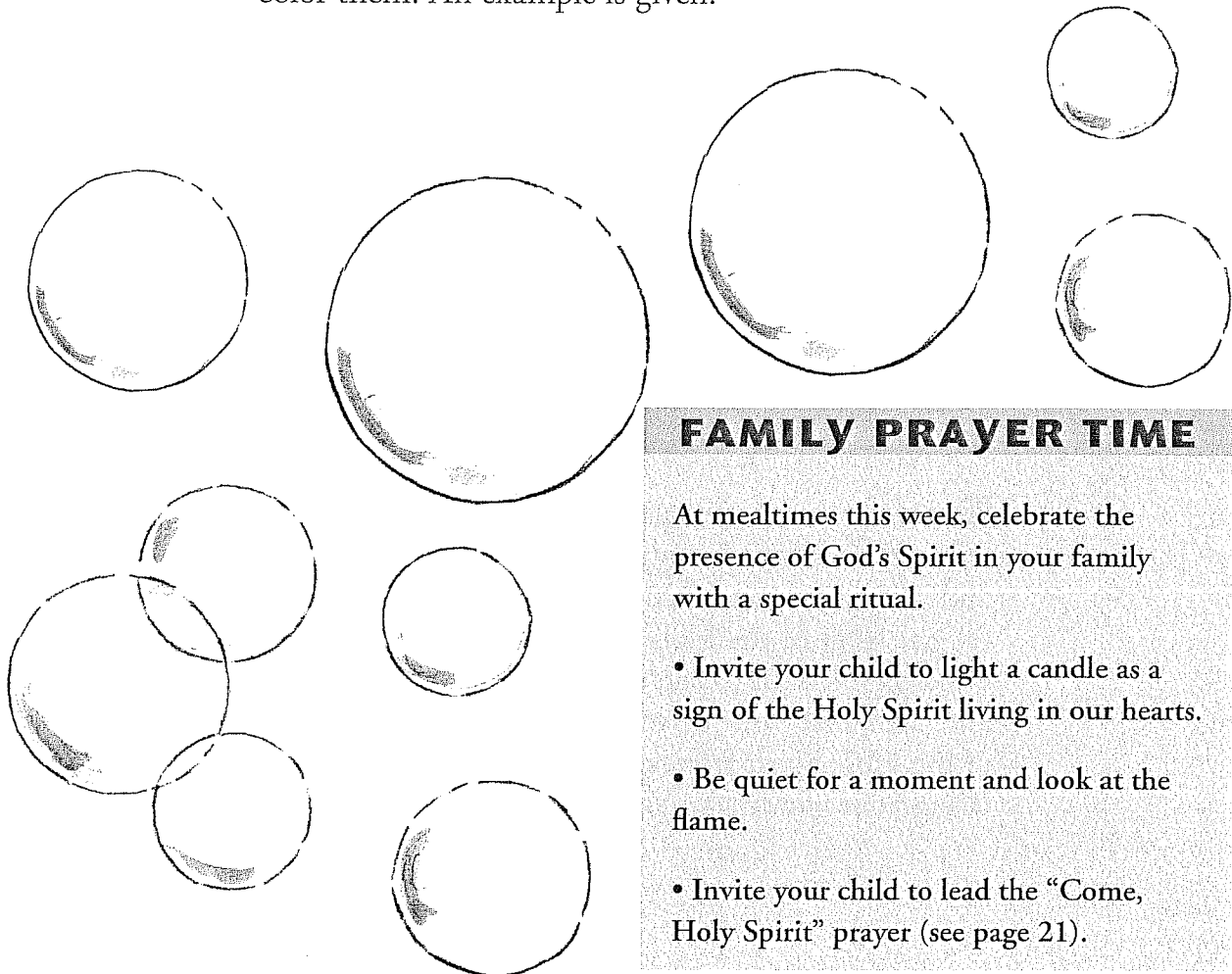
- What will you say when the bishop or priest says, “Peace be with you”?

And also with you.

Things to do



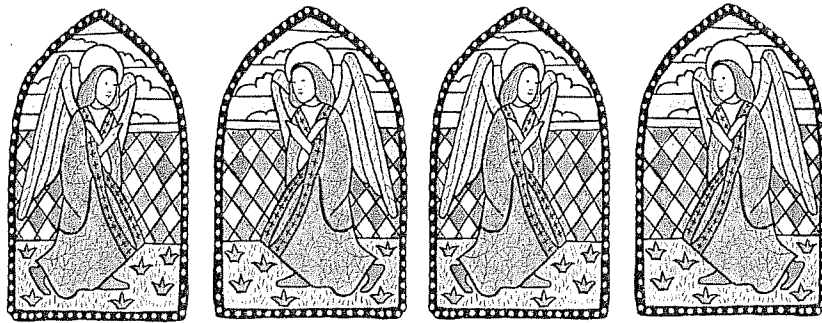
✦ Have you ever blown bubbles? As you gently blow, what do you see in the bubbles? Think about how our breath, which we cannot see, creates these beautiful bubbles. Talk about how God's breath, the Holy Spirit, brings forth our beautiful gifts so that they can be seen. Now think of some of the gifts you see in your friends, your family, your grandparents, your teachers, and of course, yourself. Write these gifts in the bubbles and color them. An example is given.



FAMILY PRAYER TIME

At mealtimes this week, celebrate the presence of God's Spirit in your family with a special ritual.

- Invite your child to light a candle as a sign of the Holy Spirit living in our hearts.
- Be quiet for a moment and look at the flame.
- Invite your child to lead the "Come, Holy Spirit" prayer (see page 21).



☒ Recall how the Holy Spirit prayer you just learned had the following response: “Send forth your Spirit, O Lord.” (Answer) “And renew the face of the earth.” Discuss how you as a family could be kinder to the environment and help “renew the face of the earth.”

☒ See if you could do something different:

- ride a bicycle instead of drive a car;
- hang up clothes instead of using your dryer;
- eat less meat and more vegetable protein (much more land is needed to feed the animals than to feed us with plants);
- lower the temperature in your home and wear a sweater.

☒ Have you ever seen a stained glass window that tells a Bible story? Imagine that you are an artist and you have been asked to design a window to tell the story of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus. On a big piece of paper, draw a church window, and then with your crayons, draw and color one of the Holy Spirit stories you read this week. Bring your window to your next gathering.

3. Come!

A Word to Parents



If Baptism opens the door and Confirmation leads us into the community, then Eucharist puts us right at the center, at the heart of Christianity, where Christ's death and new life are celebrated. Eucharist helps us make sense of our own living and dying, being bread for others, pouring out our lives in love.

A whole lifetime is needed to get into this great mystery. How can we ever open it up to a child?

We will try to introduce the Mass with four simple words: Come. Listen. Do. Go.

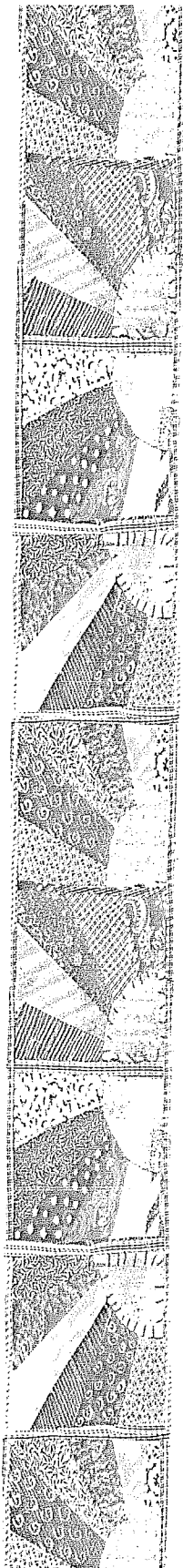
We come together,
we listen to God's word,
we do what Jesus commands and break the bread.
Then we go out to love and serve.

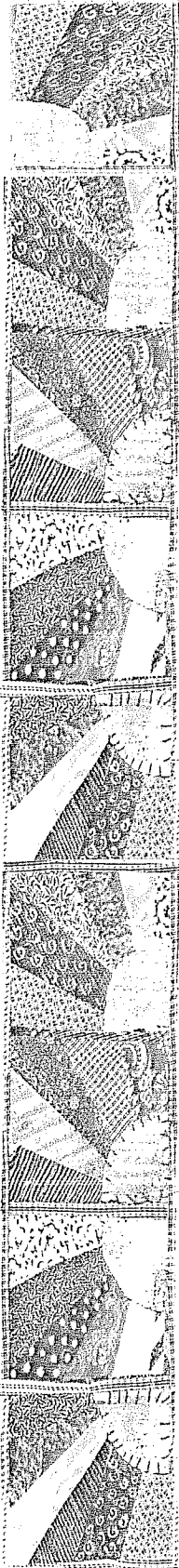
We begin by making the Sign of the Cross and remembering what Jesus promised:
"Where two or three
are gathered in my
name, I am there among
them"(Matthew 18:20).

FOCUS

The focus or aim of this theme is to:

- introduce the structure of the Eucharist through these key words: Come, Listen, Do, and Go;
- reflect on how Jesus gathers us and how the cross is central to our gathering.





An invitation

“Come, please bring your whole family to our home for supper tomorrow,” said Mrs. Garcia.

“Thank you so much for asking. There will be four of us coming—my husband and myself, our ten-year-old son, Pedro, and our seven-year-old daughter, Carmen. We will see you tomorrow then. Goodbye,” said Mrs. Lopez as she hung up the telephone.

Mrs. Garcia was very excited to welcome this new family to her home. The Lopez family had moved to their American community from El Salvador, just as the Garcia family had done only a few years earlier. Mrs. Garcia started to prepare the “pupusas” (puh-POO-sas), which were something like tortillas. Mrs. Lopez had told her that they were Pedro’s favorite. The two families spent all Sunday afternoon together. Everything was like a return visit to El Salvador, even the food.

“Thank you for the wonderful supper,” said Mrs. Lopez as they were leaving, “but especially thank you for asking us to come.”

“Muchas gracias,” said Carmen Lopez in Spanish, to the great delight of her father. “Thanks very much.”

“Come again,” shouted the Garcia family as the Lopez family drove off.

FOR FAMILIES

Talk about the story.

Do you think the Lopez family felt welcomed?

Name some times when you really feel welcome—that you belong.

FOR PARENTS

Jesus says, "Come"

In the Gospels, Jesus often invites people: "Come." Read or tell the story of Jesus and the little children (Matthew 19:13-15).

What did Jesus say to his friends?

Jesus invites everyone, adults and children alike: "Come, follow me." Jesus' friends understood this on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus died and rose to new life. They were sitting together in one room when suddenly they heard the sound of a powerful wind and saw something like flames of fire that seemed to touch each one of them. In this way they were filled with the Holy Spirit! They weren't afraid anymore! Jesus' friends went outside right away.

A huge crowd had gathered in Jerusalem, since it was a big Jewish feast. There were people there from every country in the known world. Peter began to tell everyone the story of Jesus. "My friends, listen to what I have to say. Jesus of Nazareth came to us from God. He did many wonderful miracles. God was right here with us. And still you had him crucified. But death could not hold him. God raised him: we are all witnesses to that. What you see and hear now is the Holy Spirit which God has breathed into us. Believe this. God has made Jesus whom you crucified Lord and Christ."

When the crowd heard this, they were worried. They asked Peter, "What must we do?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus." And that day, 3,000 people were baptized! (See Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36, 38.)

That is why this day is sometimes called the "birthday of the church." We celebrate it each year on Pentecost Sunday.

FOR FAMILIES

Read Acts 2:22-24, 32-33, 36, 38 together.

- How can we tell about God's wonderful deeds?

Find Peter's important words in the puzzle.
 They're written in block capital letters in the text
 below the puzzle. Some words go up; some go
 down; some are written forwards, some backwards,
 and some diagonally. Some words are repeated.
 See how many words you can find!

G	O	D	W	I	T	H	U	S	W	O
O	N	P	R	L	D	R	P	P	I	F
D	E	E	E	U	E	A	P	I	T	A
W	T	N	P	S	A	M	U	R	N	X
I	S	T	E	K	T	E	D	I	E	L
T	I	E	N	D	H	N	E	T	S	O
H	L	C	T	E	J	E	S	U	S	R
U	R	O	B	A	P	T	I	Z	E	D
S	L	S	T	E	N	E	A	B	S	O
I	M	T	O	K	C	H	R	I	S	T
L	B	C	R	U	C	I	F	I	E	D



LISTEN to what I have to say!
 JESUS of Nazareth did many wonderful miracles.
 GOD was right here WITH US.
 DEATH could not hold him in its power.
 All of us are WITNESSES to that.
 Today he has breathed his SPIRIT into us.
 God has made him LORD and CHRIST, this Jesus whom you CRUCIFIED.
 REPENT and be BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus.
 We celebrate the birthday of the church on PENTECOST Sunday.

What happens when we celebrate the Eucharist with Jesus' friends?

Every Sunday Jesus welcomes us as we gather with the family of Christians, just as he welcomed us at our Baptism. He says:

Come—gather with my family of the Church.
Listen—to my word.
Do this—in memory of me.
Go—to love and serve.

These four words—come, listen, do, go—tell us the important things that happen at the Eucharist.



FOR FAMILIES

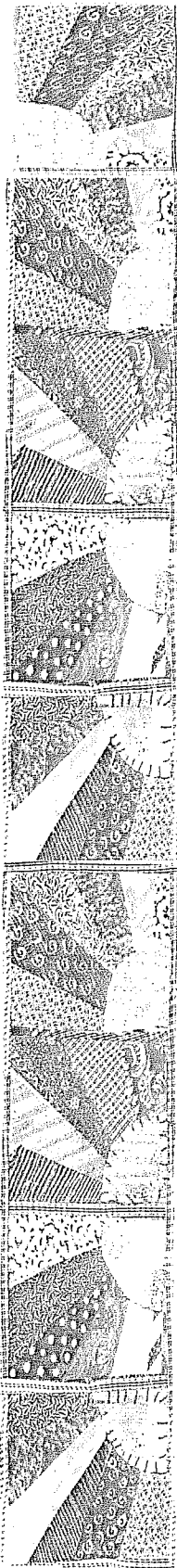
- Talk about the first part of the Mass, the Introductory Rites. You might ask:

Do you remember what happens at the beginning of Mass?

Why do we begin with the Sign of the Cross?

What words remind us that Jesus is very close to us when we are the Church gathered together?

- Help your child complete the story on the next page.



Come! The Introductory Rites

On Sunday, the day of the Lord, we come together to praise and thank our God in _____ Church.

Father _____ leads us with the Sign of the Cross:

“In the name of the _____, and of the _____, and of the _____.”

We say “_____.”

Then the presider greets us with these words:

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!” or “The Lord be with you!”

We answer: “_____.”

FAMILY PRAYER TIME

Continue to focus on the cross as the symbol of God’s love, the sign of Christians.

- Make the Sign of the Cross at least once during the day, at mealtime, or bedtime.
- Remember Jesus’ words: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)
- Sing the song refrain “Come to the Feast.”

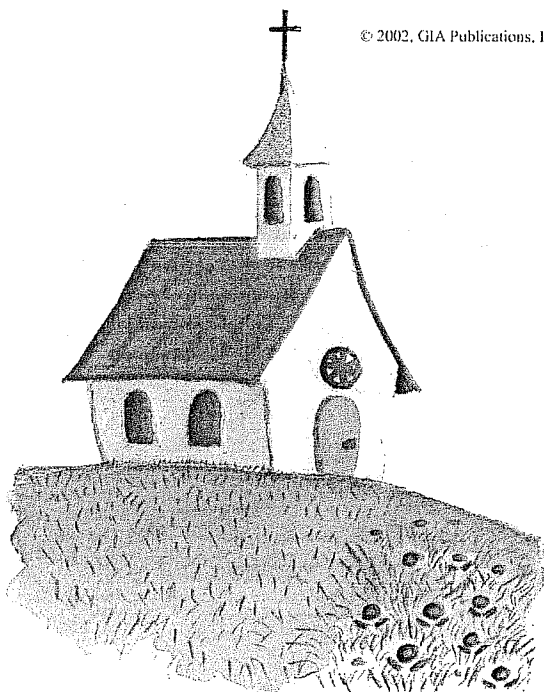


Come to the Feast

Words and Music by James E. Moore, Jr.

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Come to the feast, come hear the Word, come to the ta - ble of the Lord. O come to the feast, come sing your song, come let us join and be one."

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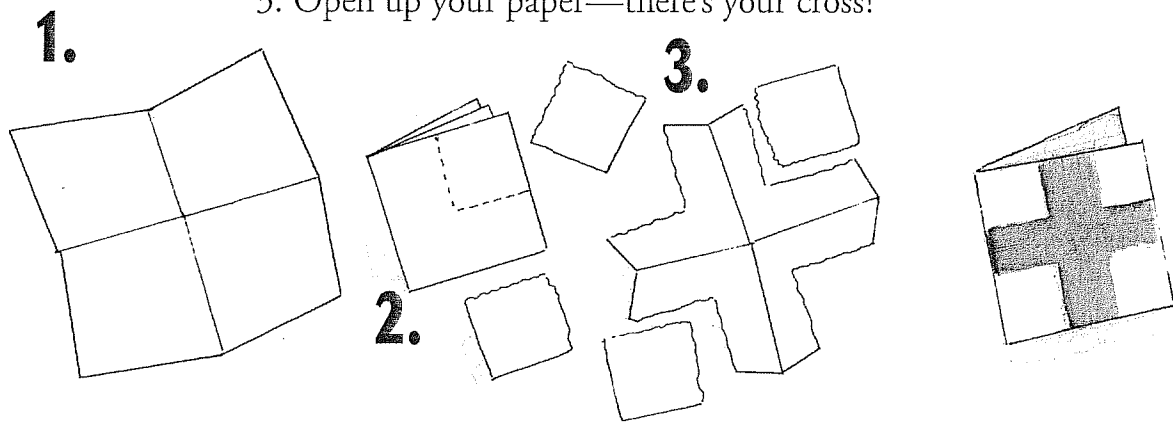


Things to do

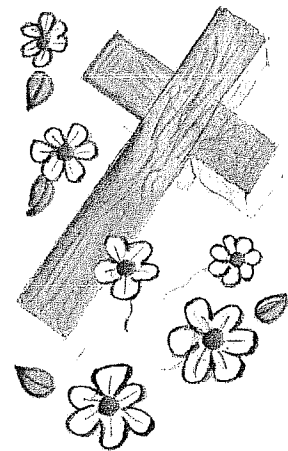
■ Make a small poster for your prayer center with Jesus' words from Matthew 18:20.

■ Make a paperfold cross for your prayer center or your room. If you're doing this during Lent, try to use purple paper.

1. Fold the paper in half, then in quarters.
2. Tear out one corner as in the diagram.
3. Open up your paper—there's your cross!



■ Buy or make a styrofoam cross or cut out a cross from heavy cardboard. If you use styrofoam, try to get dried or silk flowers. If you use cardboard, make small flowers out of colored paper (or use markers to draw flowers). Place the flowers in a basket near the cross. During Lent, each time someone in the family does something thoughtful or kind, or if the family helps someone in need, attach a flower on the cross. By Easter, your cross will be a sign of the risen Jesus!



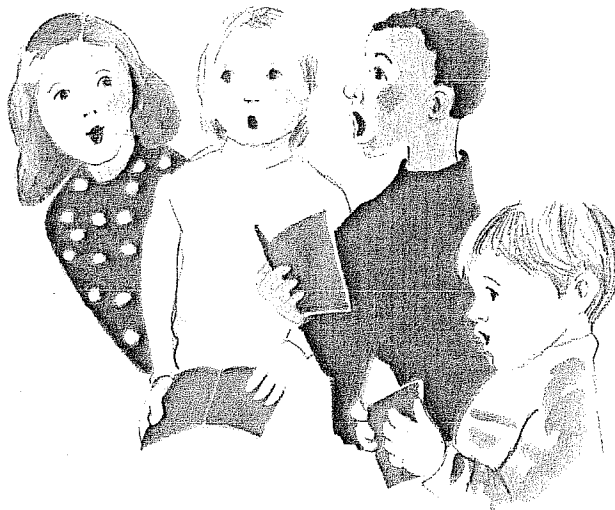
Sing a song

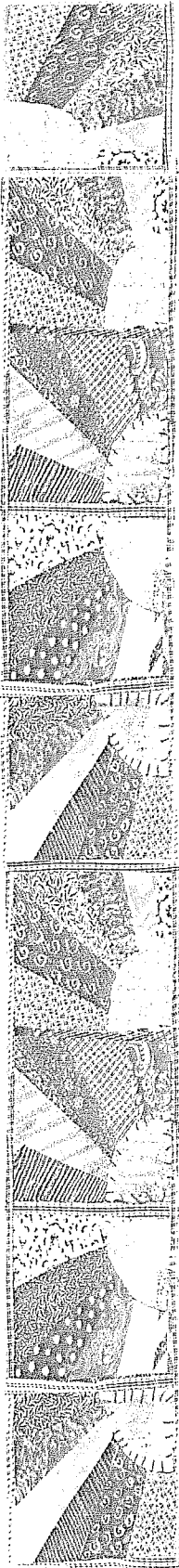
Come to the Feast

Words and Music by James E. Moore, Jr.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Come to the feast, come hear the Word, come to the table of the Lord. O come to the feast, come sing your song, come let us join and be one." The melody is simple and suitable for children's voices.

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4. Listen!

A Word to Parents

Listening is very different from just hearing, isn't it? We perk up, we tune in.

Encourage your child to stop and focus on sounds: sounds close by, those farther away. We need to be attentive, to enjoy quiet moments, to truly listen. Once we learn to make that inner connection with others, words become less important; we can hear with our hearts, we can listen to the sounds of silence where God speaks.

Jesus' story is the most astounding story. When we Christians listen to that story, the story of a man in whom we see the face of God, we call it "gospel." It is "good news" because it is a story full of hope. Let us be attentive to this word of God, for our lives depend on it.



FOCUS

The focus or aim of this theme is to:

- help us fine-tune our listening skills so we can more easily hear God speak to us;
- appreciate the Liturgy of the Word as a special time during which God speaks to us.

Called from the darkness

“Escucha!” (ess-KOO-cha) “Listen!” That word has become my favourite since I was in the hospital.

After my accident I was in a coma. That’s when your mind seems to hide deep inside your body. To those around you it seems that you have gone into a long sleep.

But I can tell you I wasn’t asleep at all! My mind was working well and I can remember everything that happened. I could hear what the doctors and nurses were saying, even when they whispered. I wanted to answer back sometimes or even scream, but I couldn’t. One day when my mom and my brother were sitting next to my bed, I could hear Pedro crying. He said, “Carmen, please wake up!”

“Escucha!” said my mother excitedly. “She can understand us!”

Mom tells me now that she saw my eyelashes flutter. She knew that I was hearing them and that I would be all right. “Listen!” added Pedro. “Carmen, can you hear me? I miss you so much. Please get better!”

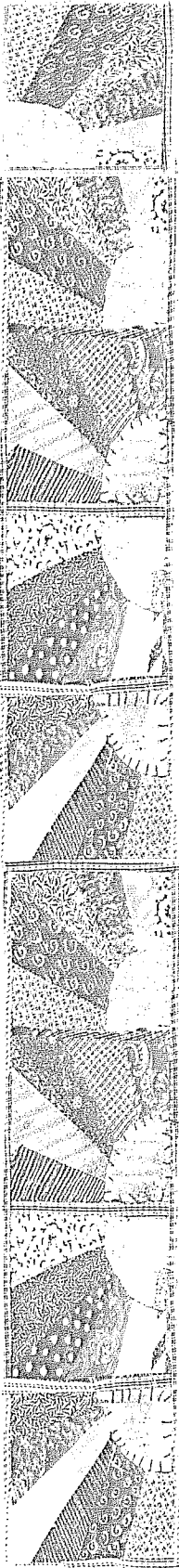
And he leaned over me and gave me a kiss. It was a week before I could get my eyes open, and then things really got better. For five weeks I had been in the dark. I couldn’t tell people I was still here. But they didn’t give up. They brought me back into the light. “Escucha!” And I did. I listened and waited for someone to lead me out of that darkness.

FOR FAMILIES

- Talk about the story.

- Ask:

How do you think you would feel if you had been Carmen? If you hadn’t been able to hear? How do you think her family felt?



Jesus tells us it's important to listen

Jesus was a wonderful storyteller. People loved to listen to him. Once such a huge crowd followed him that he got into one of his friend's boats, stood on the front of it, and talked to the people who had gathered on the shore. "Listen, everyone!" he said. Then Jesus told them a story about the Word of God. He said it was like a seed that grows and grows and produces lots of fruit when it falls on good soil. He ended the story with these words:

"Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" (Mark 4:1-9)

Over and over again Jesus reminded people about how important it is to listen to God's word. One day Jesus' mother, Mary, and some of his relatives were trying to see him. They couldn't get near him because of the crowds. Someone said to him, "Your mother and some of your family are outside. They want to see you."

Jesus answered,

"My mother and my family are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 8:19-20).

What do you think Jesus wanted people to understand?

FOR PARENTS

Talk with your child about listening to the Word of God. Name some other ways God speaks to us. (*When we see something beautiful, when a friend hugs us ...*)

Think of a time when you were kind, or caring, or when you said, "I'm sorry." Who told you to do this? (*You were listening to the Spirit of Jesus in your heart.*)

Listen! The Liturgy of the Word

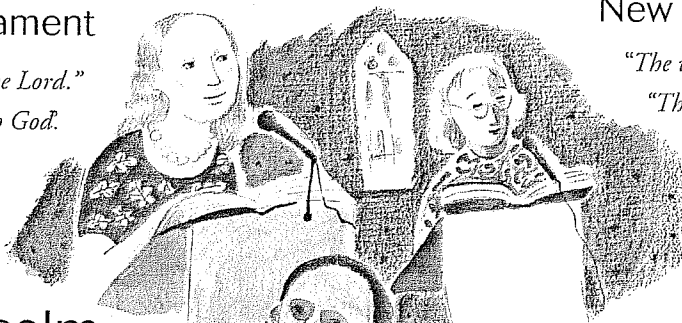
When we gather for the Eucharist, the special time for listening to God's word is called the Liturgy of the Word. In the Liturgy of the Word, God says "I love you." Look carefully at these pictures. You'll discover lots about the Liturgy of the Word in them!

1. First Reading

Old Testament

"The word of the Lord."

"Thanks be to God."



3. Second Reading

New Testament

"The word of the Lord."

"Thanks be to God."

2. Psalm

(sung by the cantor)

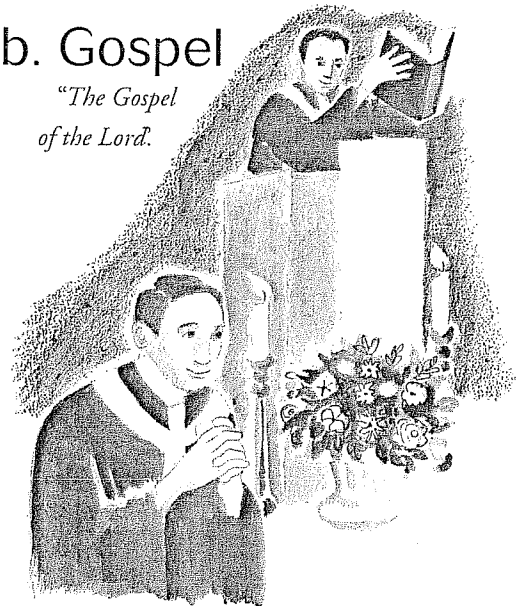


4a. Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia...

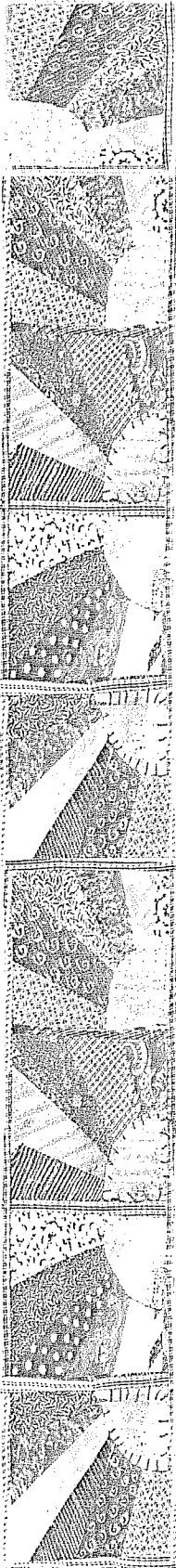
4b. Gospel

*"The Gospel
of the Lord."*



5. Homily

*"Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ."*



6. "We Believe"

(the Creed)



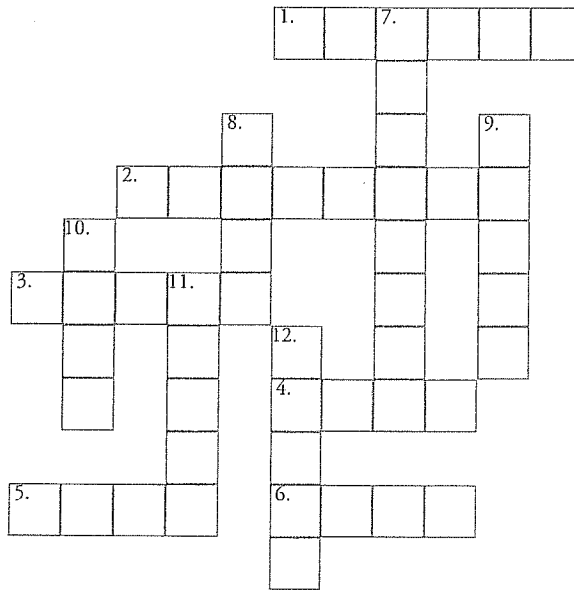
7. Prayer of the Faithful

for the World's Needs

FOR FAMILIES

Why do we make a little cross on our forehead, lips and heart before we listen to the Gospel? It's like saying: "I want to know God's word. I want to speak God's word. I want to treasure God's word in my heart."

- Make a game out of remembering and practising the responses for the Liturgy of the Word.
- Help your child to complete the crossword puzzle on the next page. The words that fill in the blanks are in this chapter.

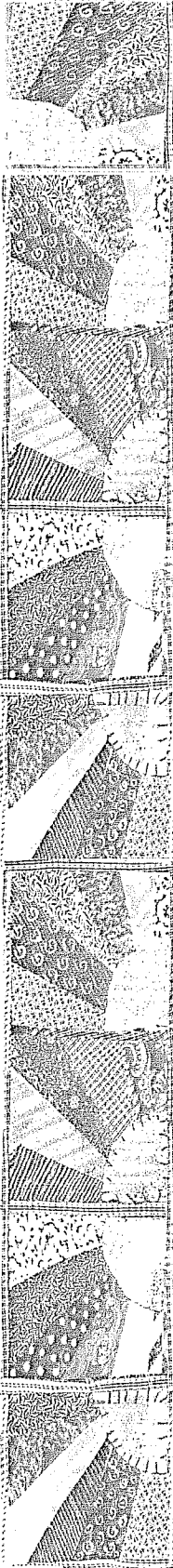


Across

1. After the Gospel is read, we say “_____ to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”
2. Gospel means “_____.”
3. The book of God’s word, the _____, tells the story of God’s love.
4. Jesus said, “My mother and my family _____ the Word of God and keep it” (Luke 8:19-20).
5. Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to my _____ (Psalm 119:105).
6. Jesus is present with us when the _____ of God is read.

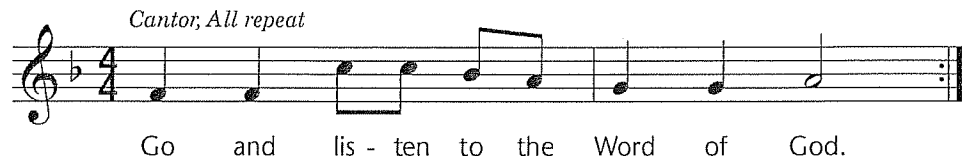
Down

7. A Hebrew word we sing to welcome the Gospel, the good news of Jesus is _____.
8. In the Liturgy of the Word, God says, “I _____ you.”
9. The song-prayer we sing after the first reading is called a _____. There are 150 of these in the Bible.
10. When Jesus was a boy he used to pray and _____ the psalms, just as we do.
11. “Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet and a _____ to my path” (Psalm 119:105).
12. Jesus _____ us the way to God.



Go and Listen

Words and Music by Robert J. Batastini



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Pray together:
Your word,
O Lord,
is a lamp to my feet,
and a light to my path.
(Psalm 119:105)



FAMILY PRAYER TIME

- Take time to sit with your child or family in a comfortable, quiet place.
- Light a candle and sing “Speak, Lord, I’m listening.” Then read the story of the sower and the seed (Luke 8:4-8).

Things to do

☒ Read or tell the story of the “Sower and the Seed” in Luke 8:4-8. Plant some seeds in rich soil either in a pot or in your garden. As you watch them grow, think of how the seed of God’s word has to be rooted in the rich soil of our hearts if it is to bear fruit in our lives.

☒ Look at the Bible together. The book of God’s word, the Bible, is a library of books inside one cover. These books were written by different people at different times. Look at its table of contents. The first part, the Old Testament, tells the story of God’s people before Jesus was born. The second part, the New Testament, tells about Jesus’ life and the lives of his friends.

☒ Do some research. Find the answers to the following questions: How many books are there in the Old Testament? _____.

How many are there in the New Testament? _____.

Find the first four books of the New Testament. These are the four Gospels.

Name the four evangelists (Gospel writers) who told these stories of “good news”:




■ Play a game of Tic-Tac-Toe with your child. Draw a Tic-Tac-Toe grid on a piece of paper. Explain that you will draw the Os and your child the Xs. Start by naming a book of the Bible, chapter and verse. For example: Matthew 19:15. If your child finds it, mark an X. If not, mark an O. Continue until your child wins.

■ Sing the following song:

Go and Listen

Words and Music by Robert J. Batastini

Cantor, All repeat



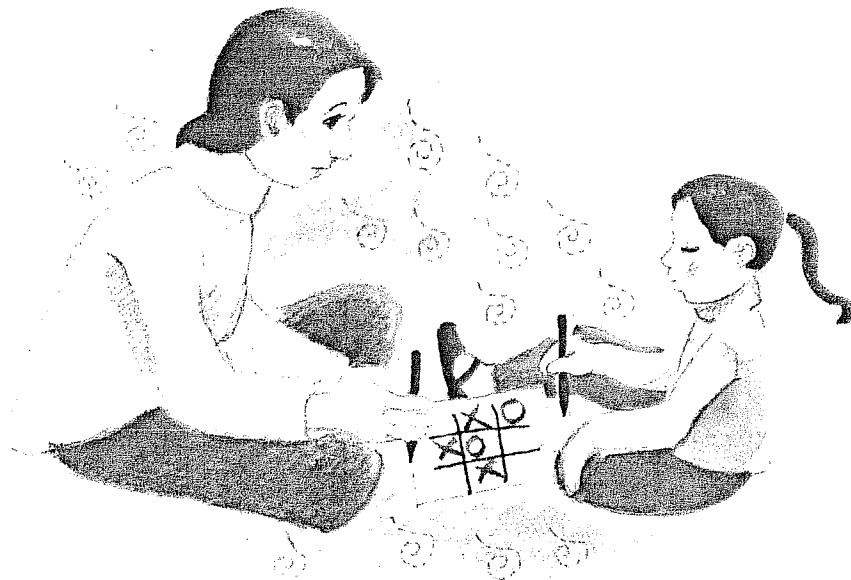
Go and lis - ten to the Word of God.

Cantor, All repeat



God has the words of ev - er - last - ing life.

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5. Do!

A Word to Parents

Our busy world has us doing a lot of things, often overdoing, acting superficially, living on the surface.

Jesus encourages us to do a very simple action, but to do it with depth. Jesus wants us to break the bread, remembering how bread comes from wheat gathered from many fields, how it is crushed, loses its life as individual seed and is changed into something new, something that nourishes. Jesus says this is his body, given for the life of the world. Like crushed grapes becoming wine, this breaking and sharing is about losing life and giving it, making our daily struggles one with Jesus' own death and new life.

“This is your mystery,” says St. Augustine. That’s why we say “Amen” when we receive communion. We say yes to life—shared, broken and celebrated for eternity—starting now!

FOCUS

The focus or aim of this theme is to:

- help your child recognize that the food we share at the Eucharist is Jesus himself, the Bread of Life;
- see that the celebration of the Eucharist is planned around the words and actions of Jesus: taking, giving thanks, breaking the bread, giving.



Something to celebrate

“You’re back! You’re with us again!” said Dad as he leaned over me. “We thought we’d lost you, Carmen.” And a big tear fell from his eye onto my cheek. My heart was filled with joy and I wanted to hug him and tell him how much I loved him. And Mom. And Pedro. And the doctors and nurses. Everybody. Everybody in the world! It was so good to be alive!

Six weeks locked up inside myself!

“We want you to meet someone special,” whispered Mom. “Someone who’s gotten to know you very well since the accident. He’s like one of our family.”

A big man in a police officer’s uniform came over to my bed. He leaned over me and began to cry. I couldn’t believe my eyes. I smiled.

“Know you,” I managed to say. My first words! Yes, I knew him because he had sat by my bed many times during those six weeks. And he talked to me. He told me how I looked exactly like his own daughter. About finding me beside a car after the accident.

“You didn’t let me down, Carmen,” he said. “It’s so good to have you back.”

“Tomorrow is Easter, Carmen,” said Mom as they all stood around my bed. “But you gave us Easter today!”

“Alleluia!” Pedro shouted.

Just then the door opened and Dr. Regent came in with many nurses and other hospital staff. They wheeled my bed out of the room and down the hallway to the cafeteria. I saw a big cake. Then someone lit the sparkler in the center. Everyone started shouting, “Welcome back, Carmen!”

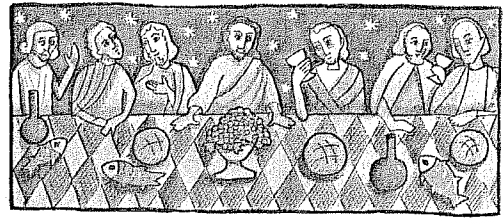
It was a great party with balloons, gifts and lots of hugs. “Carmen has come back to us,” my mom said. “We thought she wasn’t going to be with us again, but here she is.”

Yes, it was a celebration I’ll never forget!

FOR PARENTS

- Talk with your child about the story. Why was Easter a good time for this to happen to Carmen? How would you feel if you were Pedro or one of the nurses? How would you feel if you were Carmen?

The Last Supper



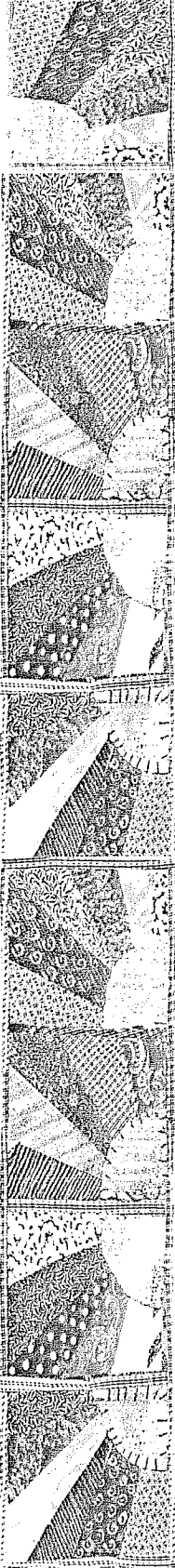
Jesus was a Jew. During a special celebration called Passover, the Jewish people thank God for rescuing them from being Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt long ago.

At Passover time Jesus ate his last supper with his friends. When he sat down with them, he said, "I have wanted so much to eat this meal with you." Then, like all Jews, he praised and thanked God for the bread they ate and the wine they drank. But after that, Jesus did something different from the usual Jewish celebration. Luke retells the story in his Gospel.

Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 21:19-20).

FOR FAMILIES

- Imagine with your child that you are one of Jesus' friends at the table.
What do you see?
What do you hear?
How do you feel?
- Can you name Jesus' four important actions at the Last Supper?
(He took the bread, thanked God, broke the bread and gave it to his friends.)



“Do this in memory of me”: the Liturgy of the Eucharist

After Jesus died and rose to new life, his friends remembered what he had done at the Last Supper. They remembered that he had asked them to “Do this in memory of me.” And so they came together and did what Jesus had asked. They took the bread and the cup, they thanked God, broke the bread, and shared the bread and the cup.

Today at every Eucharist we remember what Jesus did with his friends the night before he died, and we do the same. We take the bread and wine; we give praise and thanks to God. We *break* the bread of life and *share* the sacred cup. We eat and drink together.

The priest leads us in the great prayer of thanksgiving. This prayer starts with the words “Lift up your hearts.” Do you remember what we answer? Then we ask God to send the Holy Spirit to change our gifts of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. At the end of this prayer, the priest holds up the bread of life and the sacred cup, and we praise and thank God for Jesus who gives himself to us, and we offer ourselves to God with Jesus.

Through him, with him and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen

We sing out our “Yes” with a loud “Amen!”

“Amen” is a Hebrew word that means “So be it” or “I agree!” Singing the Great Amen is like signing our names to this beautiful prayer of praise. Color and decorate the *Amen* above. Around it you could add symbols of yourself and your life.



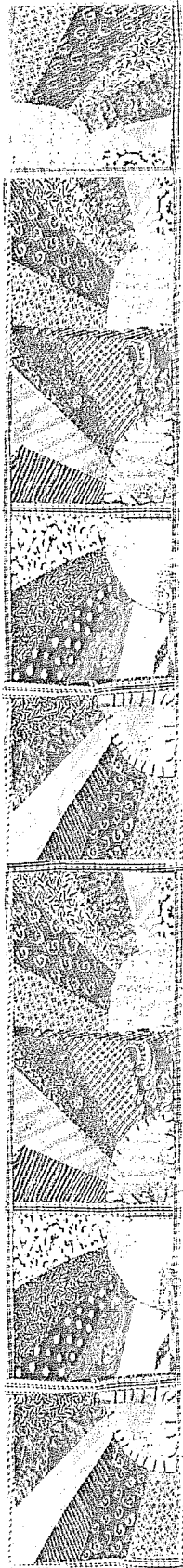
FOR FAMILIES

Read these pages together. The word *Eucharist* comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” Why is this a good name for the Mass? What should we do to remember Jesus?

We eat together—we share the Bread of Life

Now we are invited to eat at God’s table. First we say the family prayer that Jesus taught us: the Our Father. After the Sign of Peace, we go up in procession for communion. When we eat the bread of life and share the holy cup, we are one with Jesus—close to him. Communion also means that we are one with all Jesus’ friends who join us at the table.

Why do you like eating together with your family or friends?



FOR PARENTS

A color prayer

Think quietly about how you will feel on your First Communion day. Then choose some markers or crayons and use different colors to tell the Lord Jesus what is in your heart. You don't have to draw anything—just express your feelings in color.

- Ask your child: “What do we do when we come back to our seats?” We continue to sing the communion song. Talk about how this shows the happiness that is in our heart, and how joining our voices with all the others shows that we are one community. We are “one in heart and voice.”



FAMILY PRAYER TIME

The family table is the best starting place for understanding and appreciating the Sunday Eucharist. Everyday meals are holy, too.

- At a meal you might light a candle, read a short passage from Scripture, such as “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35, 51), take bread, bless it, break it and share it, join hands and say the Lord’s Prayer or sing a song.
- At a meal just before the First Communion celebration, read again the story of Jesus and the little children (Matthew 19:13-15).

As your child's First Communion celebration approaches, try to focus on family meals and sharing.

Read through the "Things to do" section and take some time to talk about and do these activities with your child.



Things to do

- ☞ Have some fun baking bread together. Use this bread for your special breakfast or lunch on first communion day.
- ☞ Bake a batch of bread to share with the poor through a soup kitchen.
- ☞ Break a piece of bread with your child.
Reflect together: Why do you think Jesus chose bread to give himself to us? [Bread gives life; it nourishes our bodies and makes us strong. Jesus said: "I am the Bread of Life."] When we receive Holy Communion, the priest or eucharistic minister says, "The Body of Christ." We answer: "Amen." When we say "Amen" we are saying "Yes" to becoming one with the Lord Jesus and with each other, just as the little grains of wheat become one in the bread.
- ☞ Demonstrate how we hold out our hands when we receive communion; practice this gesture together. Talk about how we come back to our seats.
- ☞ Start marking off the days on your calendar as you draw closer to your special celebration day.

FOR PARENTS

Help your child understand that we come back from communion in a reverent and respectful way. One way of being reverent is to join the rest of the community in singing the communion song as everyone processes to the table of the Lord.

■ Make a “Thank You” board.

The most important thing we “do” at the Eucharist is give thanks and praise to God. But sometimes we forget God’s goodness during the week. Post a white board or a large sheet of poster board where everyone can write on it. Tie a string to a colorful marker and tape this to the board. Write the title “THANK YOU” on the top. Invite family members to write or draw anything that makes them feel good during the week.



6. Go!

A Word to Parents

Go. The whole Eucharist is about life poured out: God's life in Jesus given to us; our life broken, distributed, feeding others. We are to bind up society's wounds, bring forgiveness to all, and wrap a ribbon of joy around the whole world.

"Go," says Jesus. "I am sending you to proclaim my Gospel, good news for all the world." Jesus did not transform the world. He transformed ordinary people who are sent, in the power of the Spirit, to renew the face of the earth.

A class touring a church was asked what was the most important part of the building. One student answered, "The door." Startled, the questioner asked again,

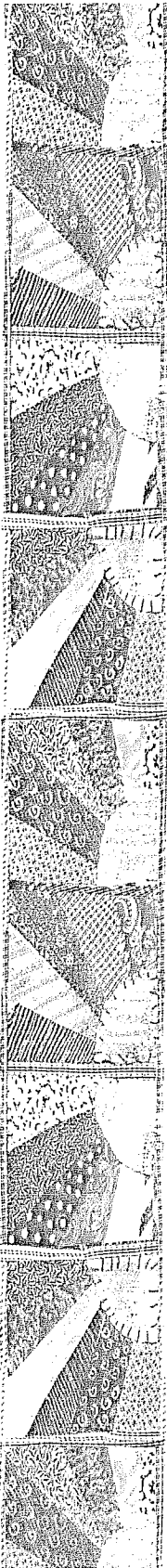
"What do you mean?"

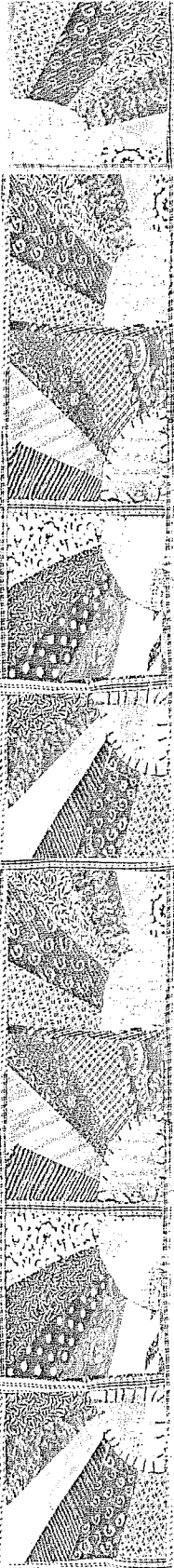
"When we go through that door," the student explained, "that's when the real work of the Church begins." Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord, for he assures us, "I was hungry and you gave me food."

FOCUS

The focus or aim of this theme is to:

- help your child reflect on the new, personal experience of the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist;
- learn what it means to be sent forth to love and serve the Lord.





Going home

“Go!” said Dr. Regent. “We’d love to keep you here, Carmen, but you are healed now. Your family needs you.”

My seven-week stay in the hospital after my car accident was over. The last two weeks were like an Easter celebration for everyone around me. Since the day my eyelashes fluttered, my body started waking up. I was now walking out of the hospital! It was a miracle for sure!



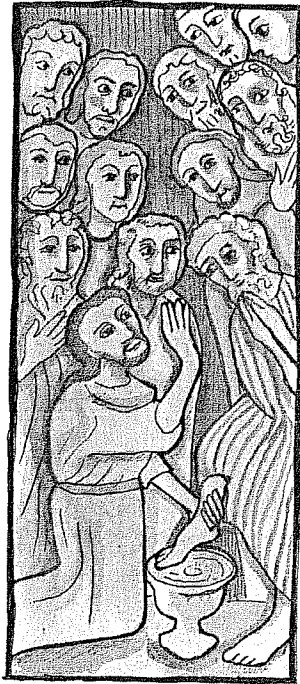
At the front door of the hospital, Mom thanked the doctor. “The hardest thing,” she remembered, “was to keep on speaking to Carmen even though it seemed hopeless. Thank you for not giving up and for telling us to talk to her. She listened and woke up.”

My friend the police officer was waiting to take me home in his police car. “This is really a special day for me,” he said. “Thanks, Pedro, Mr. and Mrs. Lopez—and all of you—for letting me be part of all this.”

“I can hardly wait to go home,” I said. “I’ve got lots to catch up on!”

“Adios! Go with God!” called Dr. Regent as we drove away.

Jesus says, "Go ..."



In his Gospel, Saint Mark tells us that Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples one day when they were sitting at the supper table. He said to them:

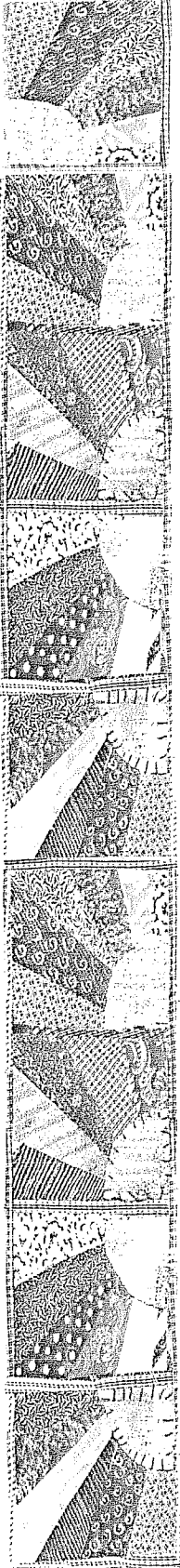
"Go out to the whole world; tell everyone the good news" (Mark 16:15).

Think about how Jesus brought the message of God's love to people. How did he tell people what God was like? By his words and stories, yes, but also by his actions, by the way he treated people. Jesus was God's "I love you" to the world. Now when Jesus says "Go," he is asking us to be his hands and feet, his heart and voice in our world.

Saint John's Gospel (13:3-5, 12-15) tells a story that we do not find in the other Gospels. Jesus bent down and washed the apostles' feet at the Last Supper. What an amazing thing to do! When he had finished, Jesus said to his friends,

"I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

Jesus is reminding us of what the Eucharist is all about. Every Sunday the Eucharist calls us to loving service of others.



Go in peace! The Concluding Rite

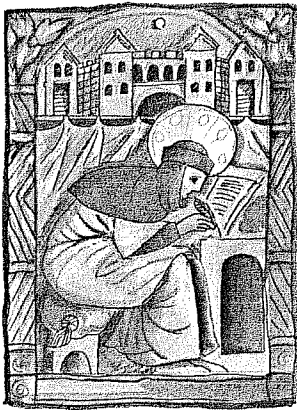
After we receive the Bread of Life, we come back to our places and spend some quiet time in prayer. We thank God for being so good to us. We listen to the Spirit of Jesus, who tells us in our hearts how we can now help to make our world a better place. After a special blessing, we hear these words: "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!" We answer, "Amen!"

What does it mean "to serve the Lord"? Where is the Lord? One day Jesus' friends asked him this question too. They just didn't understand. Do you remember Jesus' answer? Look it up in Matthew 25:34-40.

**Jesus said: "I tell you truly, if you did it to any one of my brothers and sisters, you _____
_____."(Matthew 25:40)**

FAMILY PRAYER TIME

Long ago, in the thirteenth century, Saint Richard of Chichester left us a beautiful daily prayer. Decide on a time your family can pray it together.



Day by day, day by day,
Dear Lord,
three things I pray:
to see you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
follow you more nearly,
day by day.

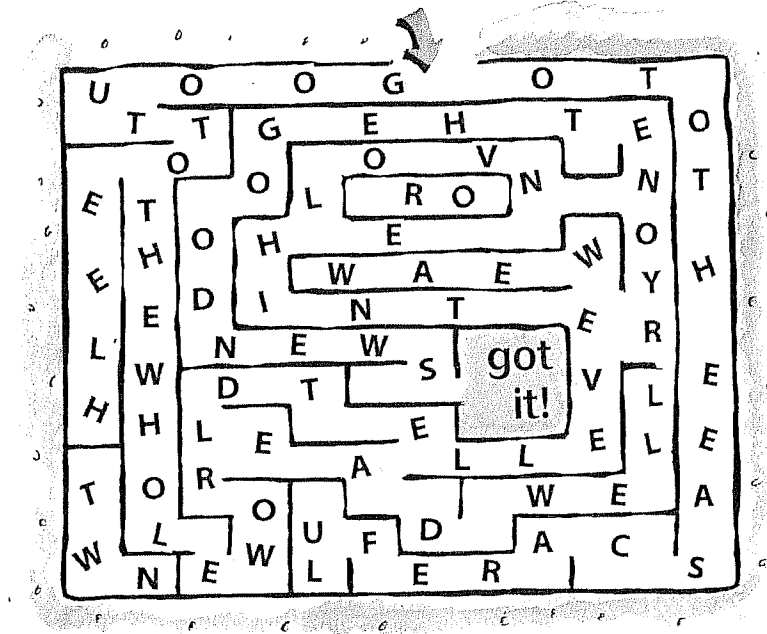
Things to do

Remember that, after he had finished washing their feet, Jesus said to his friends:
“I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).
As a family, think of Jesus’ words and of what the Eucharist calls all to do.

What special service can you as a family do in your community?

Find Jesus’ message in the maze.
If you follow the right path, you will discover an important challenge that Jesus left to his apostles and to us. Here is a clue: the message starts with “Go out” and it is from Mark 16:15 as quoted near the top of page 53. When you are sure you have found the correct path, copy the message in the blank spaces below the maze on the next page.

Maze



then Jesus says to his friends:

_____ ;

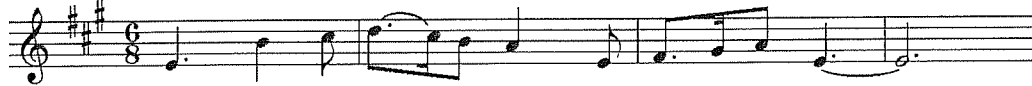
_____ !

Psalm 117: Go Out to All the World

Psalm 117, Adapted by David Haas

Music by David Haas

Refrain



Go out to all the world, and tell the good news!



Go out to all the world, and sing: "Al - le - lu - ia!"

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Following through: the Easter Season

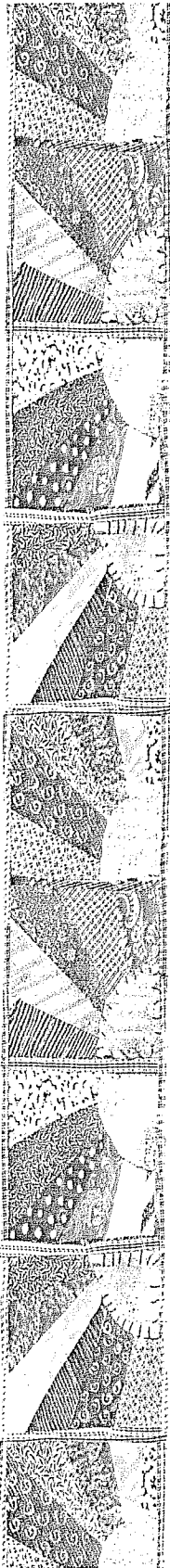
A Word to Parents

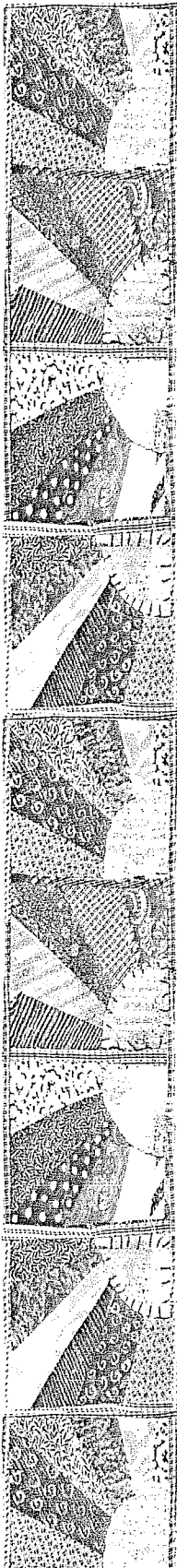
The seven-week-long Easter season is the most important one of the Church's year. It is based on the Jewish tradition, in which seven was the number of perfection. Seven weeks of seven days plus one gives the super-perfect number fifty! Fifty days of rejoicing! Life is often hard. But our Easter rejoicing should tell us something about joy for all eternity.

This is also the period that the Church calls "mystagogy" (MIST-uh-gaw-jee). The "mystery" is our teacher. During this time, we reflect on the Easter sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, especially in the light of the Scripture readings. In the readings for the Sundays just before Pentecost, we focus on the work of the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Church.

We invite you and your child to continue to reflect on the readings. We suggest that your child take some time to express this personal reflection in art. A display area will be provided at the parish. We invite you to bring and to display those reflections that your child wishes to share with the parish family, of which he or she is now fully a part.

Family prayer, especially at mealtimes, is a central focus here. We invite you to make this a regular practice. Regularly ask your child who has just experienced the sacraments to lead the prayer.





Easter Week 1

We are Christians, and *Alleluia* is our song. Sing a favourite *Alleluia* for some of your meal prayers, or sing an alleluia in place of “Amen” at the end of a prayer.

Sample meal prayer

Lord God, we rejoice in your great and wonderful deeds. You raised up Jesus, and you have invited us, especially _____ (name of person recently initiated), to join you in sharing your new life. You promised that where two or three are together in your name, you are present. Share our joy as we enjoy this food. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen, Alleluia!

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Put a flower on the table.
- Decorate your eating space with an “Alleluia.”
Make sure you use something reused or recycled.

Easter Week 2

This week we are introducing “centering prayer.” By repeating a simple word, this ancient form of prayer helps people turn all their attention to God. Try this type of prayer at bedtime. Close your eyes and choose a word or phrase such as “Praise you” or “Jesus.” Repeat the word or phrase in your mind and heart. Think of it having a rhythm, like a bouncing ball. Focus on your heart. You will find the Lord there.

Sample meal prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you again for being human with us and for the great joy your Resurrection gives us. Help us to believe that you are with us even though we don't see you. Bless this food and help us to be thankful for it and to share it generously. We make this prayer with the help of your Spirit, as we sing (say) together, “Alleluia!”

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Write out the apostle Thomas' beautiful prayer of only five words:

_____!

(See John 20:28)

Easter Week 3

This week try what is called “prayer of the senses” or of the “imagination.” Use the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Em-MAY-us). Use your Bible if you wish. The story is in Luke 24:13–35.

Sit down together in a comfortable place. Imagine you are one of the disciples walking along the road. You are worried after Jesus has been killed. You feel pretty hopeless. As you walk along, someone joins you and your companion. This stranger helps you understand. He takes you through the stories in Scripture that show that Jesus had to suffer.

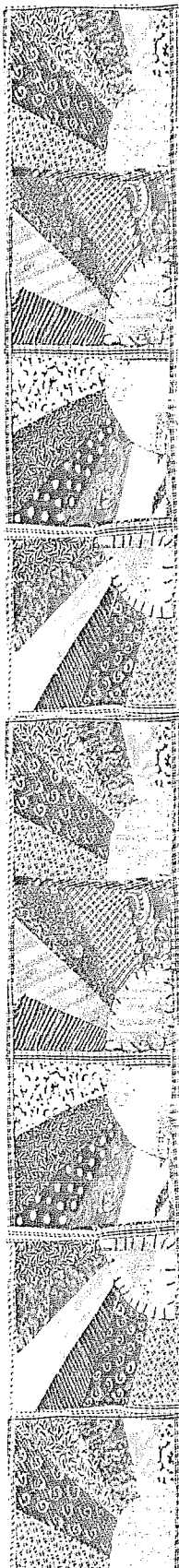
Close your eyes and remember how Jesus helped the disciples make sense out of what happened. It is beginning to get dark. Perhaps there is a fork in the road and the stranger makes to go on. But you and your friend invite him to stay the night with you. (Here you could insert a moment of centering prayer with the word “Come” or the phrase “Stay with us.”)

Imagine that the stranger comes into your house. You sit down at table and he continues the conversation. Imagine what he says. (Share among family members if you want to.) You offer him some bread. He takes it, breaks it, and shares it. Suddenly you realize who this is! It is Jesus! And you no longer see him!

How do you feel? What might you do to keep this memory alive?

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Discuss how the Sunday Eucharist is like the Emmaus journey story.
- When we pray together as a family, we invite Jesus to join us. Pray another Scripture passage (for example, John 21:1-19), using your imagination.



Sample meal prayer

Lord Jesus, you showed your followers that you really are living among them, walking with them, sharing their life. Be with us now as we break bread together and share this food, grateful for all your gifts, especially the new life we celebrate in your sacraments. Amen.

Sing “Alleluia!” and begin the meal by breaking a piece of bread and sharing it with all present.

Easter Week 4

The psalms express every kind of feelings, from anger to anxiety to praise and joy. They help us share with God everything we feel. Try praying Psalm 23 at your meal. Sing it if possible. Notice the words: *You have prepared a banquet for me.*

Choose other psalms from your family Bible: for example, 117. (In some Bibles, this four-line psalm will be Psalm 116.) The children might try to mime or illustrate parts of Psalm 104. Have fun with these prayers, which hold up to God our life and the whole of creation.

Sample meal prayer

Lord, you are our Good Shepherd. Hear us and teach us the sound of your voice so that we can stay close in your care. You give us every kind of gift, this food, and the food of your new life in the Eucharist. We bless you and ask you to bless us always. Amen.

Sing “Alleluia!”

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Make sheep for all members of the family out of cardboard and cotton batting, or marshmallows and toothpicks. (You may want to use tiny strips of curled newspaper glued to the cardboard.) Place the sheep on the table.
- Compose and write your own psalm. In it tell God how you feel.

Easter Week 5

This week's prayer uses rituals. You might use one of these ideas:

- Make the Sign of the Cross slowly and reverently.
- Offer a Sign of Peace to someone you've hurt or to someone you're mad at. You may wish to use the ritual you know from church, or to use another gesture that says you want to make up.
- Invite each person in the family to place one hand in the center of the table to form a circle of hands. When all are joined, in your own words, thank God for being together or use these words: "Lord, you are the Way, the Truth, the Life. Be at the center of our family, fill us with your love and guard us always in the palm of your hand."

Sample meal prayer

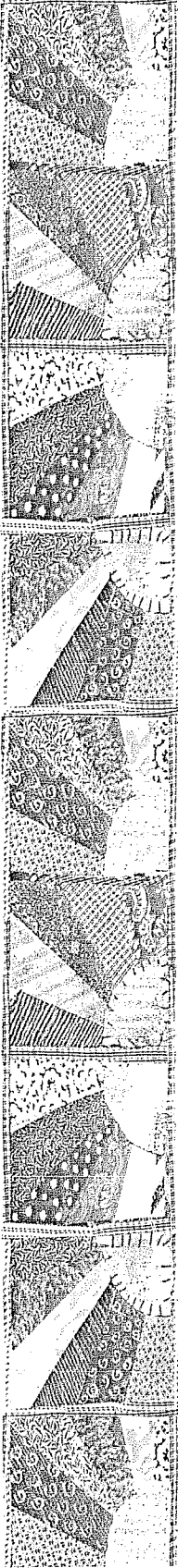
Lord Jesus, you say to us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in me." Be with us now as we eat this meal. Help us to trust you, the way to God. We give you praise forever. Amen.

Sing "Alleluia!"



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Bring bread dough or other dough to the table and have each person form a special loaf or cookie to represent himself or herself. Bake the loaves or cookies. Pack each person's baked creation in his or her lunch box with a note saying how special he or she is.
- If you bake bread, use it later at a meal or snack time and express your thanks for the uniqueness of each person.



Easter Week 6

The whole Christian community is joining you this week in pondering Jesus' farewell talk to his disciples. Check out these Scripture passages: John 13:34-35; John 14:6-7; John 14:26-27; John 15:4-9; John 15:26-27; John 16:13-14, 21-24; John 17:21-24. Pick your favorite, and make it into a poster.

Sample meal prayer

Lord our God, we love you. Your Son, Jesus, promised that he and you would be with us always. Send us your Spirit, the Helper, to keep us together in your love. May this meal be a sign of that love as we share it with joy. Amen.

Sing "Alleluia!"



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Label a large piece of paper with the words *I am with you.*
- Display the paper on the fridge door. Each day this week, add a picture or a sentence that describes how you have discovered Jesus' presence.

Easter Week 7 (Ascension)

When Jesus gives his Spirit to the Church, he himself is staying with us. His Spirit lives on among us, unseen, just as the Father lives with us. Teach the other members of your family the gestures that you learned in the parish program for this traditional prayer asking for the gift of the Holy Spirit:

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,

All: And enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,

All: And renew the face of the earth.

Sample meal prayer

Lord Jesus, your friends were sorry when you left them. You promised you would not leave us orphans. You and your Father are part of our lives, making us one family. Give us the joy of knowing that you are always with us, in each other, and especially at this meal. Amen.

Sing "Alleluia!"



OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- How do you need to "renew the face of the earth" in your community? Using newspapers or magazines, find pictures that illustrate this concern. Turn your prayer into action: How can you and your family help to "renew the face of the earth"?
- Watch the local TV news together. Have each person offer a prayer about a story that touched him or her. At the end pray, "Come, Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth!"



Pentecost

Congratulations! You've followed through and completed your Easter celebration! We hope this Easter was a glorious one. May each of you live as an "Alleluia," praising the Lord.

Remember these words of Jesus' promise as you journey through life:



"I am with you _____!"

(See Matthew 28:20.)

