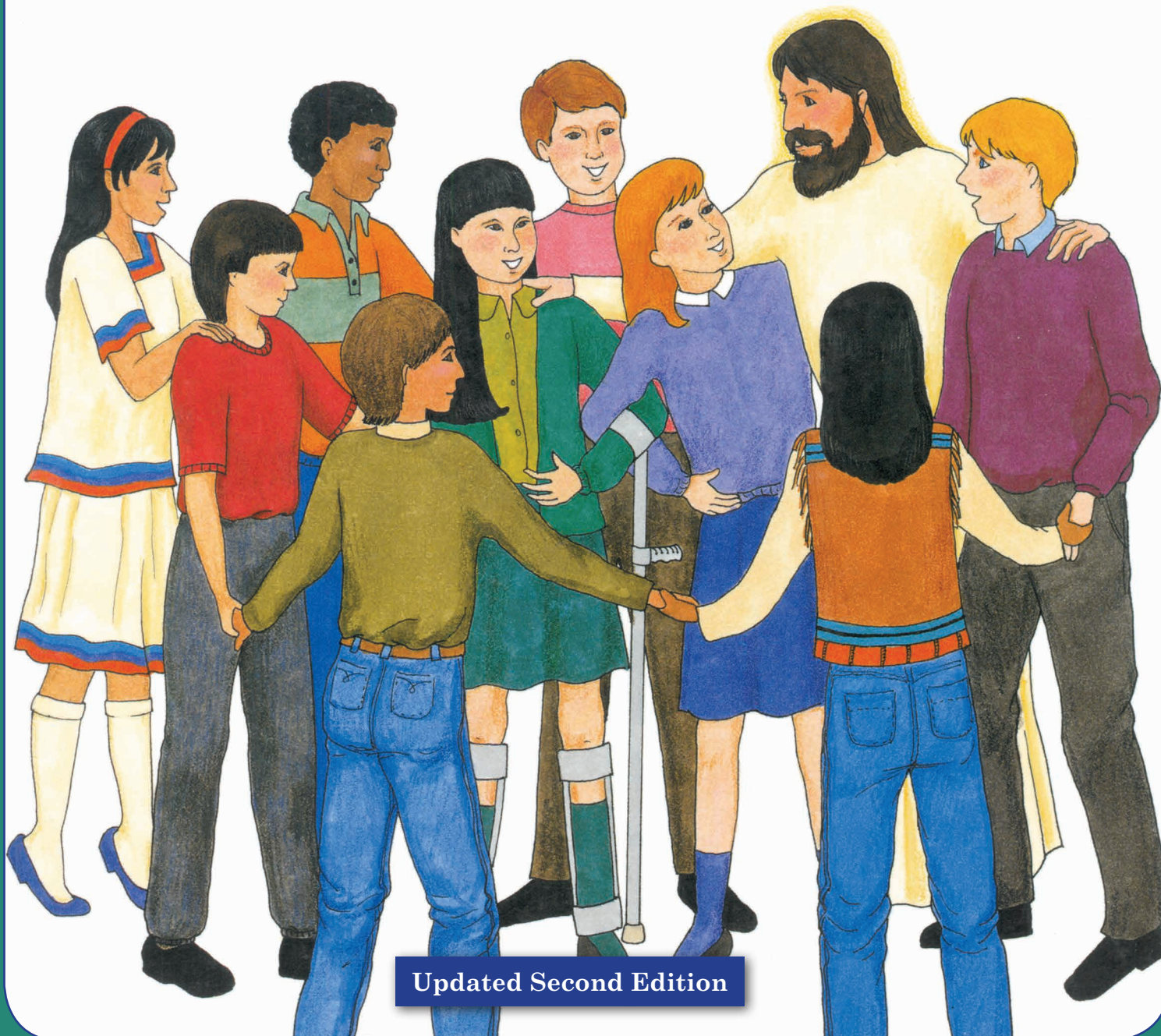


Our Mission of Love

THE CHURCH CARRIES ON JESUS' MISSION



Updated Second Edition

OUR MISSION OF LOVE

Fifth Grade Teacher's Manual

OUR MISSION OF LOVE

Fifth Grade Teacher's Manual

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IMAGE OF GOD SERIES

IMAGE OF GOD, INC., MAPLE GROVE, MINN
IGNATIUS PRESS SAN FRANCISCO

Nihil obstat: Reverend Joseph Johnson
Censor Librorum
June 8, 2013

Imprimatur: ✠ John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
June 8, 2013

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations have been taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible, Second Catholic Edition, © 2006. The Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible: the Old Testament, © 1952, 2006; the Apocrypha, © 1957, 2006; the New Testament, © 1946, 2006; the Catholic Edition of the Old Testament, incorporating the Apocrypha, © 1966, 2006, the Catholic Edition of the New Testament, © 1965, 2006 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

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For teacher information
Image of God: 1-800-635-3827
Ignatius Press school/parish line: 1-800-431-1531
www.ipreligious.com

Cover design by Riz Boncan Marsella
Cover and text illustrations by Barbara Harasyn
Photography by Bill Wittman and Getty Images

Updated second edition with USCCB corrections
First Edition published 1991 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco
© 1989 by Image of God, Inc., Brooklyn Center, Minn.
Second Edition published 2013 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco
© 2013 by Image of God, Inc., Maple Grove, Minn.

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ISBN: 978-1-62164-333-3

Printed by Friesens Corporation in Altona, MB, Canada, on June 2020

Job Number 267370

In compliance with the Consumer Protection Safety Act, 2008

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Introduction to the Image of God Series

Scope and Sequence

The Seven Basic Topics

God, creation, Christ, Church, grace, sacraments, and Commandments.

Topics Emphasized by Grade Level

Preschool and Kindergarten	God and creation
Grade 1	Grace and sacraments
Grade 2	Sacraments and Commandments
Grade 3	Christ and Church
Grade 4	God, grace, and Commandments
Grade 5	Christ, Church, and sacraments
Grade 6	Old Testament—creation
Grade 7	God, creation, Christ, and Commandments
Grade 8	Church, grace, and sacraments

Each of the seven topics is included in all grades; however, at each grade level, certain topics have been given special emphasis.

General Instructions

THE IMAGE OF GOD SERIES' PRESENTATION OF *IMAGE OF GOD* IN CONFORMITY WITH THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*

The *Our Mission of Love* fifth-grade curriculum is a Catholic religion curriculum for children of fifth-grade age. Catechesis on the human person created in the image and likeness of God is used throughout the series. It is the intent of the authors of the Image of God Series to present the creation of man and woman in the image of God in the series as “image of God” is defined and presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC). Above all, however, it is the intent to make Jesus Christ, “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible” (Colossians 1:15–16; cf. CCC 241), the heart, center, and focus of the Image of God Series.

The impetus for the use of the theology of the “image of God” in the series is an insight of Saint John Paul II that highlights both the human dignity and proper human activity of man and woman created in the image of God. Each human being has been created by God in his image and likeness. “The divine image is present in every man” (CCC 1702). Our dignity is further ennobled by Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our human nature in order to redeem it. “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning” (CCC 1691, quoting Saint Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C¹).

Most importantly, it is Jesus who redeems the human race and reveals human beings to themselves. “It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God” (CCC 1701). Furthermore, “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear” (CCC 359, quoting GS 22 § 1). “Christ . . . makes man fully manifest to man himself and brings to light his exalted vocation” (CCC 1701, quoting GS 22 § 1). “Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (GS 22 § 1).²

All creation reflects God, who made all things. However, it is especially man and woman who bear a resemblance to God because they have been created in his image and likeness. “All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently, we can name God by taking his creatures’ perfections as our starting point, ‘for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator’ (Wis 13:5)” (CCC 41).

“Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge,

¹For a list of the spelled-out forms for all abbreviations used for the *Catechism* references, please see the appendix.

²All translations of *Gaudium et Spes* that are not part of an internal quotation from the *Catechism* are from the Vatican’s website (http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

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of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead” (CCC 357). “‘In creating men “male and female,” God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity’ (FC 22). ‘Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God’ (MD 6)” (CCC 2334).

The human person, both male and female, is created in the image of God. “Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, *willed* by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. ‘Being man’ or ‘being woman’ is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator (cf. Gen 2:7, 22). Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity ‘in the image of God.’ In their ‘being-man’ and ‘being-woman,’ they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness” (CCC 369; emphasis in original).

Man and woman each possess a spiritual soul. The soul is the invisible part of the human being because it is spiritual. Soul “refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God’s image: ‘soul’ signifies the *spiritual principle* in man” (CCC 363; emphasis in original).

The personal soul possesses the powers of intellect and will. The intellect is the power to know, to reason, to think, and to understand. The will is the power to choose the good and to love. “By his reason [intellect], he [the human person] is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he [the human person] is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He [the human person] finds his perfection ‘in seeking and loving what is true and good’ (GS 15 § 2)” (CCC 1704).

The human person is blessed by God with a free will. Freedom is an attribute of a being created in the image of God. “By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an ‘outstanding manifestation of the divine image’ (GS 17)” (CCC 1705).

In addition to a personal soul, Adam and Eve also had bodies. “The human body shares in the dignity of ‘the image of God’: it is a human body precisely because it

is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit: ‘Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world’ (GS 14 § 1)” (CCC 364).

“The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature” (CCC 365).

In the beginning, God created man and woman (Adam and Eve) in his image and likeness. God placed them in a beautiful garden. They had a friendship or intimacy with God. They loved each other. They were integrated or experienced a wholeness or harmony within themselves. Their intellect and will governed their bodies in truth and love. They lived in true or authentic freedom, using their freedom to choose the good. They were not subject to death. They lived in harmony with all creation.

“By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man’s life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called ‘original justice’” (CCC 376).

However, “‘Man, enticed by the Evil One, abused his freedom at the very beginning of history’ (GS 13 § 1). He succumbed to temptation and did what was evil. He still desires the good, but his nature bears the wound of original sin. He is now inclined to evil and subject to error: ‘Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness’ (GS 13 § 2)” (CCC 1707).

Original Sin wounded and disfigured human beings, but did not destroy them. “Disfigured by sin and death, man remains ‘in the image of God,’ in the image of the Son, but is deprived ‘of the glory of God’ (Rom 3:23), of his ‘likeness.’ The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (CCC 705).

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“In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. ‘Crowned with glory and honor’ (Ps 8:5), man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging ‘how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth’ (Ps 8:1). Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence” (CCC 2566).

We inherit Original Sin and its consequences. Due to Original Sin, we are born without grace, God’s life in us. We lack the likeness to God. Also, due to Original Sin, the powers of our souls are affected. Our minds are darkened and our wills weakened. In our bodies, we suffer from concupiscence. Concupiscence means that our “human appetites or desires . . . remain disordered due to the temporal consequences of original sin, which remain even after Baptism, and which produce an inclination to sin” (see CCC, Glossary). In other words, we lack integration or wholeness. Due to Original Sin, we also suffer and we die.

Original Sin “is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin—an inclination to evil that is called ‘concupiscence’” (CCC 405).

Jesus Christ is *the* Image of the invisible God or the Perfect Image of God (uncreated, consubstantial with the Father). Jesus Christ is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who became human without giving up his divinity. In other words, Jesus is God incarnate or the Word made flesh. “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man” (CCC 464).

On the other hand, all of us as men and women created in the image of God have the divine image in us. It is Jesus, as true God and true man, who reveals us to ourselves and makes us fully manifest to ourselves. He reveals to us our identity—that is, who we are, human beings, persons created in the image of God. “‘Christ, . . . in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation’ (GS 22). It is in Christ, ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15; cf. 2 Cor 4:4), that man has been created ‘in the image and likeness’ of the Creator” (CCC 1701).

It is Jesus who manifests to us how we should act. Jesus is our example and our model. “In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is ‘the perfect man’ (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him” (CCC 520). “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear” (CCC 359, quoting GS 22 § 1).

“It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God” (CCC 1701). As stated earlier, “The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (CCC 705).

“God is love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the ‘plan of his loving kindness,’ conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son (Eph 1:4, 9): ‘He destined us in love to be his sons’ (Eph 1:5) and ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son,’ through ‘the spirit of sonship’ (Rom 8:15, 29)” (CCC 257).

Due to the Paschal Mystery—that is, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ—grace is made available to us. Grace is God’s life in us or God dwelling in us. “For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ” (CCC 1670, quoting SC 61).

By his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Jesus returns the love of the Father that was rejected by Adam and Eve at the beginning. This love is returned because of Jesus’ obedience to the Father. Out of love for the Father, Jesus said: “Not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). “Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel’s vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God’s Servant, totally obedient to the divine will” (CCC 539).

Through the sacrifice of the Cross, Jesus gives us the grace to imitate him and to return the love that God has for us. “The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the ‘one mediator between God and men’ (1 Tim 2:5). But because in his incarnate

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divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, ‘the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery’ is offered to all men (*GS* 22 § 5; cf. § 2). He calls his disciples to ‘take up [their] cross and follow [him]’ (Mt 16:24), for ‘Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps’ (1 Pet 2:21)” (*CCC* 618).

“We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son’s, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father” (*CCC* 2825; cf. John 8:29). The power of the Holy Spirit or grace empowers us to choose what Christ chooses.

“Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body” (*CCC* 1997; emphasis in original). Sanctifying grace “heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity.” It makes us “holy, and Christlike” (see *CCC*, Glossary). Sanctifying grace comes to us through Baptism and through the other sacraments. The sacraments themselves are the fruits of the Paschal Mystery and are personal meetings with Jesus Christ through sensible signs.

“By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam’s sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God” (*CCC* 1263; emphasis in original). “Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ’s grace [sanctifying grace], erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle” (*CCC* 405).

However, sanctifying grace helps us to prevail in our spiritual battles and to overcome the consequences of Original Sin in our lives. Our likeness to God is restored by grace (see *CCC* 705). By the power of sanctifying grace we are enabled and strengthened to reflect God in what we think, and say, and do. Grace enables us to imitate the Perfect Image of God, Jesus Christ. As our Lord himself taught: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (*CCC* 2842, quoting Jn 13:34).

Imitating Jesus constitutes the moral life, and through the power of sanctifying grace, we grow more loving in our relationship with God by imitating Jesus.

It is important to note, however, that “it is impossible to keep the Lord’s commandment [‘that you love one another, even as I have loved you’] by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live (cf. Gal 5:25; Phil 2:1) can make ‘ours’ the same mind that was in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5)” (*CCC* 2842).

In other words, sanctifying grace (God’s life within us) enlightens our minds, strengthens our wills, and helps us to overcome concupiscence. Sanctifying grace helps us to exercise our freedom properly—that is, to choose what is truly good. We still suffer death, but, at the end of time, Jesus will raise our mortal bodies and make them like his own. For those who are united with Jesus at their death, eternal life in heaven awaits them.

“By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us” (*CCC* 1708). “He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven” (*CCC* 1709).

God revealed his plan of salvation gradually, over time, through words and deeds. “It [God’s plan] involves a specific divine pedagogy: God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ” (*CCC* 53). “Indeed, ‘the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men’ (*DV* 15)” (*CCC* 122).

Catechesis on the image of God in the series may be summed up in the following five points:

1. the human person has been created in the image and likeness of God;
2. the fall did not destroy the image of God in us, but seriously tarnished it. The fall also deprived human beings of the glory of God, of his “likeness”. Due

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to the fall, we experience a divided heart, darkened mind, and weakened will and concupiscence in the flesh, as well as suffering and death;

3. Christ is *the* Perfect Image of the invisible God and has restored the likeness to God for us in principle;
4. Baptism restores the likeness sacramentally;
5. the Christian moral/spiritual life, drawing on the grace of Baptism, engages in the daily struggle to live out the restored likeness in the experience of daily living;
6. Christian daily life involves the imitation of Christ, who “in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation” (CCC 1701).

The *Our Mission of Love* curriculum has as its emphasis three key truths of the faith: Christ, Church, and sacraments. These key truths form the unifying element of the lessons. The material in each lesson revolves around fundamentals of our faith presented in terms that the children can understand and remember.

The *Our Mission of Love* curriculum is Christ centered and invites the learner to lifelong conversion. To help achieve this, the lessons are divided into different steps: Preparation, Proclamation, Explanation, Application, and Celebration.

The *Our Mission of Love* curriculum consists of the following material: a student textbook and a teacher’s manual, which includes unit assessments, activities, and family notes.

The teacher’s manual consists of twenty-six content lessons, two liturgical lessons, and one supplementary lesson on sacramentals. The content of each lesson is discussed in the Lesson Focus section at the beginning of each lesson. The many Scripture stories were taken from the Revised Standard Version—Second Catholic Edition, published by Ignatius Press.

The Activities section offers choices for expanding and enriching the core lessons. There are a variety of project types, including art, crafts, research, Bible study, community service, role-playing, writing, poetry, prayer, and reflection. Family notes are also provided as take-home material to furnish the basis for family faith discussions.

Assessment for student learning is provided in several ways. Lesson review questions, Living the Lesson activities, and other activities assist teachers in

determining students’ understanding of the concepts presented in the lessons. Unit Assessments allow teachers to gauge the students’ overall grasp of the material.

The materials of the *Our Mission of Love* curriculum form an integrated whole, and it is the hope of the authors that these materials will aid catechists in bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the little children.

Using *Our Mission of Love*

The teacher’s manual consists of twenty-six content lessons, two liturgical lessons, and one supplementary lesson on sacramentals. All lessons are made up of the following components: Lesson Focus, Lesson Presentation, Lesson Explanation, Living the Lesson—Application, Celebration, and Activities. **Note:** The first lesson of each unit has a Take Home section that instructs the catechist to distribute a copy of the unit’s family notes, to be used as take-home material.

1. Lesson Focus

The Lesson Focus gives you, the teacher, an insight into the main emphasis of the lesson. The Lesson Focus defines the lesson within Saint John Paul II’s theology. The Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references the key topics taught from the *Catechism* that are included in the lesson. The Concepts of Faith section is in a question-answer format, which reviews and restates the main ideas of the lesson. Key vocabulary words are given with a definition that can be understood and remembered by the children. The Dig Deeper with YOUCAT section provides applicable references to the *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

2. Lesson Presentation

The Lesson Presentation contains the Preparation and Proclamation sections. Use the Preparation section to set up the room, to lead the class in prayer, and to gather any materials needed for the lesson. The Proclamation summarizes the message of the lesson, and should be proclaimed at the beginning of each class. It may be written on the board, memorized by the students, or made the center of a bulletin board display.

3. Lesson Explanation

The Lesson Explanation provides the focus of the lesson for the students. Scripture accounts are suggested in each lesson. These accounts may be read directly

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from Holy Scripture, if age appropriate. Included are summaries of the Scripture readings that present the teaching in a simple, easy-to-understand manner. These summaries should not be confused with the actual Scripture readings. Through the reading and discussion of material, students are guided to learn the concepts of the lesson. Review and discussion questions help the teacher to assist students as they process and learn the concepts.

4. Living the Lesson—Application

The Living the Lesson—Application section offers the students opportunities to apply what they have learned and to make connections to their daily lives. Activities in this section reinforce the material presented in the Lesson Presentation. The aim is to have the students respond to their faith.

5. Celebration

The Celebration section is the final step in the lesson. It is always a form of a prayer. Prayer should proclaim our faith, and reinforce what was learned in the lesson. Because prayer should be an important part of our lives, we recommend beginning and concluding each school day with a prayer. Prayers can also be said together throughout the day. We strongly encourage the use of the formal prayers of the Church: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, and the Grace before Meals, among others. Many formal prayers are printed in the Prayers to Know section, located at the end of the textbooks and at the beginning of the appendix of this teacher's manual. We also encourage the teacher to guide students to use spontaneous prayer.

6. Activities

The Activities section provides a variety of activities to reinforce or expand the lesson. The needs of the students will determine which activities are beneficial for the class and to the lesson. These activities also offer the teacher another opportunity for assessment, to determine if further instruction is needed.

Model Class Periods

The *Our Mission of Love* program was designed to be used both in five-day parochial school settings and in a one-day-a-week Faith Formation settings. Model class periods are provided below. Times will have to be adapted to fit the material in each lesson, as well as the students in each classroom.

Faith Formation Setting (one day a week)

Note that many lessons have a lot of content and may need two class periods for completing them.

Preparation, Proclamation, Vocabulary, Concepts of Faith	10 minutes
Lesson Explanation	20 minutes
Living the Lesson	20 minutes
Activities and Celebration	10 minutes

Parochial School Setting (five days a week)

Each lesson should have enough material for a week. Some lessons have more content and may need two weeks for completion.

Day 1: Preparation, Proclamation, Vocabulary, and Lesson Explanation
Day 2: Vocabulary (review), Concepts of Faith, and Lesson Explanation
(continue)
Day 3: Living the Lesson
Day 4: Activities
Day 5: Activities and Celebration



God the Father

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

LESSON FOCUS

Emphasis

The mystery of three persons in one God (Most Blessed Trinity) is certainly one of the most difficult subjects of our faith. The students will better understand, through examples, what is meant by the statement “In one God there are three persons.” The students will understand the importance of the Most Blessed Trinity in their own lives when they see the Most Blessed Trinity as a model for love. Created in the image of God, we are invited by God to love as he loves. In the Most Blessed Trinity, each divine person knows the other two persons and gives himself in love to the other two persons. When we love as God loves, we know others and give ourselves to them. When we love as God loves, we form a communion of persons in imitation of the perfect communion of persons: the Most Blessed Trinity.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Belief in one God: CCC 199–202, 228

Church’s origin, foundation, and mission: CCC 758–69, 778

Consequences of faith in one God: CCC 222–27, 229

Creeds: CCC 185–97

God is love: CCC 218–21, 231

Most Blessed Trinity as mystery: CCC 232–37, 261

Most Blessed Trinity in the doctrine of the faith: CCC 249–56, 266

Man created in the image of God: CCC 355–57, 380–81

Mystery of faith: CCC 42, 50, 158, 206, 230, 234, 237, 1066

Vocabulary

incarnate: God the Son assumed human nature; Jesus is both true God and true man.

creed: a formal statement of what we believe as Catholics

mystery of faith: a truth revealed by God that cannot be fully understood by the human mind

faith: the gift that God gives us that helps us believe in him and all he has taught

person: someone who has a mind and a will. (In God there are three persons, but each person possesses the exact same mind and will.)

human person: someone who is created in the image of God with a mind, a will, and a body

consubstantial: Each of the three persons of the Most Blessed Trinity is God, whole and entire.

Concepts of Faith

What is the Most Blessed Trinity?

The mystery of the three persons in one God.

Who are the members of the Blessed Trinity?

We call the first person “God the Father”, the second person “God the Son”, and the third person “God the Holy Spirit”.

What is a communion of persons?

A loving union of two or more persons. The Blessed Trinity is the perfect communion of persons.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

Learn more about the mystery of the Blessed Trinity by reading YOUCAT 36.

LESSON PRESENTATION

Preparation

Create a sacred space for students to gather for prayer. The **materials needed for the sacred space** should include a Bible, a crucifix, a cloth of the liturgical color appropriate for the season, and items that represent the focus of the lesson. Those using this program in schools should designate a permanent location for this space. In a parish Faith Formation program, set aside a table or desk during class for this purpose alone. Throughout the teacher's manual, suggestions will be made for additions to the sacred space to reflect the theme of the lesson. **Materials needed for the lesson** are a chalkboard or dry erase board, as well as signed copies of the introductory letter to parents/guardians and copies of the family notes for Unit 1 (see appendix). **Note:** If additional activities are done, please see the list of materials in the Activities section at the end of the lesson.

Proclamation

(Proclaim slowly.)

We believe in one God. In God there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Vocabulary

incarnate: God the Son assumed human nature; Jesus is both true God and true man.

creed: a formal statement of what we believe as Catholics

mystery of faith: a truth revealed by God that cannot be fully understood by the human mind

faith: the gift that God gives us that helps us believe in him and all he has taught

person: someone who has a mind and a will. (In God there are three persons, but each person possesses the exact same mind and will.)

human person: someone who is created in the image of God with a mind, a will, and a body

consubstantial: Each of the three persons of the Most Blessed Trinity is God, whole and entire.

Concepts of Faith

What is the Most Blessed Trinity?

The mystery of the three persons in one God.

Who are the members of the Blessed Trinity?

We call the first person "God the Father", the second person "God the Son", and the third person "God the Holy Spirit".

What is a communion of persons?

A loving union of two or more persons. The Blessed Trinity is the perfect communion of persons.

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

Learn more about the mystery of the Blessed Trinity by reading YOUCAT 36.

The Nicene Creed

Each time we come together at Sunday Mass, we recite together the Nicene Creed, our "profession of faith".

In this profession of our faith, we openly declare or say what we believe about God and the things that are related to God—for example, that there is a resurrection of the dead. "The Church's faith precedes, engenders, supports, and nourishes our faith" (CCC 181).

3

Reminder: For a list of the spelled-out versions of the abbreviations used for the sources for the internal quotations from the *Catechism*, please see the appendix of this teacher's manual.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS



The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven (*At the words that follow, up to and including "and became man", all bow.*), and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

When we say the Nicene Creed, we say that we believe in one God. We also say that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In other words, we say that we believe that in one God there are three persons. This is the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. This mystery is a mystery of faith. A mystery of faith is a truth revealed by God that we cannot fully understand because of the limits of our minds and the greatness of God. "The Church . . . having received the faith from the apostles and their disciples . . . guards [this preaching and faith] with care" (CCC 173).¹ The mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is one of the more difficult mysteries of our Catholic faith.

The Most Blessed Trinity

It is very difficult to understand the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, but we can use some examples from our own experience to help. Of course, these examples are not exactly the same as the Most Blessed Trinity, because there is nothing exactly like the Most Blessed Trinity.

The Most Blessed Trinity has been compared to a triangle. The triangle is one thing. But it has three sides. There are three sides in one triangle. There are three in one. We could also say that the triangle has three angles, but it is still one triangle.

Some of the great saints of the Church have compared the Blessed Trinity to a clover leaf. One clover leaf has three leaflets, but it is really only one clover leaf. There are three in one.

Another example that may help us understand the Blessed Trinity is an apple. One apple has its skin, its fruit, and its core. Still, it is only one apple. Every apple is three in one.

We should remember that none of these examples is the same as the Blessed Trinity. These examples only help us to see a small, small part of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. There is nothing in this world that can fully explain the three persons in God. We need our faith to help us say, "I believe", even when we must say, "I don't fully understand."

Communion of Persons

Another way of describing the three persons in one God is to say that they are a communion of persons. A communion of persons is a loving union of two or more persons.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is the central mystery of the Catholic faith. No mystery is more fundamental. "We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the 'consubstantial Trinity'.² The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: 'The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God'³ (CCC 253). The communion of persons in God is fundamental because the divine persons are consubstantial. The communion of persons in God expresses itself in their perfect love for one another. Each divine person gives himself totally to the other two. The persons of the Blessed Trinity love each other perfectly.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

By our creation, we are called to form communions of persons. “The divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the unity of the divine persons among themselves” (CCC 1702). When we love others and they love us, we form a communion of persons with them. There are three types of communions of persons that we form.

The communion of persons of the family is established in marriage. A man and a woman accept the intimate communion of life and love and plan to share their love with their children. “The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit” (CCC 2205). The communion of persons of the workplace, which for us is the school, is established when students and teachers work together to achieve a good learning environment for all. Finally, the communion of persons of the Church is founded on the Sacrament of Baptism and joins us to another family, God’s family.

We are created in the image of God, and so we should strive to act like God. “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (CCC 2013, quoting Matthew 5:48). Remember that the communion of persons of God is fundamental because the divine persons are consubstantial. The communion of persons in God expresses itself in the three persons’ perfect love for one another. The way God loves is the example for us to follow in our own lives as we live in various communions of persons. We are called by our creation to act like God or to imitate him. We should live imitating God, ready to work together and to love one another.



Glory Be

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

LESSON EXPLANATION

Read and discuss the vocabulary words and the Concepts of Faith with the students.

Have the students recite the Creed on p. 4 in the textbook. Then have the students read and discuss “The Nicene Creed” section on pp. 3–5 in the textbook.

Ask: *What did we say about God? Lead the students to say that in the Creed we say that we believe in one God who is three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.*

Write these three names on the board—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Have the students read and discuss “The Most Blessed Trinity” section on p. 5 in the textbook.

Ask: *What are some of the other mysteries of our faith? Lead the students to mention the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Eucharist.*
Incarnation—God the Son assuming human nature
Resurrection—Jesus rising from the dead
Eucharist—Jesus Christ truly present under appearance of the bread and wine

How can we explain that in one God there are three persons? Refer the students to their textbook, p. 5. Ask them to give examples of things that represent the Blessed Trinity. They should mention the triangle, clover leaf, and apple.

Have the students read and discuss the “Communion of Persons” section on pp. 5–6 in the textbook.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Have the students complete the Review Questions on p. 7 in the textbook.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Review Questions

1. What are some things we need to do in order to form a communion of persons?

We form a communion of persons by working together, by loving one another, and by helping each other love as God loves.

2. Why should we love others as God loves them?

We are created in the image of God, and we should love as God loves.

3. How do we know how to love?

God tells us and shows us how he loves.

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LIVING THE LESSON • APPLICATION

Ask: What communions of persons are we members of? *We are members of school, family, and Church.*

What makes us members of these communions? *A school—teachers and students join together to form the best learning environment; a family—we are born or adopted into a family; the Church—we are baptized into God’s family.*

Sometimes we choose not to be good members of these communions of persons. How? *We are not good members when we do not love as we should.*

What will help us to be good members of a communion of persons? *Good members follow God’s example and love as he loves.*

What person of the Blessed Trinity came to show us the best way to live as members of communions of persons? *The second person, God the Son, shows us the best way to live as members of communions of persons. He did this by becoming fully human without sacrificing his divinity.*

CELEBRATION

Prayer

Join hands in a circle and pray together the Glory Be (on p. 6 of the textbook), and then read the following prayer aloud:

May we always work to be like you as a communion of persons in school, in church, and at home. May we be loving and giving as you are in the Most Blessed Trinity. Amen.

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

TAKE HOME

Have each student take home a signed copy of the introductory letter to parents/guardians and a copy of the family notes for Unit 1.

ACTIVITIES

Communion of Persons Activity

Have the students complete the “Communion of Persons Activity” on p. 8 in the textbook.

Finding the Blessed Trinity in the Bible

Students select a reference to the Blessed Trinity from one of the New Testament selections below. Each student writes the Bible verse or verses on construction paper and draws a picture to illustrate the reference.

Suggested references:

Matthew 3:16–17; 10:20; 17:5; 28:19

Luke 3:21–22; 4:18

John 3:34–35; 14:16, 26

1 John 5:7

Ask the students to write a paragraph about what they have learned after they have shared the meaning of the pictures that they have drawn.

Materials needed:

Bibles (one per student)
construction paper
markers or crayons

LESSON 1: BLESSED TRINITY—COMMUNION OF PERSONS

Communion of Persons Activity

Directions: For each communion of persons below, write a specific example showing how you can be a good member.

(Answers will vary.)

Church	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Family	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
School	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

LESSON 2: CREATION

LESSON FOCUS

Emphasis

In Lesson 1 we considered God as a Blessed Trinity of persons. We said that the three persons in one God are a communion of persons. The activity among the three persons is love. The communion of persons within the Blessed Trinity completely fulfills each of the three persons. God does not need anything outside of himself to make him happy. Yet, in order to share his goodness and love, he created the angels, human beings, and the world we live in. We can experience God's creation by looking about us. The Book of Genesis tells us about God's creation.

In creating, God expressed his power, wisdom, and love. God showed his infinite power in the act of bringing everything into existence out of nothing. God showed his infinite wisdom in the ordering of the world. God expressed his love by giving human beings life.

God's creation consists of the physical world and the spiritual world. The physical world is more familiar to us, because we can experience it through our senses. The spiritual world is less familiar to us, because we cannot directly experience it through our senses.

Angels are the only created beings who belong solely to the spiritual world. Human beings share in both the physical and the spiritual worlds. Human beings have bodies, which are physical, and souls, which are spiritual. Human beings are given the privilege and responsibility of taking care of the physical world God has created.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Angels: CCC 328–36, 350–52

Attributes of God shown in and through creation: CCC 46, 51, 53–54, 293–95, 315, 341

Catechesis on creation: CCC 282–89

God as Creator of heaven and earth: CCC 279–81, 325–27

God creates an ordered and good world: CCC 299

God creates out of nothing: CCC 296–98, 317–18

God creates out of wisdom and love: CCC 295, 315

God is love: CCC 218–21, 231

God's omnipotence: CCC 268–78

Man as body and soul: CCC 362–68, 382

Man created in the image of God: CCC 355–57, 380–81

Man's responsibility for creation: CCC 358, 2415–18, 2456–57

Concepts of Faith

What are the two main divisions of the Bible?

The two main divisions of the Bible are the Old Testament and New Testament.

What is the first book of the Old Testament?

Genesis is the first book of the Old Testament.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Vocabulary

Genesis: the first book of the Bible. It begins with the story of creation.

create: to bring something into existence out of nothing

physical world: all that we can see or experience with our senses or scientific instruments

spiritual world: all that we cannot directly experience with our senses or scientific instruments—for example, God and angels

steward: someone who cares for the property of others

infinite: without any limit

immortal: living forever

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

Learn more about how we are to take care of animals and creatures of the earth by reading YOUCAT 57.

LESSON PRESENTATION

Preparation

Create a sacred space for students to gather for prayer. Pray together by reading Psalm 104:1–5 to the students. The **materials needed for this lesson** are Bibles, chalkboard or dry erase board, markers or crayons, poster paper, whiteboard markers, five to six computers (optional), and notebooks for each student to use as a religion journal.

Note about the Bible version used: Throughout the entire teacher's manual and student textbook, the Revised Standard Version—Second Catholic Edition, published by Ignatius Press, was the version used.

Proclamation

(Proclaim slowly.)

Thank you, God, for sharing your power, wisdom, and love with us through creation.

Note to teacher: Review with students that both the Old Testament and New Testament together comprise the Bible. Because the human authors of the Bible were so inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is God who is the author of the Bible.

LESSON 2: CREATION

LESSON EXPLANATION

Read and discuss the vocabulary words with the students.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Vocabulary

Genesis: the first book of the Bible. It begins with the story of creation.
create: to bring something into existence out of nothing
physical world: all that we can see or experience with our senses or scientific instruments
spiritual world: all that we cannot directly experience with our senses or scientific instruments—for example, God and angels
steward: someone who cares for the property of others
infinite: without any limit
immortal: living forever

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

Learn more about how we are to take care of animals and creatures of the earth by reading YOUCAT 57.

The Bible Tells Us about Creation

We know that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the perfect communion of persons. The three persons of the Blessed Trinity share love among themselves. To share his love and goodness, God created the angels, us, and the world we live in. In order to experience God's creation, all we have to do is look about us. We can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch God's various creations every day of our lives. An excellent place to read about God's creation is in the Bible. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is the author of all Sacred Scripture, the human authors were able to write God's message to his people. Sacred Scripture (the Bible) contains the Word of God and, because these words are inspired by the Holy Spirit, they are truly the Words of God. We should know the Sacred Scripture, study it, and live by it, for the Word of God is a light for our path.

First, let's review our knowledge of the Bible by answering these questions:

1. What are the two main divisions, or parts, of the Bible?

Old and New Testaments

2. What is the name of the first book of the Bible?

Genesis

3. This first book of the Bible begins by telling us about what great act of God?

Creation

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Have the students read and discuss “The Bible Tells Us about Creation” section on p. 9 in the textbook.

Have the students open their Bibles to the table of contents. Read over the names of the books of the Old Testament.

Ask: On what page does the Book of Genesis begin? Have the students turn to that page and look at the top of the page. Depending upon the Bible version used, they will see that at the top of the page it says words such as “The Book of Genesis” or “The First Book of Moses Commonly Called Genesis”, which means that we find on this page the beginning of the Book of Genesis.

Write “The Book of Genesis” on the board.

As the students begin to read the story of creation, they will notice that numbers are written before many of the lines. The numbers separate the lines into verses. When a new chapter begins, the verse numbers start over with the number one again. Look at chapter 2 of Genesis to illustrate this point.

Explain that there is a special way to write which book, chapter, and verse that you are reading from the Bible. Write on the board “Genesis 1:1–31”. First we write the name of the book of the Bible, Genesis; then the number of the chapter, followed by a colon, “1:”; then the numbers of the verses, “1–31”.

You may also wish to tell the students that the names of the books of the Bible are sometimes written as abbreviations—for example, “Gen” for Genesis.

Have the students follow in their Bibles as the story of creation is read.

Read chapter 1 of Genesis, and then ask the following questions:

Ask: What are some of the things God created? Accept all appropriate answers.

With what words does the Book of Genesis begin? *Genesis begins with the words, “In the beginning God created . . .”*

What verses describe what was created on the third day? *Verses 9 to 13 describe what was created on the third day.*

LESSON 2: CREATION

Look at Genesis 1:24. What does this verse say? *The verse says, “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures ...’”.*

Have the students read and discuss the “Creation” section on p. 10 in the textbook.

Have the students read and discuss the “We Are Unique” section on p. 10 in the textbook.

Write “Physical World” on the board.

Ask: What things belong to the physical world? Write down the students’ suggestions for the list. Answers should be human beings; other living things; nonliving things.

Write “Created Spiritual World” on the board.

Ask: What created beings belong to the spiritual world? Answers should be angels and human beings. Even though God belongs to the spiritual world, he does not belong on a list of created spiritual beings, because he is not created. We belong to the created spiritual world because we have souls.

Have the students read and discuss the “God Is Perfect” (p. 10) and the “We Are Stewards” (p. 11) sections in the textbook.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Creation

In the Bible, the inspired Word of God, we read how God created everything and everyone. To create means to bring something into existence out of nothing. Can any of us make something out of nothing? No! God alone has the power to create—to make something out of nothing. We are able to fashion and make things because God created us and gave us our talents. But in order to make things, we always start with something. God started with nothing and made everything.



We Are Unique

We are unique because we are part of the physical world and the spiritual world. Our bodies are physical and our souls are spiritual. “The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal [physical, bodily] and spiritual” (CCC 362). The soul is the invisible, spiritual, and immortal gift from God that gives us life. We have minds or intellects and wills because they are powers of our souls. Because we have minds and wills, we can think or reason and choose, and we are persons created in the image of God. No other physical creation of God is a person. In other words, nothing else in the physical (visible) world can think and choose, has a mind and a will, or is created in the image of God. Only human beings belong to both the physical world and the spiritual world. No other creation of God is both physical and spiritual. But there are creations of God who are pure spirits. They belong only to the spiritual (invisible) world. We call them angels. They are persons; they have minds and wills. They are created in the image of God; but they do not have bodies.

God Is Perfect

Did God need to create things for himself? No, God is perfect, and he does not need anything. God creates because he is good and wants to share his goodness. By his creating, God shows us he is powerful, wise, and loving.

God is powerful. A powerful person has great strength and ability. God showed us his infinite power by creating everything out of nothing. For example, when God created the heavens and the earth, there was darkness everywhere. So he brought into existence light, by creating the sun, the moon, and the stars. He created something out of nothing.

God is wise. A wise person can organize things and put order into things. God showed us his infinite wisdom by establishing order in the world. Everything has its proper place in creation. For example, the planets stay in their orbits around the sun.

LESSON 2: CREATION

LESSON 2: CREATION

God is loving. Loving persons give themselves to others. God showed us his infinite love by sharing his life with human beings. For example, no one would be alive if it weren't for God.

It is important to remember that God is one, but he is also three. In the one God, there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, we think of God the Father as the maker of heaven and earth, as we recite in the Nicene Creed at Sunday Mass. But, even though "the work of creation is attributed to the Father in particular, it is equally a truth of faith that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together are the one, indivisible principle of creation" (CCC 316). In other words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act as one in the act of creation.

We Are Stewards

Because we are created in the image of God, God made us stewards of his physical creation. This means we are responsible for taking care of the physical world God has created. The Old Testament tells us that God wants us to be stewards. Being a good steward means understanding that the world and everything in it was created for the whole human race. We are to care for the whole world and be sure that the goods of the world are available to everyone.

Read Genesis 2:18–20.

Have the students complete the Review Questions on p. 12 in the textbook.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Review Questions

1. Into what two major groups are the things of creation divided?

Creation is divided into the physical world and the spiritual world.

2. In addition to his infinite power, what else does God show us by creating the world?

God shows us his infinite wisdom and his infinite love.

3. What part of a human being is physical?

The body is physical.

4. What part of a human being is spiritual?

The soul is spiritual.

LESSON 2: CREATION

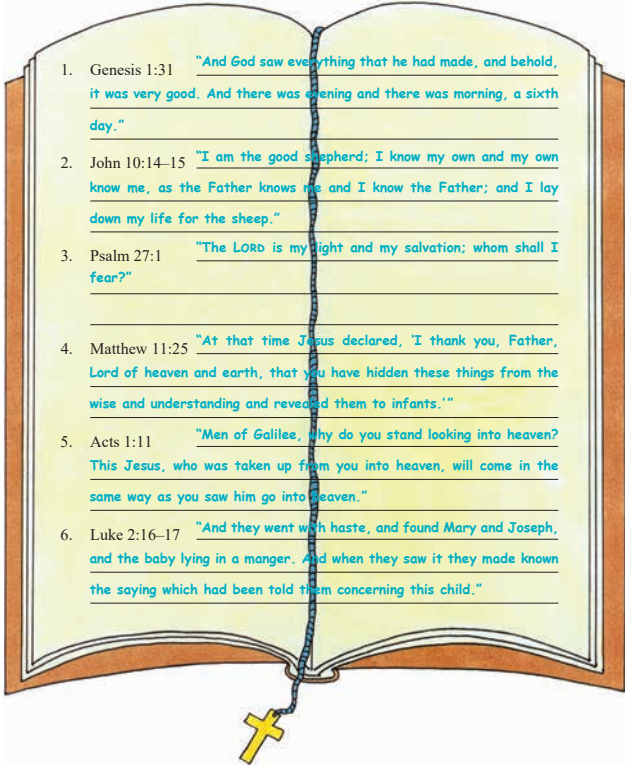
Bible Verses Activity

Have the students read and complete the “Bible Verses Activity” on p. 13 in the textbook. The activity asks them to look up references in their Bibles. You can choose to have the students write the verses or read them aloud.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Bible Verses Activity

Directions: Look up these Bible verses:



1. Genesis 1:31 "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day."
2. John 10:14–15 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."
3. Psalm 27:1 "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"
4. Matthew 11:25 "At that time Jesus declared, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants.'"
5. Acts 1:11 "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."
6. Luke 2:16–17 "And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child."

13

LIVING THE LESSON • APPLICATION

Tell the students that God created us in his image. We are the most important of his earthly creations. He gave us a very important responsibility with respect to the world.

Ask: What is this responsibility? *To be good stewards of creation.*

Write the word “steward” on the board.

Ask: What does this word mean? *Someone who cares for the property of others.*

Can you think of a time when you have been a steward? *Possible answers include taking care of the house when parents are away; using carefully someone else’s bike or toys.*

Explain to students that as stewards of God’s creation, we have an important job. We are taking care of his property for him.

Write on the board, “What are the things God has asked us to take care of as stewards?”

Have the students answer this question in teams. Divide the class into teams, with about five players per team. The object of the game is for each team to get as many different answers as possible without repeating any.

1. Have the teams line up.
2. Player 1 walks to the board/computer and writes/types one answer to the question. Player 1 goes to the end of the line.
3. Player 2 goes to the board/computer and adds a different answer to the team list. This process continues until everyone on each team has had a turn. There should be no talking.
4. The game can continue until the teacher calls time.

When the game is over, have the students return to their seats and look over their lists. The lists should contain both living and nonliving things.

LESSON 2: CREATION

Explain that we can see that we are stewards over many things. God has given us a share in his care over a variety of things.

Write on the board: “How can you be a good steward of God’s creation?”

Have the students work individually or in pairs to make posters showing how they can be stewards. At the top of the poster, have them include a title that explains what they are doing to be good stewards. Hang the posters up under the title “We are stewards of God’s creation.”

CELEBRATION

Prayer

Gather in a sacred space and read the following prayer for the students to reflect on.

God, we praise you and thank you for the many wonderful things you have created in our physical and spiritual worlds. Help us to be good stewards of creation. We especially thank you for _____.

Have each student complete the last sentence.

Journal Entry

Have the students answer the following question in their journals: Why did God create the world?

ACTIVITIES

Cleanup Campaign

Explain that God made us stewards of his physical creation, and therefore we are to take good care of all the things of the earth that he has given us. Plan a cleanup campaign for the school grounds, the church grounds, a local park, or the yards of senior citizens. Create posters to advertise the event.

Posters can also be made to encourage others to keep the school and their neighborhoods clean.

Optional: Create the posters on a computer.

Materials needed:

large garbage bags (one for every five students) or small garbage bags (one per student)
large sheets of construction paper or poster board (one per student)
pencils
markers

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

LESSON FOCUS

Emphasis

Through creation God showed us his infinite power, wisdom, and love. Human beings are made in God's image and likeness. We are unique, because we are the only persons created in the image of God with bodies. Human beings are also unique because we have individual differences. As persons created in the image of God, we have value, worth, and dignity. We should treat each other with the same dignity and love that God gives us. We should love others as God loves them.

When teaching about man and woman as created in the image of God and Jesus as the image of God, it must be made clear that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) or the perfect image of God because he is God the Son. Man and woman are created in the image of God by God. They are in his image by creation.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Dignity of the human person: CCC 1700–12

Equality and differences among men: CCC 1934–38, 1944–46

God creates out of wisdom and love: CCC 295, 315

God is love: CCC 218–21, 231

Man created in the image of God: CCC 355–57, 380–81

Concepts of Faith

What are the two ways in which we are unique?

We are the only persons with bodies; and each of us has unique talents and gifts.

Vocabulary

uniqueness: being in some way different from others of the same kind

dignity: having worth or value

Dig deeper with YOUCAT

Discover more about what it means when we say we are created in the image of God by reading YOUCAT 58.

LESSON PRESENTATION

Preparation

Create a sacred space for students to gather for prayer. Pray together the Our Father as an expression of praise to God. The **materials needed for this lesson** are Bibles, drawing paper, and markers or crayons.

Proclamation

(Proclaim slowly.)

As persons created in the image of God, we praise and thank God for our unique talents and gifts.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

LESSON EXPLANATION

Read and discuss the vocabulary words and the Concepts of Faith with the students.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

Vocabulary

uniqueness: being in some way different from others of the same kind
dignity: having worth or value

Concepts of Faith

What are the two ways in which we are unique?
We are the only persons with bodies; and each of us has unique talents and gifts.

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We Are Created in the Image of God

We have learned that the universe was created by God because he wanted to share his goodness and love. Through creation God showed us his infinite power, wisdom, and love. We know that the list of God's creations is almost endless. Human persons are unique among all God's earthly creation because they are the only persons with bodies. In other words, human persons are the only earthly beings that are created in the image of God and the only persons created in the image of God with bodies. Jesus, God the Son, is the perfect image of God. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Colossians 1:15; cf. CCC 241). "Jesus can say: 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (Jn 14:9)" (CCC 516). On the other hand, we are created in the image and likeness of God.

Created in the image of God, we are called by our creation to act like or imitate God. The story of creation tells us, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

Not only are we unique because we are persons (created in the image of God) with bodies, but we are also unique because we have individual differences. God made each of us unique in many different ways. Our height, weight, hair, and eye color are some of the things that make each of us unique. In addition, we all have our own talents and gifts.

We have unique likes and dislikes. Based on our likes and dislikes, each of us makes choices. These choices show that we are unique. Our choice of foods is different. When we grow up, we will choose different jobs. There are no two people who are exactly alike, and there never will be.

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Have the students read and discuss the "We Are Created in the Image of God" section on pp. 14 and 16 in the textbook.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

Even though we are all different from one another, we are all made in the image of God, and therefore, we have a great dignity. One aspect of our dignity is our freedom to choose. For example, we are free to choose to believe in Jesus and what he teaches us through the Church. No government has the right to take this freedom away from us or to restrict our exercise of our freedom to believe. Any government that would do this would be violating human dignity.

We see how special every human being is to God by looking at the way Jesus, God the Son, treated people on earth. An example of Jesus' love for us is found in John 5:1-9, in which Jesus cures a sick man.

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the Jewish feast days. In the temple area was a large pool of water. By the pool there were a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled people. They came to the pool because they believed that when the water began to bubble it had healing power. When Jesus was walking by the pool, he saw a man who had been ill for a very long time. Jesus asked the man, "'Do you want to be healed?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled [stirred up], and while I am going another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your pallet [mat], and walk.'" (John 5:6-8). Immediately the man got up and walked.

In this Bible reference, we see Jesus sharing his love. Jesus loved the sick man and all people. He showed us that each one of us has dignity and value. We respect each other's dignity.

We Are Special

We feel good about ourselves when we are well liked, when we do well in school, or when we help our team. But even on those days when we don't feel good about ourselves, we are special and unique. God loves us. Because he created us, he knows who we are and everything about us. He calls us by name, and we are his. Psalm 139 tells us that God is all-knowing.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether....

For you formed my inward parts,
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am wondrously made.
Wonderful are your works!
You know me right well;
my frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. (Psalm 139:1-4, 13-15)

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LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

Reflection

Have the students close their eyes and think about these questions.

1. How would you feel if you were told you were the best-liked person in the class?
2. How would you feel if you earned an A+ on a test for which you had studied very hard?
3. How would you feel if you scored the winning run in a championship game?

Discuss with the students that we are made in the image of God, and therefore, we have a great dignity. One aspect of our dignity is our freedom to choose. For example, we are free to choose to believe in Jesus and what he teaches us through the Church. No government has the right to take this freedom away from us or to restrict our exercise of our freedom to believe. Any government that would do this would be violating human dignity.

Have the students read and discuss the “We Are Special” section on pp. 16–17 in the textbook.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

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LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

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Have the students complete the Review Questions on p. 17 in the textbook.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

We have great value. We are important and worthwhile. We can see how special we are to God by what Jesus said to the children in Luke 18:15–16.

People were bringing children to Jesus so he would touch them. When the disciples saw this, they tried to tell the people to leave Jesus alone. But Jesus called the disciples to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16).

Review Questions

1. Why are human beings unique among all of God’s creations?
Human beings are the only persons with bodies; we have individual differences; each human being has unique talents and gifts.
2. What did God show us by creating everything from nothing?
His infinite power, wisdom, and love.
3. What are some of the ways we, as individuals, are unique?
Examples include talents, likes and dislikes, choices we make.
4. What does it mean that a person has dignity?
(Accept all reasonable answers.)
5. What can we do to show love and respect toward others?
(Accept all reasonable answers.)

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LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

“I Am Unique” Activity

Have the students complete the “‘I Am Unique’ Activity” on p. 18 in the textbook.

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

“I Am Unique” Activity

We are unique in many ways. No two people have the same fingerprints. To demonstrate this, make a set of your thumbprints by following these directions:

1. Run a pencil over the ball of your right thumb.
2. Place a piece of clear tape on the graphite smudge.
3. Carefully remove the tape and place it on a piece of paper.

Repeat the process with your left thumb. Compare your thumbprints with those of your classmates.

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LIVING THE LESSON • APPLICATION

Tell the students the following: “Let’s suppose that you have been told that you must leave earth and go to live on another planet. You have been told nothing about the planet that will be your new home, only that you can bring a total of ten people with you. The people you value most should be at the top of your list, in case there is not room on the ship for everyone.”

Have each student make up a list of people to take to the new planet.

- Ask:

Was it difficult to choose only ten persons to bring on the trip?

Why was it difficult to choose only ten?

How will you treat the people you brought with you to the planet?

Explain that God treats us with love and respect. As persons created in the image of God, we should treat all human beings the same way.

- Ask:

How do we show people that we value them? *Answers will vary.*

LESSON 3: OUR DIGNITY AND UNIQUENESS

CELEBRATION

Prayer

Have each of the students take a piece of drawing paper and write his first name in large letters, then draw a picture showing a talent, a hobby, or anything about himself that shows that he is unique.

Have the students bring their drawings and sit in a circle. Place an open Bible on a table in the center of the circle. Read the following prayer to the students:

Dear God, you have made us all in your image. We are unique and special. Each of us has great value and worth because each of us is a reflection of you. Help us to treat one another with respect and dignity. We put our love and trust in you, because you know each one of us and love us.

Call each of the students by name, having each come up and place his papers on the Bible one by one. For each child, say, “[Name], God called you by name, and you are his.”

When all the students have come up and returned to their places, you may sing with them an appropriate song, such as “You Are Near”. Close the prayer service by joining hands and praying:

God, we thank you for our uniqueness. You are great and wonderful.
Amen.

ACTIVITIES

Ten Good Things about Me

Have the students take a piece of paper and write at the top “Ten Good Things about Me”. At the end of the class period, have the students list ten “good things” on their papers. If they run out of ideas, ask them questions, such as

Did you help your family, a friend, a classmate, or a teacher?
Did you complete your work today?
Did you remember your prayers at night, in the morning, and at mealtime?
Did you remember to thank God for his many gifts to you?
Were you nice to your brothers or sisters?
Did you do your work without complaining?

V.I.P.s

Explain to the class that each of us is unique because we have individual differences. As persons created in the image of God, we have value and dignity.

Each week pick a student to be a V.I.P. (Very Important Person). Cut out the letters for the words “Very Important Person” and arrange them on a bulletin board. Ask the V.I.P. to bring pictures from home to display on the board and to share with the class something special about himself, such as talents, interests, or hobbies. Have other students create “praise slips” about the V.I.P., using construction paper, ribbons, stickers, or other decorative items, and arrange them on the board.

Materials needed:

bulletin board or wall for display purposes
construction paper
scissors
ribbon
stickers (or other items for decorations)