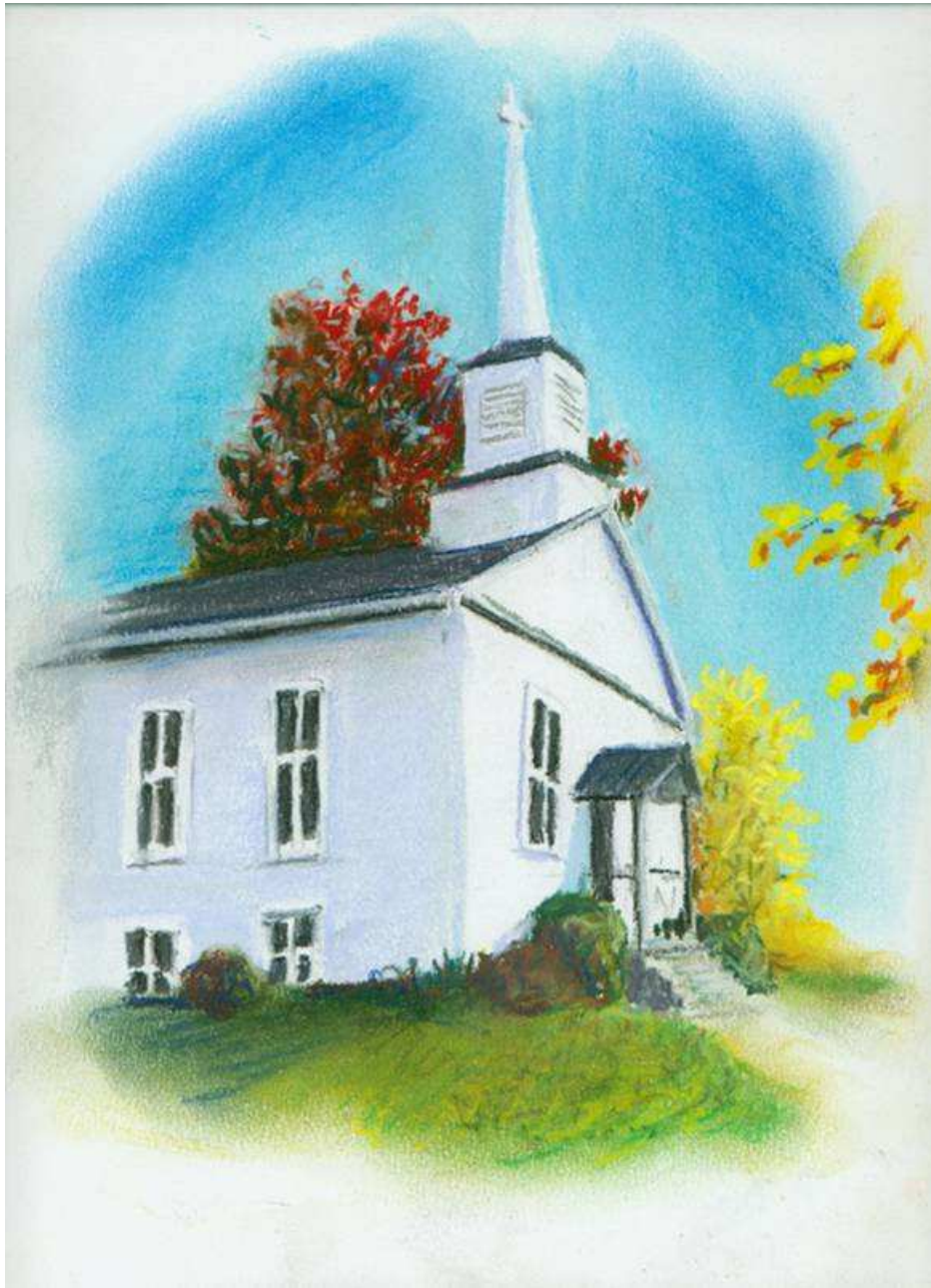


Partnership with Parents Planning Guide & Worksheet



Use this Guide to evaluate your current programs and plan to refine them as you include more and more coaching for parents.

Working with a small group of parish leaders, review each dimension of [Partnership with Parents](#).

For each dimension, sketch your plans and ideas. Then let this guide your decisions and planning for the coming years.

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Partnership with Parents

Planning Guide and Worksheet

Dimension One: Infant Baptism Preparation

The people responsible for this area of ministry

Person working in this ministry	The role which he or she plays	The person who oversees this

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Describe your current program for this ministry:

What is required of someone who comes to the parish door and asks for baptism for their child? What steps must they take?

1

2

3

4

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Evaluate your current program using this chart. Answer this question:
How do we think young couples or single parents respond to our current program?

Fill in the appropriate percentages and, talking this over together, complete the bottom portion before going on.

%	Really liked what we offered and wanted more
%	Mainly tolerated what we offered and were happy to see it end
%	Really disliked what we offered and seemed not to find it helpful

What part of your current program seemed to work best? What would you repeat?

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Coaching Options

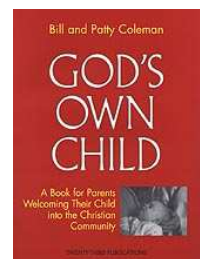
1. Dual Avenues.

See pages 25-30 in *Great Expectations*.

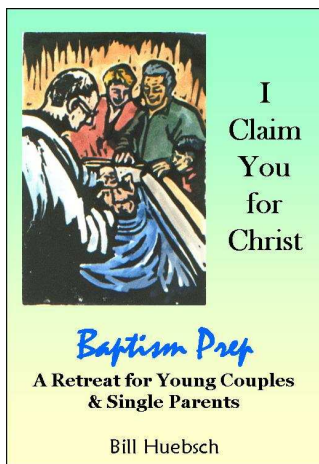
Go here on the web site: <http://pastoralplanning.com/Partnership-Parents.html>

Avenue #1: Use a baptism prep process which actually coaches parents, rather than merely “teaches” them. Let this be your criterion when choosing your resource.

One example of a resource that does this is *God’s Own Child*. It provides coaching for parents who are actively engaged in parish life, or who have a working knowledge and understanding of the Rites and practices of the Church. In the program, moms and dads each consider the core beliefs they hold and are coached to expand that and make it personal in order to pass it on to their child. Single parents are likewise coached to do the same. *God’s Own Child* also addresses the role and needs of non-



Catholic parents in raising the child. In sensitive and inclusive language, the non-Catholic is helped to see that he or she shares many of the same beliefs we do, and can pass the values and virtues rooted in them to the child.



Avenue #2: Create dual avenues for preparation. For young parents who are active in parish life, avenue #1 may be enough. But for others, follow avenue #2.

By inviting the young couple or single parent to deepen their own faith and encounter the Living Christ in a retreat-like preparation process, you set the stage for them. You make liturgy more meaningful. And because this retreat includes the Sacrament of Penance within it, you also help them over a common barrier in the way of a more active faith. One such retreat is *I Claim You for Christ*. It is described in detail in *Great Expectations*, pages 29-30. This baptism prep retreat has evangelization as its goal.

2. On-going coaching for young couples and single parents.

See pages 25-30 in *Great Expectations*.

Following the use of a good preparation resource and a retreat-like experience such as *I Claim You for Christ*, the **adult parishioners** who volunteer to work as leaders for these experiences may continue to play a role in the life of the young couple or single parent. **Why not extend the relationship begun in this process into the following years?**

If you intend to do this, laying a plan before the preparation sessions is important. Recruit those adult parishioners who work in baptism prep to take a role in the next phase of coaching -- which occurs *between baptism and the first years of school* for the child.

Before proceeding with this plan, jump ahead one dimension and read the next section of this Guide & Worksheet.

3. Other options

As a team, talk through other options resulting from your experience or based on the ones presented here, or a combination of them. What works best in one parish may not work in another as well. Tailoring your approach to your own community is very wise.

Planning

What outcome do you want? What do you want parents with baptism-age children to get from their preparation process?

In the long term:

In the short term:

If you were planning “from scratch” what elements or characteristics of a faith formation process for these parents do you think would be ideal? (See also *Dreams and Visions*, pages 145-146).

A. Leading to deeper communion with Christ?

B. Leading to a greater understanding and practice of the Catholic faith?

Resources & First Steps.

A. What first steps will you take with this group, or how will you enhance what you offer now?

B. What faith formation resources will you use to take those first steps?

C. What will this cost? Where will it come from in the budget? Who will do it?

Partnership with Parents

Planning Guide and Worksheet

Dimension Two:

After Baptism...Before the first years of school

The people responsible for this area of ministry, in any:

Person working in this ministry	The role which he or she plays	The person who oversees this

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Describe your current program for this ministry

Coaching Options

We suggest you name a staff person or volunteer to serve as **“The Pastoral Coach”** in this area of parish life. This person would follow some or all of these options:

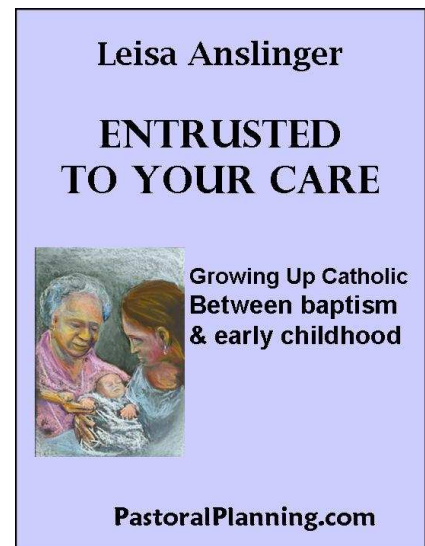
See page 30 in *Great Expectations* Go here on the web site:
<http://pastoralplanning.com/Partnership-Parents.html>

1. For couples or single parents who are already active in parish life.

- ✚ The pastoral coach would be their “cheerleader,” making sure young couples and single parents are included in the language and activities of the wider parish.
 - Young couples and single parents often become invisible, mainly because they are busy with their daily lives and unable to donate a lot of time and money to parish life.
- ✚ This person would maintain THE LIST of such households in the parish, and pay attention to their unique needs.
 - If there are special needs children
 - Single parents who need support
 - Families living far from their extended tribe
 - Households with illness in with
 - Do these households have everything they need to create a truly “Catholic home?”
 - Is there a need for more formal contact, such as that provided through *Entrusted to Your Care*?
 - And so forth
- ✚ The pastoral coach would also keep an eye on the needs of such households at Sunday liturgies and parish activities:
 - Do they need childcare?
 - Would some level of pre-school program be needed?

2. For young couples or single parents who are not active in parish life.

- ✚ The pastoral coach would make use of a program to keep in touch with them, such as *Entrusted to Your Care*
- ✚ This resource includes annual and seasonal letters and invitations, prayer resources for the household, and other tools to help the pastoral coach keep a strong **relationship** active between the parish and these households.



Planning

What outcome do you want? How do you want parents with children to be connected to the parish?

In the long term:

In the short term:

If you were planning “from scratch” what elements or characteristics of a faith formation process for these parents do you think would be ideal?

A. Leading to deeper communion with Christ?

B. Leading to a greater understanding and practice of the Catholic faith?

Resources & First Steps.

A. What first steps will you take with this group, or how will you enhance what you offer now?

B. What faith formation resources will you use to take those first steps?

C. What will this cost? Where will it come from in the budget? Who will do it?

Partnership with Parents

Planning Guide and Worksheet

Dimension Three: Preparation for First Confession & First Communion

The people responsible for this area of ministry

Person working in this ministry	The role which he or she plays	The person who oversees this

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Describe your current program for this ministry

In your current program, how well do you actually coach parents to form their own children? Rate your parish:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

poorly	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	a lot	they do it all				
<p>Comments:</p> 									

Evaluate your current sacrament prep program using this chart. Answer this question: **How do we think young couples or single parents AND THEIR CHILDREN respond to our current program?**

Fill in the appropriate percentages and, talking this over together, complete the bottom portion before going on.

%	Really liked what we offered and wanted more
%	Mainly tolerated what we offered and were happy to see it end
%	Really disliked what we offered and seemed not to find it helpful

What part of your current program seemed to work best? What would you repeat?

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Coaching Options

See *Great Expectations*, pages 30-31 and the Appendix beginning on page 50.

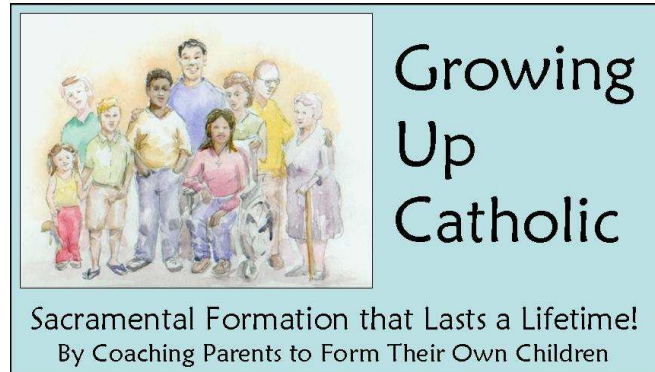
On the web site, go here: www.GrowingUpCatholic.com.

1. Use your existing textbook series, companion books for Sacrament Prep.
 - ✚ But build in a component to coach parents, based on the models you have seen in *Great Expectations*.
 - ✚ Gather parents-with-their-children for learning sessions
 - Don't merely send home the book and hope they can find their way through it by the time the first sacraments are being offered. Most parents cannot do this, even many who are actively engaged.
 - ✚ Provide catechist-coaches to guide the parents in the learning session, using the materials you prepare for them.

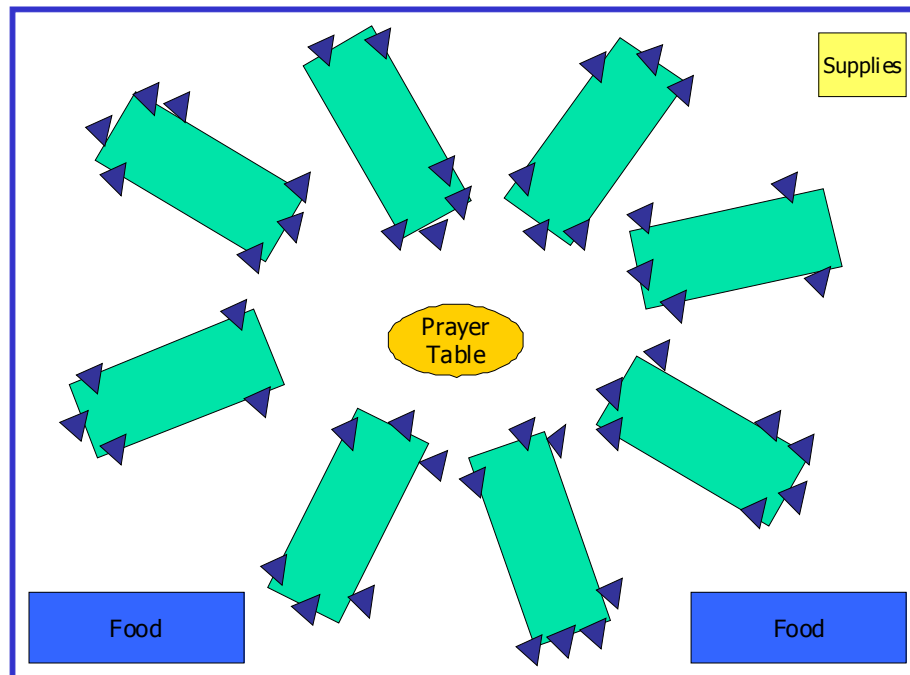
2. Create or buy a resource designed to coach parents.

(See Chapter Five, starting on page 45 of *Great Expectations*.)

- ✚ As above, hold learning sessions in which the parents are seated with their children for Sacrament Prep.
- ✚ The catechist-coach guides both parents and children through the resource, parents serving as the primary teachers.



- ✚ One such resource, or one that you could use as a model, is *Growing Up Catholic*. Es disponible en español, también. A sample of this is provided at the end of this Planning Guide.
- ✚ The room you use might look like this:



Note: In your planning on the following pages, bear in mind that coaching parents is unlike classroom teaching. When you coach, you need a resource which is more of a handout than a book (although some books are designed with parents in mind and work very well).

Planning

What changes are possible for you to make in your Sacrament Prep process for this coming year? What do you want parents and children at this age to get from their preparation process?

What do you want them to take home with them?

What role do you want parents to play?

Getting Organized

What steps are needed to get started in this new direction?

Who will take those steps?

Resources & First Steps.

A. What faith formation resources will you use to take those first steps?

C. What will this cost? Where will it come from in the budget?

D. What room or spaces can you use?

Partnership with Parents

Planning Guide and Worksheet

Dimension Four:

After Sacrament Preparation: grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 or higher

In most parishes, these are simply known as the middle elementary years during which the youngsters are taught by a catechist in a religious ed or school setting, mainly with their parents absent. Most parishes and schools use a standard children's religion textbook during this period.

The people responsible for this area of ministry

Person working in this ministry	The role which he or she plays	The person who oversees this

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Describe your current program for this ministry

In your current program, how well do you actually coach parents to form their own children? Rate your parish:

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-weight: bold;"> 12345678910 </div> <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; color: red; font-weight: bold;"> poorlya littlesomewhatquite a bita lotthey do it all </div>	<p>Comments</p>
--	-----------------------------

Coaching Options

Partnering with Parents in the middle elementary years

See pages 31-34 in *Great Expectations*.

Many parishes experience a significant drop off in the number of parents who enroll their children in religious education programs after Grade 2 and the first sacraments.

- ✚ Do parents believe that they have “done their duty” by completing the first sacraments and now feel they can take a break until their child is old enough to prepare for Confirmation?
- ✚ Do parents feel unwelcome or uninvited into this part of their children’s religious education? Are they possibly, in fact, *not welcome*?
- ✚ How do you extend a real, warm invitation to parents to become part of this process on a regular enough basis that they
 - are being formed themselves by it?
 - know what their children are learning and take part in it?

1. Read the material in *Great Expectations* on pages 13-34 about the using “**Learning Centers for Parents.**”

- ✚ Such learning centers occur while the children are in their regular parish religious ed class
- ✚ Or for parents with children in the school, on an evening or Saturday morning.

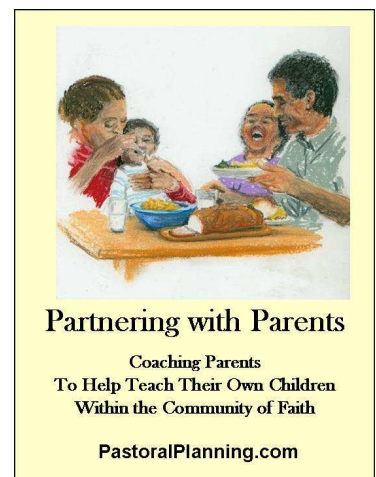
2. Also become familiar with the material describing “**Whole Family Catechesis**” in the same section of *Great Expectations*.

- ✚ If you are familiar with inter- or multi-generational learning, such as that offered through *Generations of Faith*, you will recognize much in this that is the same.
 - The key difference is that in this setting, parents sit with their children and are coached to form them as teachers.

The themes with which either **Learning Centers** or **Whole Family Catechesis** would flow directly from the children’s textbooks. For example, while the children are in Unit #1 on God and Creation or Revelation, parent sessions are on the same theme. **You can create these programs yourself.**

OR: Everything needed to host such parent sessions, all in outline form and including prayer, handouts, check-lists, and talking points, *is available on the web site here:*

<http://pastoralplanning.com/Partnership-Parents.html>



The Themes

for Partnering with Parents in the middle elementary years

Our Inborn Hunger for God Often a key theme on which to begin. This is where the <i>Catechism</i> itself starts – the recognition that we all hunger for unity with each other and with God. WHFG101
How God Reveals Himself In many textbooks, this is the first unit. It deals with the nature of God and how God reveals himself to us humans. For parents, it is important to speak to their children about God as he is revealed in nature, a loving home, acts of kindness, or even in times of trouble. LAFG102
The Blessed Trinity The heart and soul of our faith is our belief in the Blessed Trinity, a community of divine love, expressing itself to us, inspiring and guiding us, and creating us. This is one area where parents often feel least equipped to talk with their children. LAFG107
The Person of Jesus Christ What could be more important for parents than to be able to speak with their children about the life and person of Jesus Christ. To know the stories and, more importantly, to know Christ as a shared friend and teacher. LAFG111
The Nature of the Church This is a key unit in the children’s textbooks because for many children attendance at Mass and other parish functions is rare. Coaching parents here leads them to fuller participation, to modeling this for their children, and to re-joining the community. LAFG117
Catholic Morality In today’s world and culture, having parents who are fully knowledgeable about Catholic moral teachings is more vital than ever before. LAFG131
The Liturgy and the Sacraments As Catholics, we are a sacramental people. Knowing and understanding our liturgical life will help parents speak clearly about it to their children. LAFG121
The Reign of God Our mission is to help build the Reign of God on earth. It’s very important to coach parents on what this means and how each household is a reflection of this Reign. LAFG113
The Mass – Intro Rites, Lit of Word & Eucharist Of all the liturgical celebrations in the Church, none is more important for parents to know well than this. Each part of the Mass is examined and explained fully. DMFG125
Sacred Scripture Once parents are coached to make the Bible a more central part of household life, it will pass on to their children. They will come away with confidence about the Bible. LAFG104
Christian Prayer Daily prayer is a hallmark of being a follower of Jesus. We Catholics bring centuries of tradition and a strong connection to God through prayer. LAFG145
Catholic Social Teachings When parents are prepared to speak to their children about the events of business, politics and social life through the lens of our social teachings, their children learn from them. LAFG134

Planning

How can your parish organize in either or both of these options?

Learning Centers for Parents?

Whole Family Catechesis?

Getting Organized

What steps are needed to get started in this new direction?

What will the calendar look like for next year?

Who will take those steps?

Resources & First Steps.

A. What faith formation resources will you use to take those first steps?

C. What will this cost? Where will it come from in the budget? What space do you need?

Partnership with Parents

Planning Guide and Worksheet

Dimension Five:

Junior or Senior High: Youth Ministry or Confirmation

It is commonly believed that either (1) young adults don't want their parents present for faith formation during these years, or (2) parents themselves don't want to be present during formation sessions. In fact, when you bring parents into the mix, using a process which is friendly to all, both parents and young adults have a much better chance of growing in their faith now and for the rest of their lives.

The people responsible for this area of ministry

Person working in this ministry	The role which he or she plays	The person who oversees this

If more space is needed, please use the backside of this page.

Describe your current plan for Confirmation or Youth Ministry Formation:

The persons are named above. But what texts or resources do you use?
What two major outcomes do you plan for?

1

2

In your current program, how well do you actually coach **parents** to form their own children? Rate your parish:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<hr/>									
poorly	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	a lot	they do it all				
Comments									

In your current program, how well do you actually coach **sponsors** to take a planned, active role in Confirmation preparation? Rate your parish:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<hr/>									
poorly	a little	somewhat	quite a bit	a lot	they do it all				
Comments									

This is a key period of a young person's life, one in which his or her faith is growing and maturing. Even if parents have been absent up to this point in the young person's faith formation, there is still time to invite them in and provide a forum in which Catholic faith, life and culture can be explored, and the Creed we all share can be integrated into the beliefs of both parent and young adult.

This is the moment when both parent and young adult take steps down a lifelong journey of faith.

Coaching Options

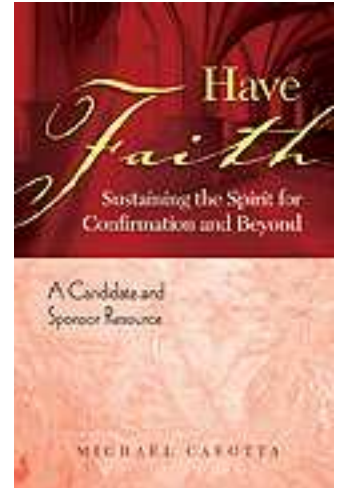
See *Great Expectations*, pages 34-35.

1. For Sponsors. We cannot find another resource better than *Have Faith* from Mike Carotta. In this lovely, inexpensive book, both young adults and sponsors are coached to be in touch with each other on vital matters of faith – whether that’s by E-mail, Twitter, Facebook, in Person, or by Phone. This is simply the best.

95604X

There is a *Have Faith* leader’s guide available as well, written by the same author and very user-friendly. We recommend it.

HF6043



2. For Young Adults and Parents: Mini-Courses



Growing Faith
Mini-Courses
Deep. Engaging. Life-changing.

In these sessions, young adults (junior or senior high) and their parents, sponsors, or other adults gather together in the same room. They are seated as household groups, two or three household groups forming each **Discussion Group**.

The **Discussion Groups** employ a teaching method created for the purpose of coaching parents or other adults and youth together. It is called **Learn & Teach**. In this method, each **Discussion Group** learns a segment of the session material well enough to turn around and teach it to their peers in the whole group. Both

youth and adults work together, both learning and both teaching.

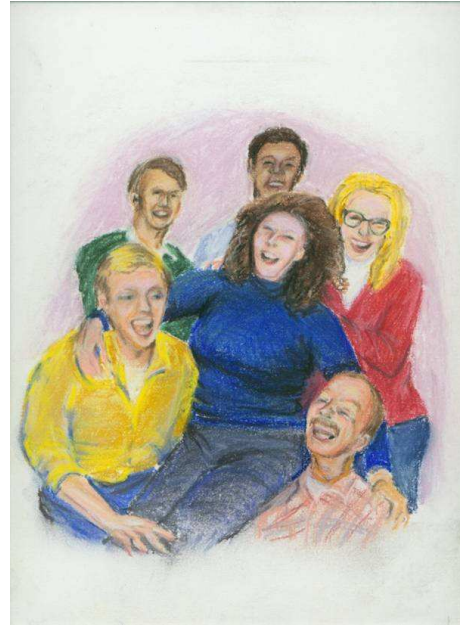
The resource used for the **Learn & Teach Method** is the key. The resource works best if it is in pamphlet or booklet format. These can easily be sent home with the household group. In this method, the resource is studied and dissected before being outlined in order to teach it to others. Having a resource in plain English (or whatever language you need) is a very strong idea. Several good booklet-style resources are available, and it is probably best not to try to create this from scratch in your own parish. Here is a partial list of possible resources:

- ✚ Catholic Update, from St Anthony Messenger Press
- ✚ Scripture from Scratch, from Ligouri
- ✚ The Faith Connection, from RCL-Benziger

We are demonstrating this method with one resource below, *Growing Faith*.

If you could have THE perfect resource for your Youth Ministry program, Confirmation Preparation, or Junior & Senior High religious ed, it would be

- ✚ easy to use
- ✚ prayerful
- ✚ reflective
- ✚ oriented to young people
- ✚ and it would cover the entire spectrum of Catholic teaching.



Sounds impossible, doesn't it? But such resources do exist and we are using one to demonstrate how Mini-Courses work. Each of the 48 eight-page booklets in *Growing Faith* covers key teachings from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in a prayerful, reflective, easy-to-absorb way. With *Growing Faith*, Youth and Confirmation candidates will have the *complete* content of the faith at their fingertips. And yes, *Growing Faith* has a *Nihil Obstat* and an *Imprimatur*.

Scheduling Options

1. For a two-year program that meets weekly

(Please see details of each course at the end of this resource and full outlines are available on line.)

During the first year (30 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions:
 - 1 - community building and program details, prayer
 - 2-6 mini-course one: **The Nature of God and Faith**
 - 7 - pause for review and prayer event
 - 8-12 mini-course two: **Growing our Faith in Everyday Life**
 - 13 - pause for review and prayer event
 - 14-22 mini-course three: **The Person of Jesus Christ**
 - 23 - pause for review and prayer event
 - 24- 28 mini-course four: **The Nature of the Church**
 - 29-30 summary and year end review

During the second year (30 sessions):

(Continue the course of study even after the Rite of Confirmation is celebrated, using the final mini-courses as mystagogia.)

- ❖ Sessions
 - 1 – community building and program details, prayer
 - 2-9 mini-course five: **Catholic Liturgy & Sacraments**
 - 10 – pause for review and prayer event
 - 11-18 mini-course six: **Catholic Social & Moral Teachings**
 - 19 – pause for review and prayer event
 - 20-26 mini-course seven: **Living the Commandments**
 - 23 – pause for review and prayer event
 - 27- 29 mini-course four: **Christian Prayer**
 - 30 summary and year end review

2. For a two year program that meets twice a month

During the first year (15 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions 1- community building
- ❖ Sessions 2-14 mini-course # ten: **A Thorough Survey of the Catholic Faith**
- ❖ Session 15 summary and year end review

During the second year (15 sessions):

- ❖ Sessions 1-12 mini-courses # six & four: **Moral Teachings & Christian Prayer**
- ❖ After confirmation: Mystagogia along with mini-course seven: **Living the Commandments**

3. For a one-year program with monthly mini-retreats

During the first half-year

- ❖ Sessions 1- community building
- ❖ Sessions 2-4 begin mini-course # ten: **A Thorough Survey of the Catholic Faith**

Month 4: a mini-retreat on the Holy Spirit

Month 5: a mini-retreat on the 10 commandments (one of the booklets in mini-course ten)

Months 6-8: continue with mini-course ten

Month 8: celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Month 9: mystagogia and a mini-retreat using the *Living Christ Retreat*

Suggested Learning Path for Adolescents in a two-hour session

15 minutes: Community Building

15 minutes: Focusing Activity (to discover what they already know about the topic)

35 minutes: GFP booklet, presentation and journaling

(remember that GFP comes with a PowerPoint presentation for each session!)

10 minutes: break

15 minutes: Response to the GFP booklet, group process

20 minutes: Moving Forward (how does the material relate to daily life?)

10 minute: Prayer Experience

Additional Ideas for the Learning Path

Community builders: Saint Mary's Press, Group Publishing, and others have books available that offer community building exercises. When possible, connect the community building activity to the topic of the session.

Focusing activity: use a popular song, movie, or video to spark a discussion about what the candidates already know about the topic. (This would be a good time to use the Question of the Week.)

Growing Faith booklet: invite candidates to look at the drawings in the booklet as well as the words. Ask: "what does this drawing say to you?" Invite participants to read some of the content aloud and some quietly. Allow time for reflection and questions. Then sum up the key points from the booklet.

Response to the Growing Faith booklet: this can be done through skits, posters, and group discussion and should include faith sharing and the sharing of insights and challenges.

Moving Forward: this is the time for a commitment to the future. This can be connected to the closing prayer and can be a commitment card, an "accountability buddy agreement," a reminder activity (like a craft) or a "walk the talk" activity.

Prayer Experience: for this, incorporate the Scripture from the GFP booklet or from an upcoming Sunday reading. Use music the candidates are familiar with and invite responses to the words from Scripture.

Sample Session

using *Growing Faith*

This is only a sample. A similar session using any other suitable resource can also be developed, following this basic outline and employing the **Learn & Teach** pedagogy.



Small Community
Reflections
On Daily Life & Faith

Sample session from mini-course #2

based on Growing Faith booklet #1, *Our Inborn Hunger for God?*

Based on articles 26-49 of the *Catechism*.

For a free sample of this booklet, send a note to us at the website.

1 Arrive and get settled. Check in with each other.

[Be sure everyone feels welcome in this gathering. Help each other get settled comfortably. Let each person say his or her name. If there are guests or newcomers, be sure they're introduced. As a group enter into a brief "check-in" with each other using these questions to get started:]

What happened in your life today?

What really struck you in the recent news?

2 Brief opening prayer.

[Let a different member of the group prepare a prayer for each meeting, based on those in *Desires of the Heart*. Use the music CD to enhance this opening moment and help people focus. Or use other prayers which you may have at hand.]

3 Focus as a group.

[Let someone serve as leader and begin by offering a few short prepared introductory remarks about the theme of this meeting, drawn from the Growing Faith booklet in use. You may use these or similar words at this meeting.]

The theme of this meeting include the following points:

The inborn hunger for God

- We are religious beings by nature.
- We are made to live in communion with God
- Being with God is the only way to find happiness.
- When we listen to the message of creation and to the voice of conscience, we can arrive at certainty about the existence of God.

Here is an outline of the **Learn and Teach** method, which we strongly recommend you use in this process:

- ✚ Organize the large group into smaller Discussion Groups
 - Keep households together, unless there is a compelling reason to split them up
 - A typical Discussion Group may include two or three household groups
- ✚ Assign a portion of the resource being used to each Discussion Group.

- ✚ Invite them to **Learn** -- read and share insights based on the discussion questions and method we provide in the Study Guides (which are free and accompany every Mini-Course).
- ✚ Then ask them to **Teach** in the large group, using a 3-step process:
 1. Name the 3 or 4 (or more) *major points* learned in this segment – write them on a white or black board, or on flip chart paper. Present them to the large group with explanation.
 2. Choose one or two of these *major points* (the ones that seems most central to faith) and create a question or exercise for discussion – participants may wish to use some of the suggested questions or exercises in the booklet or this study guide.
 3. Lead a conversation or exercise in the large group, using this discussion question and this method:
 - Ask participants in the large group to work in pairs.
 - Pose the question or exercise and invite the pairs to work together to respond.
 - Invite each pair to present its outcome to the large group.
- ✚ Before going on, the leader may wish to make observations or summarize what happened in this segment.

4 First reading from Growing Faith.

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the first two pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

- What struck you in the text?
- What affirmed your belief?
- What surprised you?
- What do you resist about what you just heard or read?
- What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- Why do you think we Humans have always sought to know God, even if we were following what we later came to see as a “false god?”
- How do you see God revealed in Creation?
- In particular, how do you see this revelation in us Humans?
- Try to recall a moment when you were either in nature or among people when you sensed the presence of God there. Share that among yourselves.

5 Second reading from Growing Faith.

[Let a volunteer now read from the chosen *Growing Faith* booklet, from the second set of pages, more or less. Let the rest of the group note (while listening) any questions, insights, or items each may find remarkable. Write notes directly into the space provided in the booklet. When the reading is complete, the group may enter into conversation:]

- What struck you in the text?
- What affirmed your belief?

What surprised you?
What do you resist about what you just heard or read?
What questions arise from this section?

Turn now to the reflection/exercise on this page of the booklet.

- How do God and the things of the world relate to each other?
- What do you think is the divine plan for us Humans regarding creation, possessions, natural resources, and money?
- Can we prove that there is a God?
 - How do we know that God is present with us?
- What is your response to the art on this page?

[If time permits and the group so wishes, you may work through other sections of this booklet together. Members of the group may wish to do so privately or within their household.]

- In the final discussion of this group meeting, back up from all that has been said and ask, “What was the BIG message which I take away from this?”

6 Make connections.

[Members of the group now work to connect the teachings found in this section of *Growing Faith* with their everyday lives. You may wish to insert this discussion into the readings and reflections above. Or members may wish to pause at this point for this purpose.]

What is the connection of this material

- To your daily life?
- To what’s happening in the world?
- To the big questions before us as a society?
- If there is no connection, what do you think that means for you?

7 Take it to God.

What would you say to God about this?
What do you think God is saying to you or to us about it?

Take a quiet moment now to turn toward the face of God in this “colloquy” or “conversation with God.” The first lines provided are meant to *prime your prayer pump*. Continue from there or begin on your own – but spend a little time talking with God. If writing does not suit you, at least make a couple of notes, a word or two, in the space provided to help you make your thoughts and prayers more concrete.

The colloquy will be used in the closing prayer of this gathering, but you will not be asked to share anything you think would be inappropriate for you.

8 Take it home.

What would you like to explore further?

What one action or decision or change do you want to make?

What else comes to mind for you before we quit?

9 Brief closing prayer.

[If members of the group wish to do so, close by sharing parts of each one's colloquy. You may also return to the opening prayer and repeat part of the prayer or song used there. And let there be a warm embrace of Christian love and peace all around.

Be sure to set the time and place for the next gathering. Let each member know which Growing Faith booklet will be used.]

10 Refreshments or a shared meal



Mini-Course outlines

The following Mini-Courses are already created and ready-to-use, including the Study Guides like the one we just saw above for each booklet, as well as a Marketing Kit for each. Both the Study Guides and Marketing Kits are free. You can also create such Mini-Courses yourself using any suitable resource.

See *Great Expectations* pages 34-35. On the website: <http://store.pastoralplanning.com/coinjuorsehi.html>

1. *The Nature of God and Faith*

- What is God like?
- How do we describe the Trinity?
- How does Revelation occur and how is it passed from generation to generation?
- How did God create heaven and earth?
- What is grace and how do we get it?
- What is the end of life like?

5 Booklets: 2, 4, 6, 7, 8

2. *Growing Our Faith*

- What do humans want?
- How are we made in God's image?
- Why do we sin?
- How are we made whole and free?
- How do we make a response in faith?
- How do we live our faith in everyday life?
- What is human freedom?

5 Booklets: 1, 5, 9, 10, 16

3. *The Person of Jesus Christ*

- Who is Jesus Christ?
- What did Jesus teach?
- How do we relate with Mary, his Mother?
- Why did he suffer?
- What happened at the Resurrection?
- How does he live on in the Church?
- How do we reach out in prayer?

5 Booklets: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

5. *Introduction to the Nature of the Church*

- How is revelation passed on to us?
- Who is the church?
- What is the communion of saints?
- How does the church pray?
- How do we designate leaders?
- What is the Magisterium?

5 Booklets: 3, 17, 18, 19, 20

6. *Introduction to the Liturgy and Sacraments*

How does the Church pray?
What are the sacraments?
How is the liturgy the “source and summit” of life?
How do the sacraments shape our lives as Catholics?
What are the essential words and actions of the sacraments?

9 Booklets: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

7. *Introduction to Catholic Social and Moral Teachings*

What makes us free?
What is right and what is wrong?
How do we cultivate virtuous living?
How do we live together peacefully?
What are our social and moral teachings?

7 Booklets: 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

8. *Living the Commandments*

What does each of the commandments ask of us?
How did Jesus bring them to fulfillment?
How do Christians follow the commandments?
How does the church help us live as Christ teaches?
What are the key dimensions of each command?

7 Booklets: 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

9. *Christian Prayer*

What is prayer?
How do we pray?
How do we deal with distractions to prayer?
What are the wellsprings of prayer?
How did Jesus pray?

5 Booklets: 44, 45, 46, 47, 48

10. *A Thorough Survey of Catholicism*

Our inborn hunger for God
Our need for the Church
How God speaks through Scripture
The love of the Trinity
Why we sometimes turn away from God
The life and teachings of Christ
The Holy Spirit
How the Church prays together
Morality and conscience
The Magisterium and the Ten Commandments
Christian Prayer

12 Booklets 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 22, 31, 36, & 44

Planning

How can your parish organize to include parents, sponsors or other adults more fully in the Confirmation preparation or Youth Ministry Formation process?

For Sponsors?

For Parents, Guardians or other adults?

Getting Organized

What steps are needed to get started in this new direction?

What will the calendar look like for next year?

Who will take those steps?


Resources & First Steps.

A. What faith formation resources will you use to take those first steps?

C. What will this cost? Where will it come from in the budget? What space do you need?

Sample

Parent Coaching Notes from Growing Up Catholic First Eucharist



Growing
Up
Catholic

Sacramental Formation that Lasts a Lifetime!
By Coaching Parents to Form Their Own Children

Use this sample to create or build your own coaching notes for the First Sacraments, as well as for any other similar setting.

5 We Receive Holy Communion



We are going to receive our first Holy Communion

This is a very exciting time for us!

We Receive Holy Communion

- Catholics believe that Jesus **is really present** under the signs of Bread and Wine
- We share Jesus in Holy Communion
- We become a closer **church family**
- Jesus wants to come to us
- The Mass reminds us that Jesus died for us

We are the People of God!

Parent lesson plans for page one of the 5th lesson.

Follow the numbers.

1 In this lesson, your child will begin the **final period of preparation** for his or her first Communion.

2 Take the time after this lesson or during the coming week to go with your child to **visit the Blessed Sacrament** in your parish church. Make sure your child understands that Jesus is present there.

3 Teach him or her to talk with Jesus in personal ways, like sharing with a friend. In preparing for Communion, this will help create a strong sense of reverence for your child.

4 Make sure your child knows and gradually comes to believe that **Jesus becomes sacramentally present in the bread and wine** at Mass. It is his Body and Blood. All of us who take part in the Eucharist likewise become ever more the Body of Christ, one body and one spirit in Christ.

5 It is not too early to introduce this big word to your child: **Transubstantiation**. It is the word used by the Church to explain that, at Mass, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. There is no need to dwell on this at length with your child, but it is good to be aware of this term. To read more about this, see the *Catechism* articles 1373-1381.

6 Explain to your child that the Eucharist and our gathering on Sundays for Mass is the highpoint of all the Sacraments. It is that from which our whole Christian life flows each week - and that toward which we aim ourselves every week.



**Prayer Celebration:
Growing up Catholic means we
Gather with God's People**

**A Prayer to Prepare Ourselves
for Holy Communion**

Everyone begins by making the Sign of the Cross
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Jesus, we believe in you and love you.
All: Make us ready to receive you in Holy Communion.

Leader: Jesus, thank you for loving us with your whole life.
All: Make us ready to receive you in Holy Communion.

Leader: Jesus, help us to be strong friends of yours.
All: Make us ready to receive you in Holy Communion.

Please listen to the Reader now.
Reader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor
11:26-28)

(At the end of the reading:) This is the Gospel of the Lord
All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Please listen to the leader.
When the time comes, please bring up your slip of paper with your promise to Jesus
written on it. Place it here on this table.

Let us pray together
(please pause after each line)

Oh Jesus, we are preparing to receive you
in Holy Communion.
Help us to be loving and kind,
help us to receive you
and believe in you
and love you with all our hearts.
We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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2

Parent lesson
plans for page
two of the 5th
lesson.

Follow the numbers.

1 Pray this with your child, helping them find their way through it as the leader guides you.

When the time comes, help them choose and write **the one special way they will prepare themselves for Holy Communion.** You should also choose and write one way that YOU will prepare yourself, and please share that with your child.

These might include things like:

- having a special intention in your heart when you come to Mass,
- asking Jesus to help you,
- being sorry for any sins,
- saying a special prayer,
- fasting,
- giving money for good causes

2 Making peace at home.

Many times, family life can be tough! Even in the most loving homes, there are quarrels and fights, people act selfishly or are even mean to each other. The preparation that we do for Mass leads us to seek peace in our homes. The road to peace is paved with

- ✚ Saying we're sorry when we hurt each other
- ✚ Accepting each others' apologies
- ✚ Giving each other signs of love such as notes, cards, little gifts, and hugs
- ✚ Admitting when we're wrong
- ✚ Being "the big one" in situations where fighting just makes things worse
- ✚ Praying for one another often
- ✚ Praying together at certain times of day
- ✚ Having signs of faith around the house

Parent lesson plans for pages 3 & 4 of the 5th lesson.

Follow the numbers.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray in the Words that Jesus gave us...
Next to each line, draw a line to what it means.

Our Father Who art in Heaven		May your plan for our lives and the world come into reality! Soon!
Hallowed be thy name		Please continue to provide for our daily needs, as you always do
Thy Kingdom come		Forgive our sins in the same way we forgive people who hurt us
Thy will be done On earth as it is in Heaven		Oh God, you care for us like our mom or dad – with great love for us...
Give us this day our daily bread		Forgive any sins we have committed against you
And forgive us our trespasses		And protect us from all evil
As we forgive those who trespass against us		May we follow your teachings every day while we live on earth just like we will when we get to heaven
And lead us not into temptation		We have great reverence for who you are
But deliver us from evil.		Please don't let anyone tempt us
Amen.		Amen! Let it be so!

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1 This exercise may be difficult for younger children, but with your help, they will be able to work through it and **understand the Our Father much better.**

2 First, read through the words of the Our Father with them. We have provided you with **notes on the following pages** to help you. Use them but don't read them to your child.

3 Then help them find the correct meaning of each phrase of this prayer. Draw a line to that. We have given you two clues to get you started. Here's the key:


- 1 = 4
- 2 = 8
- 3 = 1 (given)
- 4 = 7 (given)
- 5 = 2
- 6 = 5
- 7 = 3
- 8 = 9
- 9 = 6
- 10 = 10

The Kiss of Peace

Receiving Holy Communion means we accept being part of the family of Jesus.

Circle the correct answer


What do you do when...	Choose one option
In your family, when you hurt someone, what do you do to make up?	<input type="checkbox"/> I pretend nothing happened OR <input type="checkbox"/> I say I'm sorry and we hug
If you do something to hurt a friend, how do you make up?	<input type="checkbox"/> I lie and say I didn't do it OR <input type="checkbox"/> I say I was wrong and we shake hands
In the Church, when we sin and hurt others, how do we make up for it?	<input type="checkbox"/> We shake hands at the kiss of peace OR <input type="checkbox"/> We ignore other people and try to be all alone



The Bread and Wine are the Body of Christ

Why do we share a sign of peace?

Because we are one family in Jesus.



The People of the Church are also the Body of Christ

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4 Work through this page with your child, helping him or her understand why **making peace** is part of the preparation for Communion. (The explanation is in the bottom section of this page.)

What Do the Words of the Lord's Prayer Mean?

Today we're learning about how God would like us to pray. Even Jesus' closest friends, the disciples wanted to know how to pray. The disciples were with Jesus all the time and were with him when he went to pray and heard his prayers to God as well, yet they still weren't sure how they were supposed to do it.

Before Jesus teaches the prayer he has a few things to say first. He says that **we should keep our prayers simple**. God listens to us no matter if our prayers are long or short and if you just don't have the right words God knows what we mean (and we don't need to use fancy words either)!

Jesus also mentions that **we shouldn't 'show off' when we pray**. He said this to the people that used to stand on the street corners praying so that everyone would see how 'great' they were. God doesn't want us to pray so people can see us or to hear how great we can pray. He wants us to pray in a quiet place with our own words our needs, thanks, praise, and what we're sorry for.

Jesus gave us the words of the Our Father in the Gospels. (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4).

This prayer might be a little tough to understand when you first hear it, but we're going to go through it and try to explain what it means.

Our Father who art in heaven means we're praying to our father who is in heaven. We start the prayer out this way so we know that we're praying to God our father and we're not alone. God likes it when we call him father and he wants us to talk to him like we talk to our own father. God is our loving father and we are his special children.

The *Catechism* reminds us in article 239 that calling God father means two things: that he is the first origin of everything, and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all this children. "God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood," the *Catechism* says. It is important that the children also understand that we know God is not a human. The language of faith simply draws on the human experience of parents to help us understand the Mystery of God.

Hallowed be thy name is next and it means holy is your name. Even though God wants us to call him our father, he is still God. It's sometimes really hard to understand who God is and what he's like. How did he make us? How is he perfect and never makes mistakes? God just wants us to remember that we need to treat him super special because he is God and when we pray to him we need to be respectful.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. If we think about where God lives, we know its pretty great. The Bible says that in heaven there will be no more crying, God will live with us, and there will be no hunger or hurt there. And this eternal happiness, we know, **begins here and now!** The Reign of God is at hand, Jesus taught in Luke 17:20-21. "...the kingdom of God is among you," he said.

This part of the prayer says let your kingdom come. Let your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. This means we are praying that people would live in peace and love with one another the way it is in heaven. It reminds us that we should be living the way God wants us to everyday.

Give us this day our daily bread means give us today all that we need. Keep in mind that these are things that we can't live without. We don't *need* video games and princess dolls those are the things that we want, we need food, water and shelter.

God provides everything that is good, but we humans are entrusted with developing ways to share that fairly. Some people in the world do not have their “daily bread” but it is not because God has failed to give it. It's that we have failed to share it.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those we trespass against us. This next part of the prayer is asking for forgiveness for our mistakes. Forgiveness means that we are sorry for something we've done and we don't want to do it anymore. But we also need to forgive people who have done wrong to us. Sometimes others hurt us very badly, so we need to ask God to help us forgive them because it's really hard or we don't want to. If we forgive others, God will forgive us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Is it sometimes tempting to do something you're not supposed to? This part of the prayer is really neat because it asks God to help us to know the right thing to do. To protect us against the evil that is in the world and keep us away from it.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. The last part of the prayer is the best part! For yours is the kingdom means that Heaven will last forever and will always be God's. God also has all the power and all the glory FOREVER! It makes me happy knowing that God will never die and he's the strongest and greatest. With God we will always win!

Prayer is our special way of talking to God so remember to pray as many times as you can. God loves you and wants to know everything about you and how you're doing.



Meeting Jesus in the Bible

As we prepare to receive Holy Communion, we should remember that Jesus comes to us as a friend. He is like the Good Shepherd – he cares for us and watches over us.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

Jesus told his friends one day that he is the “good shepherd.”

The good shepherd, he told them, lays down his life for his sheep.

If there is a hired shepherd tending the sheep and a wolf attacks them the hired shepherd runs away and let's the sheep be eaten by the wolf.

He does this because he doesn't really care about the sheep.

But I am the good shepherd.

I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

(Based on John 10:11-14)



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5

Parent lesson plans for pages 5 & 6 of the 5th lesson.

Follow the numbers.

1 We will now read about how Jesus is our friend, just as a shepherd is to his sheep. Begin by showing your child a **Bible**. Open it to show them this passage.

2 Tell them that we are going to read this story in words that we understand better.

3 Then close the Bible and ask them to read this passage aloud. Help them when needed. Ask your child to retell this story in his or her own words.

4 Time for a break! Help your child **enjoy** coloring this image of Jesus and the children.

Coloring time is a good time to be close to your child without necessarily talking about faith.

Don't be afraid to **put your arm around your child** during this time.

5 Your child may not be familiar with what shepherds do. Explain that they look after their sheep with **tenderness and love**. Jesus watches over us that way.

Color This Picture



"Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep." John 10:11

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6

Parent lesson plans for pages 7 & 8 of the 5th lesson.

Follow the numbers.

The Sacrament of The Eucharist
Holy Communion

The Lord's Prayer



- Jesus teaches us how to pray
- At Mass, we pray the Our Father with words that Jesus taught us
- What do the words mean?


The Lamb of God
Practice this part of the Mass:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, **have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, **grant us peace.**

Holy Communion

The Priest or person sharing Communion says:
The Body of Christ

We say: **Amen!**




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1 Throughout these lessons, we have been learning about the parts of the Mass. You may wish to return to pages 3-6 of lesson one to review it one more time.

2 We have already treated the meaning of the **Our Father** in this lesson.

3 Help your child understand why we pray for mercy in the **Lamb of God**. Mercy, you can explain, is when God "looks the other way" when we sin. God endlessly forgives us, even if we don't really deserve forgiveness all the time. That's how much God loves us!



At home this week
Work on this together at home as a way of continuing the process of preparing for The Sacrament of The Eucharist

A plan for love.
Tell or draw one way you will be kind and loving this week.

With your parents	At school	With your friends	With Jesus in prayer

Rehearsal for Holy Communion.
You can receive Communion in two ways:

In your hand
Open your hands like a small bowl. Bow in reverence and hold your hands upward toward the priest or person sharing Communion. Say "Amen" when you are offered the Host. When handed the host, place it in your mouth immediately and swallow.

On your tongue
Bow in reverence and say "Amen" when you are offered the Host. Hold your head back just a little. Open your mouth and place your tongue on your lower lip until you feel the Host being placed there. Close your mouth and swallow immediately.

The chalice
Take the chalice when offered to you and drink a small sip.

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We pray for mercy, not because God withholds it, but because the prayer reminds us that we depend on God.

4 As part of the preparation for Communion, help your child **create a little plan** to be ever more loving in daily life.

5 This week, **rehearse** the reception of Communion with your child. Use the notes on the bottom of this page to help you. Your child will feel more comfortable if they are well rehearsed.