

God's Masterworks

Preparation for the Session

This session has parts that will take place at different times. You will gather with your child for Part 1: Invite. Your child will then work independently on Part 2: Discover, and you will read that section of the chapter on your own as well. Finally, you will come together again later in the week for Part 3 to review and complete the In Summary & Live section.

Parents, Consider This: *Saint Augustine described a Sacrament as “an outward sign of invisible grace.” Young children are able to learn about the signs and symbols of Sacraments, but they may not be able to grasp the deeper theological meaning and invisible realities behind them. However, by the seventh grade, your child may be developing the capacity for more abstract thought, including understanding the meaning behind the signs and symbols of our religious traditions. When discussing sacramental celebrations, point out the invisible realities behind the visible signs, like the new life of grace a child receives in the baptismal waters, the strength and healing associated with the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, or the joy experienced in the celebration of the sacramental covenant of marriage. You both might be surprised at the insights your child is developing about these matters of faith.*

Children at This Age: *Young people this age tend to be very open to being taught about the power of rituals and traditions. This is an important time to be sure that your family continues to participate in Church ritual, especially Sunday Mass. It can be easy to allow work, school, and activities to overwhelm the family schedule. Keep faith practices a priority. These are formative years when adolescents are growing into a deeper awareness of how their past is connected to their present. Help them to find the balance between comfortable family traditions and expressing themselves in new and independent ways.*

In this chapter, your child will cover the following objectives:

- Discover that the Sacraments begin with God's invitation given in signs and symbols and require our faith-filled response
- Explain why we call Jesus the first Sacrament
- Explore how the Holy Spirit works with the Church to make Jesus' saving work present in the Sacraments
- Recognize that all of the Sacraments draw us into the Paschal Mystery
- Explain how the Edict of Milan changed the lives of Christians
- Explore how the physical elements used in the Seven Sacraments help us experience God's presence
- Identify what Real Presence means in Catholic teaching

PART 1: Invite

Turn to Page 251,
God's Masterworks

Make sure you have a Bible, writing tools for both of you, and some paper.

Find a quiet place to be with your child. This is a sacred time—a time when you will be present to each other and to the Lord. You may want to light a candle as you begin.



Let Us Pray Together make the Sign of the Cross. Have your child take the role of leader and read aloud the prayer. Both of you respond with the part marked "All."

Explain that Jesus is always with us, loving us. His greatest desire is to bring us to his Father.

Say: God's greatest gift to us is his Son, Jesus Christ. Let's listen to God's Word and remember that we are rooted and grounded in the love of Christ.



Guide your child through the Preparing for God's Word ritual you learned in the Introduction Session.

- Proclaim the Scripture in the Parchment Paper box on the page.
- Maintain several moments of silence.
- *Ask:* What did you hear God say to you today?

Invite your child to respond and also share what you heard.

Say: The Sacraments are Jesus' gift to us as a way for us to always experience his welcoming, forgiving, healing, and nourishing power in our lives.

Now, look at the *Have you ever thought...* box.

Invite your child to respond to the questions found in the box in the Student Book, also listed here:

- Why is it important for faith customs to be passed down through generations? *(Imagine if a generation didn't find it important to participate with the younger generation in rituals and customs. The customs and rituals might die out. Talk about why faithfulness and consistency are important in passing down customs.)*
- Which Church traditions are especially meaningful to you? *(Each of you will likely have certain traditions that appeal more to you. Share your favorite traditions with one another.)*

Ask what else your son/daughter might wonder about God’s Word and what it means to us today.

Turn to Page 252,
Getting Started

Read aloud the introductory paragraph.

Invite your child to read the directions for the chart. Point out that the category titles can also be found in the Catholic Faith Words box. When your son/daughter is finished, discuss together how each of the Sacraments relates to its category title.

Preview the Catholic Faith Words at the top of the page. Ask your child what she/he thinks the words mean. The definitions can be found in the glossary at the end of the Student Book.

Turn to Page 253

Have your child silently read the directions for this page, as you do. Make sure he/she identifies at least one Church tradition and one personal and/or family tradition. Have him/her complete the activity in the book. You can complete it on a separate piece of paper. (Note that when you discuss Church traditions, you will likely be speaking of liturgical practices within your own parish.)

When you both are finished, share with one another the symbol(s) you drew and/or one of your favorite traditions and what it means to you.

PART 2: Discover

Direct your child to independently complete pages 254–259. Have him/her highlight the main sentence in each paragraph while reading through the text. This includes completing all on-page activities. Ask your child to write any questions he/she might have about a Catholic Faith Word in the margins of the text. You can review these when you gather again to complete the session.

Be sure to read these pages as well. Doing so will give you insight into chapter topics and will help you engage your child in later discussions.

PART 3: In Summary & Live

Turn to Page 259,
In Summary

When you return, review the “In Summary/Catholics Believe” section. Read the summary statement and each of the bullet points. Ask your child to share his/her most memorable experience during one of the Sacraments that he/she has celebrated.

Turn to Page 260

Direct your daughter/son to silently read Our Catholic Life.

Parents, Consider This: *In the Our Catholic Life section of this chapter, your child will be reading about grace and how it allows us to participate in the life of the Holy Trinity. Grace aligns our human life spiritually with God and helps us to do what God calls us to do. Actual grace can help us to make the right decisions in life and know and act according to God's will in particular situations. Sanctifying grace is a permanent gift that builds our relationship with God and assures us of eternal life. We also receive a particular grace, or sacramental grace, with each Sacrament. God is active in our life in all of these ways. Take some time to think about the ways these experiences of grace have touched your life and changed you.*

Ask: What kind of grace do you most need in your life right now. How do you think you should ask for it? *(Share some examples like prayer, being still, and listening to what comes to our heart, or being involved in relationships with strong spiritual people.)*

Say: Grace permeates our lives. Developing good habits or virtues help us to focus on grace and help us live according to God's will. Participating regularly in the Sacraments, being kind and caring in our relationships, and cultivating a regular life of prayer, all help us to recognize God's grace in our lives.

Point out the picture on the page. Might this be a brother or older friend and a younger child sharing a happy moment together? Discuss a possible caption. Explain that God wants us to share the grace he gives us with others by our love and good will toward them.

Read aloud the story of Saint Ludmilla, who helped to bring Christianity to Bohemia. She is the grandmother of King Wenceslaus, who later became a Saint himself.

Say: We have learned about grace and how it helps us in life. Actual grace helps us to make right decisions and think and act according to God's will. Saint Ludmilla showed steadfastness and courage in her life as the leader of her country and within her family. We're going to use the Consider activity to think of ways we can be more mindful of God's presence in our lives.

Once you have both completed the activity, share with each other an example from each category.

Conclude the session by praying the Act of Contrition on Page 387.



To access and send an eAssessment to your child, go to the Student & Family section of aliveinchrist.osv.com.