

The Church Grows

Engage: Page 11

- ▶ Start your session by shouting out *Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!* Point out that this is a true statement, but shouting it at people might not be an effective way to encourage them to grow with Jesus. Discuss ways to spread the Gospel message positively.
- ▶ Read aloud the session title and discuss the questions in the blue box. **Say:** *In this session we are going to learn how the words and actions of some of Jesus' early followers helped encourage others to join the Church.* Point out that the work of these early disciples helped the Church grow.
- ▶ Pray aloud the prayer together.

Explore: Pages 12–13

- ▶ Have a brief discussion in which you and your child present opposing views about a subject that interests you both. After the discussion, **ask:** *What might be some ground rules for having a successful discussion in which both sides disagree?* (Possible answers: Both sides listen to each other. Both sides respect each other.) **Say:** *We are going to read how Church leaders met to discuss an issue that was dividing the early Church.*
- ▶ Read aloud the title Apostle to the Gentiles and the first five paragraphs. Remind your child that many of Jesus' early followers were Jews and that as the Church grew, Paul began to preach the Gospel message to Gentiles, or non-Jews. **Ask:** *What was Paul's attitude toward Christians at first?* (He led the persecution against them in Jerusalem. He thought that they were unfaithful to the Law.) Ask your child to retell the story of Paul's conversion.
- ▶ Invite your child to read aloud the last five paragraphs on page 13. **Ask:** *What was Paul's essential message?* (In Jesus Christ, God has given Salvation to all who believe.) Explain that grace is the gift of God, given to us without our meriting it. **Say:** *Grace is the Holy Spirit alive in us. It gives us the strength to live out our vocation.*
- ▶ Explain that Paul's belief that Gentiles and Jews were equal members of the Church caused controversy among Jesus' early followers. Point out the term *Council of Jerusalem*. **Ask:** *What did the Church leaders decide during the Council of Jerusalem?* (Gentiles would not have to become Jews first to be able to practice the Christian faith.)
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Spread the Good News and complete the activity independently.
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Explore: Pages 14–15

- ▶ Share stories from movies or literature in which characters have experiences that change their lives. **Say:** *Now we are going to read how a vision that Peter experienced changed the course of his life.*
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud the title Proclaiming Jesus to the World and the first section. **Ask:** *What did Peter realize the meaning of the vision was after he was sought out by Cornelius's servants?* (While for a Jew it was unlawful to associate or visit with Gentiles, God told Peter not to call anyone profane or unclean.)

- ▶ Read aloud The Holy Spirit Descends on Cornelius. **Say:** *When the Gentiles began speaking in tongues and glorifying God, Peter's interpretation of his vision was reaffirmed. He became even more certain that God wanted the Church to be open to Gentiles and Jews alike.*
- ▶ Have your child read aloud Council of Jerusalem on page 15. **Say:** *Church leaders were so sure of their decision that they wanted everyone in the Church to know about it. That is why they sent Paul and Barnabas to announce it to others.*
- ▶ Read aloud the Past Meets Present feature. **Say:** *We commemorate the Passover meal every time the Mass is celebrated.* **Ask:** *Why might we say that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our lives?* (Possible answer: In the Eucharist, we receive the Body and Blood of the risen Christ, which give us the strength to live as Jesus' disciples in the world today. The Eucharist is the summit of our lives because receiving it is the most important thing we do as Catholics.) **Say:** *The gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is the most important gift we have received from God.*
- ▶ Use the Study Corner as a quick review of the article.

Reflect: Pages 16–17

- ▶ Read aloud the title The Law of Love and the paragraphs in the left column. **Ask:** *How do we give witness to the unity of the Christian community?* (Possible answer: by performing selfless acts of love that help others open their hearts to God's presence)
- ▶ Ask your child to read aloud the Leader part and pray the prayer together. Invite your child to share any insights he or she had while reflecting on the two questions that were part of the prayer. Conclude by praying together the Glory Be to the Father.
- ▶ Read aloud the introductory text of Where Do I Fit In? **Say:** *Think of all the different communities to which you belong.* **Ask:** *What is common among all of them?* (Possible answer: The members all care for one another.) *How would you define the term community?* (Possible answer: It is a group of people who help one another.) Point out that when we join a community, we commit ourselves to respecting the members of that community.
- ▶ Take turns reading aloud A Place Where I Belong. Point out that being named—as at Baptism—is one of the most powerful ways we know that we belong to a community. Discuss how your child's name was selected.
- ▶ Have your child read aloud We Belong and complete the activity independently.

Respond: Page 18

- ▶ Read aloud the directions and have your child complete the crossword puzzle independently.
- ▶ Ask your child to list, define, and use in sentences the terms under Say What? Use the Glossary if necessary.
- ▶ Read aloud Now What? Remind your child that when we share the love of the Holy Spirit with others, we grow in our relationship with God and with the Church. Have your child complete the activity independently. Together pray the Sign of the Cross.
- ▶ Invite your child to pray a 3-minute Retreat at www.loyolapress.com/retreat.