

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 4 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 18 LOVING GOD

Objectives

- Link love for God with refusal to worship false gods.
- Examine the first three commandments.
- Explore ways to be faithful to the first three commandments.
- Distinguish between the use of holy images and idolatry.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experiences), pages 134–135

Invite your child to think about books, movies, television shows, or plays in which characters made promises to other people. Ask your child to explain the promises and tell whether they were kept or broken. Remind your child that we have a loving God who keeps all his promises. Then pray together the opening **Prayer** on page 134.

Ask the three questions in the opening paragraph (to keep promises, do what we say we will do; hurt, mad, disappointed, let down; bad, guilty)

Ask your child to read aloud the definition of *faithful* from a dictionary. Then read and discuss the second paragraph.

Read aloud the **Scripture Story: The Golden Idol** on pages 134 and 135. Stop at the bottom of page 134 and explain that an *idol* is a statue or other image that people worship. Ask: How did God show his faithfulness to the Israelites? (God saved them from slavery and promised to bring them to a new land.) Why did the people think God had forgotten them? (Many years had passed, and they still hadn't reached the promised land.) After the text is read, explain that *sacrifices* are offerings made to God or to idols.

Recall the covenant the Israelites had with God. (God promised to protect and help the Israelites; they promised to worship only God.) How did the Israelites break their covenant with God? (They worshiped the golden calf rather than God.) Why do you think God forgave the people? (Possible response: God loved them and was faithful to his promises.)

Read the caption under the picture of the bull, and have your child answer the question. (Possible answers: money, fame, power, material possessions, celebrities or athletes.)

Additional information about the art: The bull statue is a tribute to the god Apis (Osiris), who was worshiped by the Egyptians during the thirtieth dynasty (380–343 B.C.) The statue guarded the entrance to a temple called the *Serapeum*, where mummified sacred bulls were buried in elaborate *sarcophagi* (stone coffins).

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 136–139

Read aloud **Faithfulness** on page 136, and use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted terms. Make sure your child understands the term *idolatry*.

Ask your child the following: What are some of the ways we can praise God above all things? (trust in his help; pray daily, and so on) What are some ways we can honor God's name? (don't swear or curse) What are some ways we can worship God? (participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, spend quality time with our families on Sunday)

Have your child look at the picture at the bottom of the page. Ask: How does this picture remind you of God? (God is like a loving parent.) After discussing the photo caption, give your child art materials and allow time for him or her to make a bookmark or prayer card as a reminder of God's love.

In discussing **Catholics Believe**, ask your child to share how God has loved us. (Possible responses: by giving us life, by providing us with loving people, by giving us certain abilities.)

Read and discuss each of the **Signs of Unfaithfulness** on page 137.

Superstition—Use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to further clarify the term. Ask your child to brainstorm examples of superstitions. (Possible responses: four-leaf clover, Friday the 13th, lucky charms or clothing worn by some sports figures.)

Fortunetelling—Distinguish between weather forecasters, who predict future weather patterns based on scientific evidence, and fortunetellers, whose predictions have no basis in science. Explain that fortunetelling is wrong because it assumes that God has every day of our lives totally planned out for us.

Sorcery—Help distinguish between magic and sorcery. Perhaps explain that sorcery includes actions such as putting curses on people, trying to talk to the dead, and devil worship. Stage magic is usually done for fun and not as a source of superstition.

Atheism—See the **Language of Faith** at the back of the textbook.

Have your child look at the picture on page 137. Ask: How is the picture of the lightning storm an example of God's power? (Possible response: God has control over nature; people do not.) Read and discuss the caption.

In discussing **Saints Walk with Us: Saints Perpetua and Felicity**, you may wish to share the following information: Perpetua was a young noblewoman of Carthage (an ancient city in Northern Africa) and the mother of an infant son. She and her pregnant servant, Felicity, were imprisoned because they refused to deny their faith. Both women were sent to the public games in the amphitheater, where they were beheaded. Explain that the word *martyr* means "witness to the faith." It refers to people who choose to suffer and die rather than give up their faith.

Read **Keeping the Commandments** on page 138 and explain to your child that Christians try to follow the commandments to show their faithfulness and love for God.

Discuss each picture and corresponding caption in the chart on **Honoring God**. You may wish to share the following information about the central picture: *The Three Fishes* symbolize the Trinity in Christian art. For early Christians the fish was a specific symbol of Christ. Today the fish represents Christian faith and the reverence we are to have toward God as explained in the first three commandments.

Then brainstorm with your child practical ways that your child can do each of the actions described in these captions. (For example, *We care for God's people and all God's creation*: We visit the sick, help brothers and sisters, pick up litter on the playground, and so on. *We treat holy things with respect*: We can pick up after ourselves in church by putting books and papers where they belong, and we can be careful not to break windows, scratch pews, talk loudly in church, and so on. *Honor God in the Eucharistic celebration*: We can pay attention to what is happening and being said, join in the prayers and songs, respectfully use appropriate gestures—Sign of the Cross, genuflection, standing, sitting, kneeling, sign of peace, and so on.)

Read **Holy Images** on page 139. Share the following information with your child: Saint John of Damascus (676–749) was a priest and scholar who defended the practice of using holy images in prayer. According to John pictures and statues of the saints serve as reminders of how we are to follow Christ. Because Mary and the saints are good role models of faith, hope, charity, patience in suffering, and perseverance until death, images of them remind us to turn to God as they did. Saint John's feast day is December 4.

Point out to your child that some people may still use religious objects the wrong way. It is important to remember that a statue or other image of Jesus or the saints points us toward God but has no power of its own.

Read the **Activity** and discuss your child's favorite religious image in the book. Pick out one of your own and explain to your child why you made your choice.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Daily Life), page 140

Review the material taught in this lesson by discussing **Recall, Think and Share** and **Continue the Journey**. Have your child complete the activity.

Read **We Live Our Faith: At Home** and **In the Parish**. Try to follow through on the suggestions found there.

Refer to the **Language of Faith** section in the back of the textbook for clarification and review of all highlighted terms.

Complete the **Faith Journal**, pages 35–36.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 141

Refer your child to page 141. Ask your child to think about times when he or she might have questioned God's faithfulness. When bad things happen, we sometimes wonder how God could be on our side. But remind your child that God has always been faithful and we need always to trust in his care. God is always there for us to turn to, and we can turn to him through prayer.

Ask your child to describe what he or she sees in the background photograph. (nature scene of clouds, a sunset, mountains, and a lake) Ask: How can nature bring us close to God? (Possible responses: It reminds us to praise God for creation and to recognize God's powers.) Direct your child's attention to the photograph of the students who are praying. Ask: How is prayer related to the first three commandments? (It is a good way to honor and praise God and ask God for help.)

Read **We Believe** and point out that our beliefs are summarized in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Turn to these prayers on page 218, and make sure that your child can read them. Then pray together the closing **Prayer** on page 141.