

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 4 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 25 NOW AND FOREVER

Objectives

- Describe the love God has for people.
- Identify examples of God's faithful love throughout history.
- Identify people in the Old Testament who were faithful to the covenant.
- Connect prayer with the new covenant relationship with God.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experience), pages 186–187

Invite your child to name words we use to talk about time. (yesterday, now, tomorrow, next week, and so on) Then ask him or her the three questions found at the beginning of chapter 25, **Now and Forever**, page 186. Explain God's love for us is the same now and forever. Then pray together the opening **Prayer** on the page.

Continue reading the text on page 186. Point out that, with the passing of time, change occurs.

Ask: Think about what you were like last year. How have you changed since then? (Possible answers: I've grown taller, weigh more, can read harder words, have more skills.) What might you be like as an adult? (Possible answers: I'll be a husband/wife with children; I may be a priest or religious; I may work in an office.) How will you change from now? Help your child realize that the passing of time brings change. Seasons come and go, our bodies grow, we make new friends, and so on.

Draw attention to the picture of a watch. Point out that this photograph "freezes" a moment in time. However, we really can't stop time. Then ask your child to discuss what he or she thinks the caption means. (God doesn't have a lifetime, as we know it. God has no beginning or end. Every moment is the same for God. It is always now.) Refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the term *eternal*. Read each Scripture passage on page 187.

Draw attention to the photograph of the mother and child. Ask your child to think about the most loving moments he or she has ever known. Then explain that God's affection for us is even stronger and more loving than the moments of love that your child has experienced. Furthermore, God's love for us will never change or end. Point out that God gave us creation as a sign of love.

Help your child come up with his or her own symbol of God's love as described in the **Activity**.

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 188–191

Ask your child to brainstorm examples of God's faithful love throughout the Old Testament. (creation, saving Noah from a flood, making a covenant with Abraham, saving the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, giving the Ten Commandments)

Read aloud **Living in Truth and Love** on page 188. Ask: Why do you think God has given his people so many chances to turn back to him and his covenant? (God loves us so much that he wants to show his everlasting love)

Point out that God always gives us the option to choose his love over all else but never forces us to love him in return. Emphasize that love for God is a relationship that affects our thoughts, words, actions—our entire identity. Because we are made in God's image, we experience the fullness of life whenever we live and act like God—with truth and love.

Read **Catholics Believe** and invite your child to share how he or she has felt God's truth and love in his or her life. Add your own examples. Then try to name at least one time as a family that you have experienced God's love.

Draw attention to the photograph on page 188. Ask: What are the students doing? (learning about something on the computer) How are they choosing to live in God's love? (They are cooperating, sharing, and helping one another.)

Invite responses to the caption question. (Encourage your child to mention practical applications of the Commandments.)

Read **Faithful Ones** on page 189 and then read aloud one or more of the Bible passages listed in the captions. After reading each passage, ask how the people in the story remained faithful to God's covenant.

Art Background:

- *Noah's Ark* is the work of folk painter Malcah Zeldis (b. 1931). It depicts the story of Noah, complete with the animals, the receding waters, the returning dove with the olive branch, and the rainbow—the sign of God's covenant.

- *Ruth and Naomi* is a stained-glass depiction of the story of Ruth. Naomi was a widow whose sons had died. Naomi told Ruth and her other daughter-in-law, Orpah, to return to their families. Ruth is kneeling at the feet of Naomi, insisting that she will stay with Naomi and worship Naomi's God.
- *Abraham and the Three Angels* is the work of Italian painter Gaudenzio Ferrair (1484–1546). Three strangers (angels) relay God's promise to give children to Abraham.
- The *menorah* is an eight-branched candleholder used by Jewish people in Hanukkah celebrations. One candle is lit for each night of the festival.

Read **The New Covenant** on page 190 and, using the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook, make sure your child understands each of the highlighted terms. Explain that *testament* is another word for "covenant." The New Testament tells the story of how God established a new covenant with all people, without destroying the old covenant, by sending his Son to free us from sin and gain for us everlasting life.

Read the **Scripture Signpost** and share the following information with your child. *Hebrews 10:23* explains how the sacrifice of Jesus differs from the sacrifices of other priests. Only the sacrifice of Jesus brings forgiveness of sin, once and for all. The Eucharistic sacrifice offered today is not an additional sacrifice. It is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice, which alone is necessary for our salvation.

Make sure your child realizes that people who have faith and who are faithful to God's covenant are also hopeful people. Then invite your child to answer the question. (God, who is completely trustworthy) Be sure your child understands that *confession* in this passage means a statement of belief or profession of faith, not an admission of sin.

Look at the picture of the crucifix on the page and read the caption. Explain that a crucifix is a cross that shows the body of Jesus on it. Both crosses and crucifixes are *sacramentals*, holy objects that remind us of God's great love. Read the **Landmark**, and remind your child that Christians do not see the cross as a sign of the end of Jesus' life but the means by which Jesus passed from life in this world to new life. We believe that Christ is alive and has forever conquered sin and death.

Read the introductory paragraph, and look over the various forms of prayer listed on page 191. Try to give an example of each type of prayer. (Possible answers: *Blessing*: "We bless you, O God. . . ." *Adoration*: "We adore you, O Jesus. . . ." *Petition*: "Lord, have mercy." *Intercession*: "That all who are hungry may be filled, Lord, hear our prayer." *Thanksgiving*: "Thank you, God, for every good you have given us." *Praise*: "Glory and praise to you, God.")

Explain to your child that prayer can be personal or communal (when we are at Mass or with a group of people); prayer can be quiet or spoken aloud. We can use formal prayers, Scripture, or our own words.

Ask your child to state which form or expression of prayer is shown in each picture. (Examples: The boy praying alone may be meditating or praying a prayer of intercession or petition. The students who are praying in church are probably preparing to participate in some type of vocal prayer, spoken or sung.) Make sure your child realizes that he or she can pray anywhere and any time and that all forms of prayer are good.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Everyday Life), page 192

Review the material taught in this lesson by completing the sections: **Recall, Think and Share, and Continue the Journey.**

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

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

Complete pages 49–50 in your **Faith Journal.**

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 193

Look at the background picture on page 193. If your child has been near a large body of water, have him or her describe the experience. If your child has not been near a large body of water, have him or her imagine what it would be like. Ask: How did it make you feel? How did it help you sense God's presence?

Draw attention to the photograph of the boy and the elderly man. Ask: How are they showing faithfulness to God's covenant? (They are respecting and helping one another.)

In discussing the photograph of singing students, recall that singing is a type of vocal prayer.

Read **All Our Days**, and remind your child that psalms are prayer songs found in the *Book of Psalms* in the Old Testament of the Bible. Psalms are also a part of the official prayer life of the Church. Several times a day members of religious communities pray the Liturgy of the Hours or the Divine Office, a collection of psalms and Scripture readings.

Close the lesson by asking your child to reflect on the ways in which he or she has experienced God's love. Then pray together **Psalm 90.**