

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 6 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 17 THE WAY OF LOVE

Objectives

- Realize that God calls people to follow the law of love.
- Explain Jesus' law of love.
- Examine some steps to follow the law of love.

Step 1: We Are Invited (Life Experience), pages 126–127

Ask your child to tell you about times he or she did a good deed for someone. Explain that in this chapter, **The Way of Love**, you will explore the way of love Jesus shows us. Then pray together the opening **Prayer** on page 126.

Read the text on the page. Explain that among some groups of Jews, girls celebrate their coming-of-age ceremony, known as a *bat mitzvah* (baht MITZ•vah), by which they become “daughters of the law.” Ask: What does *bar mitzvah* (bahr MITZ•vah) mean? (“a son of the law”) Which five books of the Bible do bar mitzvah candidates study? (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) Explain that Jewish people refer to these five books as the *Torah*. Ask: Besides obeying the laws, what else did Benjamin’s mother want him to do? (perform a mitzvah—a good deed—every day)

Read the photo caption and have your child note the details in the photograph. The scroll shown is a handwritten copy of the Bible’s first five books, or the *Torah*, which are sometimes known as the *Law of Moses*. Special parchment, ink, and pens are used by professional scribes who spend about a year making one copy. When the parchments are finished, they are sewn together into a long scroll and attached to two wooden rods. The teacher uses a pointer called a *yad*, which means “hand.” By using the *yad* instead of fingers, he can point exactly to letters or words on the parchment without soiling it. The skullcap is called a *kippah* (Hebrew) or *yarmulke* (Yiddish). The prayer shawl is called a *tallis*. Both are worn as signs of respect and reminders of God’s presence, particularly when attending a synagogue prayer service or when studying a holy book.

Direct your child's attention to the picture on top of page 127. Ask: How might the students do good deeds for the boy in the wheelchair? (Possible response: get some books down from a high shelf.) What might the boy in the wheelchair be able to do for them? (Possible answer: help them with homework.)

Read and discuss the caption.

Read the rest of the story about Benjamin and **Law of Love**. Ask: Why did it take courage for Benjamin to challenge his friends? (They might have become angry and turned against him.)

Discuss with your child any similar experiences he or she has had. Ask: Why is the law of love "at the heart of all the commandments"? (It sums up what we *should* do to live all the commandments well. How does each mitzvah we do give testament to the law of love? (It shows our love for God and for others.)

Read the **Scripture Signpost** and answer the question there. (Possible answers: A person who lives in love is kind, generous, thoughtful, cares about others, wants to help those in need, and so on.)

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 128–131

Ask your child what he or she could do to teach others how to lead loving lives. (Possible responses: use positive words and deeds, share his or her faith in Jesus.) Point out that the **Scripture Story** on page 128 tells how Jesus summed up the commandments.

Read the **Scripture Story: Jesus Teaches the Teacher**. Use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to define the word *Sadducees*. Write the words *Sadducees* (SAD•joo•seez) and *Pharisees* on a piece of paper. Explain that these two groups exerted tremendous influence on the lives of Jews during Jesus' time. As you discuss these two groups with your child, list information about them on the sheet of paper.

Point out that one scribe wanted to learn from Jesus. Ask: What can this scribe teach us? (Possible response: We, too, should search for the best way to live God's love. Like him, we can be open to the teachings of Jesus, even if those around us are closed to them.)

Read **Catholics Believe** and explain that when we love others we reflect, or mirror, God's love for us.

Have your child note that the scroll the scribe is holding is similar to the one in the photograph on page 126. Invite your child to respond to the caption question. (The scribe understands how necessary love is; he sees that love means more to God than anything else.)

Read **Jesus Teaches with Authority** on page 129. Make sure your child understands the term *transfiguration* by referring to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook. Ask: How did Jesus interpret the Law of Moses for the Jewish people? (He told them that they must live by the spirit of the Law.) What does it mean to live by the spirit of the Law? (to concentrate on the Law's purpose, which is to draw people closer to God and others)

As you read **Our Moral Guide**, you may want to start a chart on a piece of paper, listing each sin against love. As your child responds to the question, list his or her examples under the appropriate headings. (Answers may include not caring when other people are hurt, sick, or in trouble—indifference; not saying thank you for the good things you've been given or for someone's help—ungratefulness; not doing your best with the talents you have or being lazy and not caring about your grades or performance—halfheartedness; thinking so much of yourself that you forget God and think everything you are is a result of your efforts only—hatred of God that comes from pride.)

Refer to the painting, and have your child identify Moses and Elijah (standing on either side of Jesus) and the apostles (on the ground). Invite him or her to respond to the caption question. (The transfiguration showed that Jesus' authority came from God and his teachings were the fulfillment of the teachings of Moses and the prophets.)

Read **The Greatest Virtue** on page 130. In discussing the text, focus on the law that Jesus taught his disciples to share. Ask: Whom should we love? (everyone) In what ways should we show our love? (share with those in need, visit those who are sick or lonely, welcome newcomers, and so on) What makes living the law of love difficult? (Possible responses: Sometimes we do not notice the needs of those around us; we may not want to go out of our way to help others.) How can we practice the law of love in school? (Discuss specific examples.)

Discuss **Saints Walk with Us: Saint Thérèse of Lisieux**. Thérèse entered the convent at the age of fifteen. She spent nine and a half years in the convent before her death from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four. Pope Pius XI pointed out that she found holiness in common, everyday experiences. Thérèse called offering little everyday gestures of love "throwing flowers." She is popularly known as the "Little Flower." Explain that the writings of Saint Thérèse give us small things each of us can do to help others and praise God.

Draw your child's attention to the photographs on page 130. Ask: How are the people in the photographs showing acts of love? (The girl reading to the younger children is showing she cares about them and wants to help them learn to read. The boy helping with the groceries is showing love and concern for his neighbor by lending a helping hand.)

Together with your child, do the **Activity** on page 130.

Point out that the two people in the small photograph are sharing an important experience of helping and being helped. Ask: Why is sharing an act of love? (Possible response: You are thinking of someone else.) What do we share with God in prayer? (Possible responses: worries, excitements, hopes.)

Refer to page 131, and read **Stepping Stones: Following the Law of Love**. Take turns with your child reading the items in the list and then each pick one bulleted phrase from the three categories and think of specific, concrete examples of each item. Read aloud **Where Will This Lead Me?**

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Daily Life), page 132

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 33–34.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 133

Ask your child to tell how God shows his love for us. (Possible responses: through all creation, by sending Jesus.) Read **What Is Love?** on page 133. Explain to your child that Paul wrote this letter to the Church at Corinth to discuss the many gifts they had been given by the Spirit. In chapter 13 he focuses on the gift of love as the greatest gift. Some in this Church had been insisting on having their own way or had been rejoicing in what was going wrong for others. The strong had often been impatient or unkind, and some of the people were filled with pride. The words in Paul's letter highlight what was missing from the Church at Corinth. Take a moment to think about the ways we miss the mark when it comes to loving as Jesus wants us to love. Then pray together the **Prayer** excerpt from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians.