

WALKING by FAITH

Grade 6 / Home Lesson

CHAPTER 27 WAITING FOR THE NEW CREATION

Objectives

- Explore visions of the future.
- Develop an understanding of the new creation.
- Explore images and symbols in the Book of Revelation.

Step 1: *We Are Invited* (Life Experience), pages 202–203

Ask your child what he or she would do if he or she could see into the future. Tell your child that, although we can't see into the future, we have much to look forward to. Then pray together the opening **Prayer** on page 202.

Read the chapter title (**Waiting for the New Creation**), and discuss the **Activity** with your child.

As you read the opening text, be sure your child understands that superstition is a belief that irrational forces determine what happens in our lives. Point out that while some might look at horoscopes or go to a psychic for entertainment, Christians must not rely on them to determine our actions.

Draw your child's attention to the picture of the person walking along a road. Point out that we can't see where the road goes. Ask: What does the photograph symbolize about the future? (We are on a journey, but we can't always see where the path leads.)

Call attention to the photograph of the people praying, page 203. Point out that it is sometimes difficult to live as a Catholic, especially where there is a government policy denying religious freedom.

After discussing the caption, ask: Why is religious freedom important? (Possible response: It allows people to worship God openly and practice their faith without fear of persecution.)

Continue reading the text on page 203 and refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted term. Ask: When concerns about the future arise, why should we put our hope and trust in God? (because only God, who is all powerful, knows what the future holds)

How will the new creation be governed? (by God's justice) Why do you think belief in the new creation was important to Christians who were persecuted? (because it proved that they did not suffer or die in vain; because those who put their faith in God would be with him forever)

Step 2: We Explore (Doctrine), pages 204–207

Recall with your child that the new creation is a promise of God that Jesus communicated to his disciples. That promise has given hope to Christians throughout the ages.

Point out that the illustration on page 204 shows a group of early Christians who have gathered together. Note that one of the Christians is reading from a scroll. Ask: Why were Scripture readings so important to the early Christians? (Scripture helped strengthen their faith and gave hope to those who were persecuted.) Then discuss this question: What strengthens your faith and gives you hope?

Read **Catholics Believe**, and explain that the world as we know it will one day be radically transformed. An entirely new creation will result, but we do not know the moment when this will occur. We can be confident through our faith that this new creation, which God is preparing, will be full of more joy and peace than we can imagine.

Invite your child to read **Unveiling the Future**, and refer to the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted term. Emphasize that apocalyptic literature has two main characteristics:

1. It is written in a “code” to protect those being persecuted and therefore cannot be taken literally.
2. Its main message is to give those persecuted hope by reminding them that good always triumphs over evil.

Ask: What do you think the Book of Revelation's author wanted the persecuted Christians to know most of all? (that God would not let their suffering and death go uncounted or unrewarded, and that he would defeat those who do evil)

Read **The Messenger and the Message** on page 205. As you continue to read about the Book of Revelation, tell your child that in ancient cultures it was common to attach the name of a famous author to a work of apocalyptic literature. The author of Revelation chose John the Evangelist, who most likely had died before this book was written. Remind your child that all the examples of death and destruction in this book are written in symbolic language typical of this style of literature. Through all the visions and stories of wickedness and destruction, what promise is repeated again and again? (God will soon triumph over evil; a new world is coming.)

Do the **Activity** along with your child.

Call attention to the scene from Revelation. Explain that this scene shows an angel holding one of the seven seals, which has been opened. It tells of the destruction shown in the background.

Read **Understanding What It Means** on page 206. Use the **Language of Faith** section at the back of the textbook to clarify the highlighted term. Ask: To whom do most of the images in *Revelation* refer? (first-century Christians who were persecuted) Why shouldn't the reader today attempt to make a connection between details in Revelation and events of the present or future? (Revelation is apocalyptic writing that should not be read as a detailed forecast of the future.) What details of creation does Revelation offer us? (It will come; the Church will be seen as the bride of the Lamb.) How does the Bible reflect God's role in bringing about the beginning and end of the world? (The Bible begins with creation and ends with a new creation.)

Read the **Scripture Signpost**, and discuss with your child how each of you would answer the question.

After your child has read the caption, ask him or her how the photograph demonstrates a foretaste of the new creation. (Possible responses: fellowship, sharing, everyone's needs taken care of.)

Remind your child that the Book of Revelation was written to give hope to early Christians who were persecuted and living in fear. Explain that communication had to be symbolic to keep it hidden from enemies. Point out that because of the symbolic imagery and the writing code, even Scripture scholars are not sure of the meaning of every image. We do know, however, not to take the writing literally.

Learn how to understand the "code" of Revelation by reading **The Symbols in Revelation** on page 207. Then go to your Bible and select one of the passages from Revelation that talks of the vision and "translate" it using the chart on page 207. If you are still a bit stumped, do not fret, even Scripture scholars are at a loss to understand this book completely. The one thing they all do understand and agree on is that the Book of Revelation is not to be taken literally.

Have your child note the number seven in the background, symbolizing perfection. Explain that the top left image shows Mary surrounded by four angels, the top right shows the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and the bottom image shows the new Jerusalem with seven angels. Have your child associate each image with the corresponding number or symbol in the chart. These images from the Book of Revelation are part of a series of reliefs carved into the doors of Saint Peter's Church in Soest, Germany. The image on page 205 is from the same series of carvings.

Step 3: We Reflect (Integration of Faith into Everyday Life), page 208

Review the material taught in this lesson by completing 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 **Unit 7 Review** on pages 210–211 in your textbook.

Complete pages 53–54 in your **Faith Journal**.

Step 4: We Celebrate (Prayer and Conclusion), page 209

Read **The Song of the Lamb** on page 209. Point out that the word *Lamb* appears in the Book of Revelation more than two dozen times. Ask: Whom does the Lamb symbolize? (Jesus)

Call attention to the background picture, the lamb surrounded by angels with arms upraised, rejoicing.

Tell your child that this is a sixth century Byzantine mosaic. It is located in the Church of San Vital in Ravenna, Italy. Like other notable artwork of its time, its dominant theme is the majesty of Christ. A central medallion of fruits, leaves, and flowers encircles the Lamb of God. The four surrounding panels show angels, plants, animals, and other images of creation.

Close the chapter by taking turns praying the parts of the closing **Prayer**.