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## Stories of God's Love (Kindergarten)

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# Welcome to Stories of God's Love!

This year you will be a teacher in a religion readiness program that helps young children take their first steps on their journey of faith.

*Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program:

- teaches children appropriate Scripture stories that tell them of God's love and connects these stories to the children's lives.
- follows the guidelines of the Subcommittee on the Catechism of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to assist the review of kindergarten materials.
- incorporates a simple "Teach and Apply" process in every lesson.
- weaves prayer experiences into every lesson.
- connects your sessions to the home by offering weekly family enrichment.
- supports your religion coordinator with resources to make your religion readiness program effective and enjoyable.

## Your Role

Beginning to teach from your new program can be a wonderful experience. As *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program was being developed, you were thought about every step of the way. We considered the needs of both beginning teachers and the needs of experienced, veteran kindergarten educators. The result is teacher guides that will make a difference!

We created two guides for *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program: a Catechist Guide for those who teach one session per week, and a Teacher Guide for those who offer religion sessions on multiple days. You'll find that the session plans are very simple and easy to use. They were written by people who actually teach religion readiness classes just like yours, so we know that these lessons will work for you.

These guides have excellent organizational pages and background information on the topics that you will be teaching—hundreds of ideas you can use. Colorful Teaching Posters and a Music Songbook with CD are also available. In addition, we hope you'll become a regular visitor to our supportive Web site designed to offer even more ideas. You'll find it at [RCLBenziger.com](http://RCLBenziger.com).

*We're looking forward to working with you!*



# The Catechetical Ministry

Kindergarten catechists and teachers do more than simply teach religion to young learners. First of all, catechists are people of faith themselves who let the Word of God echo, or resound, through their lives and teaching. Religion teachers and catechists share their faith and help the children to apply and live out their faith day by day.



If you are like most catechists and teachers, you may already have realized that teaching religion is different from most other teaching tasks. Certainly, your storytelling ability and skills for organizing cooperative play activities will serve you well. But there is a different atmosphere in faith formation because you are sharing your own faith as well as your knowledge.

You may be wondering what you are getting yourself into and asking how you can ever help children to grow in faith. You might also be wondering if you are up to the challenge. Well, you are! You are one of the thousands of catechists and teachers who have asked these same questions and have discovered a wonderful secret: Helping young children begin their journey of faith is one of the most important ministries of the Church and one of its most rewarding.

Here is a simple approach to your ministry that will make this year a satisfying one for you:

**Relax!** Some teachers and catechists find the idea of sharing faith a little frightening. Remember, the Scriptures tell us that our ancestors in faith, including Moses, Jeremiah, Peter and Mary, faced the same fear. With God's help, they did great things. You will too.

**Ask questions!** You are not expected to have the answers to every question the children may ask. Your pastor, priests, principal, DRE, kindergarten coordinator and other teachers will gladly help you respond to the children. We will too.

**Take your time!** Remember, you are both a teacher and a learner. Be patient with yourself as you learn. Trust the Holy Spirit. The important thing is to continue to grow in your ministry.

**Use your guide!** In the pages that follow, you'll find a comprehensive introduction to *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program, including an overview of the effective and easy-to-use "teach and apply" format. You'll find hundreds of helpful tips and activities to engage young children in the lesson plans that follow. Gradually, you'll find yourself growing in competence and confidence about your ministry.

**Examine the children's leaflets.** Browsing through the children's leaflets, including the family pages, will help you to capture the flavor of what you are to present to the children. Becoming familiar with the sequence of lessons will also help you plan your calendar.

You are embarking on an exciting journey this year. Be sure to take advantage of all the opportunities for growth as a teacher that are offered by your parish or school. And most of all, have fun!

# Getting Started

## Your Children

Your success as a teacher depends on your relationship with the children. Welcome the children with warmth and enthusiasm. Be sure to tell them how much you look forward to getting to know them.

Here are some basic principles to keep in mind with all young people:

- Respect them as children of God.
- Honor the children's abilities, their imagination and their desire to know and love God.
- Value the children as learners.
- Involve the children actively in the learning process.
- Help the children understand what a difference faith can make in their lives.

You will learn more about the special characteristics of five- and six-year-old children on pages 10 and 11 of this guide.



## Your Teaching Space

Every teacher and catechist faces the challenge of creating an inviting and safe catechetical environment. With a little creativity and determination, you can transform your setting into a warm and inviting environment for the teaching of religion.

Here are some questions to discuss with your principal, DRE or religion coordinator:

- What are the safe environment guidelines of your parish or diocese?
- Is your teaching space shared with others? Can you meet with the other people who use the space to discuss needs and to build a spirit of cooperation?
- Are the chairs, desks and tables the appropriate size for the children? Can the seating be rearranged for different activities?
- Can the lighting and temperature be adjusted for comfort?
- Is a chalkboard, a dry-erase board or newsprint available?
- Are you allowed to tape posters or other materials to walls or bulletin boards?
- How will the children clean up after the activities?
- What electronic media equipment is available? How can you be trained to use that equipment?



## Your Prayer Center

The prayer center is the heart of your catechetical teaching space. It tells the children that sharing faith together is a sacred activity. Gather with the children in or around the prayer center for prayer each time you meet with them.

Here are some simple practical ideas for creating a prayer center:

- Cover a small table with a cloth, preferably with a cloth that is the color of the liturgical season or the liturgical feast you are celebrating.
- Place a crucifix on the wall or on a table in the prayer center.
- Place a candle on the table as a sign that Christ is the Light of the World. (Be sure to check and follow all fire regulations. Battery powered flameless candles are a good option.)
- Enthroned an open Bible on the table by displaying pages from important passages for the day.
- Place a plant or other objects that symbolize the lesson theme in the prayer center. Invite the children to take turns helping you decorate the prayer center by bringing in objects from home that might be appropriate to symbolize the themes you are covering in class.

## Your General Supply List

No matter how well-equipped with materials your parish programs are, there will usually be additional materials that you will need. Here are some items to have on hand:

- Art supplies such as art paper, construction paper, poster board, newsprint, colored markers, crayons, glue, washable paints, paint brushes, paint smocks, appropriate safety scissors, tape and yarn.
- Audiovisuals such as DVDs and videos, photos, posters and music tapes or CDs. *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program CD and Songbook are available and specifically designed for this program.
- Materials for your prayer center such as a cloth, a Bible, a crucifix, a candle, a plant and symbols for the liturgical seasons and feasts.
- A bulletin board reserved for displaying religious projects and education topics such as the liturgical seasons and feasts of the Church.

# Who Is the Kindergarten Child?

Kindergarten children have a growing sense of independence. Yet they also may be somewhat anxious as they branch out to new horizons. Five- and six-year-olds can be very enthusiastic about their endeavors. When given adequate support, they love new places, new ideas and new bits of information. Remember that as five-year-old children become six-year-olds, changes will occur rapidly in their growth and development.

## Physical Development

Kindergarteners abound with energy. Their new abilities in balance and coordination allow them to ride a bike with training wheels, swim, jump rope and play most ball games. They can also use their fingers to control writing and painting tools as well as manage zippers, buttons and shoelaces. You can expect your kindergarteners to:

- appear restless even when seated.
- have short attention spans or be easily distracted by things in the environment around them.
- enjoy boisterous play.
- be continuing to develop coordination skills.
- be quite good at large motor skills such as clapping, hopping and skipping while they are talking or singing.
- be continuing to develop fine motor skills; cutting is a skill that needs practice.

## Cognitive Development and Learning Skills

Kindergarteners are creative and enthusiastic problem solvers. They are eager to learn more about the world and how it works. They are able to gather information and carry out simple investigations. Hands-on experiences help them discover “how” and “why” things happen. You can expect your kindergarteners to:

- learn best through touch, exploration and movement; through activities that engage the whole child, and through the presentation of concepts one at a time.
- display increased ability to sequence things in time and enjoy hearing about the past.
- enjoy dress-up, fantasy stories and puppet plays.
- be interested in expanding beyond themselves and their immediate families.
- favor show-and-tell as a favorite activity.





## Language Development

Kindergarteners begin to extend their oral language skills to reading and writing. They use increasingly descriptive language to share information, ask questions and provide explanations. You can expect your kindergarteners to:

- display emerging reading skills.
- pronounce words clearly.
- have a good size vocabulary that continues to grow rapidly.
- be able to wait their turn to speak during group conversations.
- be able to discuss stories and tell their own tales.

## Social and Emotional Development

Kindergarteners become more social as they prefer activities that involve other children. They can handle feelings and social situations with greater independence. They may even choose to go to another room to calm down or try negotiating before asking for an adult to help. Fitting in and being accepted by the group is becoming more and more important. You can expect your kindergarteners to:

- get along well with all classmates.
- begin to understand rules, the concepts of winning/losing and working together.
- have difficulty losing, possibly walking away from a team game and pouting when losing.
- view the teacher as always right.
- seek affirmation of their abilities.
- play best in pairs rather than in larger groups.



## Spiritual Growth and Development

Kindergarten is a wonderful time for teachers and catechists to support families in developing the Catholic Identity of their children. It is a time to celebrate simple rituals and the traditions of the Church. Kindergarten is a time to introduce the children to a beginning faith vocabulary and provide a readiness for future catechesis in the faith of the Catholic Church. You can expect your kindergarteners to:

- have a natural sense of wonder and awe that fosters sensitivity to the sacred.
- imagine God as a human person.
- experience God's love through parents or guardians and other family members.
- have a natural tendency for prayer and enjoy ceremony and ritual.
- be comfortable with both formal and spontaneous prayer.
- interpret Bible stories and other stories literally, be unable to derive the symbolic meaning.



# Scope and Sequence

## INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

### INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER FOCUS

*We listen to stories from the Bible.  
Stories in the Bible tell us about God's love.*

### Welcome Chapter

- Major Concept:** The Bible is a special holy book from God. God tells us about himself in the Bible. God tells us how much he loves us.
- Key Word:** Bible
- Story:** "Stories from the Special Holy Book"

## UNIT ONE

### God Gave Us the World

#### UNIT ONE FOCUS

*God is the Creator. All God creates is good.*

### Chapter 1: God Created the World

- Major Concept:** God is the Creator. He created the world and everything in it. All God created is good.
- Key Word:** creation
- Bible Story:** "God Created All Things Good" Based on Genesis 1:1–31

### Chapter 2: We Care for Creation

- Major Concept:** God said, "Let people take care of all the creatures I made." Based on Genesis 1:26
- Key Word:** care (for creation)
- Story:** "Music in the Park"

### Chapter 3: God's Promise to Noah

- Major Concept:** God made a special promise to Noah and through him to all humankind. God promised to care for all people and animals. The rainbow is a sign that God loves and cares for us.
- Key Word:** promise
- Bible Story:** "God's Promise" Based on Genesis 6–9

### Chapter 4: We Share God's Love

- Major Concept:** God always shares his love with us. We show our love for God when we show our love for other people.
- Key Word:** share
- Story:** "A Sandwich and a Note"

## UNIT TWO

### God Knows and Loves Us

#### UNIT TWO FOCUS

*Jesus tells us that each person is special to God. God loves and cares for us.*

### Chapter 5: Jesus Welcomes the Children

- Major Concept:** Jesus taught that everyone is to live as a child of God. Things we do and say are to show that we are children of God and followers of Jesus.
- Key Word:** Jesus
- Bible Story:** "Jesus Blesses the Children" Based on Matthew 19:13–15, Mark 10:13–16 and Luke 18:15–17

### Chapter 6: We Are Children of God

- Major Concept:** God loves us. We are children of God.
- Key Word:** gifts
- Story:** "Chen's Gift"

### Chapter 7: Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

- Major Concept:** Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He loves and cares for his sheep.
- Key Word:** trust
- Bible Story:** "Jesus Is the Good Shepherd" Based on John 10:14–15 and Luke 15:3–7

### Chapter 8: We Care for Others

- Major Concept:** God loves and cares for us. We share God's love for other people when we care for them.
- Key Word:** care (for other people)
- Story:** "Not Enough Toys"

## UNIT THREE

### Jesus Is God's Own Son

#### UNIT THREE FOCUS

*God the Father sent us Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God. Mary and Joseph loved and cared for Jesus. Our families love and care for us.*

### Chapter 9: Jesus Lived in a Family

- Major Concept:** God chose Mary to be the Mother of Jesus. Joseph cared for Mary and Jesus. Jesus, Mary and Joseph are called the Holy Family.
- Key Word:** family
- Bible Story:** "The Birth of Jesus" Based on Luke 1:26–35, 2:1–7, 15–17

### Chapter 10: My Family Is a Sign of God's Love

- Major Concept:** My family is a gift from God. My family loves and takes care of me. My family helps me to show my love for God.
- Key Word:** belong
- Story:** "Family Fun on Friday"

### Chapter 11: Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

- Major Concept:** Jesus prayed to God the Father. Jesus taught us to pray to God the Father too. We tell God the Father that we love him.
- Key Word:** pray
- Bible Story:** "Jesus Teaches Us the Our Father" Based on Luke 11:1–4

### Chapter 12: We Pray Every Day

- Major Concept:** We pray every day. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray. We thank God for his blessings when we pray.
- Key Word:** Holy Trinity
- Story:** "Teaching Lucy the Words"

## UNIT FOUR

### God Gave Us Our Church Family

#### UNIT FOUR FOCUS

*We are members of our Church family.  
We celebrate God's love with our Church family.*

#### Chapter 13: Jesus Has Many Friends

**Major Concept:** The friends of Jesus are called the Church. Many people become friends of Jesus.

**Key Word:** Church

**Bible Story:** "New Friends of Jesus" Based on Acts of the Apostles 2:14-47

#### Chapter 14: We Belong to the Catholic Church

**Major Concept:** The Church is made up of friends of Jesus. Baptism makes us members of the Church.

**Key Word:** Baptism

**Story:** "A Special Family Sunday"

#### Chapter 15: Jesus Feeds Many People

**Major Concept:** Jesus shows the people God's love. Jesus feeds the crowd with five loaves of bread and two fish.

**Key Word:** thank

**Bible Story:** "Bread and Fish for Everyone" Based on Luke 9:10-17 and John 6:1-13

#### Chapter 16: We Thank God at Mass

**Major Concept:** The Church family gathers to celebrate Mass. We come together to thank God for his love for us.

**Key Word:** Mass

**Story:** "We Thank God at Mass"

## UNIT FIVE

### We Live as Friends of Jesus

#### UNIT FIVE FOCUS

*We live as Jesus taught us to live. We are kind, fair and helpful.*

#### Chapter 17: Zacchaeus Listens to Jesus

**Major Concept:** Zacchaeus listened to Jesus. Jesus teaches us to be kind and fair.

**Key Word:** listen

**Bible Story:** "Zacchaeus Listens to Jesus" Based on Luke 19:1-8

#### Chapter 18: We Listen to Jesus

**Major Concept:** Jesus taught us about God's love for us. We show God's love to other people.

**Key Word:** kind

**Story:** "Waiting for Lucy"

#### Chapter 19: The Good Neighbor

**Major Concept:** Jesus told stories to teach people. Jesus taught us to love one another.

**Key Word:** neighbor

**Bible Story:** "The Good Neighbor" Based on Luke 10:29-37

#### Chapter 20: The Holy Spirit Is Our Helper

**Major Concept:** The Holy Spirit is always with us. The Holy Spirit helps us live as children of God.

**Key Word:** Holy Spirit

**Story:** "Jada Shows Emma the Way"

## UNIT SIX

### We Celebrate Holy Days and Holidays

#### Chapter 21: Mary's Birthday

**Major Concept:** God chose Mary to be the Mother of Jesus. We celebrate and honor Mary and her parents on her birthday.

**Key Word:** Mary

**Story:** "God Chose Mary"

#### Chapter 22: All Saints Day

**Major Concept:** Saints show us ways to live as followers of Jesus.

**Key Word:** saint

**Story:** "A Party for Jesus' Friends"

#### Chapter 23: Thanksgiving Day

**Major Concept:** We thank God for all our blessings. We share our blessings.

**Key Word:** blessings

**Story:** "How Many Chairs?"

#### Chapter 24: Advent

**Major Concept:** Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

**Key Word:** Advent

**Bible Story:** "An Angel Brings Wonderful News to Mary" Based on Luke 1:26-40, 46

#### Chapter 25: Christmas

**Major Concept:** The Magi honored Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

**Key Word:** Magi

**Bible Story:** "The Magi Honor Baby Jesus" Based on Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

#### Chapter 26: The Holy Family

**Major Concept:** Jesus, Mary and Joseph were a family. They are the Holy Family.

**Key Word:** Holy Family

**Bible Story:** "The Boy Jesus in the Temple" Based on Luke 2:41-52

#### Chapter 27: Saint Valentine's Day

**Major Concept:** Jesus teaches us the Great Commandment. The Great Commandment teaches us how to love as God wants us to love.

**Key Word:** Great Commandment

**Bible Story:** "The Greatest Commandment" Based on Matthew 22:34-40

#### Chapter 28: Lent

**Major Concept:** Jesus invites us to grow in love during Lent. We grow in love when we share, help and pray.

**Key Word:** Lent

**Bible Story:** "The Farmer and the Seed" Based on Mark 4:1-8

#### Chapter 29: Easter

**Major Concept:** Easter is a time of new life. The signs of new life remind us that Jesus is alive and is always with us.

**Key Word:** Alleluia

**Bible Story:** "Alleluia! Jesus Is Alive!" Based on Matthew 28:1, 5-8; Mark 16:2, 7; Luke 24: 4-6, 9-12; John 20:1-10

#### Chapter 30: Mary, Our Mother

**Major Concept:** Mary is the Mother of Jesus and our mother too. Mary loves us. We honor and show our love to Mary.

**Key Word:** honor

**Story:** "Handprints and Flowers"

# The Stories of God's Love Kids



## Sam

Hi. My name is Sam.  
I love to build with blocks.  
My favorite color is green.  
I live with my mother and twin sister, Emma.

Sam loves to build things with his blocks. He can be still and quiet for a long time as he builds. He is shy around strangers, but always kind. When he grows up, he wants to build houses.



## Emma

Hi. My name is Emma.  
I love to draw and paint pictures.  
My favorite color is yellow.  
I live with my mother and twin brother, Sam.

Emma is fun to be around. She loves to be silly and to make others laugh. It makes her feel good. Sometimes she likes to paint pictures to show the whole family. When she grows up, she wants to be an artist.



## Jada

Hi. My name is Jada.  
I love animals.  
My favorite color is light blue.  
I live with my mother, father and older brother, Darius.

Jada loves animals. She has a puppy and a goldfish. She really likes to watch animals, especially at the zoo. She has light blue glasses that she loves to wear. When Jada grows up, she wants to be a veterinarian.

## Chen

Hi. My name is Chen.  
I love cars and my racetrack.  
My favorite color is red.  
I live with my mother, father and baby sister, Lucy.

Chen is full of energy and likes to play with his cars whenever he can. He has many cars and a racetrack in his room. He also likes to play with his baby sister, Lucy. When Chen grows up, he wants to be a racecar driver.



## Marcos

Hi. My name is Marcos.  
I love to sing and make music.  
My favorite color is orange.  
I live with my mother and father.

Marcos likes music. He has an MP3 player he likes to listen to. He likes to play his drums while he listens. When Marcos grows up, he wants to be a drummer in a band with his friends.



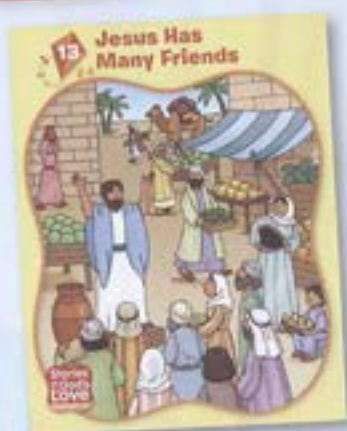
## Maria

Hi. My name is Maria.  
I love to read and look at my books.  
My favorite color is pink.  
I live with my father and grandparents.

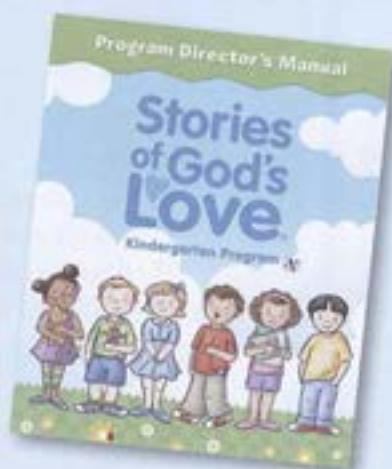
Maria is a good listener who loves to hear stories and look at her books. She likes to go to the library with Grandma to get new books each week. When she grows up, she wants to write stories.



# Component Overview



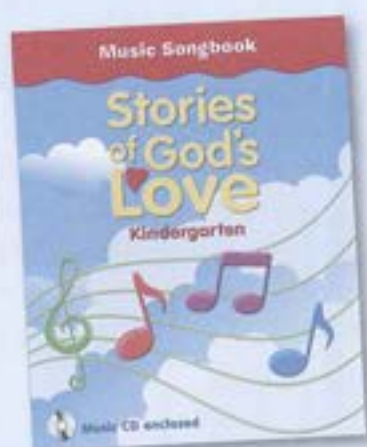
**Children's Leaflets**



**Program Director's Manual**



**Catechist/Teacher Guides**



**Songbook**



**Teaching Posters**



**Music CD**



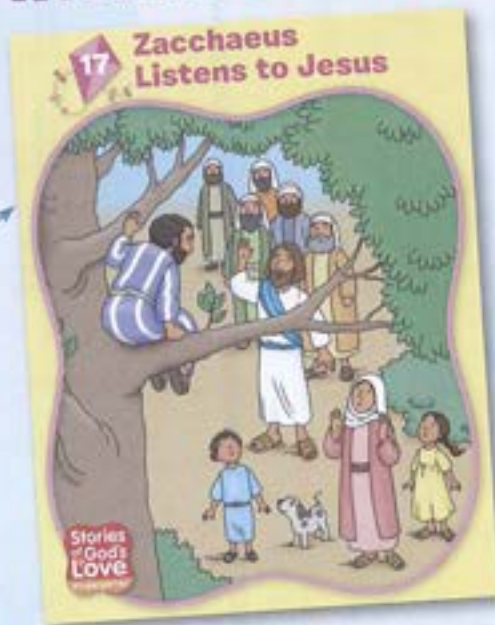
# Children's Leaflets

There are 31 story-based leaflets for *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten program.

- One introductory lesson to welcome the children.
- Ten Bible story lessons.
- Ten present-day life story lessons that connect with the Scripture stories.
- Ten seasonal celebrations.

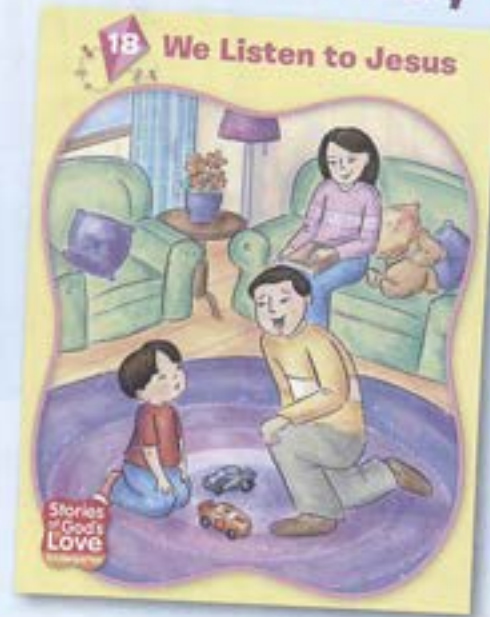
Scripture stories form the heart of the *Stories of God's Love* Kindergarten religion readiness program. Young children are introduced to a new Bible Story of God's love from the Scriptures every other week. A corresponding Life Story related to the child's life that reinforces the scriptural theme is presented on alternate weeks.

## Week 1: Bible Story



The Bible Story presents the faith theme of the lesson.

## Week 2: Life Story



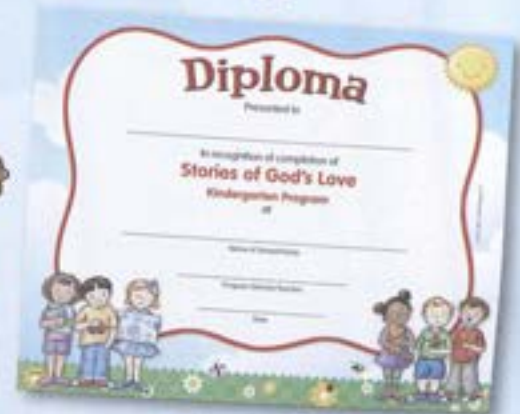
The Life Story parallels the Bible Story theme from the previous week and connects the faith theme to the child's everyday life.

## Character Punch-outs



Set of character punch-outs for child to use for storytelling and other activities

## Certificate





Colorful diploma for each child recognizing their participation in the program

## Activity Pages

The center spread of each leaflet contains engaging activities to help the children apply and integrate the weekly session theme into their own lives.

### Zacchaeus Listened to Jesus

Jesus taught Zacchaeus to be fair and kind.  
Friends of Jesus are fair and kind.



Tell what the children are doing in each picture.  
Draw lines from the circle to the images that are fair.

We live as Jesus taught us to live.



Hearts remind us to be fair and kind.  
Find and circle the hearts.

## For My Family Page

A resource that supports parent's efforts to actively participate in the faith development of their child.

### For My Family

#### Sharing the Story

**Zacchaeus Listened to Jesus**

After the story and his family came to a new school teacher, Jesus had been teaching them how to share with his friends, teaching the people that God loves them very much.

In Jesus and his friends were walking through Jericho, a crowd of people followed them. A crowd named Zacchaeus lived there. He was a tax collector and was very wealthy.

Zacchaeus joined with the crowd, looking for Jesus. The teacher saw him and said, "Zacchaeus, today you have found the one I want to go to." Jesus heard him and said, "Zacchaeus, today you have found the one I want to go to."

Zacchaeus was surprised and he knew that Jesus wanted to come to his house, and he quickly climbed down from the tree.

He had a conversation with Jesus and he knew that Jesus wanted to go to his house. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, today you have found the one I want to go to."

Zacchaeus was surprised and he knew that Jesus wanted to come to his house, and he quickly climbed down from the tree.

He had a conversation with Jesus and he knew that Jesus wanted to go to his house. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, today you have found the one I want to go to."

Zacchaeus was surprised and he knew that Jesus wanted to come to his house, and he quickly climbed down from the tree.

He had a conversation with Jesus and he knew that Jesus wanted to go to his house. Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, today you have found the one I want to go to."

#### Nurturing Our Children

Help your children that making mistakes is an important part of learning. Avoid over-protecting, praising and criticizing and encourage your child if they make a mistake.

Look with the greatest love each challenge. Your child also needs to know that there is a difference between making a mistake and intentionally doing something that they know is wrong - against family rules or content.

Be the one that wants to be fair. When your child is unable to remember, guide them to accept responsibility for their actions and to try "Next time".

#### Living Our Faith Together

How do these activities fit with your child?

- Ask your child to share the faith activities with you. They talk with your child about the play, sharing and learning about others.
- Invite your child to share a picture of himself or herself being kind. Ask your child to do this at the end of the week or at the end of the month.
- Visit www.AFL.org.au for more.

#### Praying as a Family

Remember that following prayers are your family's private prayer. They are the sign of the Cross.

Jesus, you are always welcome in our home. Help us to be kind and fair to everyone when we meet Jesus.

#### Scripture Background

Zacchaeus was a member of an important group of people who were called the Pharisees. They were called the Pharisees. They made their money by collecting taxes from the people. There was no law to say they could not charge.

### Nurturing Our Children

Advice from experts gives parents tips regarding their child's development.

### Living Our Faith Together

A variety of activities foster integrating what the children have learned into everyday family life.

### Praying as a Family

Weekly family prayers provide parents ways to guide their children in developing good prayer habits.

### Sharing the Story

The story told in class is provided for the parents for retelling at home.

### Saints and Holy People

A short biographical sketch of a saint or holy person and their important contribution to the Catholic life expands the Life Story based chapters.

or

### Scripture Background

Helps parents better understand the Scripture passages that form the foundation of the Bible Story based chapters.

## Seasonal Lessons

Stories of God's Love Kindergarten program provides ten seasonal lessons that:

- introduce children to holy days, holidays, feasts and liturgical seasons.
- build Catholic identity.
- provide stories, activities and prayers.
- offer ways to extend the celebrations into the home.



# Teacher Guide

## Background Page

Chapter background information to assist the teacher in preparing for the chapter theme that includes:

### Background for the Teacher

A brief scriptural and theological reflection related to the chapter faith theme

### For Reflection

A question inviting teachers to reflect on their living of the chapter faith theme and their modeling the faith theme for the children



### About the Children

Insights into the development of kindergarten-age children

### A Few Suggestions

Practical teaching tips for effective and age-appropriate lessons

### More Background

References to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

## Lesson Planner

### Faith Focus

The major faith focus for the chapter

### Story

The Bible story or real-life-story

### Enriching the Lesson

A quick reminder for additional resources to enrich the lesson with song and the variety of opportunities on RCLBenziger.com

### Chapter Objectives

Brief statement of lesson objectives to guide your teaching



### Materials Needed

A detailed list of necessary materials to complete the lesson

### Prayer

A prayer centered on the session theme to prepare the teacher

# Lesson Plan

In *Stories of God's Love*, you will follow this easy-to-use step-by-step process as you teach each lesson:

- Gather
- Teach and Apply
- Pray

## Gather

Music signals the children to move to the Story Time Area and helps focus them on the chapter story.

## Teach

In every lesson, the children discover and learn through story. (1) The story is introduced and the children are given a purpose for listening. (2) The children listen to the story. (3) The children are guided to recall the details of the story to reinforce their knowledge of the story.

## Apply

Age-appropriate activities engage the children to reinforce their understanding of the story and connect what they have learned to their everyday life.

**Day One**

**Lesson Objective**

**Gather**

**Teach**

**Apply**

**Pray**

**Day Two**

**Lesson Objective**

**Gather**

**Teach**

**Apply**

**Pray**

**Day Three**

**Lesson Objective**

**Gather**

**Teach**

**Apply**

**Pray**

**Day Four**

**Lesson Objective**

**Gather**

**Teach**

**Apply**

**Pray**

## Pray

Your lessons end in prayer. Additional extended prayer celebrations are provided in the *Stories of God's Love Kindergarten* program Songbook.

## Activity Masters

Reproducible masters are provided throughout to enhance the activities.

## Additional Activities

Optional activities are provided for every chapter. They offer you choices for class activities that include strategies for the many ways children learn.



# Additional Resources



## Music Program

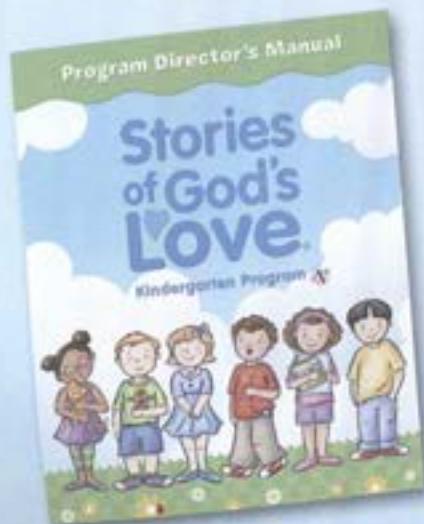
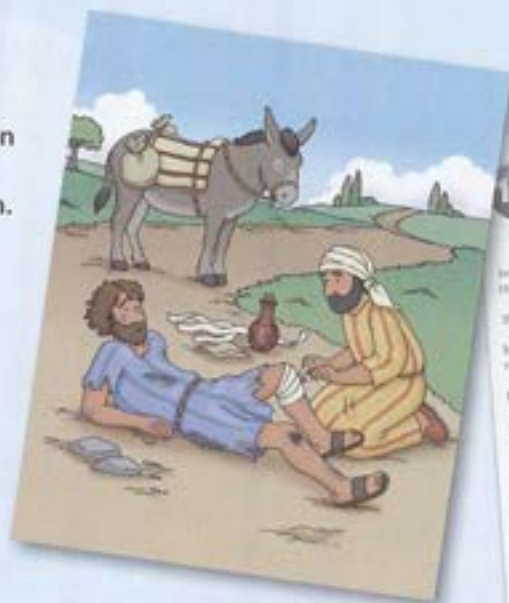
Music is an integral part of *Stories of God's Love Kindergarten*. The music program includes the following elements:

- Music CD containing both lyrics and instrumental versions of each song
- Songbook with lyrics and accompaniment for piano and guitar and a prayer celebration for each unit



## Teaching Posters

*Stories of God's Love Kindergarten* program provides you with a teaching poster for every session. These provide a focal point for story time. The posters contain the same images and story as the ones on the corresponding Children's Leaflet.



## RCLBenziger.com

Go to [RCLBenziger.com](http://RCLBenziger.com) to find a multitude of ideas for teachers and parents to help young children take their first steps in faith. You'll find additional activities and teaching tips, as well as resources for both the children and their families.

## Program Director's Manual

Kindergarten Program Coordinators will find a treasury of resources in this manual to support their teachers and parents and to connect the religion readiness program to the whole community of faith.

# Getting Ready

## The Environment as the Third Teacher

Young children learn from active exploration of their environment. It is important that we think about setting up the classroom with activity centers that allow children to explore and learn.

Kindergarteners generally do not sit quietly at a table or floor activity for very long (8–10 minutes maximum). Thus, the environment needs to be designed to allow them to move around, be active and make choices. Teachers can “play” with the children, guiding them to engage in tasks that help the children learn the concept of the day, such as “caring for others” or “Jesus wants me to be kind to my friends.”

Refer to the Program Director’s Manual or series Web site for suggested materials and centers.

Establishing an appropriate and engaging environment will take some planning on the teacher’s part. However, these efforts can pay off with young children who are engaged in learning.



# Getting Ready

## The Importance of Active Learning and Enticing Materials

Children at this stage of development learn by interacting with materials and activities. Thus, the teacher will need to plan ahead and have enticing materials (those that make the child want to participate) set up in an inviting and engaging manner. It is best if children are allowed to explore the materials so that they can make their own meaning with the guidance of the teacher. Modeling activities can be helpful, but remember that children at this age may not get it “right” or have their product look like yours. The learning is what is important through active engagement.

## Classroom Management through Guiding Behavior

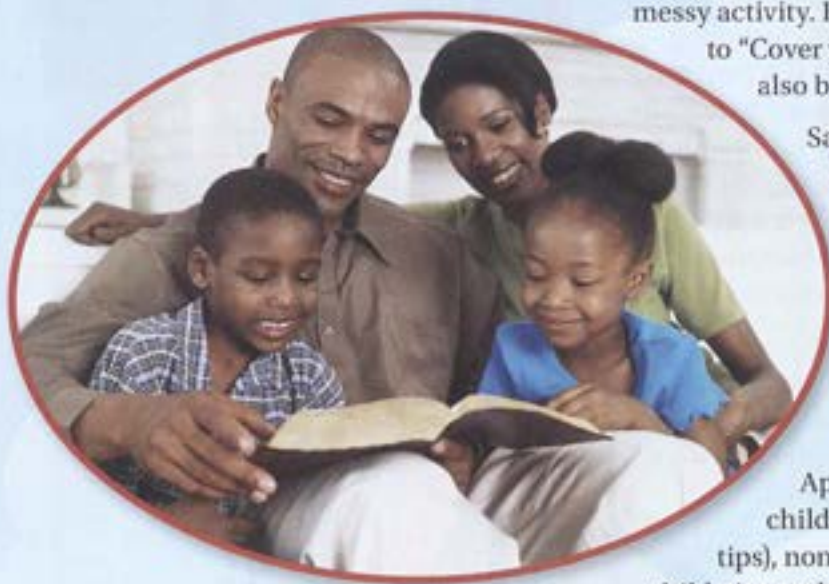
Positive behavior management techniques have been proven to be more effective than punitive or negative management strategies. Strategies that will help you decrease behavior problems include being ready for class (having all your materials ready, music and books ready to go), praising appropriate behavior (sharing, helping others, picking up toys or trash) and having a daily routine with cues to the children when it is time for a transition and what the next activity will be. Guiding the children through verbal prompts, modeling of appropriate behavior and praising acts of kindness and acts of helping will all encourage children to “behave” in class. You will also need to support the children as they learn to manage conflicts. Help them learn the words and support them as they practice using them.





## Health and Safety First!

Little children are infamous for runny noses, coughing and sharing their germs! You can help stop the spread of germs by encouraging and modeling appropriate hand washing with soap after using the restroom, before eating snacks or after participating in a particularly messy activity. Having tissues handy and teaching children to “Cover your mouth” in the crook of their arm will also be helpful.



Safety also needs to be taught, with gentle reminders of class and school rules (no running in the hallways, no climbing or sitting on furniture other than chairs, no hitting, and so on). It is often helpful for children to be involved in making the rules, with the teacher writing them on poster board and the children decorating the poster once it is complete.

Appropriate tools need to be available for the children to use, including safety scissors (round tips), non-toxic washable paints and crayons and child-size tools if using any for the weekly activities.

Medical issues and allergies need to be known about the children, as does emergency contact information for the parents/caregiver.

## Family Involvement and Communication

Encourage families to be involved in the program. They can help in the classroom, use the children’s leaflet to practice new concepts at home or donate materials that are listed on the classroom wish list (see the Program Director’s Manual).

The parents’ role may be somewhat different with this age group as separation is often difficult for children until they begin to trust the teacher. Parents should be encouraged to stay and join in with the lesson until their child is comfortable. Gradually, they should be able to leave the child for longer and longer periods of time as the children adjust to their new surroundings.

Parents should be encouraged to view the family page of the children’s leaflet and to read the Bible and life stories presented and discuss the topics of the lesson also included for family discussion. Taking a few minutes to talk with the parents as they drop off or pick up the children will help make transitions smoother for the children and will let parents be aware of what their child did while in class.

# Getting Ready

## Working with Children with Special Learning Needs and Developmental Differences

Children with special learning needs are likely to be members of your class and can be accommodated with some basic modifications. Most children with special needs, including children with autism, learn best through repetition, consistency (schedule, locations in the room for specific events such as the Story Time Area, prayer center, and so on), cues for attention (calling their name before asking a question, telling the class to listen for a particular concept as you are reading or seating them next to you for quick taps on the shoulder or knee to help them refocus on you) and visual cues (pictures, models, word cards or sequencing cards to complete a task).

Children with visual impairments benefit from enlarged materials, physical cues such as outlining a picture with a line of glue that will harden and leave a ridge and verbal descriptions of what the other children are seeing to help them learn and participate in given tasks.

Children who are deaf or hard of hearing generally benefit from sitting where they can see the speaker's lips or visual cues and possibly an amplification system. Physical impairments can be accommodated by room arrangement, seating of the other children in the class (others in chairs instead of sitting on the floor if the child needs to stay seated in a wheelchair) and modified utensils and tools that can be provided by the family or child's therapists.

Children who are gifted or talented also need to be considered. Provide enrichment activities to keep them interested in the tasks and activities.



# Resources to Use with the Children

## Introductory Unit

*That's What Friends Are For* by Valeri Gorbachev (Philomel, 2005)

**Theme:** friendship

In this fourth book in a series, Goat and Pig experience the meaning of friendship when Goat misunderstands Pig's tears from cutting onions, which turns into an opportunity for them to make and enjoy dinner together.

*Don't Need Friends* by Carolyn Crimi (Dragonfly Books, 2001)

**Theme:** friendship

A grouchy junkyard dog and a surly rat decide they need each other.

*God's Quiet Things* by Nancy Sweetland (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998)

**Theme:** creation

A child's consciousness is raised through the quiet marvels found in nature.

*I Wonder* by Tana Hoban (Harcourt Brace, 1999)

**Theme:** creation

A thoughtful walk in the park becomes a wonderful look at nature.

*The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers (HarperCollins Children's Books, 1991)

**Theme:** creation

A little girl, her father and their dog take a quiet walk, listening to many different sounds along the way.

## Unit One

*Bible Animals* (Bible Discovery Collection) by Bruce B. Barton (Tyndale House, 1997)

**Theme:** creation

Presents fascinating facts about the animals of the Bible.

*Designed by God So I Must Be Special* by Bonnie Sose (Character Builders for Kids, 1991)

**Theme:** uniqueness

A warm colorful book designed to stimulate the imagination and enhance the self-esteem of young children.

*From One to One Hundred* by Terri Sloat (Puffin Books, 1995)

**Theme:** creation

Animals and people from all around the world are pictured in this detailed counting book.

*Noah's Trees* by Bijou Le Tord (HarperCollins Children's Books, 2007)

**Theme:** caring for God's creation

In this new perspective on the Old Testament story, Noah is a gardener who tends to dozens of trees. When God asks Noah to build the ark, he does so obediently, making sure to take pairs of animals and plenty of saplings along.

*Rain* by Manya Stojic (Chrysalis Children's Books, 2001)

**Theme:** God's wondrous creation

Follow the animals of the African savanna who eagerly anticipate and experience rain through the senses of smell, sight, sound, touch and taste.

*The Salamander Room* by Anne Mazer (Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

**Theme:** creation

Brian brings a salamander home and thinks of ways he can make his new pet feel comfortable.

# Resources to Use with the Children

*Sam Who Never Forgets* by Eve Rice (William Morrow and Co., 1987)

**Theme:** creation

This story tells of a zookeeper's rounds and how he cares for each animal.

*Swimmy* by Leo Lionni (Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

**Theme:** creation

Swimmy, the little black fish and lone survivor in a school of red ones, devises an ingenious scheme for protecting a new school of fish friends.

*The Way I Love You* by David Bedford (Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004)

**Theme:** caring for God's creation

A young girl counts the ways she and her dog are best friends.

*I Know a Lady* by Charlotte Zoltow (Mulberry Books, 1992)

**Theme:** children are special

Sally describes a kind old lady in her neighborhood who always tries to make the children feel special.

*It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2001)

**Theme:** uniqueness

A book that describes all sorts of differences that will help kids celebrate their individuality.

*Now One Foot, Now the Other* by Tomie dePaola (Putnam Publishing Group, 1998)

**Theme:** family

Until his fifth birthday his grandfather, Bob, taught him to do many things. After Bob has a stroke, Bobby becomes his grandfather's teacher.

*Otis* by Janie Bynum (Voyager Books, 2003)

**Theme:** uniqueness, friendship

Otis is a young pig who dislikes the mud. He eventually befriends a young frog who also does not care to be dirty.

*Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1993)

**Theme:** uniqueness, friendship

After Stellaluna falls into a bird's nest, the baby bat is raised like a bird until she is reunited with her mother.

## Unit Two

*Arnie and the New Kid* by Nancy Carlson (Econo-Clad Books, 1999)

**Theme:** bullying, friendship

When Arnie has an accident, he realizes what life is like for newcomer Philip, who is confined to a wheelchair.

*Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems* by Mary Ann Hoberman (Puffin Books, 1993)

**Theme:** family

This delightfully illustrated collection contains both humorous and serious poems about every kind of family member.

## Unit Three

*Because Your Daddy Loves You* by Andrew Clements  
(Clarion Books, 2005)

**Theme:** caring for ourselves, parent/child relationship

This book celebrates a father's unconditional love and patience for his daughter who experiences some frustration while at the beach.

*Bubba and Beau Meet the Relatives* by Kathi Appelt  
(Harcourt Children's Books, 2004)

**Theme:** family

The hilarious adventures of Bubba and Beau continue when Granddaddy Bubba, Grandma Ruby, Aunt Sapphire, Cousin Arlene and dog Bitsy visit.

*Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets (Penguin Group, 1978)

**Theme:** Holy Spirit

Gilberto finds the wind to be an unpredictable playmate.

*How Does God Listen?* by Kay Lindahl (Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005)

**Theme:** prayer

Young readers will explore spiritual questions that speak to their heart. The children learn that God's presence can be experienced through the use of their senses.

*My Book of Thanks* by B.G. Hennessy (Candlewick, 2005)

**Theme:** prayer

A collection of prayers and petitions for young children to enjoy.

*Sing a New Song: A Book of Psalms* by Bijou Le Tord  
(William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997)

**Theme:** prayer

A beautiful collection of psalm verses combined with equally beautiful watercolor illustrations.

## Unit Four

*How to Be a Friend: A Guide to Making Friends and Keeping Them* by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Tolon Brown (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2001)

**Theme:** friends

This book offers specific ways to be and not be a friend.

*The Mass Book for Children* by Rosemarie Gortler, Donna Piscitelli, Mimi Sternhagen (Our Sunday Visitor, 2004)

**Theme:** Mass

This book is a great way to introduce children to the Mass. It teaches the parts of the Mass as well as explains why participating in the Mass is an experience of love.

*Miracles of Jesus* by Pamela Broughton, Jane Werner Watson and Jerry Smath (Random House Children's Books, 2009)

**Theme:** miracles

This book retells the stories of two of Jesus' most well-known miracles, feeding the crowd and walking on water.

# Resources to Use with the Children

*Sunday Morning* by Gail Ramshaw (Liturgy Training Publications, 1993)

**Theme:** Mass

Children are given a multicultural introduction to the Sunday liturgy.

*We Go to Mass* by Judy Winkler (Catholic Book Publishing Company, 2004)

**Theme:** Mass, church

This book contains a creative way to help the children learn about the Mass with five exciting jigsaw puzzles alongside a description for the major parts of the Mass.

*Water Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized* by Walter Wangerin Jr. (Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 1999)

**Theme:** Baptism

All creation join family and friends in celebrating the baptism of a child of God.

*The Kindness Quilt* by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2006)

**Theme:** kindness

Minna, a young rabbit, and her friends learn about acts of kindness when their teacher, Mrs. Bloom, assigns them a kindness project. So Minna decides to make a quilt to illustrate the various acts of kindness she performed.

*The Little Engine that Could* by Watty Piper (Penguin Group, 1990)

**Theme:** helping

After several engines refuse to help, the Little Blue Engine pulls a stranded train full of toys over the mountain to the good little boys and girls on the other side.

*Seven Animals Wag Their Tales* retold by Howard I. Bogot and Mary K. Bogot (Pitspopany, 2000)

**Theme:** helping

This is a collection of stories by theme: helpfulness, making choices, cooperation, duty, teamwork, courage and accepting differences.

## Unit Five

*Because of You* by B. G. Hennessy (Candlewick, 2005)

**Theme:** kindness, friendship, peace

This book highlights the importance of the individual and how each of us can make a difference in the world through our sharing and helping others.

*The Flower Man* by Mark Ludy (Green Pastures Publishing, Inc., 2005)

**Theme:** caring, sharing

A wordless story told through illustrations about a man who transforms a small town.

*Simon and Molly Plus Hester* by Lisa Jahn-Clough (Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 2001)

**Theme:** friendship

Simon and Molly are best friends, and then Molly befriends Hester, causing Simon to feel left out. So the three work through reconciling the friendships.

*The Teddy Bear* by David McPhail (Henry Holt and Co., 2002)

**Theme:** care, compassion

This is a story about a teddy bear who is lost and found and lost and found again, and a little boy who begins to learn about compassion.

*Toot and Puddle: You Are My Sunshine* by Holly Hobbie (Little, Brown, 2001)

**Theme:** friendship

Friends of Toot try to cheer him up from his gloominess and sorrow. After some time and a storm, Toot finally gains a new outlook because of the support of his friends.

*When Randolph Turned Rotten* by Charice Mericle Harper (Random House Children's Books, 2007)

**Theme:** friendship

A reassuring story about the icky feelings we all have, even though we are mostly very nice.

## Unit Six

*1, 2, 3, Valentine's Day* by Jeanne Modesitt (Boyd's Mills Press, 2002)

**Theme:** Valentine's Day

In this rhyming counting book that celebrates the love of Valentine's Day, Mister Mouse, dressed in a dark pink suit, visits his animal friends to give them gifts.

*B Is for Bethlehem: A Christmas Alphabet* by Isabel Wilner (Dutton Children's Books, 1990)

**Theme:** Christmas

This glorious alphabet book, illustrated with shimmering collages, tells the story of the first Christmas as it was performed by a group of school children.

*Boston and the Feast of St. Francis* by Sue Stanton (Paulist Press, 1994)

**Theme:** saints

A child's pet creates excitement at the annual blessing of the animals.

*The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss (HarperCollins, 1945)

**Theme:** Lent, growth

A small boy plants a seed, cares for it, and believes that it will grow, even though his family tells him that it won't.

*The Children's Book of Saints* by Louis M. Savary (Regina Press, Malhame & Company 1986)

**Theme:** saints

This is a collection of stories about the lives of the saints.

*Easter* by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House, 1989)

**Theme:** Easter

The events leading up to Jesus' death and his rising from the dead are carefully presented to young children, along with an explanation of some of our Easter customs.

*In My Heart* by Molly Bang (Little Brown Young Readers, 2006)

**Theme:** motherhood

With a cast of multicultural characters, a mother describes the love in her heart for her child as she reflects on all aspects of her day.

# Resources to Use with the Children

*Loving* by Ann Morris (Lothrop, Lee and Shepherd Books, 1990)

**Theme:** parenthood

Parents all over the world show their love for their children in many heart-warming photographs.

*Loyola Kids Book of Saints* by Amy Welborn (Loyola Press, 2001)

**Theme:** saints

This collection features over sixty saints and encourages readers to consider how they might apply what they learned from the story to their everyday lives.

*Mary the Mother of Jesus* by Tomie dePaola (Holiday House, 1995)

**Theme:** Mary

The author reverently retells fifteen episodes from Mary's life by combining Scripture, legend and tradition.

*Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African tale* by John Steptoe (Lothrop, Lee and Shepherd Books, 1987)

**Theme:** Great Commandment

An African tale that retells the message of Jesus to treat others as they would like to be treated.

*My Mom* by Anthony Browne (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005)

**Theme:** motherhood

This book is an affectionate tribute to motherhood from the perspective of the adoring child with illustrations of the everyday mom who is the strongest woman in the world.

*Over the River and through the Wood* by Lydia Maria Child and Iris Van Rynbach (Little Brown & Co., 1989)

**Theme:** thanksgiving

Full-page illustrations detail rural scenes alongside this familiar children's poem about a visit to grandmother's house on Thanksgiving Day.

*The Popcorn Book* by Tomie dePaola (Holiday House, 1978)

**Theme:** change, Lent

From this well-illustrated book, young children can learn the history of popcorn, how it grows, and how it is cooked. Included are legends and recipes.

*Rabbit's Good News* by Ruth Bornstein (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1995)

**Theme:** Easter

When Rabbit comes out of her warm dark hole, the signs of new life that she sees softly tell her that "Spring is here!"

*Saint Francis and the Christmas Donkey* by Robert Byrd (Dutton Juvenile, 2000)

**Theme:** All Saints Day

Saint Francis meets a donkey in the forest who is struggling with the heavy burden he carries every day. Saint Francis tells him the story of the birth of Jesus, which raises his spirits.

*Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch* by Eileen Spinelli (Simon and Schuster, 1991)

**Theme:** Valentine's Day, kindness

When the unsociable Mr. Hatch receives an anonymous valentine, he becomes a friendly person doing acts of kindness for his neighbors.



# A Teacher's Prayer

*Gracious God, I ask your blessing as I begin this year as a teacher to the young children in our kindergarten program. Help me follow the example of your Son, Jesus, and all faithful people as I help these young ones take their first steps in faith.*

*Give me the spirit of **welcome** that Jesus showed when he gathered children around him. Remind me to show the kindergarten children how much I appreciate the blessing that each of them brings to our class.*

*Give me the gift of **persistence** displayed by the Good Shepherd who cared for each of his sheep. Help me give special attention to the children who most need to know your love for them.*

*Give me the spirit of **love** present in the Holy Family. Guide me in creating a circle of love and mutual respect within my teaching space.*

*Give me the gift of **faith** of the first disciples, who answered Jesus' call to proclaim his Good News to all people. May I tell the stories of your great love for us with the same passion and commitment.*

*Give me the spirit of **forgiveness** as I teach the children to be thoughtful and to forgive one another as your Son taught us to do.*

*Above all, help me to create a community of faith, which is marked by listening, sharing, praising you and treating one another with a spirit of love and care. Instill in me a child's sense of wonder and awe as I reflect on the mystery of your love and on the gift of being invited to serve as a teacher for you this year. Amen.*

