

PART 3

Moral Life

Faith Focus: *God forgives us as he did the Israelites in the desert.*

Reflecting on the Faith Experience

Take a few moments to reflect prayerfully before preparing the meeting.

John 3:14–15

“And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

Question: How quickly do I turn to the all-forgiving God when sin separates me from him?

Learning Outcomes

- Explain how we are all created in the image and likeness of God.
- Describe how being in a relationship with Jesus makes us want to make good choices.
- Discuss the terms *actual grace*, *Original Sin*, *mortal sin*, *sanctifying grace*, and *venial sin*.

Materials

- Bible
- Reflective music

Scripture in This Part

Deuteronomy 30:15–16, 19–20



Catholic Social Teaching in Part 3

Life and Dignity of the Human Person: All human life is sacred and all people must be treated with dignity. As Catholics, we strive to respect and value people over material goods. We ask whether our actions as a society respect or threaten the life and dignity of the human person. The foundation of our moral vision is our belief in the life and the dignity of the human person.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

The themes in this part correspond to the following paragraphs of the *Catechism*: 1714, 1757, 1871, 1874–1875, 2021.

Welcome!



Moral Life

Stop Trying to
Fix Yourself

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Time

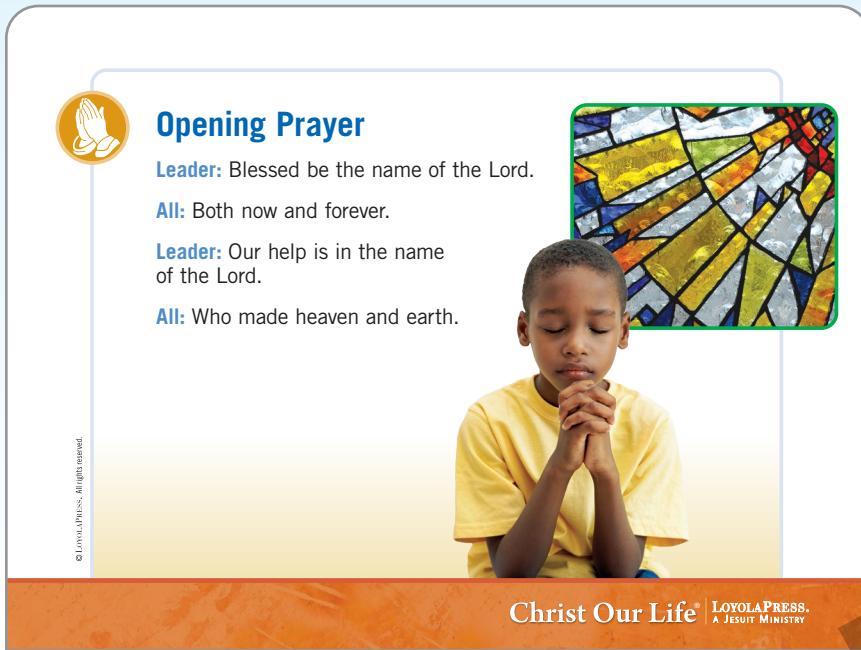
The Welcome section will be about 15 minutes.


Welcome families, and introduce yourself and the grade-level catechists. Invite the participants to introduce themselves to those around them. Before beginning the meeting, address any scheduling or parish-specific information.

SAY: Welcome! Today we will focus on Part 3: Moral Life. We'll explore the Catholic moral life by focusing on the realities of grace and sin and recognizing when it comes to sin, we need to stop trying to fix ourselves. Only God can repair us!

We will all stay together for the first part of today's meeting; then the children will go with their catechists to complete the first chapter of Part 3.

Explain how your Family Catechesis program works and whether the remaining sessions can be taught at home by parents or in the parish by grade-level catechists.



 **Opening Prayer**

Leader: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: Both now and forever.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

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Lead the group in prayer, following the prompts. Indicate that you will pray the lines for “Leader” and the group will pray the lines for “All.”

Say: Let’s begin our prayer.

Begin the prayer with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All: Both now and forever.

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.



Prayer

Ask participants to quiet their minds before beginning the prayer.



Reader: A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy:

See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

Deuteronomy 30:15–16,19–20

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



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Scripture

As an option, invite the volunteer to stand and read aloud the Scripture from the Bible.



Tip

Explain how Scripture passages are read:
Deuteronomy, *chapter 30, verses 15 through 16 and 19 through 20.*

Say: We will now hear the Word of God.

Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Scripture.

Reader: A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy:

See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, Your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the Lord swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.



Adults: God, you have blessed us with the ability to choose. May we choose to listen to your Word. May we choose to follow you.

Children: You are always with us. Help us become more aware of your constant loving presence. Help us listen to your voice inside our hearts.

Adults: As we continue to grow in our faith, may the decisions we make reflect our love for you and one another.

Children: We pray this in the name of your loving Son, Jesus.

All: Amen.



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Say: Now, let us pray, following our assigned parts, beginning with the adults.

Adults: God, you have blessed us with the ability to choose. May we choose to listen to your word. May we choose to follow you.

Children: You are with us during this time together. Help us become more aware of your constant loving presence. Help us listen to your voice inside our hearts.

Adults: As we continue to grow in our faith, may the decisions we make reflect our love for you and one another.

Children: We pray this in the name of your loving Son, Jesus.

All: Amen.

Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.



Prayer

Pray both parts as you lead the prayer.



Tip

After the prayer, allow time for reflection.

Family Resemblance



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Tip

If you share a strong resemblance with a family member, consider showing a picture to get the game started.

Say: Let's get started.

First, we're going to have a little activity before the children are sent off with their catechists. This is a family resemblance contest, and it will be very informal. For starters, we're looking for children here who bear a resemblance to either a sibling, a parent, or a guardian. This can also include other similarities, such as habits and likes and dislikes. Who thinks they have a strong family resemblance going on?

Invite volunteers to the front of the room. Line up five or six pairs.

Say: OK, what traits or characteristics do each of you pairs share in common?

Have members of each pair name some traits or characteristics that they share in common.

Family Resemblance



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Say: Many of us bear a strong resemblance to someone in our family, whether it be a parent, child, brother or sister, grandparent, cousin, aunt, or uncle. Sometimes that resemblance is physical. Other times, we may acquire certain personality traits from family members.

Well, we're going to begin today by focusing on a resemblance that all of us possess! And that is a resemblance to God!



FYI

God's creation of humankind in his image is told in Genesis 1:26–27.

Imago Dei

We are made in the image and likeness of God.



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**Tip**

Consider playing reflective music as children are dismissed.

Say: The Book of Genesis tells us that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. That doesn't mean that we resemble God physically. It means that we have inherited God's characteristics—namely, his ability to love others.

When we reflect the image of God—*imago dei* in Latin—we are living a life of grace. When we act contrary to God's image, we are participating in sin.

Today, we're going to look at the realities of grace and sin. We're going to explore the fact that we cannot heal ourselves when we sin. We need a Savior—Jesus Christ. With that in mind, let's dismiss our children now to go with their catechists for their meetings.

Dismiss catechists and children to their meetings by having each grade-level catechist hold up a sign for their grade level. Ask children to accompany their catechists to their meetings.

Grace

A loving relationship with God



Michelangelo's depiction of God creating Adam

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Say: We're going to start with the good stuff—grace!

The Catholic Church teaches us that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God. This means that we can enter into a relationship of grace with God.

Grace is not something we collect. It is not something that can be measured in quantity. Grace is a state or a condition. When we are in a state of grace, we are in a healthy relationship with God. A state of sin, however, means we have distanced ourselves from God. For example, at times you may feel close to a friend, and other times you may experience a distance from him or her.

True happiness is found in *grace*—in a loving relationship with God.



Time

The Connect section will be about 30 minutes.



FYI

Pope John Paul II called grace “the fruit of the sacraments” and the “irreplaceable condition for Christian living.”
(*Fidei Depositum*, 2)

Actual Grace

A Grace That Compels Us to Take Action in Our Lives to Put God and Others First



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FYI

Through actual grace, God helps us conform our lives to his will. (CCC, Glossary p. 881)

Say: Relationships don't just happen; they require work. Sometimes friends “nudge” us to deepen the relationship we have with them. They may say something to provoke us or do something to get our attention. Whatever it may be, the intended message is, “Pay attention to me!”

Similarly, God sometimes nudges us to get our attention so that we might enter more deeply into relationship with him. Perhaps we are caught by the beauty of a sunrise, the laughter of a child, a moment of reconciliation with a friend or family member, or an experience of deep significance. Reflecting on such moments, we realize that we have been experiencing **actual grace**—a grace that compels us to act to put God first in our lives.

When have you felt God trying to get your attention?



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Say: When was a moment that you felt nudged by God, an experience when you felt God was trying to get your attention?

Pause for a moment to allow time for reflection.

Say: Let's take a few minutes to share those experiences.

Have participants form small groups and share anecdotes about times they felt God reaching out to them. Then ask volunteers to share their stories with the larger group.



Sharing

Consider initiating the discussion by sharing a personal story.

Sanctifying Grace

Leading Us into an Ongoing Life of Discipleship



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FYI

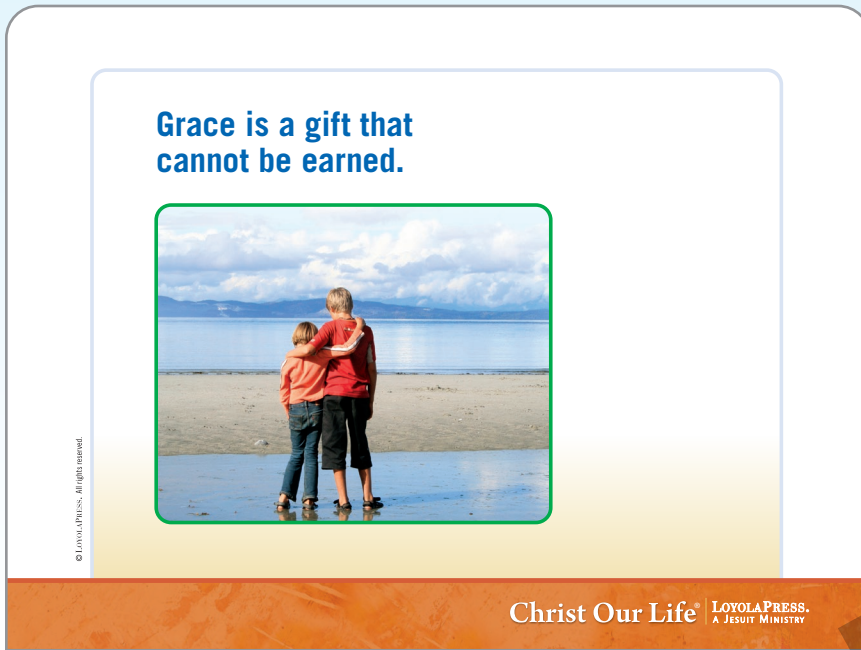
We receive sanctifying grace through the Holy Spirit in Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.

SAY: Once we commit to a deeper relationship with someone, we might think, “How could I have ever lived without him or her?” The relationship sustains us daily in an ongoing way. Similarly, when we find ourselves rooted in a relationship with God, we recognize that this relationship sustains us, and we want to keep it healthy.

Let’s think for a moment about such relationships in our lives, like family and good friends.

Pause for a moment to allow time for reflection.

SAY: We receive **sanctifying grace** through the Sacraments of Initiation. In faith, we recognize God’s saving love guiding us to a loving relationship with him and one another. Sanctifying grace leads us into an ongoing life of discipleship that we practice by receiving the sacraments, performing works of mercy, and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.




Say: Grace is a gift that we need but cannot be earned. We cannot do anything to earn God's grace. We cannot pry it away from him. Rather, God's grace is freely given to us in overflowing abundance.

**Tip**

Refer participants to the 3-Minute Retreats at www.loyolapress.com for prayers that encourage reflection on topics such as grace.

Ignatian Spirituality
Finding God in All Things



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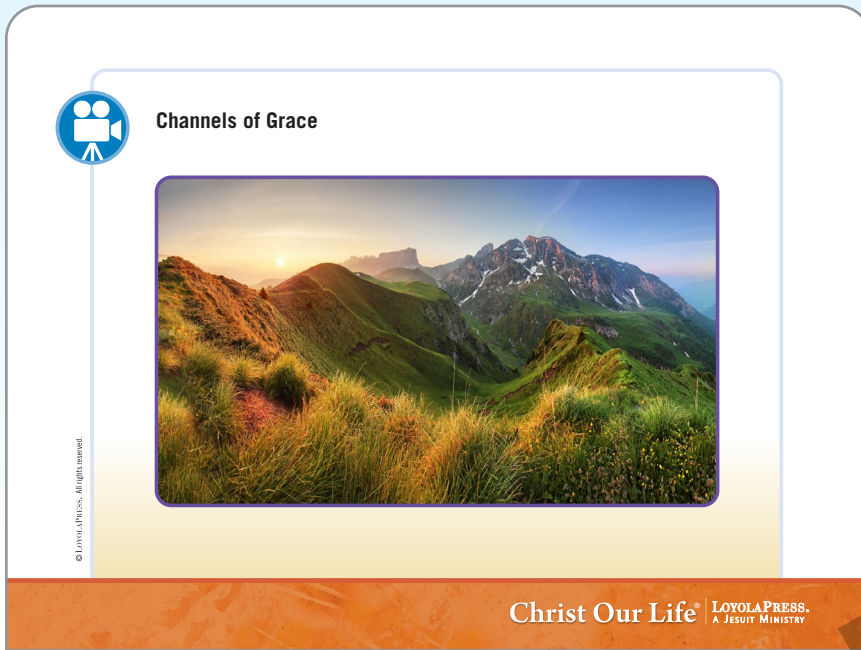


FYI

Saint Ignatius founded the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits.

Say: To be Catholic is to acknowledge and recognize that God's grace is abundantly poured forth into our world and may be lurking almost anywhere. This is what led to Saint Ignatius of Loyola's notion of finding God in all things.

Simply put, we Catholics believe that our world is filled with opportunities and experiences that can deepen our relationship with God. Our world is filled with grace.



Say: Let's watch a video about God's grace in our daily lives, which can lead us to a greater awareness of his undying love for us.

Play the video. Afterward, pause for a moment to allow time for reflection.



Video

Click anywhere on the slide to play the video or launch it from the LP Digital Library.