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## CHAT WITH THE PARENT OR TEACHER

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### Introduction

First I would like to introduce myself. After Our Blessed Mother brought me into the Holy Catholic Church, I spent about three years studying the Faith and teaching Catechism to young children. Shortly after that, I began teaching pre-kindergarten through third grade at a private Catholic school. As the school grew, the classes were divided and I was able to "specialize" in kindergarten and first grade for the last two and a half of the five years that I taught.

During that time, God sent me a wonderful Catholic husband. I quit teaching when He blessed us with our first child, a lovable baby girl. I have written this book during her naps. It is for my children, as well as yours, that I have written it, so it is written with a mother's care. May the Mother of all Christians bless and guide us as we use it.

### Important Instructions

Blanche, Queen of Castille, once told her son, Louis, that she would rather see him dead than have him commit one mortal sin. He became the great Saint Louis, King of France. Do you think, if she had read to him from a book: "It is better to die than to commit one mortal sin," that it would have had as much effect on him as the words which came from a mother's loving heart?

Perhaps this illustration will best explain to you why I have not written a book for the child to read or for you to read to the child. Instead, I have written a step by step guide to enable you to arouse the child's interest, apply the Faith to his daily life, and convey to him your love of Jesus and Mary and of the child himself. Our chief aim, after all, is to inflame his heart with love of God and His Holy Mother, and enkindle in him the desire to please God. And what lights one heart on fire better than the sparks from another heart?

For Chapter I, LEARNING OUR BASIC PRAYERS, I have first briefly noted the basic points and then explained in depth how to teach each lesson. I hope this will give you a clear understanding of the methods of presentation. As you become familiar with these methods, you can see how the Basic Principles, given below, are applied.

For subsequent lessons, I have given the main concepts and questions. You will want to read each lesson in advance. You may wish to jot down the main points before your presentation or you may wish to keep the book in front of you during the talk. Either way, you should then make the lesson personal and adapt it to the age, knowledge, and ability of the child.

### Basic Principles in Giving the "Chats"

1. Help the child to enjoy the Religion Lessons. Be enthusiastic and cheerful. Children are sensitive to our attitudes.
2. Teach the part that Our Blessed Mother plays in the Mysteries of our Faith. Remind the child frequently that she is our loving Mother who will always help us if we ask her.
3. Capture his interest and get him involved by asking him questions. Give him the answers, but whenever possible, draw them out of him by your guidance.
4. Keep the lessons short. Long lessons can be taxing to a child's short attention span and thereby make Religion distasteful to him. The lessons can range from two or three minutes for three year olds to about twenty minutes for second graders. The lessons can be followed by an average of ten minutes of singing holy songs and/or reading a holy story. (For Pre-schoolers, this can be done on separate days.)
5. Always keep sight of our main objectives. We want to enlighten the child's understanding, but knowledge alone never merited heaven for anyone. Let us remember that our goal is also to inflame the child's heart to love God and enkindle in him the will to serve Him.

### Grade Divisions

Second Grade: Give one Lesson or Review Lesson per day, five days per week. Chapter 1 through 3 will have to be condensed; they are meant as a review for this age group. In addition to the daily lessons, work on memorization of some of the questions in the Baltimore Catechism as well as art projects, singing and holy stories. This program should last for one semester (about nineteen weeks). The second semester should be spent studying and preparing for First Holy Communion.

First Grade (1B): Give one Lesson, or part of a Lesson (as marked by Roman numerals), or a Review Lesson, daily, four days per week. Spend one day per week on an art project. Allow four weeks for the Commandments (five extra days) and have the child memorize them. Also have him study some of the questions in the Baltimore Catechism, and have some singing and holy stories. After you have completed all of the Lessons, do the Review Lessons again (one per day, four days per week). This program should last for the full school year (about thirty-eight weeks).

Kindergarten (1A) and Pre-School--General: Give one part of a Lesson per day, as marked by a Roman numeral and/or a lower case letter, except where there is no division given. Also spend one day on the Review Lesson at the end of each chapter. Try to keep the lessons within about five minutes, unless the child shows an obvious desire to continue. For the younger child, many of the questions in the book may have to be turned into statements, but you can involve the child in other ways. (One example is that, in teaching the creation, you can have him name some specific things that God made on each day, such as tuna, goldfish and parakeets on the fifth day.)

Also spend some time each week on singing and holy stories. The program at this level should last about thirty-eight weeks.

Kindergarten (1A)--Specific: Spend four days per week on the Lessons and one day per week on art projects.

Pre-School (Four-year-olds)--Specific: Spend three days per week on the lessons. Cover Chapters 1 through 14 and Chapters 22, 23 and the first three Lessons of Chapter 24. For Chapter 24, use only Part I of the Review Lesson. Spend one or two other days per week on art projects.

### SAMPLE CHILDREN'S PRAYERS

Morning Prayer: Dear Jesus, / I offer everything I will do today / and everything I will suffer today / and everything that will make me happy today / for love of Thee. / Dear Blessed Mother, / please help me / to always do / what God wants me to. / Dear Guardian Angel, / please watch over me.

Night Prayer: Dear Jesus, I am very sorry / if I have done anything / which does not please Thee. I will try, / with Thy help, / to always do / what You want me to. I thank Thee / for my good parents / and teachers / and for giving me the Blessed Mother / to be my mother too. / Please bless my family / and my school / and our Holy Father the Pope / and all those who need our prayers. / And please bless me, / and help me to be good.

Prayer to St. Joseph: Dear St. Joseph, / Foster-father of Jesus, / please kiss Jesus for me / and tell Him how much I love Him, / and please give us our favors / if they are for the greater honor and glory of God / and the good of our souls. (Adapted & shortened from the prayer which begins, "O St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God...")

## THE SHORT FORM OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND WHY WE USE IT

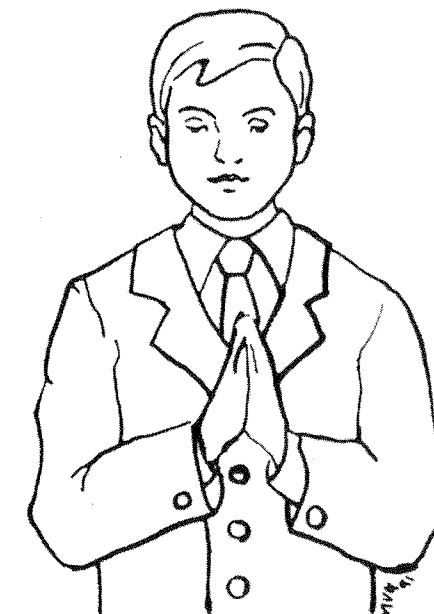
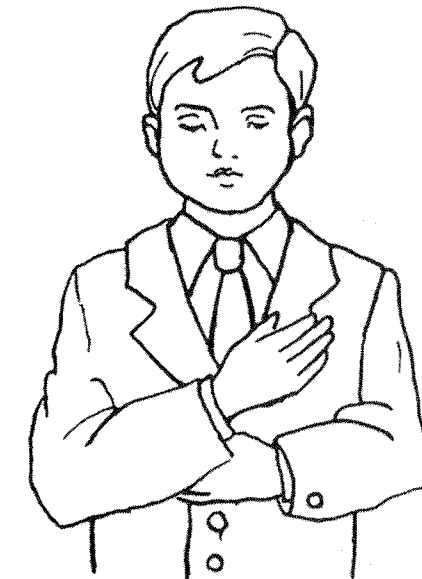
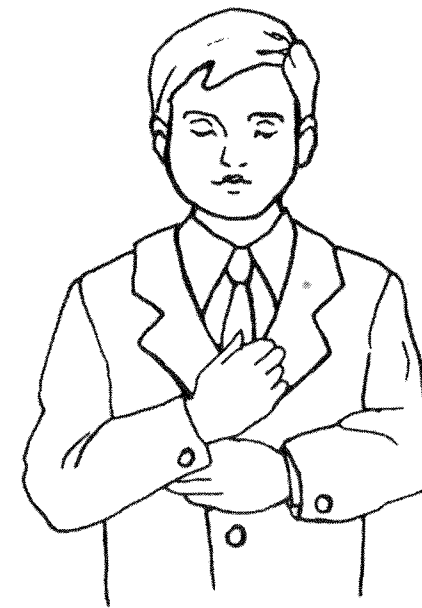
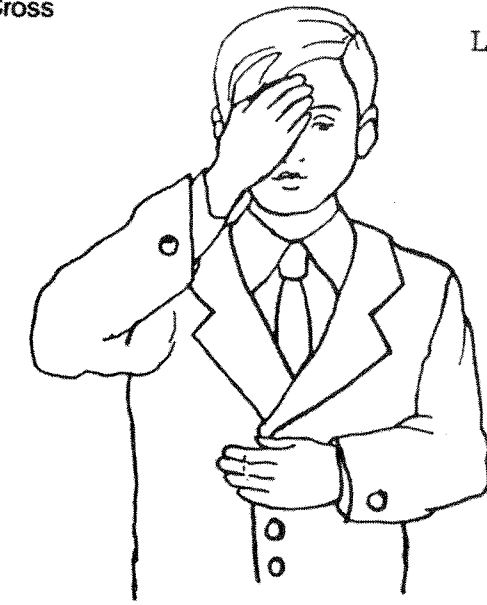
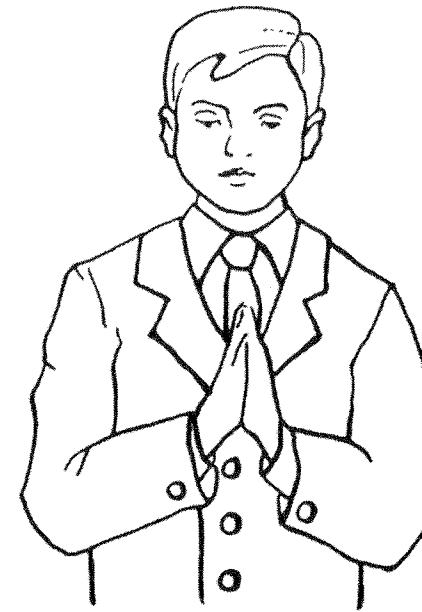
1. The First Commandment tells us to love God.
2. The Second Commandment tells us to love God's name.
3. The Third Commandment tells us to love God's day.
4. The Fourth Commandment tells us to obey.
5. The Fifth Commandment tells us to be kind.
6. The Sixth Commandment tells us to be pure.
7. The Seventh Commandment tells us to be honest.
8. The Eighth Commandment tells us to be truthful.
9. The Ninth Commandment tells us to be pure in thoughts & wishes.
10. The Tenth Commandment tells us to be satisfied.

As we explain to the children, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses for adults to understand, expecting the adults to explain these to children. We have found that many young children become confused trying to remember both the long form of the Commandments and what they mean. So we tell the children that in a year or two they will learn the long form as God gave it to Moses, but that for now they will learn a "short form" of the Ten Commandments, so that they may better understand them and thus more easily obey them.

To help the child obey these commandments requires frequent yet gentle reminders. If a child speaks harshly to another child, we ask him (privately) what the Fifth Commandment tells us to do ("Be kind"), and we remind him that we must try to keep the commandments, to please God Who loves us so much. Before we pray, we often remind the children that the First Commandment tells us to love God, and that if we want to show God that we love Him, we try very hard to think of Him when we pray, since praying is speaking lovingly to God. These are only isolated examples, but a short prayer to the Holy Ghost, and to Our Blessed Mother, will surely provide you with the help you need for each situation.

St. Therese, the Little Flower, once said, "From the age of three I never refused the good God anything," showing us that a young child can understand the concept of pleasing and obeying God. Indeed, these early years, as the child begins to reach the age of reason, form the very foundation of his life, which, if solidly built on virtue, will not be easily shaken, in whatever storms and trials lie ahead.

Sign of the Cross

See  
Lesson 1

## THE CHATS

See  
Lesson 2

### CHAPTER I: LEARNING OUR BASIC PRAYERS

**Lesson 1. The Sign of the Cross:** (If possible, have a picture of a child making the Sign of the Cross.)

- Making a correct and reverent Sign of the Cross.
- What does the Sign of the Cross make us think of? The Blessed Trinity. There is only one God. How many Persons are there in God? Three.
- What did Jesus do for us? Became Man and died on the Cross to make up for our sins and to open the gates of heaven for us. Summarize the two things the Sign of the Cross should make us think of. We begin and end all of our prayers with the Sign of the Cross.

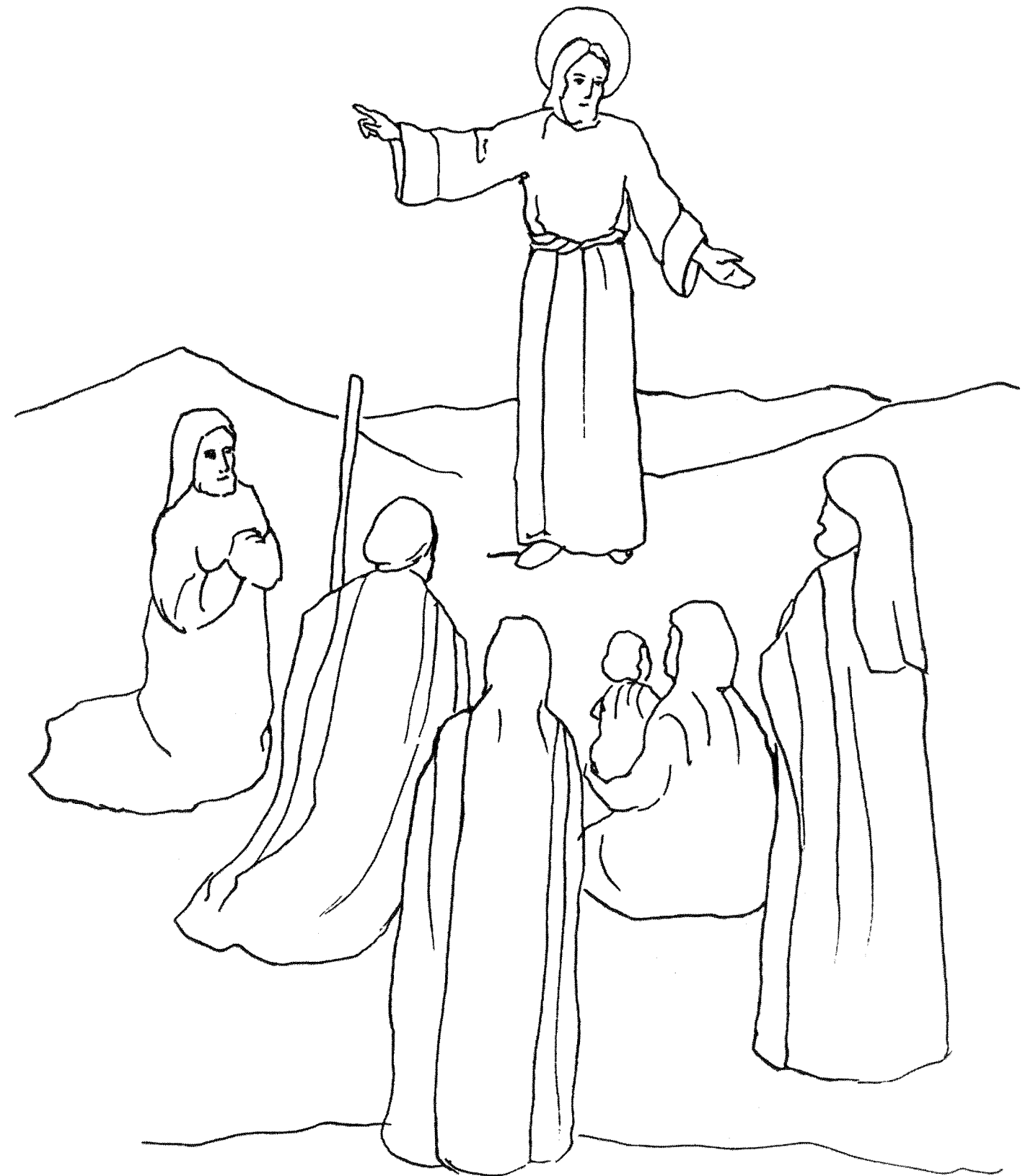
#### How to Teach Lesson 1:

- If a child does not know how to make the Sign of the Cross, begin by teaching him to do so, practicing every day until he can do it alone and correctly. If he does know how, review the procedure, making sure that he does it correctly and reverently.
- Ask the child if he knows what the Sign of the Cross should make us think of. If he says, "Jesus," say, "Yes, and Jesus is God, isn't He?" (Your expression and tone should tell the child that the answer to this question is definitely yes.) Or, if the child answers the first question, "God", go on from there.

A child may give an 'answer' which is totally unrelated to the question. This happens frequently, even with some five and early six year olds. In this case, I would avoid dampening the child's enthusiasm by saying he is wrong. If at all possible, I would say, "Good;" otherwise I might say, "Good try." Then I would pause ever so briefly and say, "The Sign of the Cross should make us think of God."

Once you have established that the Sign of the Cross should make us think of God, tell (or remind) the child that there is only one God. Ask him if he knows how many Persons there are in God. If he doesn't know, tell him there are three Divine Persons in one God (emphasize the underlined words). Make the Sign of the Cross slowly. When you say the words, "of the Father," put up one finger of your left hand; when you say, "of the Son" put up a second finger; and when you say, "of the Holy Ghost," put up a third finger. Keeping up your three fingers, say, "How many Persons are there in God?" Then say with conviction, "But there is only one God, isn't there?" holding up one finger. Summarize that the Sign of the Cross makes us think of three Divine Persons in one God. Then tell the child that the Sign of the Cross makes us think of something else too and ask him if he knows what. Ask the child if he knows what Jesus did for us. If he says, "He opened the gates of heaven," say, "Good, and how did He do that?" Draw out of him, or tell him, that He did so by becoming Man and dying on the Cross for us. We are reminded of this by the Sign of the Cross.

- Now ask if he can tell you the two things that the Sign of the Cross makes us think of (Three Divine Persons in one God and Jesus dying on the Cross to make up for our sins and open the gates of heaven.) Tell the child that we begin and end all of our prayers with the Sign of the Cross.



**Lesson 2. The Our Father (Part One):** (If possible, have a picture of Jesus talking to the people.)

- a. Correct recitation of the first part of the Our Father.
- b. "Our Father". To Whom are we praying? God. Do you know who taught us the Our Father? Jesus. Your parents love you very, very much, don't they? God is our Father in heaven and loves us even more than our parents do!
- c. "Who art in heaven." God is everywhere but we say, "Our Father Who art in heaven." God's name is holy so we should always say it reverently and with love. When say the name of Jesus we bow our heads for this reason. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In heaven the angels and saints always love God and do what He wants them to do. We pray that we and everyone else will do the same.
- d. "Hallowed be Thy name." God's name is holy so we should always say it reverently and with love. When we say the name of Jesus we bow our heads for this reason. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In heaven the angels and saints always love God and do what He wants them to do. We pray that we and everyone else will do the same.

**How to Teach Lesson 2:**

- a. If the child does not know how to say the first part of the Our Father alone and correctly, begin teaching him to do so, practicing daily until he learns it well. This practice may be part of his daily prayers, provided that you help him to say it correctly (e.g. the child may be encouraged to lead a decade of the Rosary.)
- b. Ask the child what two words the Our Father begins with. (He may smile as he answers, since you "gave away" the answer with your question: The Our Father begins with 'Our Father'.) Ask him if he knows Who we are praying to when we say this prayer. If he answers, "God," say, "Yes, good," and proceed to the next point. If he answers, "Jesus is God," say "Yes, Jesus is God the Son." When we pray the Our Father, we are praying to God the Father (talking lovingly to God). Ask the child if he knows who taught us the Our Father. Tell him that one day Jesus was on a mountain, teaching his friends and followers about God and heaven. They asked Him to teach them how to say a prayer that would please God very much, and this is the prayer that He gave them. Say to the child, in your own words, something to this effect: "Your parents love you very, very much, don't they?" Tell him that God is his Father in heaven and loves him even more than his Mommy and Daddy do!
- c. Ask the child if he knows where God is. If he says "everywhere," tell him that is the correct answer. Then say that God is in heaven in a very special way and that when we get to heaven, we will be able to see Him! However, if the child answered, "Where is God?" with, "heaven," tell him: "That's right; God is in heaven and he is on earth. He's right here with us and he is with Daddy at work. God is everywhere. But He is in heaven in a very special way and when we get to heaven, we will be able to see Him!" (Of course, you may paraphrase.)
- d. Say something like, "Then we say, 'Hallowed be Thy Name.' Do you know what that means?" Tell him it means that God's name is holy and ask him if he knows how we should say God's name. If he answers, "Nicely," praise him. (Praise to a young child can be as simple as a sincere smile and a nod of the head.) Then tell him that whenever we say God's name, we should think of Him with love. Tell him that if, everytime we say God's name, we think of how great and good He is, we will say it reverently (hence we expose the child to the word 'reverent', while he begins to learn its meaning from context). Next explain that when we say the name of Jesus, we bow our heads because Jesus is so great and good. (If you have not already done so, now is a good time to begin to teach the child, by example and reminders, to bow his head at the Holy Name of Jesus.)

Say: "After 'Hallowed be Thy name,' we say 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Ask him if he knows who is in heaven besides God. Draw out of him (or tell him) that the Blessed Mother, the angels, and the saints are in heaven. Including names of specific angels and saints with whom he is acquainted may increase his interest and understanding. (You probably will want to limit the number of names given so that this lesson does

not become too long.) Tell him with enthusiasm that they love Him very, very much and they never, ever do anything that does not please Him. "So when we say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' we are praying that we and everyone else will love God and do what He wants us to do, just as the angels and saints do."

**Lesson 3. The Our Father (Part Two):**

- a. Correct recitation of the second part of the Our Father.
- b. "Give us this day our daily bread." We ask God to give us everything we need for our body and our soul. We ask Him to take care of us and to help us to get to heaven.
- c. "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Sometimes we do things that do not please God. We tell God we are sorry and we ask Him to forgive us. Will He? (Yes!) We promise for His sake to forgive anyone who does something bad to us, just as He forgave from the Cross.
- d. "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen." We ask God to help us not to be bad and we ask Him to keep us safe.

**How to Teach Lesson 3:**

- a. If the child does not know how to say the second part of the Our Father alone and correctly, begin teaching him to do so, practicing daily until he learns it well. This practice may be part of his daily prayers, provided that you help him to say it correctly.
- b. Say something like: "When we say, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we are asking God to give us everything we need for our body, such as food and clothing, and everything we need to get to heaven, such as good parents and teachers and all the help we need to be good. (If you wish to expand at this point, you might help the child to list some things which are needed for body and soul.)
- c. "The next part is, 'And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' Do you ever do something that is bad and does not please your parents, and they have to scold or spank you for it? Afterwards they still love you, don't they? They 'forgive' you. Every time we do something bad, we are doing something which does not please God. But if we are really sorry and try not to do it again, He always forgives us because He is our loving Father in heaven. So when we say, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' we are asking God to help us to be sorry for the times we have been bad and we are asking Him to forgive us. We also say, 'as we forgive those who trespass against us.' God wants us to forgive anyone who does something bad to us and we are telling Him that we will do so in order to please Him.
- d. "And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen." Sometimes we feel like doing something bad, or the devil or a friend tries to get us to do something bad. We are asking God to help us say no to the bad thing. We ask him to keep us safe from bad things. Then we say, 'Amen,' to finish our prayer and to show that we really mean it and that we know God listens to our prayers."

**Lesson 4. The Hail Mary:** (If possible, have a picture of the Annunciation.)

- a. Correct recitation of the Hail Mary.
- b. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee." To whom are we praying? Who is Mary? Mother of Jesus, hence Mother of God.
- c. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." She will help us on our

way to heaven. Won't it be wonderful when we get to heaven and get to see her?



#### How to Teach Lesson 4:

- If the child does not know how to say the Hail Mary alone and correctly, begin teaching him to do so, practicing daily until he learns it well. This practice may be part of his daily prayers, provided that you help him to say it correctly.
- "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." Ask the child who we are praying to. If he answers, 'God,' say, "Yes, whenever we pray, we pray to God, but when we say the Hail Mary, we are talking to someone else too." If he still doesn't know, say, "Listen carefully to the first two words, 'Hail Mary.'" If he still doesn't know tell him that when we say the Hail Mary, we are praying to Mary (or use the title he knows, such as 'Blessed Mother' or 'Our Lady'). Ask him if he knows who Mary is. Tell him, or draw out of him, that Mary is the Mother of Jesus and so the Mother of God.
- "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." Tell him that God is more pleased with Mary than with any other woman, more than any of the saints or angels, and that He has blessed her the most. Ask the child if he remembers what original sin is. If he does not, ask him if he remembers what Adam and Eve did (disobeyed God.) Remind him (or tell him) that because Adam and Eve were the first parents, their sin passed to all their children so that everyone is born with it. "But, because Mary was to be the Mother of God, God protected her from original sin, so that she was born without it. And she never made any sins herself either" (if the child understand the word 'committed,' you may use it in place of 'made') She always did just what she knew would please God.
- "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners . . .". Tell (or draw out of the child that Mary is the Mother of God and she is also our Mother in heaven. Comment that she loves us as her own dear children. Tell him that when we say this prayer, we are asking her to help us to always please God. Ask him something like: "Do you think that she will?" (Encourage him by your tone and expression to answer with an emphatic yes.) "Now and at the hour of our death. Amen." "We ask Mary (or 'the Blessed Mother') to help us now, so we will stay on the right path that goes to heaven, and we ask her to help us when we are dying and on our way to heaven. Won't it be wonderful when we get to heaven and get to see her?"

#### Lesson 5. The Glory Be: (If possible, have a picture representative of the Blessed Trinity.)

- Correct recitation of the Glory Be.
- There is only one God. How many Persons are there in God? Three. Reference to the Sign of the Cross.
- A Mystery.
- St. Patrick and the three leaf clover.
- God always was and always will be.

#### How to Teach Lesson 5:

- If the child does not know how to say the Glory Be alone and correctly, begin teaching him to do so, practicing daily until he learns it well. This practice may be part of his daily prayers, provided that you help him to say it correctly.
- "There is only one God, isn't there?" (Yes!) "Do you remember how many Persons there are in God?" (Three.) Ask the child if he remembers the names of the three Divine

Persons in one God. If he does not, go over the words of the first part of the Glory Be, putting up one finger as you name each Divine Person. Ask the child what other prayer reminds us of the three Divine Persons in one God. (The



Sign of the Cross.)

- c. Tell the child that this is something we can never completely understand. Tell him that we know it is true because God tells us so, but we can't understand it completely just as he does not understand everything that his parents know. So we call it a 'Mystery'. Ask him if he knows what we call the Mystery of one God in three Divine Persons . . . (The Blessed Trinity.) Ask him to say that with you. (If the child can read, write the words on the board and help him to sound them out.)
- d. Tell the child that a holy man, named St. Patrick, wanted to help people to understand the Mystery of one God in three Divine Persons a little better, so he showed them a three leaf clover, (draw one, unless you have one available.) Point out to the child that there are three leaves but only one clover. Tell him that this reminds us that there are three Divine Persons but there is only one God.
- e. Ask the child if he knows what we mean when we say, 'as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.' Tell him that this means that God had no beginning, that He always was and always will be.

### Review Lesson -- Chapter I

The questions should be asked orally and the child should answer orally. For first and second graders, the review lesson may be used as a test by keeping track of the number of correct answers. If the child gives an incorrect answer, count it wrong but tell him what the correct answer is.

1. Is there only one God? (yes)
2. How many Persons are there in God? (three)
3. What are the names of the three Divine Persons in one God? (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost)
4. What do we mean by 'The Blessed Trinity'? (one God in three Divine Persons)
5. Is Jesus God? (yes)
6. Is Jesus Man? (yes)
7. Why did Jesus become Man and die on the Cross? (to make up for our sins and to open the gates of heaven)
8. What does the Sign of the Cross make us think of? (one God in three Divine Persons, and Jesus dying on the Cross to make up for our sins and open the gates of heaven)
9. Who taught us the Our Father? (Jesus)
10. Does God love us? (yes)
11. Is God everywhere? (yes)
12. Did God have a beginning? (no)
13. Will God always be? (yes)
14. Is God in heaven in a special way? (yes)
15. Will we be able to see God in heaven? (yes)
16. What should we do when we say the holy name of Jesus? (bow our heads)
17. Should we always try to do what God wants us to do? (yes)
18. If we have done something bad and we tell God we are really sorry and we will try not to do it again, will he forgive us? (yes)
19. Does God want us to forgive people who do bad things to us? (yes)
20. Who do we pray to, especially, when we say the Hail Mary? (Mary, or the Blessed Mother)
21. Who is Mary? (the Mother of Jesus, Mother of God, our Mother)
22. Is God more pleased with Mary than with anyone else? (yes)
23. Did the Blessed Virgin Mary ever have any sin on her soul? (no)
24. Did Our Blessed Mother always do what pleased God? (yes)
25. Does Mary love us as her own dear children? (yes)