

SYLLABUS and TEACHER'S MANUALS

FOR

LIVING MY RELIGION SERIES

Primer and Book 1

BY

Rt. Rev. Msgr. WILLIAM R. KELLY, M.A., LL.D.

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Dedicated to the memory
of
Rev. Father Joseph E. Eberhardt (1922 - 1989)
Ordained May 30, 1948
Pray for the repose of his soul.

PRAYERS TO BE SAID BY TEACHERS

An Invocation

Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge, O Lord: for I have believed Thy commandments (Ps. 118:66).

(An indulgence of 300 days.)

A Prayer

O glorious Saint Catherine, wise and prudent virgin, thou who didst set the knowledge of Jesus Christ above all other knowledge, obtain for us the grace to remain inviolably attached to the Catholic faith, and to seek in our studies and in our teaching only the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord and of His Holy Church both in ourselves and in the souls of others. Amen.

(An indulgence of 300 days.)

The faithful who devote between a quarter and a half-hour to teaching or studying Christian doctrine may gain: An indulgence of 100 days; a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions twice a month if the above practice is done at least twice a month.

Nihil Obstat: John M. A. Fearn, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur: Francis Cardinal Spellman

Archbisho p of New York

New York, November I, 1951

The Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur are official declarations that a book is free from doctrinal or moral error. No implication is contained therein that those who have granted the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions or statements expressed.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHORSHIP: The Living My Religion Series was prepared under the editorship of:

Right Rev. Msgr. William R. Kelly, M.A., LL.D., formerly Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of New York, and now pastor of the Church of St. Philip Neri, Bronx;

Very Rev. Msgr. Edmund A. Goebel, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee;

Sister M. Imelda, S.L., M.A., of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross, Nerinx, Ky.;

Rev. Daniel M. Dougherty, of the faculty of Cathedral College, New York City, the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary; in association with

Right Rev. Msgr. Magnus A. Schumacher, M.A., LittD., author of "I Teach Catechism," pastor of the Church of St. Nicholas, Aurora, Ill., Diocese of Rockford.

OUTSTANDING FEATURES:

A new idea in making the Catechism textbook as attractive as any other textbook.

Form. The text is presented in story form which prepares the pupil for the questions of the Catechism.

Basic. The Primer, Books 1 to 5 contain verbatim the text of the Confraternity Revised Baltimore Catechism No. 1. Books 6, 7 and 8 contain verbatim the text of the Confraternity Revised Baltimore Catechism No.2.

Graded. Each of the 9 books is adapted to the mental capacity of the pupil of the particular grade and is divided into Units.

Presentation. The course is so arranged that the pupil studies the same doctrine 3 times.

Motivation. The motivation of the course is to help each child live his religion, by correlating the text to Bible History, Church History and the Liturgy.

Diagnostic Tests following each Unit allow for gauging the pupils' progress.

Illustrations. Original drawings in black and white, specially drawn for each Unit, aid in holding the pupils' interest.

TEACHER'S MANUALS:

The Teacher's Manuals for Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and grades 6, 7 and 8 provide:

1. A theme for the course
2. The aim for each Grade
3. A Detailed Method for each lesson, including:
 - a. Word Study
 - b. Picture and Statue Study
 - c. Dramatization
 - d. Emphasis on Salient Points
 - e. Drills for Memorizing
 - f. Project Book activities
 - g. Summaries
 - h. Key to tests of textbook
4. A Five-Point Program, consisting of Study; Prayer, Oral and Mental; Devotions; the Mass; the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist provide a goal for the pupils' striving.

OUTLINE OF DOCTRINE Taught in Each of the Eight Grades of Living My Religion Series

The Living My Religion Series covers all the Questions and Answers of the Revised 1941 Confraternity Edition of Baltimore Catechisms Nos. 1 and 2. Its aim is to present each subject at least 3 times during the course. By means of reviews and re-teaching at higher grade-levels with added information and a new presentation, the more important points appear many more times.

T=Taught for 1st time. NP=New Presentation. R=Review.

SUBJECT	G R A D E S							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
GOD								
Definition	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	R
Perfections	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	R
Trinity	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	R
Creator	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	
Invisible World	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	
Visible World	T	R	R	NP	R		NP	
MAN								
Definition	T	R	NP	NP		NP	NP	
First Parents	T	R	NP	NP		NP	NP	
SIN								
Definition	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	R	
Kinds	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	R	
Original	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	R	
Actual	T	NP	NP	NP	R	NP	R	
Mortal	T	NP	NP	NP	R	NP	R	
Venial	T	NP	NP	NP	R	NP	R	
Examples	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	R	
Angels	T	NP	NP	NP			R	
Adam and Eve	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	R	
CHRIST								
Incarnation	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	NP
Public Life	T	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
Redemption	T	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP
Resurrection	T		NP	NP				
Ascension			T	NP		NP	NP	NP
Judge		T	NP	NP		NP	NP	NP
HOLY GHOST								
Definition	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R

SUBJECT	GRADES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Indwelling	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R
Souls	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	
Church			T	R		NP	NP	
GRACE								
Definition	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R
Kinds	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R
Sanctifying	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R
Actual	T	NP	NP	R	R	NP	NP	R
VIRTUES								
Theological	T	NP		R	R	NP	NP	R
Moral						T	NP	
CHURCH								
Definition			T	NP		NP	NP	R
Founder	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	R
Purpose		T	NP	NP		NP	NP	R
Life						T	NP	
Power						T	NP	
Head	T		NP	NP		NP	NP	
Clergy	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	NP
Laity				T		NP	NP	NP
Marks			T	NP		NP	NP	
Attributes				T		NP	NP	
Commandments			T	NP		NP	NP	
Obligation	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	
COMMUNION OF SAINTS								
Definition				T		NP	NP	R
Mystical Body						T	NP	R
RESURRECTION OF THE BODY								
Judgment	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	
General			T	NP		NP	NP	
Particular		T		NP		NP	NP	
Sanctions				T		NP	NP	
Heaven	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	
Hell	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	
Purgatory	T	NP	NP	NP		NP	NP	

SUBJECT	GRADES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
COMMANDMENTS OF GOD								
The Law of Love	T			NP				NP
Love of God	T			NP				NP
Love of Neighbor	T			NP				NP
The Decalogue		T		NP	R			NP
First		T	NP	NP	R			NP
Second		T		NP	R			NP
Third		T		NP	R			NP
Fourth		T	NP	NP	R			NP
Fifth		T		NP	R			NP
Sixth		T	NP	NP	R			NP
Seventh		T	NP	NP	R			NP
Eighth				T	R			NP
Ninth				T	R			NP
Tenth				T	R			NP
SACRAMENTS								
Definition			T	R	NP	NP		NP
Kinds					T	NP		NP
Living					T	NP		NP
Dead					T	NP		NP
The Seven			T	R	NP	NP		NP
Baptism	T	NP	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Confirmation		T	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Holy Eucharist	T	NP	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Sacrament	T	NP	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Sacrifice.	T	NP	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Penance	T	NP	NP	R	NP	NP		NP
Extreme Unction			T	R	NP	NP		NP
Holy Orders			T	R	NP	NP		NP
Matrimony			T	R	NP	NP		NP
SACRAMENTALS								
Definition					T	NP		
Examples					T	NP	R	
PRAYER								
Definition	T	NP	R	NP	R	NP	R	
Kinds	T	NP	R	NP	R	NP	R	
Oral	T	NP	R	NP	R	NP	R	
Mental	T	NP	R	NP	R	NP	R	
The Our Father				T	R		R	NP

TEACHER'S MANUAL

for GRADE 1

USEFUL DAILY PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

On the Use of Syllabus and Teacher's Manual

For the *Living My Religion* series, it is suggested that, even for seasoned teachers, the "Remote Preparation of the Teacher" on page 9 of this Syllabus be studied at the beginning of the year. Not only does it provide tried and true methods, it simplifies the parent/teacher's work and recalls to mind the methods and salient points of the religion course. To omit this preparation is to walk onto the battlefield of your classroom unarmed.

The "Special Procedures" on page 22 can be adapted to any size group or one-on-one instruction.

Practically speaking, the Procedure on page 29 is indispensable for the daily lessons.

"LIVING MY RELIGION" SERIES

KELLY · GOEBEL · IMELDA · SCHUMACHER

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An indulgence of 300 days.

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O glorious Saint Catherine, wise and prudent virgin, thou who didst set the knowledge of Jesus Christ above all other knowledge, obtain for us the grace to remain inviolably attached to the Catholic faith, and to seek in our studies and in our teaching only the extension of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ our lord and of His holy Church both in ourselves and in the souls of others. Amen.

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FOR

LIVING MY RELIGION SERIES

Primer and Book 1

BY

SISTER MARY IMELDA, S.L., M.A.

BASIC TEXT: FIRST COMMUNION CATECHISM
Prepared from the Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism
TEXTBOOKS FOR GRADES 1 AND 2
Primer - Our Heavenly Father
Book 1 Living in God's Love
Book 2 - Living In God's Law

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ESSENTIALS OF THE LIVING-MY-RELIGION SERIES FIRST GRADES

THEME.

I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.

Gal. 2: 20

AIM.

To help each child to live his religion.

SUBJECT MATTER

The truths of faith which are vital to the spiritual life of a Catholic child at the age of six or seven years.

Truth is soul-food; falsehood is soul-poison.

Food is necessary for life. The truths revealed by God are vital to the life of God's children. It is essential that we who rear His little ones should prepare their truth-food well, season it daintily, and serve it attractively in rather small portions but often. For this reason, the authors of the *Living My Religion* series of textbooks have prepared three attractive books to teach the truths which are contained in ten pages of the *First Communion Catechism*.

The well-nourished child is active, mentally and physically. We can test the effectiveness of our teaching best, not by the number of glib, poll-parrot answers we receive, but by the way in which each child strives to live his religion. If he is assimilating his truth-food he will be active, spiritually. He will think, speak, and act as a Catholic child should. He will "live in the faith of the Son of God."

Revealed truth is soul-food; heresy is soul-poison. We must be vigilant. We must keep close to God's mouthpiece, the Holy Catholic Church; therefore, the basic text for this course in religion is the *Revised Baltimore Catechism* which is the gift of the American Hierarchy to the Catholic children of America.

In the Primer, nine questions and answers from the *Revised Baltimore First Communion Catechism* are taught. (See pages 86-88 in *Our Heavenly Father*.) In Book 1, fourteen more are taught. (See pages 149-153 in *Living in God's Love*.) In Book 2, the questions and answers from the Primer and Book 1 are re-taught at a second grade level, and those which had been omitted are introduced. Thus Book 2 covers the entire *First Communion Catechism*. (See pages 190-203 in *Living In God's Law*.)

PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL PROCEDURES-Applicable to the three books.

B. SPECIAL PROCEDURES-Applicable to one of the books.

Religion Readiness Program.
Primer-Our Heavenly Father.
Book 1 - *Living in God's Love*.
Book 2 - *Living in God's Law*.

A

General Procedures

REMOTE PREPARATION OF THE TEACHER

A. KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT

Each teacher of Christian doctrine should be given a thorough course in Catechetics. She should have a course in Scripture also, at least in so far as this is necessary for the intelligible presentation of Bible history. In many cases, these courses are not possible at present; therefore, she should be familiar with one or two good books as a minimum of background. The following are suggested:

Schumacher, *I Teach Catechism*, vol. 1, Benzinger Brothers, Inc.
Spirago-Clarke, *The Catechism Explained*, Benzinger Brothers, Inc.
Knecht, *A Practical Commentary on Holy Scripture*, Benzinger Brothers, Inc.

All explanations of doctrine and all Bible stories which appear in the *Living My Religion* textbooks have been checked by competent ecclesiastical critics. The teacher who presents each lesson as it stands in the pupils' text has no need to fear error.

B. EXEMPLIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

"We cannot give that which we do not possess." If we would lead little children to know, love, and serve God, we must strive ever more and more earnestly to "live in the faith of the Son of God" who loved us and gave Himself up for us.

We can help ourselves climb to this lofty ideal by considering a few simple truths such as these:

God's providence rules all things. It is, then, His most holy will that I should guide these very children who are here and now confided to my care. God knows their needs; He knows mine, also. God knows what graces to bestow on them and on me. He will bestow them in abundance. God never fails.

Each one of these children is guarded by an angel - not a pink fairy with butterfly wings - an angel, one of those wise, glorious, and mighty beings who fought under the standard of Saint Michael long ago. God has sent that angel to guide, not only the child, but also his teacher. God has sent a prince from heaven to help the child and to help me. I do not stand alone in the battle to win souls for God; all the hosts of the Lord are with me.

Because of the grace given in Baptism, each one of these little ones is a member of that family in which God is the Father, Mary is the mother, and our Lord is the elder Brother. I teach these holy truths of our faith under the very eye of Jesus Christ, my loving Saviour. I teach His truths. I try to lead to Him the children He died to save. He is at hand to bless my poor efforts and my stumbling tongue. Jesus never yet has failed those who put their trust in Him.

PROXIMATE PREPARATION OF THE TEACHER

Read the matter in the textbook carefully.

Consult the manual for additional aid.

Pray earnestly for light to know these holy truths and to present them to the children in the best way.

Pray earnestly for grace to "live in the faith of the Son of God" every moment of the day, knowing that your example is a far more potent influence than the words which you may say.

Trust God and teach as well as you can.

Let nothing trouble or discourage you. Teachers sow the heavenly seed in rough and stony ground sometimes. Often they think that they have failed. They seldom reap the harvest. But some glad day our Lord will let them know how good a thing it was to have labored in His vineyard.

GENERAL METHOD OF PRESENTING THE TEXTBOOK LESSONS

Discuss the picture.

Read the text in class.

Question in order to be sure the text is understood.

Memorize the Catechism.

Keep clearly in mind the fact that this is a lesson in doctrine or in Bible history-not in reading. The main objective is comprehension. While it is desirable that every child should read the entire text, it is not essential. The important point is that each child should understand what is taught in the lesson.

In an average class there are good, medium, and poor readers. In reading the religion text, let the good ones carry the weight. Call on the slower ones to re-read or to tell what has been read. If and when necessary, let the slower group study the lesson again at supplementary reading period. In certain cases choral reading has been found to be

helpful. This is especially true in schools where the children have a language handicap due to the parents' speaking Spanish, Italian, French, or some other foreign tongue. The fact that choral reading tends toward the memorization of the text is somewhat in its favor in the case of a religion lesson; the more the Christian doctrine is committed to memory the better. However, if and when choral reading is used, the teacher must be especially careful to see to it that the children really understand what they are reading. Comprehension is essential.

Question in order to see if the pupils really understand the matter read. Encourage discussion of ways and means to put the facts learned to a practical use in their own lives. Our whole religion program should tend and must tend to the development of robust Catholic life. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." James 1: 22.

Review the questions and answers of the Revised Baltimore Catechism frequently. Note that each one is framed with a single line and is placed at the base of the page on which it has been explained.

Encourage the children to learn the statements from the Catechism so thoroughly that they can never forget them. The more we know about God the more we shall love Him. The more we love God, the better we shall serve Him. The more perfectly we serve God, the more graces and blessings will be ours not only hereafter but also in this life on earth.

ACTIVITY PROGRAM

The activity proper to the study of religion is the living of that religion.

The Catholic religion is not a mere bundle of sweetly vague theories. It is a way of life to be lived.

The activity which should be the result of a primary religion class is this: each little boy and girl should sincerely strive to live as a Catholic child should live. He should say his prayers reverently, assist at Mass on Sundays, obey his parents, tell the truth, be honest, be kind and helpful at home and at school and at play.

Dramatization, puppet shows, construction projects, coloring of religious pictures, etc., etc., are good if and when they really lead the child to know, love, and serve God; but if and when such activities are mere "busy work" or are only "activity for activity's sake" or are simply a form of pious recreation, they have no part in the Religion Program; though they may have a very useful place in the Leisure-Hour Program; or they may have a distinctly valuable position in the Arts and Crafts

Program.

The main activities of the Religion Program as proposed in the *Living My Religion* series are:

A. PRAYER

- (a) Vocal
- (b) Mental

B. SACRAMENTS

- (a) Baptism
- (b) Penance
- (c) Holy Eucharist

These were chosen because they are vital to the spiritual life of a Catholic child at the age of six or seven.

C. MASS

D. COMMANDMENTS

Especial stress is laid on those which should guide the conduct of a little child.

A. PRAYER

(a) VOCAL PRAYER

The vocal prayers in common use for primary grades will be found near the back of each textbook:

Primer-Our Heavenly Father, pages 90 to 95

Book 1-Living in God's Love, pages 154-158; 137-144

Book 2-Living in God's Law, pages 206-212; 53,54, 55,57, 122

Choose those which accord with the customs of your school.

Vocal prayers may be learned by rote before a child can read them or even understand the sacred words he utters. The prayers of the Liturgy put the child in touch with the prayer of the Church and thus bring graces to him even though he is yet too young to comprehend their sublime meaning. We smile when we hear a baby lisping the *Hail Mary*. Our hearts go out in love to that wee bit of a Christian. Need we fear that our Lady will be less swift to love than we? She will pour forth her prayers for the tiny brother of her Son.

Nevertheless, the greater the devotion of the one who prays, the greater the grace he obtains. The more he comprehends the sublime thoughts he utters, the more probable it is that he will pray with devotion. We should, then, explain the prayer we ask the child to learn, at least in so far as to give him some little idea of what he is saying; and we should endeavor by our own reverence of voice and manner to make the child feel that he is doing something very holy and beautiful, that he

is standing beside his angel and is talking to God.

Choose the prayers wisely, remembering that it is better to teach a few prayers well than many imperfectly.

Vocal prayers said in unison require especial care lest the children form the habit of poll-parrot, sing-song repetition which is certainly far removed from the reverence due to God. Teach the prayers a little at a time. See to it that the words are said accurately, distinctly, at a dignified rate of speed which is neither drawled nor hurried. The poll-parrot, sing-song habit is difficult to break. Perhaps the best way to do it is to teach the children to sing the prayers in plain chant. If they must sing-song, let them sing the song of loving reverence which has come down to us from the Ages of Faith. Better still, let the children be taught to chant the prayers correctly from the beginning. This will lead them to the liturgical way of prayer; than that, what could be better?

(b) MENTAL PRAYER

Mental prayer is essential. "With desolation is the whole world made desolate because no man thinketh in his heart."

How can we teach a child to "live in the faith of the Son of God" unless we show him how to draw strength for that life from the loving heart of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?

We should teach the little one to talk to God as soon as we can. It is not difficult; we are not asked to give him a profound discourse on mental prayer. All we need to do is to lead him to our Lord's feet and tell him to talk to Jesus, simply, lovingly, in the words which come from his heart.

God knows the heart of each little child. He is waiting to help His little one lift up his heart in prayer. He is waiting for the opportunity to teach His child the language of heaven.

Sometimes we look too long at our own deficiencies and unworthiness. We forget who it is that is waiting to help and to bless our stumbling efforts. Let us try bravely, steadily, patiently, one step at a time. His help will never be wanting.

The following example may prove helpful:

Composition at Place

Our Lord watches us from His tiny golden house on the altar. He knows how He liked to play when He was a little boy, and He wants us to play with Him a beautiful game called "Let's pretend."

Let's pretend that we lived in Bethlehem long ago. We had seen the Baby King in the straw. We had helped Saint Joseph when the Holy Family moved from the cave to a cozy house in the town.

Program.

The main activities of the Religion Program as proposed in the *Living My Religion* series are:

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How can we teach a child to "live in the faith of the Son of God" unless we show him how to draw strength for that life from the loving heart of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?

We should teach the little one to talk to God as soon as we can. It is not difficult; we are not asked to give him a profound discourse on mental prayer. All we need to do is to lead him to our Lord's feet and tell him to talk to Jesus, simply, lovingly, in the words which come from his heart.

God knows the heart of each little child. He is waiting to help His little one lift up his heart in prayer. He is waiting for the opportunity to teach His child the language of heaven.

Sometimes we look too long at our own deficiencies and unworthiness. We forget who it is that is waiting to help and to bless our stumbling efforts. Let us try bravely, steadily, patiently, one step at a time. His help will never be wanting.

The following example may prove helpful:

Composition at Place

Our Lord watches us from His tiny golden house on the altar. He knows how He liked to play when He was a little boy, and He wants us to play with Him a beautiful game called "Let's pretend."

Let's pretend that we lived in Bethlehem long ago. We had seen the Baby King in the straw. We had helped Saint Joseph when the Holy Family moved from the cave to a cozy house in the town.

One day we picked some sweet clover blossoms to take to our wee Lord. As we were running along the crooked, narrow street we were almost knocked down by three big camels. We had to flatten ourselves against a wall to let them pass by. We were afraid they would step on us with their wide feet, but they did not. Then we followed the camels, and we saw three men in beautiful silk clothes go into Saint Joseph's house. We peeped through a crack in the door and saw them giving wonderful golden gifts to our Baby King. We thought the Holy Child would not welcome our poor little clovers now that He had such costly playthings; so we started to go home again very slowly, very much disappointed.

But we did not go far. The men came riding back again on their camels, so we had to flatten ourselves against the wall once more to keep from being stepped on. We almost dropped the clovers.

But we did not. Good Saint Joseph called us and said: Where did you get those pretty clovers? Were you bringing them to Baby Jesus?"

We answered him shyly: "We did want to give our flowers to our little King. They are only red clovers. Will He want them now that He has all those beautiful golden gifts?"

Saint Joseph smiled till there were wrinkles all around his kind eyes; and he said, "Give them to Jesus and see what you will see."

So we slipped up shyly and offered Jesus our clovers. He put out His hand and took our flowers. He smiled at us so sweetly that we knew He was saying thank-you with His eyes because He was still too wee to talk.

Then we whispered to our Blessed Mother, "Please let us hold Him for a little while."

Our Blessed Mother said: "You are very small to hold in your arms the King of heaven. You might drop Him. Come, climb on my knee. Then hold Him close to your heart and whisper in His ear all your secrets. He knows all you want to say. He loves you. He wishes to take you up to heaven some glad day so that He can share with you His wonderful joys. That is why He wishes you to love Him and to be good."

We climbed on Mother Mary's knee. She put Baby Jesus in our arms. She put her arms around us and our wee Lord, too. Then we whispered in His ear.

Colloquy

Now, put your head on your desk. Talk to our Lord. His grace is in your soul and He truly lives in your heart. He sees you from His golden

house on the altar. He is listening. Whisper to Him your secrets. Tell Him how much you love Him. Promise to do something good to please Him.

Time

If a child prays half a minute he is doing very well in the beginning. Later and little by little, the time may be increased until he may be able to pray three or four minutes, at least on his First Communion day.

There can be no definite rule as to the length of time; our children differ so much; classes in the same school differ, also. Prudence dictates that it is better to have the period of the child's own mental prayer rather a little too short than a little too long. Keep him eager for his chance to talk to God. Lead him to long for his little game of "Let's pretend."

B. SACRAMENTS

(a) BAPTISM

Good Catholic parents are always careful that their children receive the sacrament of Baptism. Probably all the pupils in the First Communion class have been baptized; however, it is wise to check the matter at the beginning of the scholastic year and to be sure all the baptismal certificates are at hand when the pastor calls for them.

Teach only a few points but make these clear:

1. We must be baptized. We cannot enter heaven unless we have sanctifying grace in our souls. We receive this sacred gift of God when we are baptized.
2. Stress the positive, the simple, the readily appreciated facts concerning the sacrament rather than the negative, the obscure, the easily misunderstood statements. Many adults have erratic ideas concerning this sacrament.
3. Stress the fact that Baptism is a *getting* of something holy and wonderful, a supernatural gift from the good God, a gift that makes our souls holy and pleasing to God, a gift that makes us the adopted children of God and gives us the right to live in God's beautiful heaven forever.

Stress the fact that Baptism confers on us the holy life of grace, sanctifying grace, the grace which makes us able to live in God's wonderful heaven, the grace we must have to win heaven.

To stress these positive ideas, this *getting*, is wiser than to stress the negative idea of *losing* an invisible stain. The analogy of a

stain in such phrases as "the stain of original sin" is good if the person is sufficiently educated to appreciate the word "stain" as applied to a noble family when its head has been "attainted of treason." Children misunderstand this and think the baby has dirty stains on its soul, stains analogous to mud stains or soot marks.

The term "guilty stain" is too adult for primary children. Even if explained, it will be, in all probability, misunderstood; in fact, is misunderstood by many adults; e.g., those who say that they cannot see the justice in God's holding a newborn infant guilty of Adam's sin. Of course the statement is not true. God does not hold a child to be guilty of Adam's own personal sin. Original sin is our misfortune, not our fault. It is wiser to leave all this idea of losing until a child is old enough to be taught the negative facts clearly. Stress the *getting* idea, as applied to Baptism. Stress the *giving* idea, as applied to the service of God.

4. Teach the matter, step by step, a little at a time. Let these wonderful truths seep in, be assimilated, permeate his mind. Better slow and sure than swift and uncertain.

5. In so far as original sin should be discussed in its relation to Baptism, stress the fact that original sin in us is a lack, a deprivation. There is something vitally necessary which we do not have when we come into this world, e.g., sanctifying grace.

6. Stress God's goodness, His mercy, His love for us. For example, Adam lost sanctifying grace. We are born without it. We must have it to win heaven. God gives us sanctifying grace when we are baptized. We must keep our treasure safe.

The textbooks have followed these rules in presenting the sacrament of Baptism. See:

Book I-Pages 116 and 117

Book 2-Pages 82 to 89; 106 to 109

(b) PENANCE

From the dawn of reason to the end of life, the sacrament of Penance is vital to robust spiritual life; therefore, from First Grade until the end of college, formal instruction should be given on the need, the value, and the devout reception of this gift of God's mercy bought for us at the price of Christ's blood.

This formal instruction should be suited to the age and the soul needs, not determined by the logical development of the subject matter. Johnny at six, Jack at eleven, and John at twenty-two need different types of instruction. The old truths of faith do not change, but the

practical application of those truths does.

We who teach the primary grades should keep in mind the following points:

1. The baptized child of six or seven is in all probability in the state of grace. His confessions are of devotion. They have not been made necessary by the commission of mortal sin. Hence, he should be encouraged to have great confidence in his confessor-the kind pastor who takes the place of our Lord; he should be told to tell the truth always; he should be led to make acts of perfect contrition by showing him how Christ suffered for our sins; he should be taught to correct his faults and try to do better; but he should not be terrified by stories of "bad confessions."

2. His confessions should be motivated by a true and loving sorrow for having offended God who is all good.

3. Deliberate venial sin is his greatest danger. His confessions should be aimed at the eradication of all habits of deliberate venial sin if he has any; if not, they should be aimed at building a wall of virtue against this enemy, i.e., strong habits of doing right because that pleases God. Habits of deliberate venial sin certainly lead toward mortal sin and eternal loss. Habits of doing right and swift repentance for venial sin certainly lead toward virtue in this life - and eternal joy in the next.

4. In the examination of conscience, it is better to stress the positive rather than the negative side of the commandments.

Here are a few examples:

I should say my prayers reverently. Did I?

I should say God's holy name reverently? Do I?

I should go to Mass on Sunday? Did I?

I should obey my parents? Do I?

This positive approach keeps before the child's mind the virtues he should practice.

The textbooks of the *Living My Religion* series are built in accord with these ideals. See:

Book 1-*Living in God's Love*, pages 130 to 137

Book 2-*Living in God's Laws*, pages 110 to 123

(c) HOLY EUCHARIST

"Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink