

**GROWING UP CATHOLIC**

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Faith Activities  
on **PRAYER**

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**The Pastoral Center**

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# INTRODUCTION

Our lives are filled with variety. We have, for example, a variety of foods to eat and a variety of clothes to wear. All of these varieties and many more meet the various needs we have.

Our spiritual life reflects our physical life. We need a variety of prayers and practices in order to meet the needs of our souls. Traditional prayers, spontaneous prayers, meditative practices, and creative prayers meet our different needs as we set aside time to talk with God. All of us have our favorite prayers for different occasions. Some of my friends enjoy praying the Hail Mary over and over whenever there is a crisis. Others pray the Angel of God prayer whenever they feel a need to be safe. Some take a blanket and a Bible and head outside on a warm summer day to rest and relax in God's arms as they imagine themselves in one of the Scripture stories. At other times, the soul needs to create, for we are made in the image and likeness of our Creator; therefore, we hear a call to pray using art. Prayer is our way of communicating with God, who waits and longs for our love.

This book can be used in a variety of ways. Catechists and Catholic schoolteachers can use it as they review or teach the traditional prayers for the first time. Students will find the activities engaging and easy to accomplish. An intergenerational prayer evening can be planned, and each of the prayer experiences can be an individual station. All involved can review the traditional prayers and experience newer prayer practices. Grandparents who are able to share their faith with their grandchildren can use this book as a way to help teach them the basic Catholic prayers. Parents who choose to homeschool their children will find the prayer experiences in this book easy to use as they help their children develop a relationship with God.

No matter which prayer or practice you choose, may it deepen your relationship with God and fill the need your soul has as you journey into the heart of God.

# SIGN OF THE CROSS

## Catechist background

The practice of beginning prayers by tracing the sign of the cross is prominent in the Catholic Church. In the early days of the church, a small sign of the cross was traced on one's forehead using the thumb or finger.

Scripture provides us with the symbolism of the sign of the cross. The shape of the sign of the cross reminds us of the cross on which Jesus died. It also reminds us of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The sign of the cross is used in the rites of the sacraments. In baptism, the sign of the cross is made on the forehead of the person being baptized to remind us that the cross is one of the main mysteries of our faith. The words of baptism—"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," taken from Matthew's gospel (Matthew 28:19)—are spoken while the water is poured or while the one to be baptized is immersed. This reminds us of the Triune God.

In the rite of the anointing of the sick, the priest anoints the sick person on the forehead; he makes the sign of the cross while praying: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen." He also anoints the sick person on the hands, making the sign of the cross while praying: "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen."

When a bishop administers the sacrament of confirmation, he anoints each person to be confirmed. He makes the sign of the cross on the forehead while he prays: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

During the sacrament of reconciliation, after the penitent has confessed his or her sins and made an act of contrition, the priest makes the sign of the cross while praying: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Although this is a short prayer, the challenge in teaching it to others is getting the correct hand placement with the right words. (Hint: left shoulder before right shoulder because "I" comes before "r" in the alphabet.)

## Prayer

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## SIGN OF THE CROSS LESSON PLAN 1

### Objectives

- ☐ To learn the sign of the cross with the words and gestures
- ☐ To learn the symbols of the sign of the cross found in Scripture

### Materials

- ☐ **5 SPRING-TYPE WOODEN CLOTHESPINS**
- ☐ **PERMANENT BLACK MARKER**
- ☐ **UPPER-BODY SILHOUETTE TEMPLATE** traced on cardboard and folded in half lengthwise so the crease may be used to place the second and fifth clothespins on the chest

### Lesson

- After you gather the children around you, discuss the sign of the cross and how we use it to begin our prayers, including the prayer of the Mass.
- Acquaint them with the biblical symbols of the sign of the cross: the cross Jesus died on and the three persons in the Trinity.
- Use the activity with the clothespins and torso template to practice the words and gestures of the sign of the cross.
- Make the sign of the cross together, stressing that it should be done slowly and reverently.
- If time permits take the children over to church

to the holy water fonts. Have each individual child make the sign of the cross after they dip their right hand into the holy water.

### Clothespin activity

- ❶ Print the following words on each clothespin with permanent marker:
  - Clothespin One: In the name of the Father
  - Clothespin Two: and of the Son
  - Clothespin Three: and of the Holy
  - Clothespin Four: Spirit
  - Clothespin Five: Amen
- ❷ Using the upper-body silhouette (*page 8*), children clip the clothespins to the part of the body where our hand goes as we make the sign of the cross. Two will be placed on the chest area.

## SIGN OF THE CROSS LESSON PLAN 2

### Objectives

- ☐ To be aware of the different sacraments that use the sign of the cross
- ☐ To be able to make the sign of the cross correctly

### Materials

- ☐ **CROSS TEMPLATE** (*The cross could be traced on the black paper prior to class*)
- ☐ **8.5" X 11" PIECES OF BLACK CONSTRUCTION PAPER**, one per child
- ☐ **TOOTHPICKS**
- ☐ **YARN**
- ☐ **MARKERS/CRAYONS**
- ☐ **SACRAMENT HANDOUT**, one page per child

### Lesson

- Gather the children and begin the lesson by using the background information to discuss each sacrament that uses the sign of the cross.
- Review the meaning of the sign of the cross prayer and ask children to give other examples of when this prayer is said.
- Let each child make the sign of the cross on another person's hands while praying "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- Give directions on how to complete the sign of the cross sacrament activity.
- Let each child make the sign of the cross and pray their favorite prayer.

### Sign of the cross sacrament activity

- ❶ Give each student a large piece of construction paper with a cross traced on it. Or have the children trace the cross on the black paper using the template (*page 9*).
- ❷ Fill in the cross template by gluing toothpicks. Some toothpicks may have to be cut to fit.
- ❸ Decorate the four sacrament templates.
- ❹ Punch four holes at the bottom of the black construction paper.
- ❺ Punch holes at the top of the sacrament templates.
- ❻ Use yarn to tie the sacrament templates to the black construction paper.
- ❼ Encourage the children to take their sacrament cross home and tell their family about how the sign of the cross is used in the sacraments.

# THE **SIGN** OF THE **CROSS** • clothespin activity

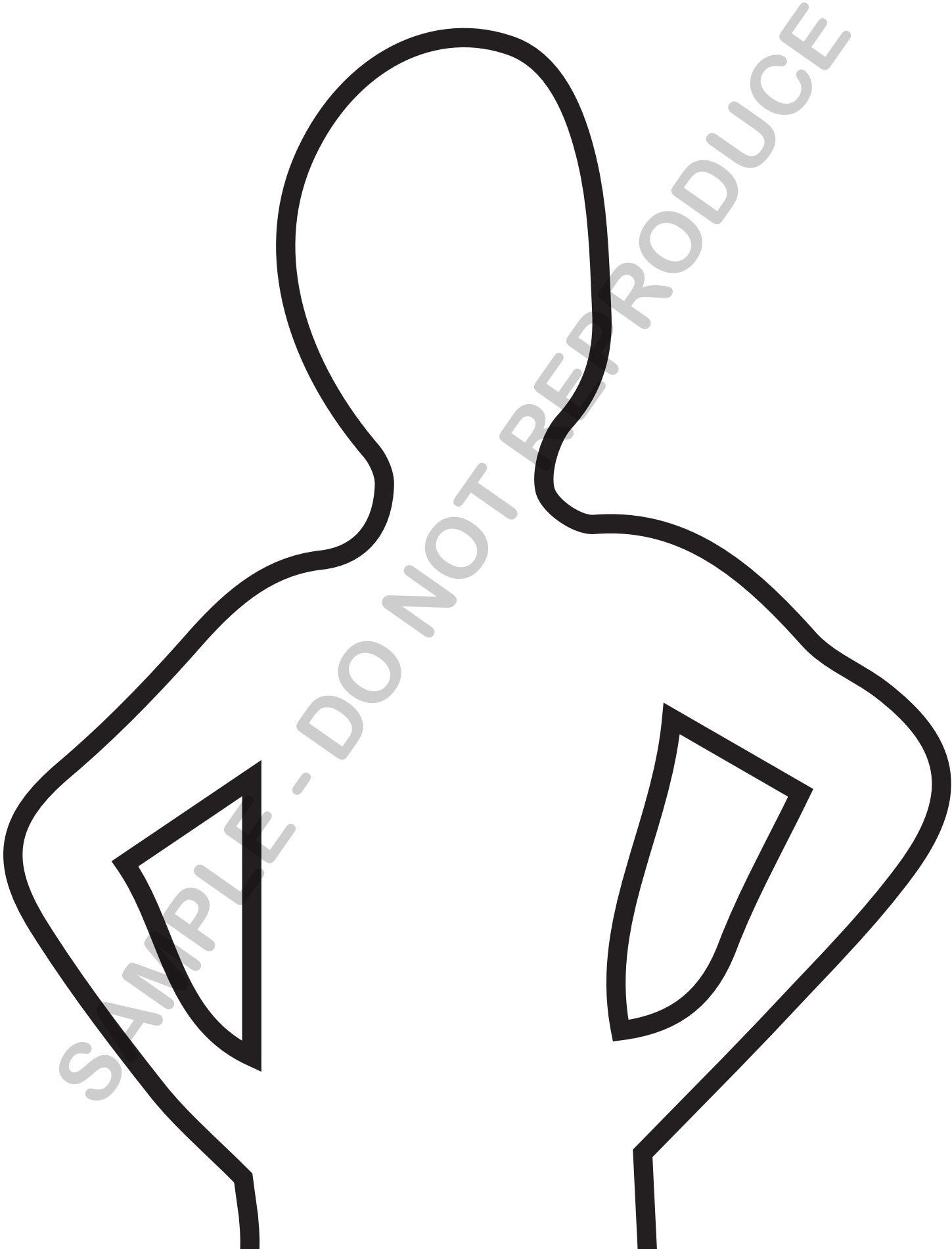
## Objectives

- ☐ To learn the sign of the cross with the words and gestures
- ☐ To learn the symbols of the sign of the cross found in Scripture

## Step-by-Step

1. Have your child find the words on the clothespins and put them in the order they appear in the sign of the cross: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*
2. Briefly discuss the sign of the cross and how we use it to begin our prayers, including the prayer of the Mass. Acquaint them with the biblical symbols found in the prayer: the cross Jesus died on and the three persons in the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Using the body cutout, have your child clip the clothespins to the part of the body where our hand goes as we make the sign of the cross.
  - ▶ Although this is a short prayer, the challenge in teaching it to others is getting the correct hand placement with the right words. (Hint: left shoulder before right shoulder because “l” comes before “r” in the alphabet.)
  - ▶ Two will be placed on the chest area (fold the cardboard in half lengthwise in order to place the clothespins there).
4. Practice the words and gestures of the prayer, making the sign of the cross together, stressing that it should be done slowly and reverently.





# THE **SIGN** OF THE **CROSS** • sacrament activity

## Objectives

- ☐ To be aware of the different sacraments that use the sign of the cross
- ☐ To be able to make the sign of the cross correctly

## Step-by-Step

1. Give your child a large piece of construction paper with a cross traced on it. Or have them trace the cross on the black paper using the template.
2. Fill in the cross template by gluing toothpicks. Some toothpicks may have to be cut to fit.
3. While your child decorates the four sacrament templates, discuss how each sacrament uses the sign of the cross:
  - ▶ In **baptism**, the sign of the cross is made on the forehead of the person being baptized to remind us that the cross is one of the main mysteries of our faith. The words of baptism—"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,"—are spoken while the water is poured or while the one to be baptized is immersed.
  - ▶ In the rite of the **anointing of the sick**, the priest anoints the sick person on the forehead; he makes the sign of the cross while praying: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen." He also anoints the sick person on the hands, making the sign of the cross.
  - ▶ When a bishop administers the sacrament of **confirmation**, he anoints each person to be confirmed. He makes the sign of the cross on the forehead while he prays: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."
  - ▶ During the sacrament of **reconciliation**, after the penitent has confessed his or her sins and made an act of contrition, the priest makes the sign of the cross while praying: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
4. Punch four holes at the bottom of the black construction paper, then punch a hole at the top of each sacrament template.
5. Use yarn to tie the sacrament templates to the black construction paper.
6. Take their sacrament cross home and tell other family members about how the sign of the cross is used in the sacraments.



## SIGN OF THE CROSS **SACRAMENT ACTIVITY**

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*Sacrament of*  
**BAPTISM**

*Sacrament of*  
**CONFIRMATION**

*Sacrament of*  
**ANOINTING  
OF THE SICK**

*Sacrament of*  
**RECONCILIATION**

# THE **OUR FATHER** • amen card game activity

## Objectives

- ☐ To learn the Our Father by playing the Amen card game
- ☐ To compare Matthew's version to Luke's version

## Step-by-Step

1. Explain that the Our Father is found in the Bible in two different places. The Gospel of Luke (11:2–4) has one version of the prayer, and the Gospel of Matthew (6:9–13) has another. Perhaps this is because Jesus actually taught it more than once and, as the prayer was passed down orally, it was remembered somewhat differently.
2. Have your child read the Matthew version. Ask if it is similar to the one prayed at Mass or used in the rosary.
3. Have your child read the Luke version. Talk about how it is similar to the one in Matthew, and discuss how it is different. Discuss which one you like better and why.
4. Play the Amen card game (it works with two or more players). Here are the rules:
  - ▶ **Goal:** To avoid being the player who ends the game holding the Amen card.
  - ▶ **Setup:** Choose a dealer. Deal the cards as evenly as possible among the players. It is acceptable for some players to have more cards than other players.
  - ▶ **Game play:** Players sort their cards and discard any pairs. The dealer then offers his hand, face down, to the player on his left. That player randomly takes one card from the dealer. If the card matches one he already has in his hand, he puts the pair down. If not, he keeps it. Play proceeds clockwise; so the player to the left of the dealer then offers his hand, face down, to the player on his left. This cycle repeats until there are no more pairs and the only remaining card is the Amen card.
  - ▶ **Winning:** The game ends when the Amen card is the only card in play. The persons not holding the Amen card are the winners.

SIGN OF THE CROSS **AMEN CARD GAME ACTIVITY**

---

**Our  
Father,**

**who art  
in heaven,**

**hallowed  
be thy name;**

**thy  
kingdom  
come,  
thy will be  
done**

**on earth  
as it is in  
heaven.**

**Give us  
this day our  
daily bread,**

**and forgive  
us our  
trespasses,**

**as we  
forgive those  
who trespass  
against us;**

**and lead  
us not into  
temptation,**

**but deliver  
us from evil.**

*Amen*

## THE GLORY BE (DOXOLOGY)

### Catechist background

The Glory Be prayer was created in order to help people understand and express the truths of the Catholic faith. It is comforting to know there is a short prayer that contains some very basic beliefs.

The phrase “Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit” was first used around the year 300 to remind people that Jesus used these words when he taught the disciples to go out and baptize (Matthew 28:19). The prayer also focuses on the Blessed Trinity; there are three divine persons in one God. Each person in the Trinity has a specific role. God the Father is the creator as well as the one who chooses us and calls us to be sons and daughters. God the Son shows us God the Father, and redeems us by his death on the cross. God the Holy Spirit gives us new life and witnesses to God the Son.

The next section of the prayer—“As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end”—came later. This phrase confirmed that there really are three persons in one God. The Glory Be prayer is said at the end of each decade of the rosary.

There are also longer versions of the Glory Be prayer. If you look carefully at the Gloria found in the Mass, it has the same basic faith beliefs.

### Prayer

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### GLORY BE LESSON PLAN 1

#### Objectives

- ☐ To learn the Glory Be prayer through making shamrock hats
- ☐ To sequence the Glory Be by putting phrases in order

#### Materials

- ☐ **PAPER** for making a white band that will fit around each child's head
- ☐ **GREEN CONSTRUCTION PAPER** for making shamrocks
- ☐ **SHAMROCK TEMPLATE** (page 16)
- ☐ **BLACK FINE POINT MARKERS**
- ☐ **PHRASES OF THE PRAYER HANDOUT** run off on cardstock, two pages per child

#### Lesson

- Gather the students together. Discuss the idea that the Glory Be is a very short prayer that contains some of our basic beliefs as Catholics. Talk about the mystery of the Trinity, three persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Tell how shamrocks are symbols that are sometimes used to illustrate the Trinity.
- Explain that this prayer is used as we pray the rosary.
- Display the words of the Glory Be on the board or chart paper. Pray it with the children.
- Use the template to make a Glory Be hat.
- At the end of the class, send home the parent letter along with the shamrock hats and the materials for the game “Pop.”

### Shamrock hat activity

- ❶ Use a strip of paper 2 ½ inches wide and long enough to fit around the child's head.
- ❷ Make four shamrocks. Write the words for the Glory Be as follows: shamrock one: Glory be to the Father; shamrock two: and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; shamrock three: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; shamrock four: world without end. Amen.
- ❸ Glue the shamrocks on the band.

### "Pop" [A game for 2 or more players]

- ❶ Cut the phrases into strips (*handout*). Cut out the two "pop" strips too. Mix all the strips up in a large coffee can. Players take turns pulling the strips out of the can. The object of the game is to put the prayer in order. If someone draws a phrase that he or she already has, the player puts the strip back. If a player draws the "pop" strip, he or she must return all of his or her strips to the can and start over. The first player to complete the entire prayer wins.

- Read Acts 2:1–4 and discuss the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost.
- Direct the children to make a Trinity mobile.
- Pray the Glory Be prayer together.

### Trinity mobile activity

- ❶ Make a large triangle. Write the Glory Be prayer on it.
- ❷ Make three smaller triangles. On the first triangle, write "God the Father" and two beliefs about God as Father.
- ❸ On the second triangle, write "God the Son" and two beliefs about God as Son.
- ❹ On the third triangle, write "God the Holy Spirit" and two beliefs about God as Spirit.
- ❺ Use different lengths of yarn to attach the smaller triangles to the large triangle. Remind everyone of the Trinity by hanging the Trinity mobile in a room in your house.

## GLORY BE LESSON PLAN 2

### Objectives

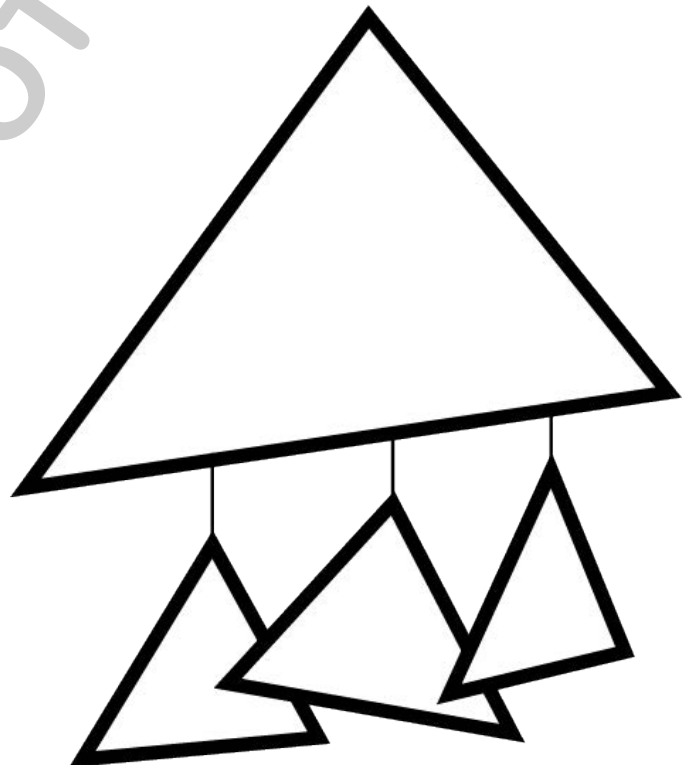
- ☐ To become familiar with Bible stories focusing on the roles of the Trinity
- ☐ To learn two beliefs about each person in the Trinity by creating a Trinity mobile

### Materials

- ☐ **BIBLE**
- ☐ **YARN**
- ☐ **HOLE PUNCH**
- ☐ **CONSTRUCTION PAPER** for making triangles
- ☐ **TRIANGLE TEMPLATES**

### Lesson

- Gather the students and display the words of the Glory Be prayer.
- Read Genesis 1:1–31 and Genesis 2:1–4 and discuss the role of God the Father as Creator.
- Read Mark 15:22–41 and discuss God the Son (Jesus), redeeming us out of love.



## GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER

### Catechist background

God gave each of us a guardian angel at our birth to watch over us, to pray for us, and to guide us. Angels can protect us from spiritual and physical harm. Jesus referred to angels when he said that children's "angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10).

Many theologians and saints have referred to angels. St. Basil wrote "every one of the faithful has an angel at his side as educator and guide, directing his life." St. Clement and St. Gregory the Great believed that countries, cities, towns, and families had angels watching over them.

The word "angel" comes from the Greek word "angelos," which means "messenger." Angels are God's special messengers. Angels are found throughout the Scriptures. Raphael, an archangel, was sent to Tobit to heal his blindness (Tobit, chapter 11). Angels protected the three young men who were thrown in a fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel, chapter 3). Gabriel asked Mary to be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38). And remember when St. Peter was in prison? An angel rescued him (Acts 12:6-10).

### Archangels

The biblical reference for the Archangel Raphael is found in the Book of Tobit. He was disguised as a man and journeyed with Tobit's son. After the journey, he healed Tobit of his blindness. The name Raphael means "God heals." He is the patron of the blind, of nurses and physicians, and of travelers.

The Archangel Michael is known for fighting the bad angels. Michael is mentioned in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Revelation. The name Michael means "Who is like God." He is the patron of paratroopers, police, mariners, and grocers.

In the Bible, the Archangel Gabriel is found in the Book of Daniel and the Gospel of Luke. Catholics are most familiar with his role as the one who asked Mary to be the mother of God. Gabriel

means "God is my strength." He is the patron of messengers, those who work for radio and television, and postal workers.

These three archangels are the only ones found in the Scriptures. Each one has a different job: Michael protects, Gabriel announces, and Raphael guides.

### Prayer

*Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.*

## GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER LESSON PLAN 1

### Objectives

- ☐ Children will use song to discuss angels and what they do
- ☐ Children will recite the Guardian Angel prayer

### Materials

- ☐ **ANGEL TEMPLATE** (run off on cardstock, if possible) (handout)
- ☐ **HOLE PUNCH** (for younger children; or to save time, punch the holes in the templates prior to class)
- ☐ **YARN**

### Song

**Angels** (Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Angels, angels up in heaven  
How I wonder what you do.  
Guarding, guiding us today,  
Keeps you busy all day long.  
Angels, angels up in heaven  
How I wonder what you do.



### Lesson

- Gather the children together and ask what they know about angels.
- Use the background material to talk about guardian angels and their main jobs.
- Give examples of how angels “light” our way, how they “guard” us, how they “guide” us.
- Ask students to share how they think their angels take care of them.
- Teach the “Angels” song.
- Explain the angel activity using the angel template and yarn.
- Pray together the Guardian Angel prayer to complete the lesson.

### GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER LESSON PLAN 2

#### Objectives

- ☐ To read and discuss the following biblical references to angels:  
*Tobit 5:1–17; 6:7–9; 11:7–14*  
*Revelation 12:7–9*  
*Luke 1:26–38*
- ☐ To make clouds to help the children remember what the archangels’ names mean and what their main job is

#### Materials

- ☐ **WHITE OR BLUE CONSTRUCTION PAPER**
- ☐ **CLOUD TEMPLATE**
- ☐ **SCISSORS**
- ☐ **MARKERS**
- ☐ **FACIAL TISSUE**
- ☐ **GLUE**

### Lesson

- Gather the children and read or tell the story from the Book of Tobit.
- Ask the children what their favorite part is and why. Ask if they would like to have a disguised angel go with them. Where would they like to go with the angel?
- Use the background information to talk about each archangel, what their main job is, and what their name means.
- Proceed to the angel clouds activity.

- To conclude the lesson, say the Guardian Angel prayer together.

### Angel clouds activity

- ① Cut out six large clouds.
- ② On cloud one, write the following: Archangel Raphael, whose name means “God has healed,” healed Tobit from his blindness.
- ③ On cloud two, write the following: Archangel Gabriel, whose name means “God is my strength,” asked Mary to be the mother of God.
- ④ On cloud three, write the following: Archangel Michael, whose name means “Who is like God,” led the good angels in battle against the bad angels.
- ⑤ Glue the edges of cloud one to a blank cloud; leave a bit of space, and stuff the cloud with facial tissue to make it puffy. Finish gluing the edges of the cloud together. Do the same for the other two clouds. Glue the clouds in an arrangement so all three are connected with the words visible.

# GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER • the angels song

## Objectives

- ☐ Children will use a song to discuss angels and what they do

## Step-by-Step

1. Ask your child what they know about angels.
2. Explain that the word “angel” comes from the Greek word “angelos,” which means “messenger.” Angels are God’s special **messengers**, and they can protect us from both spiritual and physical harm.
3. Teach your child the Angel song, set to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.  

Angels, angels up in heaven  
How I wonder what you do.  
Guarding, guiding us today,  
Keeps you busy all day long.  
Angels, angels up in heaven  
How I wonder what you do.
4. Tell your child that angels are found throughout the Scriptures. You may recall some stories from the Bible where angels appear: when three young men were thrown in a fiery furnace by King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel, chapter 3), when Gabriel told Mary she would have a baby (Luke 1:26-38), or when Peter was rescued from prison (Acts 12:6-10).

## GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER • angel activity

### Objectives

- ☐ Children will recite the Guardian Angel prayer

### Step-by-Step

1. Explain that God gives each of us a guardian angel at our birth to **watch over** us, to **pray** for us, and to **guide** us.
2. Complete the Guardian Angel activity, following the instructions on the activity page.
3. Pray the Guardian Angel prayer together:
  - ▶ Angel of God, my guardian dear,  
to whom God's love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side,  
to light and guard, to rule and guide.  
Amen.

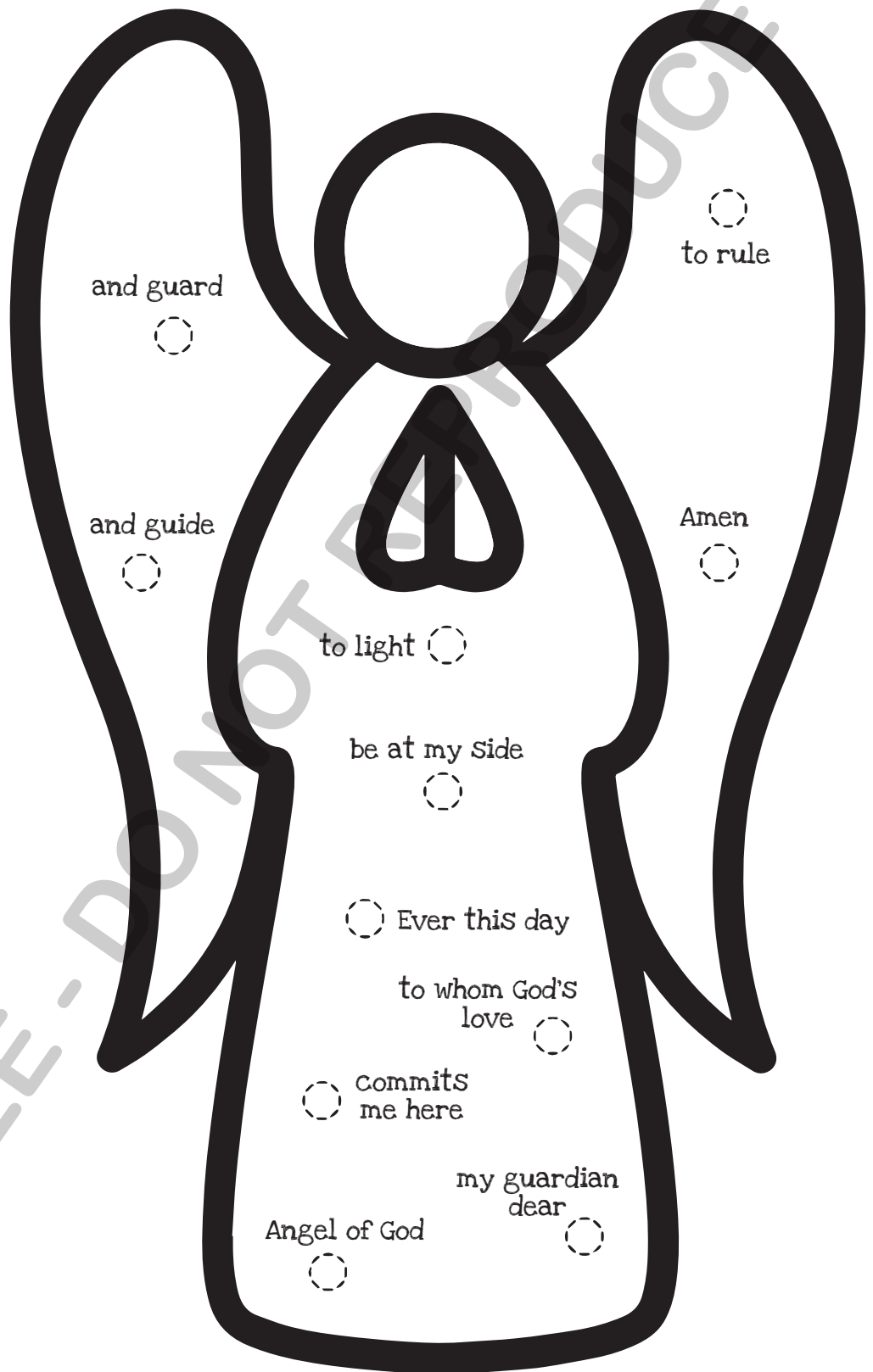


## GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER **ANGEL ACTIVITY**

Using yarn, go from hole to hole in the correct sequence to complete the Guardian Angel prayer.

Take your angel template home and place it in your bedroom where your guardian angel can watch over you.

Talk to your angel every day and thank the angel for taking care of you. Also, tell your guardian angel what you need to help you be a better person.



# GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER • cloud activity

## Objectives

- ☐ To read and discuss biblical references to angels
- ☐ To make clouds to help the children remember what the archangels' names mean and what their main job is

## Step-by-Step

1. Explain that there are three **archangels**: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. These angels rank above all angels and have special jobs. Michael is the protector, Gabriel is the announcer, and Raphael is the guide.
2. Read Tobit 5:1-17; 6:7-9; 11:7-14 together. Then read or retell the stories from Revelation 12:7-9 and Luke 1:26-38. Ask the following or similar questions:
  - ▶ What is your favorite part and why?
  - ▶ How would feel or react if an angel appeared to you?
3. Using the cloud template, have your child make six clouds. On three of the clouds write the following:
  - ▶ Cloud One: Archangel **Raphael**, whose name means "God has healed," healed Tobit from his blindness.
  - ▶ Cloud Two: Archangel **Gabriel**, whose name means "God is my strength," asked Mary to be the Mother of God.
  - ▶ Cloud Three: Archangel **Michael**, whose name means "Who is like God," led the good angels in battle against the bad angels.
4. Glue the edges of the blank clouds to the three you wrote on. Leave a bit of space to stuff the clouds with facial tissue to make them puffy. Glue the clouds shut.
5. Glue the clouds together in an arrangement so all three are connected with the words visible.



## GUARDIAN ANGEL PRAYER **CLOUD ACTIVITY**

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