Signs of God's Presence

Preparation for the Session

Turn to Page 81,
the Family + Faith page.

Read the **Consider This** feature. What thoughts or reactions do you have to the opening question?

In this chapter you will cover the following objectives:

- Identify a sign as something that points beyond itself to something else
- Develop an understanding of God's signs and the need to be attentive
- Recognize that the Passover meal was a sign of the covenant between God and the People he saved
- Describe the Seven Sacraments as effective signs of the new covenant made through the life and sacrifice of Jesus

Parents, Consider This: *Communication often times takes place through signs—physical gestures or material objects that point beyond themselves to invisible realities. A kiss, a handshake, or X's and O's on a card are all signs of relationship. The Bible describes the many signs God employed in ancient times to communicate his will to humans. The image of God's Son hanging on the Cross is an eternal sign of the reconciliation of Heaven and Earth through Jesus' saving Death. Think of some of the signs your family uses to communicate with each other. Help each other to become more conscious of what you are saying.*

Read these other sections on the Family + Faith Page.

- *Your Child Learned.* This highlights some of the content of Sacred Scripture and Tradition in the lesson.
- *Children At This Age.* This will help you understand how your child processes and learns at this developmental level.

Let's Sing: These songs connect the session topics and can be downloaded from aliveinchrist.osv.com.
- Glory and Praise to Our God
- The Seven Sacraments

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INVITE: Encountering God in His Word

Turn to Page 73,
Signs of God's Presence

After gathering the supplies that you will need, find a quiet place to be with your child. This is a sacred time—a time when you will be present to each other and to the Lord. You may want to light a candle as you begin.

Let Us Pray Invite your child to make the Sign of the Cross. Read aloud the Psalm verse from the book. Help your child to respond.

Say: God is not only in Heaven, but he is also present with us on Earth. We can talk with him anytime—he is always listening. The signs of God are all around us in the things and people he has created. God also speaks to our hearts through his Holy Spirit. Let's listen to God's promise of presence.

Guide your child through the Preparing for God's Word Ritual you learned in the Introduction Session or play Track 1 of the *Songs of Scripture* CD.

- Proclaim God's Word in the Parchment Paper box on the page.
- Maintain several moments of silence.
- Ask: What did you hear God say to you today?

Invite your child to respond and also share what you heard.

Now, look at the *What Do You Wonder?* box.

Say: God's power and presence are displayed in the wonders of creation and human life. God uses signs to tell us about his goodness.

Invite your child to respond to the questions. Ask what else he/she might wonder about signs of God's presence.

DISCOVER: Learning God's Truth

Turn to Page 74, Powerful Signs

Tell your child to be thinking about signs.

Direct him/her to read the first paragraph.

Ask: If a sign is something visible that expresses something invisible, what might be a sign of friendship? (a hug, a handshake) What are some signs of married love? (wedding rings, children) What is the most powerful sign of married love? (children, because they are the new life created by God's love and the love of their parents)

Tell your child that you will be reading a Scripture story about a powerful sign of God's presence that was shown to Moses.

Proclaim the Scripture.

Direct your child to find the passage in your Bible. Then find the verse where God speaks to Moses. Have her/him read it from the Bible. The artwork on this page shows Moses' reaction to the burning bush.

Ask your child how he/she would feel if God spoke to them in the way he did to Moses.

Turn to Page 75, Signs Point the Way

Invite your child to think of other signs of God's presence in the Bible. (angels, dove, rainbow, bread, water)

Alternate reading the text with your child.

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Activity

Give your child a blank piece of paper and ask her/him to fold it in half and in half again. Unfold the paper and in the four squares, ask your child to write a place or time when he/she has felt close to God other than in church. (when they said a prayer for someone else, when they were at the beach, when they saw an incredibly beautiful fish in the aquarium)

Parents, Consider This: *The Old Testament teaches us that God has entered into a sacred relationship with us, a covenant. God initiates that covenant through the promises he makes to Abraham and Moses. He will be our God and his love will bring us to fullness of life. As a sign of that covenant, the Israelites are freed from slavery. But the pinnacle of freedom is yet to come. It comes in Jesus—in a love so great that it frees us from the slavery of sin.*

Turn to Page 76, Covenant Signs

Ask your child to read the definition of a **covenant**.

Discuss with him/her how sacred a promise is. Share a promise that you have made to someone and kept.

Ask your child to recall a promise that was made to them and was broken. How did it make her/him feel?

Read the Catholic Faith Word definition of the **Seven Sacraments**.

Ask your child what "effective signs of God's life" means.

Say: These signs are sources of grace; God is present through these words and actions.

Have your child read aloud the first two paragraphs.

Discuss the signs of God's covenant with the Israelites.

Read aloud the text from "The New Covenant."

★ **Complete** the gold-star Activity.

Ask the question at the bottom of the page.

Share with your child what difference having the knowledge that God loves you has made in your life. Speak honestly and from your heart about your gratitude for the gift of Jesus. Tell him/her about a time of great joy or sadness when you were aware of God's grace.

Turn to Page 77, Effective Signs

Have your child silently review the chart to identify the signs of the Seven Sacraments and the form that God's presence takes in each one.

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Review the information with him/her, emphasizing that the Seven Sacraments are gifts that have come from God the Father through Jesus, the perfect sign of God' presence to us through the Church. In the Sacraments we experience God's life and love.

Parents, Consider This: *While God initiates this relationship with us, we must accept that gift of salvation. That requires a conscious effort to live in response to God's love. How wonderful it would be if each day you and your children awoke with the joy that comes from knowing that we live in the new covenant—the love made visible in the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our hearts hunger for the Seven Sacraments when we understand that they offer us an experience of God's life and love. Regularly receiving the Sacraments is so important to our spiritual life that it is one of the Precepts of the Church.*

LIVE: Living Our Faith

Turn to Page 78,
Our Catholic Life

Ask: How do you see the signs God sends to you?

Explain that becoming more aware of God's presence—like any other exercise—becomes easier with practice.

Read aloud Steps 1 and 2 of the "Become More Aware" chart. Share with your child the importance of becoming more aware of God's presence in your life.

Make a promise that you and your child will both use this tool during the week.You may want to invite other family members to do the same.

Turn to Page 79,
People of Faith

Read the paragraph about Saint Benedict.

- Share your reactions to the information.
- Talk about the rules in your family that help you to live in right relationship with each other.

Turn to Page 81,
Family + Faith Page and conclude with the Let's Pray prayer on this page.

Parents, Consider This: *It's important to form our children in the common language of prayer. We encourage you to pray the Hail Mary (see Page 321) during your night prayer this week.*

To access and send an eAssessment to your child, go to the Student and Family section of aliveinchrist.osv.com.

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