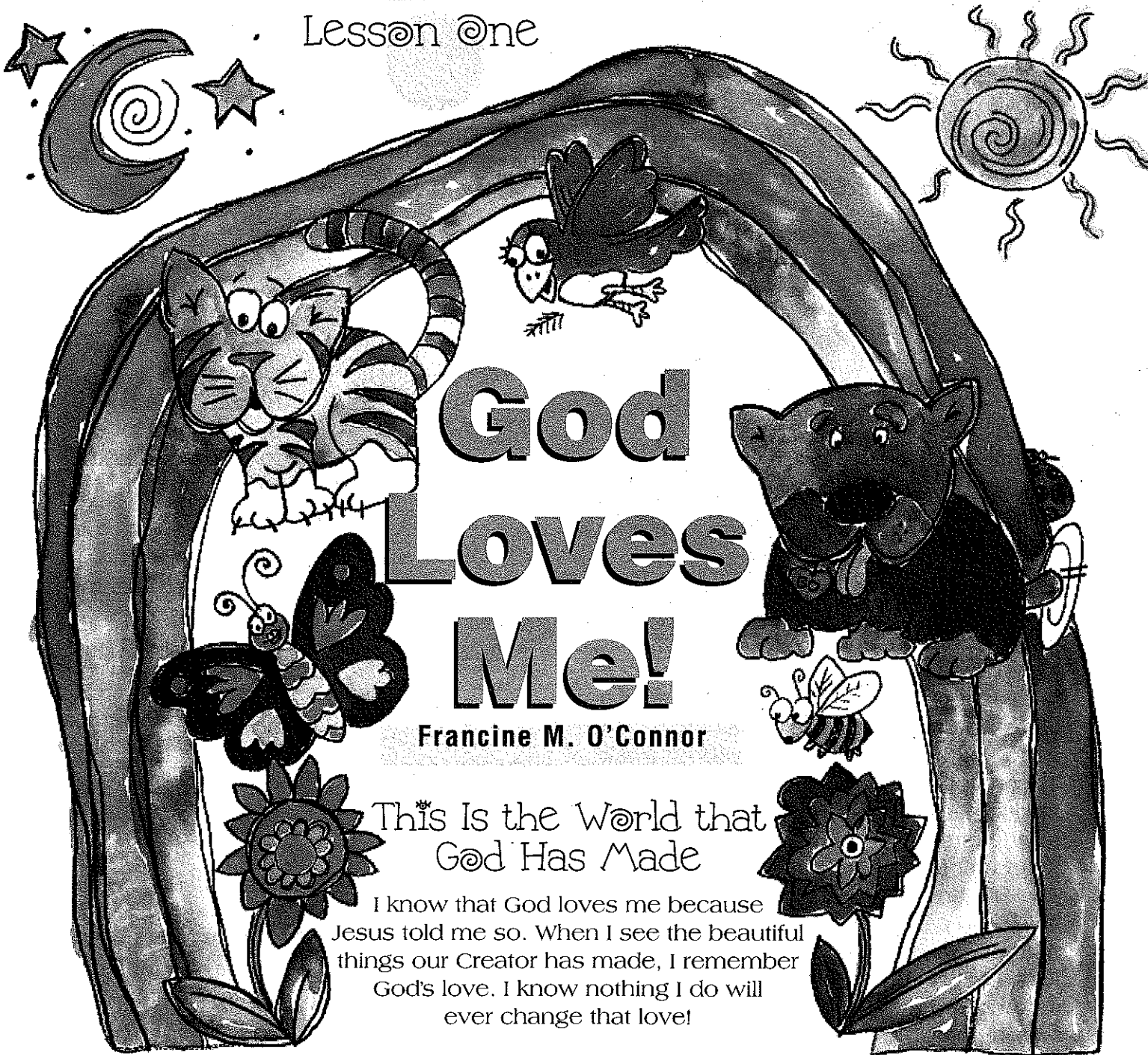


PREPARING CHILDREN for the RITE of RECONCILIATION

# First Penance

Lesson One



**God  
Loves  
Me!**

**Francine M. O'Connor**

This Is the World that  
God Has Made

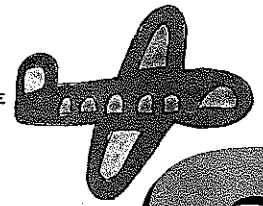
I know that God loves me because  
Jesus told me so. When I see the beautiful  
things our Creator has made, I remember  
God's love. I know nothing I do will  
ever change that love!

How many of God's gifts can you find in this picture?





# Gooda



I woke up this morning and the sun was shining in my window. I heard a little bird singing in the tree outside. It seemed like the bird was saying, "Get up! Get up! God has made a wonderful day!"

And all the beautiful things in my world reminded me of God's love.

I went downstairs to the kitchen where Mother was making breakfast. She placed my breakfast on the table, and, oh, how good it smelled! Then, Mother smiled a special mother smile. "Good morning, sweetheart," she said, and gave me a great big hug and kiss. Daddy came in and lifted me way up high.

"Have a wonderful day," he said.

I felt the love of my parents and remembered that God is my loving Father, who watches over me every day.

mind that can love and learn new things, and a teacher to show me the way.

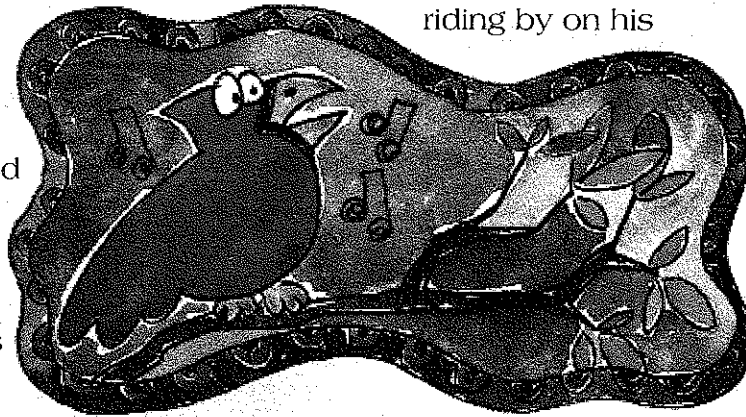
After school, I went out to play. It was a beautiful day. My best friend came riding by on his

And I remembered that God is the best kind of friend, a very good friend who loves me a lot.

Every time I walk in the park, and see children and flowers and trees and birds, I remember again about God's love for the world and the people on earth.

I learn more about how God loves me when I go to church with my family and hear the words of Jesus and about all the loving things he did for all of God's children — like me.

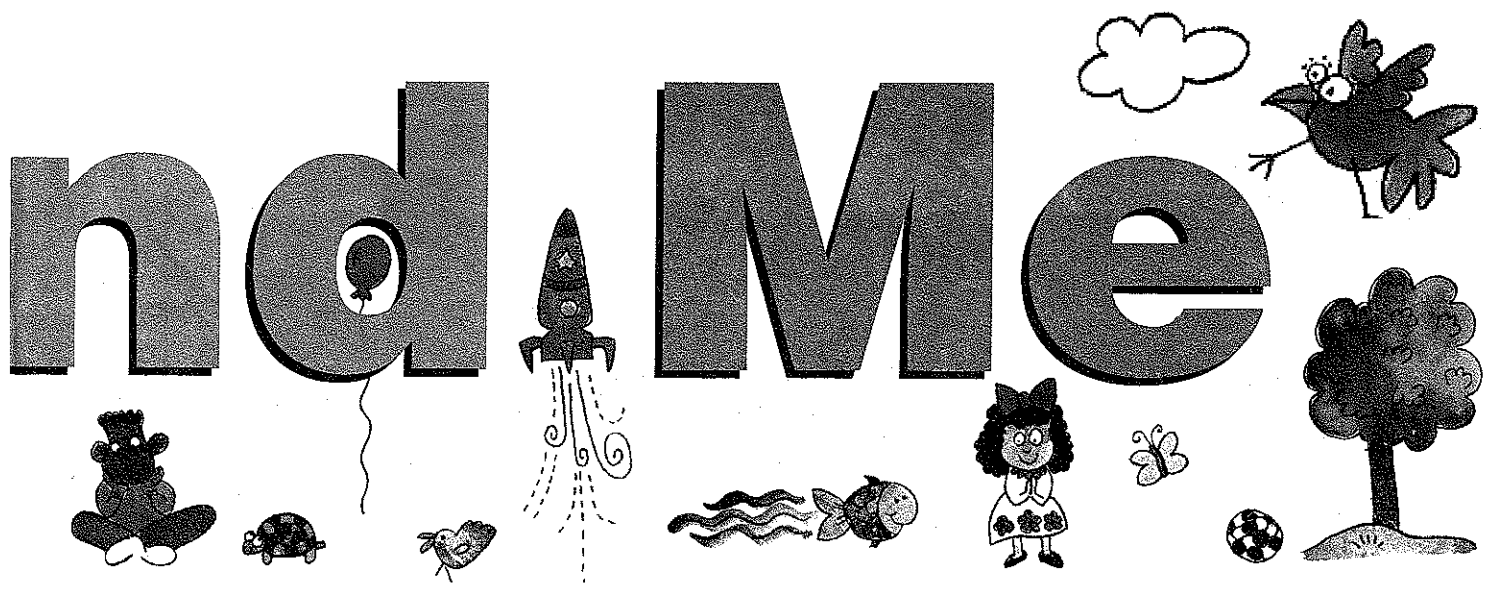
When I hear how Jesus came to our world just to teach about God's love, I know nothing I do will ever make God stop loving me.



At school, I read a story all by myself. It was about a little girl and her dog. Then, my teacher helped me with a math problem that I didn't understand. After lunch, we had a spelling bee, and I came in third.

I was so glad that God gave me a

brand new bicycle. "Would you like to ride my bike?" he asked. And I said, "Oh, yes, I would." My friend was not afraid that I would break his new bike. He trusted me. So I let him play with my best ball while I took a ride on his bike.



S R B E C I A N O U N S S I Y N O M U Y A E R Y E P S

↓  
**S R B E C I A N O U N S S I Y N O M U Y A E R Y E P S**

**Circle of God's Love**  
 Use the space outside of the circle to draw some of the things that remind you of God's love for you. Then, if you read every other letter around the circle, starting at the arrow, God will tell you why you are so loved.

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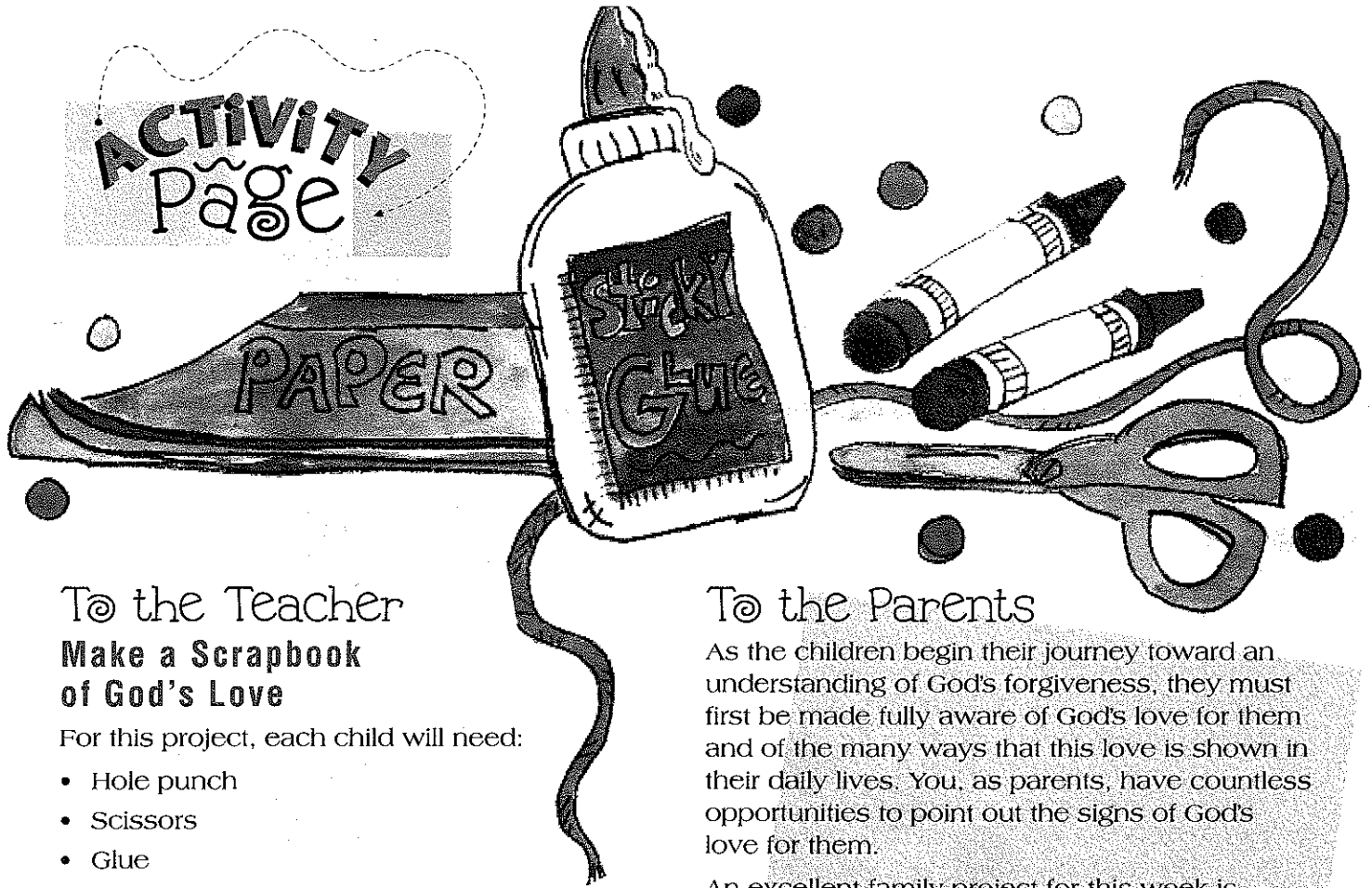


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# ACTIVITY Page



## To the Teacher Make a Scrapbook of God's Love

For this project, each child will need:

- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Glue
- Old magazines
- Four or five pieces of 8 1/2" x 11" drawing paper or construction paper
- Crayons or markers
- 12" - 15" pieces of yarn

Direct the children through the following steps:

1. Hold all four or five pieces of paper together and fold them in half to make a book.
2. Punch holes on the folded edge and string the yarn through the holes to hold the book together.
3. On the cover of the book, write, "My Book of God's Gifts."
4. Look through magazines to find pictures that are reminders of God's love.
5. Glue a different gift on each page of the book. Beneath the pictures, write a thank-you prayer for that special gift.

## To the Parents

As the children begin their journey toward an understanding of God's forgiveness, they must first be made fully aware of God's love for them and of the many ways that this love is shown in their daily lives. You, as parents, have countless opportunities to point out the signs of God's love for them.

An excellent family project for this week is a "faith walk" in a wooded area or park. In preparation for this project, decorate a shoe box with pictures cut from a magazine. You can print "God Made the World for Me" on your box.

On the day of your walk, have the children carry bags to collect small mementos: acorns, leaves, birds' feathers, small stones, flower petals, and so forth. During your walk, point out signs of God's love that the children may miss, but give them the opportunity to discover some of these signs on their own.

After your walk, read about the wild flowers in the Sermon on the Mount (see Lk 12:27-28), or the story of creation as found in the Book of Genesis. The children can then store their collections in the decorated box.

## From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- #295, #341 on creation
- #218-21, #733 on God is Love
- #370, #374 on God's attributes and friendship



Editor: Lauren K. Borstell  
Art and design: Christine Kraus

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PREPARING CHILDREN for the RITE of RECONCILIATION

# First Penance

## Lesson Two

### Mystery Scripture Message

Francine M. O'Connor

**H**ere is a message from the Bible that tells how the people have always felt about God. Unscramble the scrambled words to find out what the message says.

iSgn l jofyu  
osgsn to the  
rodL! moeC to  
wrohspi him  
with tnahkflu  
ehatrs and osgsn  
of parsie. The  
rodL is the  
rgetaest oGd.

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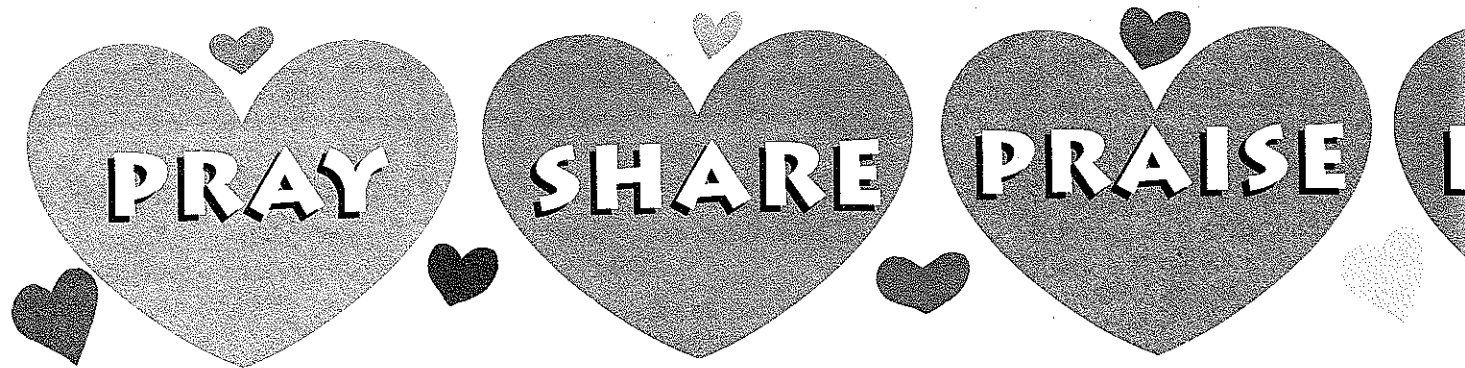
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# How I Love



I can love God in so many ways.  
Day after day, I am learning new ways  
to love my wonderful God.

I can love God as a very good *Friend*:  
A Friend I can talk to in my prayers,  
when I am lonely and want  
company.  
Maybe sometimes my Friend is lonely,  
too.  
Then, I will keep my Friend company.

I can tell my Friend all my secrets.  
When I am worried about something, I  
know my Friend will make things  
right.  
Then I can stop worrying.  
I can laugh and talk with my Friend  
when everything is wonderful and I  
am very happy.  
I can share my joy with my Friend.

I can thank my Friend for being there  
when I need to talk.  
I can love God as a very good *Friend*!

I can love God as my *Father* in heaven:  
I know my Father watches over me  
and cares for me every day.  
I know my Father never forgets about me.

I can listen to my Father's words and  
try to follow them.

I can learn the Ten Commandments  
and always live by them.  
I know when I obey, my Father is  
happy and so am I.

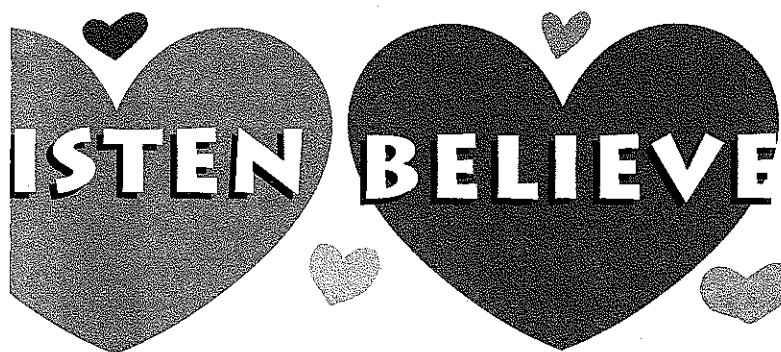
I can be good to friends and neighbors  
because they are my Father's  
children, too.  
They are my brothers and sisters.  
We all belong to one big family.

I can surprise my Father with little  
presents — saying special prayers of  
love and doing kind things for others.  
I can love God as a caring *Father*!

I can love God as *God*:  
I can look around the world and see  
how great and wonderful God is.  
I can go to Mass and listen to the  
stories of God.

I can believe, when my priest says,  
"This is my body and this is my  
blood," that God is truly mysterious, and  
powerful enough to overcome death.

# God



I can praise God in my prayers.  
I can say every single day how  
wonder-filled God is.  
I can give thanks for the world, and  
all the people who love me.

I can think about God's heaven,  
where people live forever.  
I can believe that one day I will be in  
heaven, too.  
I can love God as *God!*

I love God!

Sometimes as a Friend.

Sometimes as a Father.

Sometimes as God.

## MY OWN PRAYER

FILL IN THE MISSING WORDS IN THE PRAYER BELOW. WHEN IT IS FINISHED, YOU CAN CUT IT OUT AND SAVE IT TO SAY EVERY TIME YOU WANT TO TELL GOD ABOUT YOUR LOVE.

DEAR GOD, I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.

I LOVE YOU AS A \_\_\_\_\_  
BECAUSE YOU LISTEN TO ME  
WHEN \_\_\_\_\_.

I LOVE YOU AS A \_\_\_\_\_,  
TOO, BECAUSE YOU WATCH OVER  
ME EVERY DAY AND TAKE CARE  
OF ME WHEN \_\_\_\_\_.

I LOVE YOU AS MY \_\_\_\_\_,  
MAKER OF ALL THINGS.

I SEE THE WONDER OF YOUR  
LOVE WHENEVER I LOOK AT  
\_\_\_\_\_.

I LOVE YOU WITH MY WHOLE  
HEART, WITH MY WHOLE MIND,  
AND WITH MY WHOLE SOUL.  
THANK YOU FOR BEING MY GOD.

**AMEN**

# ACTIVITY Page

## To the Teacher

Sometimes, loving God means making difficult choices. Here is a play your class can act out about a special choice made by four of Jesus' apostles.

## To the Parents

Children are great "givers." When a child has picked a flower for Mom, his or her delight almost bursts forth. A picture drawn for Grandma or a surprise hug for Dad are given from the heart.

# Jesus by the Sea

Based on Luke 5:1-11

**Cast:** Narrator, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Jesus, First Woman, Second Woman, the crowd, a few fisherman along the shore.

**Setting:** The shores of Galilee.

**Props:** Two large nets (an old sheet cut in two will work well, or the children can pantomime holding the nets), a background mural of the sea, two large cardboard cartons painted to represent boats.

**Narrator:** The play opens with Simon Peter and Andrew washing nets in the water. Not too far away are James and John. Jesus is a short way off, talking to a crowd of people.

**Simon Peter:** Well, Andrew, it wasn't a good night. I'm tired and we've caught nothing. Let's wash these nets and go home.

**Andrew:** Right you are, brother.

*(James and John nod in agreement.)*

**Narrator:** Jesus walks up to the shoreline and climbs into Simon Peter's boat. The crowd becomes concerned that Jesus is going away.

**First Woman:** Is he leaving? I want to hear more about God. This man makes sense when he talks.

**Second Woman:** No, I don't think he's leaving. He just wants to push off from shore a little so we can see him better.

**Narrator:** Jesus sat in the boat and talked to the crowd of people. He told them about his Father and explained things to them that they had never understood before. Then he spoke to Simon Peter.

**Jesus:** Put out into the deep water and lower your nets for a catch.

**Simon Peter:** Master, we have been hard at it all night long and have caught nothing. But if you say so, I will lower the nets.

**Narrator:** Simon Peter and Andrew drop their nets over the side of the boat.

**Simon Peter (in surprise):** Andrew, will you look at those nets? They are so full of fish they are going to break!

**Andrew:** I see them, brother. I can't believe it!

**Narrator:** Simon Peter and Andrew pull in their nets with great effort. Then Andrew yells to James and John.

**Andrew:** James! John! Help us! We have too many fish to put into our small boat.

**James:** John, will you look at all those fish!

**Narrator:** James throws his net into the sea next to Simon Peter's, then he and John pull it in, struggling to lift it because it is so full.

**John:** Our boats are both full. Where did those fish come from? It's a miracle!

**Simon Peter (falling to his knees):** Leave me, Lord. I am too sinful to be here with you.

**Jesus (lifting Simon Peter to his feet and speaking to all present):** Do not be afraid, from now on, you will catch people.

**Narrator:** Jesus begins to walk away slowly. Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John throw their nets back into their boats and follow him. They chose to follow Jesus for the rest of their lives.

This week, the children are learning ways that they can "give" back to God some of the love given to them. To utilize this giving streak in their nature, plan a special celebration of their love for God. It can be a meal or a party. Balloons and streamers can help give a party air to your celebration, but simple decorations made by the children are just as effective and far more personal.

Have your children plan a "surprise" for God, a gift made by their own hands. You can help by giving a few ideas (write a prayer, draw a picture, make a small banner), but the final decision should be made by the children.

## From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- #2637, #2639-43 on praise and thanksgiving
- #2633 on times of need
- #2052-55 on the Ten Commandments and the Great Commandment
- #1524-25 on Eucharist and eternal life



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