

# Jesus Teaches Us How to Live As God's Children

**Objective:** Students will be able to explain that our trust in God, our Father, and our love for each other identify us as children of God.

## **For the Catechist**

In Genesis we read, "God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Through the first sin of Adam and Eve, however, our original likeness to God was lost. Jesus Christ's coming to the cave in Bethlehem gave us the opportunity to regain what was lost by our first parents. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus restored our communion with God. Jesus taught us how to love God and our neighbor so that we can be in communion with God. The Holy Spirit helps us live as Jesus taught us.

In the lessons (9 and 10) on the Ten Commandments, Jesus reminds us that the heart of the Old Covenant was always meant to be love. Christ shows us this by extending the commandments to cover attitudes, not just external acts; by extending the recipients of neighborly love to include more than the chosen people; and by showing His love to be the model for ours as stated in the New Commandment: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another." (Jn 13:34).

We need to be reminded to love everyone often because it is so difficult at times. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to love as God asks. Also, we are expected to act and speak in a way that identifies us as followers of Jesus. Imagine the positive changes in the world that would occur if we Christians lived always mindful of the fact that we are God's children.

Whenever we discuss family relationships, we must remember that not all families are the same. Be sensitive to unique family situations that might cause some children to feel uncomfortable. Also the trust and love that we would hope all children have may not be evident in some homes. This lesson helps all of us realize that we can always trust God because He is our Father. Now we must learn to live and love as children of God.

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** The Lord's Prayer

**Introduction:** Discussion of trust

**Read Text Aloud:** Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

### **Activity Tracks:**

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity (detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* We Are God's Children
- *Group:* Collage of God's Family
- *Craft:* "Give Praise" Prayer

**Closing:** Psalm 150

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*  
Icon Screen

## **Teaching Pics**

## ***Background Reading***

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **Humanity in God's Image and Likeness**

"In its second story of creation, Genesis distinguishes between humanity and all of God's other works. We share the same origin and destiny of all created matter, but at the same time we are radically different. We exist in the 'image and likeness' of God (Gn 1:26).

"Countless Jewish and Christian thinkers have sought to explain what it might mean to be in God's image. Some have stressed the dominion and stewardship over creation God gives us (cf Gn 1:26). While clearly subordinate to Him, we share in His lordship as free beings with responsibilities and control. Others have accented our mental and spiritual qualities, particularly our free will as marking us in God's image.

"Many Fathers of the Church used 'image' and 'likeness' to help describe our relationship with God. For them, 'image' designated that indestructible similarity to God that is at the heart of our nature. These Fathers saw this image in many aspects of the human person, including our freedom, our rationality, our dominion over the world, and our immortality. Some Eastern Christians in particular have looked to our creation as a community ('male and female He created them') as reflecting the Trinitarian essence of God. Still others have seen the entire human person as like God: body, emotions and intellect.

"For the Fathers, the word 'likeness' designated our union with God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. They saw this harmony with God illustrated in Genesis by the description of Adam and Eve enjoying fellowship with God in the garden. In their view image and likeness are complementary. Made in God's image, we are free; and as free, we affirm our likeness in union with God. However, Adam sinned and chose not to be 'like God.' He lost the likeness in us and marred the image. The image of God in us remains always as the basis for restoring friendship with God and for destined union with Him" (*LLI* 24-25).

### **The Kingdom of God**

"The Kingdom of God is at the very heart of Jesus' Gospel. His first preaching is recorded as 'Reform your lives! The kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Mt 4:17). The Divine Liturgy begins, 'Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' However, revelation seems to indicate sometimes that the kingdom is imminent and at the other times that it is in the future. In Jesus' preaching the kingdom seems imminent, I assure you, among those standing here there are some who will not experience death before they see the Son of Man come in his kingship' (Mt 16:28). The Gospel of St. Luke in a difficult passage says, 'Neither is it a matter of reporting that it is 'here' or 'there.' The kingdom of God is already in your midst' (17:21).

"On the other hand, the fullness of the kingdom of God seemingly must await some indeterminate future. Therefore, we pray daily in the Lords' Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come'" (*LLI* 57).

# *The Lesson Plan*

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## **Opening**

*Let's pray the Lord's Prayer. Do we pray the Lord's Prayer during the Divine Liturgy? (Yes) We are praying the words Jesus taught us to say to our Father.*

## **Introduction**

*Today we are going to play a game. I hope all of you know you can trust me, but today I am going to ask one of you to prove it. I need a volunteer. Okay, I want you to stand in front of me. I am going to stand behind you and I want you to fall into my arms. How is this going to show you trust me? [Follow through with the activity. If there is time, do this with every student in your class.]*

*Let's think of some other people we can trust enough to catch us if we did this activity. (Our parents, relatives, priest, religious)*

*We can relate this idea of trust to the way we trust God. We should trust Him to hold us up at all times. We trust God because He is our Father. Let's turn to our lesson.*

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## Jesus Teaches Us How to Live As God's Children



When we studied about the Feast of the Transfiguration, we learned that God revealed Himself as the Trinity at Jesus' baptism. This is the reason in the New Covenant we know God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus always called God His Father. He also taught His followers to know that God loves us so much that we, too, can call God our Father. Jesus taught His followers to trust their Father in heaven as children trust their parents. One day He asked them some questions. Read Matthew 7:9-11 to see why Jesus wanted us to know that we could trust God our Father.

What "good thing" should we ask for when we pray? Jesus' followers did not know, so they asked Him to teach them to pray. He taught them to say Our Father (The Lord's Prayer) so that they would know for what to pray.

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God With Us Grade 4

Unit 4: This Is My Beloved Son

### Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

...so that they would know for what to pray.

What good things should we ask for when we pray? [Let the children share.] What prayer did Jesus teach us to say to God? (The Lord's Prayer) Every time we say "Our Father," we identify that God is special to us and will take care of us. We are trusting God.

... Jesus wants us to know that God will take care of us if we let Him.

What did we learn are the two most important things to ask for in our prayers? (God's Kingdom come and God's will be done) What does that mean? (That we live with God in His Kingdom and we accept what God wants)

... will be given you besides."

What does this teaching mean to you? (God will take care of us always.) What are some of the things we worry about that we shouldn't? (Do we have enough money to buy something; do our clothes look nice; do we have enough soda)

What do you think Jesus is teaching us in this story?

We are to follow God's Word always even if we do not feel like it. Also, don't say you are following God's Word if you are not. Your words and actions must be the same.

In the Lord's Prayer we learn that the most important things to ask for are that His Kingdom come and that His will be done. For everything else, Jesus wants us to know that God will take care of us if we let Him.

Jesus tells us, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or about your body, what you will wear" (Matthew 6:25). We can trust God to give us what we need. Read Matthew 6:31-33 to learn what Jesus teaches us to seek instead. Then complete the sentences below:

"So do not worry and say, "What are we to eat?" or

"What are we to drink?" or "What are we to wear?"

All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that

you need them all. But seek first the kingdom and

his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."

In the Lord's Prayer we also pray, "Thy will be done." When we pray for God's will to be done in our life, we are showing that we trust our Father. We trust that He knows better than we do what is good for us. We believe that our Father will hear our prayers and answer them according to His will because we are His children. When we say "Thy will be done," we are telling God that we trust Him completely.

If God is our Father and we are His children, we should be ready to do what He asks of us. We may not always feel like it, but we must do our best. Otherwise we are only saying that we are God's children; our actions will say something else.

One day Jesus told a story about a man and his two sons. Read the story in Matthew 21:28-32. Which son did what his father asked? What do you think Jesus is teaching us in this story?

Because God is our Father, we will obey Him as well as trust Him.

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**... we will be recognized as God's children.**

*How can we be recognized? (By the way we behave) Let's think of some ways that show we are God's children. (We are nice to everyone; we are helpful; we mean what we say.)*

*Is it hard to love our enemies? Why?*

*Jesus is telling us it is easy to love our family and friends, but He wants us to do more - we are to love our enemies.*

*How can we show our love for our enemies? (We can forgive them for being mean to us; we can talk to them.) We can only do that with the help of the Holy Spirit.*

**Words to Remember:** [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

Sometimes we hear people say we look like our parents. People tell us we have our parent's eyes or nose, or they tell us we act just like our mom or dad. Perhaps we talk quickly the way our parents do. Perhaps we keep our rooms and school books organized the way our parents keep our house organized. You might even hear a relative say, "You are just like your dad, or you are just like your mom."

If we are God's children, are we like our Father? When people look at us, are they able to recognize that we are God's children? Jesus tells us that we should be perfect the way our Father is perfect. How could we possibly do that? **Read Matthew 5:43-48** and listen as Jesus tells us how.

We are like our heavenly Father when we love everyone, including our enemies, the way He loves everyone. We are to go beyond loving just the people we know or like; we are to love everyone who is loved by God. That means all people!

This is difficult for most of us. We need Jesus' help to show us how to love people who may have hurt us. In the New Testament we read many stories about Jesus and how He loved and forgave people—even the ones no one else liked. When we try to do as Jesus did, we will be recognized as God's children.



**Words to Remember:**  
**Kingdom of God:** When people follow God's way in all things.  
**Parable:** A story that teaches a lesson. Jesus spoke in parables.

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**Activity Tracks**

**Basic:** We Are God's Children

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

*Follow the instructions for connecting the words to help you write the scriptural passage.*

[For the letter you could help the children think about national enemies that we need to forgive also. They could write their letter to a country's leader or a political group that we might consider an enemy.]

**We Are God's Children**

I. Read Matthew 5:44-45 in your New Testament. For the words below, start with number 1 and number them in the order they appear in the Scripture.

2Ⓕ Father   8Ⓗ enemies   1Ⓙ but   4Ⓙ to   7Ⓙ you   10Ⓙ pray  
 13Ⓗ who   17Ⓙ you   20Ⓗ children   9Ⓙ and   5Ⓙ you   2Ⓙ I  
 6Ⓙ love   11Ⓙ for   22Ⓗ your   23Ⓗ heavenly   18Ⓗ may   19Ⓗ be  
 16Ⓗ that   21Ⓙ of   15Ⓗ you   3Ⓙ say   12Ⓗ those   14Ⓗ persecute

II. Close your New Testament and on the lines below write the words in the correct order.

**But I say to you love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be children of your heavenly Father.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

III. Jesus tells us we are to love even our enemies. Write a letter to someone you might think of as an enemy—someone who has been mean to you or someone who has hurt you. Tell this person that you forgive him or her and you would like to be a friend.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

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**Group:** Collage of God's Family

*Materials:* Poster board, magazines, newspapers, church bulletins, note cards, glue, scissors

*Today we are going to show what people who live as God's children do. Let's think of a title for the top of our poster board that is going to show and tell what people do. Any suggestions? [If there aren't any, start with the activity.] Let's start by going through some former bulletins from our church. Let's cut out announcements of things our church does to show we are God's children. [Examples: the Liturgy schedule, other services, activities that help parishioners and other people.] Let's paste those announcements on the bulletin board. Now let's go through magazines and newspapers and cut out pictures and articles about people helping other people. Let's add them to our board. This is called a collage when there is no set pattern. Now does anyone have a title for our project? [Possibilities: We Take Care of Each Other; We Love Everyone; We Are God's Family]*

**Craft:** "Give Praise" Prayer

*Materials:* Journal notebooks, pens or markers

*In our journals we are going to write a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. We are going to look to Psalm 150, our closing prayer, for the pattern. [Distribute the psalm at the end of this lesson.] First start with a list of things we can thank God our Father for giving us. Then write a poem of at least six lines. The first, third, and fifth line should start out with "Give praise. ..." Write words that you thank God and praise Him for things you have today.*

**Closing:**

*Let's pray psalm 150 to praise God!*

[You may add this to your booklets if you are doing that activity.]

*Kingdom  
of God*

*Parable*

A story that teaches a lesson.  
Jesus spoke in parables.

When people follow God's way  
in all things.

**Psalm 150**

Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy sanctuary;  
give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.  
Give praise for his mighty deeds,  
praise him for his great majesty.  
Give praise with blasts upon the horn,  
praise him with harp and lyre.  
Give praise with tambourines and dance,  
praise him with flutes and strings.  
Give praise with crashing cymbals,  
praise him with sounding cymbals.  
Let everything that has breath  
give praise to the Lord!  
Hallelujah!

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