

Unit 1 “God and Me” Lesson 1

God Made Me

Objective: The students will be able to state that God made them and loves them.

For the Catechist

A young child’s faith is founded on the joint statements “God made me” and “God loves me.” Just as parents love their children no matter what they may look like, God loves children not for any particular attribute but simply because He made them. Children never tire of hearing that God loves them. Ask often “Who made you and loves you?” to reinforce this fundamental aspect of the children’s self-understanding.

In this series the children learn to value their “likeness” with others more than their “uniqueness.” Existence, in the Eastern understanding, is meant to be communal—reflecting the Trinity as a community of love. Thus, children are special to God because they are made by God in His image.

Made in God’s Image. Human attributes such as freedom and rational thought have been offered as explanations for “being made in God’s image.” For the young student, however, freedom and rationality are more abstract than love. The Eastern theologians, focusing on the Trinity, describe God as a community of love. Being made in God’s image then means human beings are creatures with the capacity to love. “The distinguishing mark of the Christian faith remains love for one another (cf Jn 15:17; 1 Jn 4:7-13) in the image of the Trinity” (LLI 6). Love, an attribute of God with which the child can identify, is presented this year.

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

God’s Image

“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)” (LLI 24).

“Many Fathers of the Church used ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ to help describe our relationship with God. For

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: “To You, O Lord.”

Introduction: First-day introductions. Discussion of being as special as the flowers in a bouquet. **Need:** name tags, bouquet of flowers (one flower for each child)

Read Text Aloud: Hold text up for students to see as you read each page aloud. After each page, use the questions in the shaded box at the bottom of that page to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:

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

- **Basic:** “God Made Adam and Eve”
- **Group:** The Stand-up Game
- **Craft:** “God Made Me” Card

Closing: “Thank You, God, for making me.”

Come Bless the Lord Icon:

Packet I:

Packet II:

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" (*LLI 25*).

Likeness

"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 attaining our destined union with Him" (*LLI 25*).

Restored Image

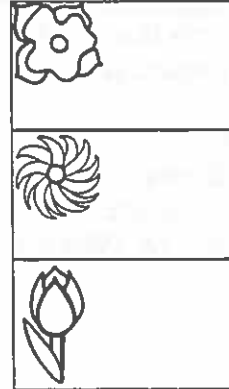
"Christ repaired the damage of Adam's sin, 'For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many' (Rom 5:15 RSV). Christ, the perfect 'image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures' (Col 1:15), restores the divine likeness to humanity when He became 'like his brethren in every respect... yet without sin' (Heb 2:17; 4:15 RSV)" (*LLI 25*).

"In the new creation ushered in by Christ, the divine image in humanity is fulfilled. While Christ is the perfect image of God, the Christian is the image of Christ. Our nature in the image of God is affirmed, and we are now able to recover the divine likeness. It is now possible to return to the original harmony of life as it was before the fall. We can act from our true human nature after the image and likeness of God. We can choose to give ourselves back to God by the grace of the Spirit. Our journey of life can become, as St. Irenaeus said, a steady 'progress towards a future full of promise.' We can be truly human again because we can soar towards union with God" (*LLI 25-26*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

Let's talk about praying to God. The first thing we do is stand quietly. Let's try it. Let's stand quietly before the icon. [Gather children before the icon.] Next, we hold our hands palms up. Let's try it; this is our prayer position. When we hold our hands open, we are telling God, "I am giving myself to you." That's how we'll pray right now. Hands open, together, and palms up. When we pray we give ourselves to God. [Move hands upward and outward toward icon as you say] "To You, O Lord." We also are ready to receive what God gives us. [Move hands back to self.] Let's all say together, "To You, O Lord." Now let's try it as our prayer. Let's be quiet for a moment and look at how beautiful our icon is. [Say prayer with children.]



Introduction

Welcome to our class this year! I am so glad you are here? Do you know why? The reason is that each of you is a wonderful person. Each of you is made by God. God loves you because He made you. And I love you. What is your favorite flower? [Allow each child to respond.] Flowers can teach us a lesson about our wonderful God. I brought some to class to help with our lesson today. [Pick up and discuss one flower at a time. Allow responses to the following:] Let's look at this flower. What color is it? Does it have a fragrance? Is it a tall flower, short, round, oval? How many petals does it have? Let's get to know each other with these flowers. I give this flower to my friend _____. [Repeat until all children have flowers.] Each of you is as wonderful as a flower. Some are tall; some are short; some have brown hair; some have blue eyes. God made each of you, and He is very happy with what He made. God made each flower, and each is special to Him. When we put them all together, they make a wonderful bouquet. [Call on each child by name to bring you his or her flower.] All of us together are very special to God, just like this beautiful bouquet. God loves each of us and all of us. Let's read our lesson.

Reading of Text

Hold text so that children can see the page as you read it to them. Read slowly and draw their attention to the illustrations. After reading each page, use the questions below (given also on the bottom of the student text) to review what you have read.

Page 1

- Who made you? (God)
- [Allow responses.] Why are you a wonderful person? (Helpful, kind)
What wonderful things can you do?
- Why does God love you? (God loves you because He made you.)

Page 2

- *What does it mean that we are "made in God's image"? We know how to love and how to give to others.*
- *What is God's greatest gift to us? Look at the top picture for a clue. (Jesus)*
- *[Allow responses.] How are these children showing that they love one another? • How do you show love to your family? • How do you give to those around you?*

Page 3

- *United means together (clasp hands together). We want to be united with God now, and forever. We will be united to God forever when we die.*
- *Let's review. Who made you and loves you? (God)*

Activity Tracks

Basic: "God Made Adam and Eve"

The basic activity is the fourth page of each student text. It is a paraphrase of the Bible story of the creation of Adam and Eve. Read the title and the story to the children. They may color the illustration. Questions to reinforce the reading are as follows:

- What were the names of the first people God made? (Adam and Eve)
- Why did God love Adam and Eve? (He made them.)

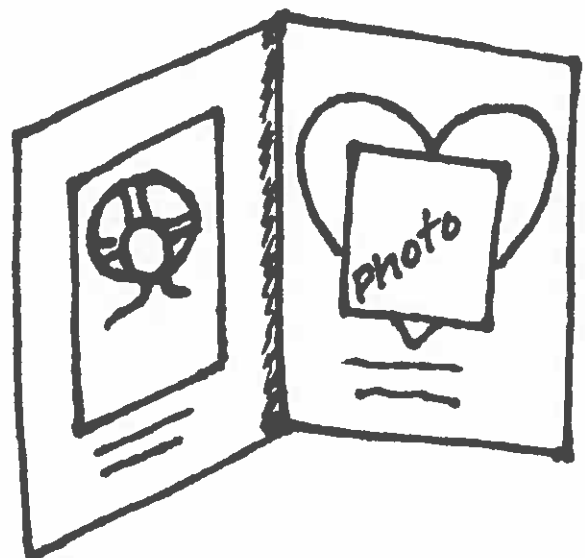
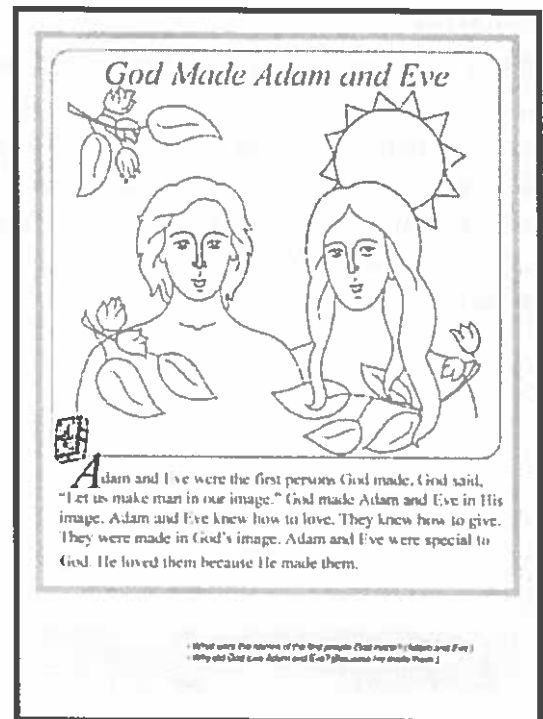
Group: The Stand-up Game

We are very special because we are made in God's image. But that doesn't mean we are all alike. In some ways we are alike, and in some ways we are different. For example, I like spaghetti; but not everyone likes spaghetti. Let's play a game to see what we share with others. Follow my directions: If you have brown hair, stand up. See, all of you share having brown hair. Okay, sit down now. If you like going to bed early, stand up. [Repeat with other examples: riding bikes, eating peas, getting a haircut, playing by yourself, watching scary movies, putting mustard on hot dogs, drinking chocolate milk more than soda, eating macaroni and cheese more than hamburgers. Also, if children have . . . a sister, brother, grandparent, dog, cat, gerbil, snake, fish, yellow raincoat, new shoes, etc. End with the following:] If you know how to love others, stand up. If you are made in God's image, stand up. We are all made in God's image. That's what makes us special. God made us, and God loves us.

Craft: "God Loves Me" Card

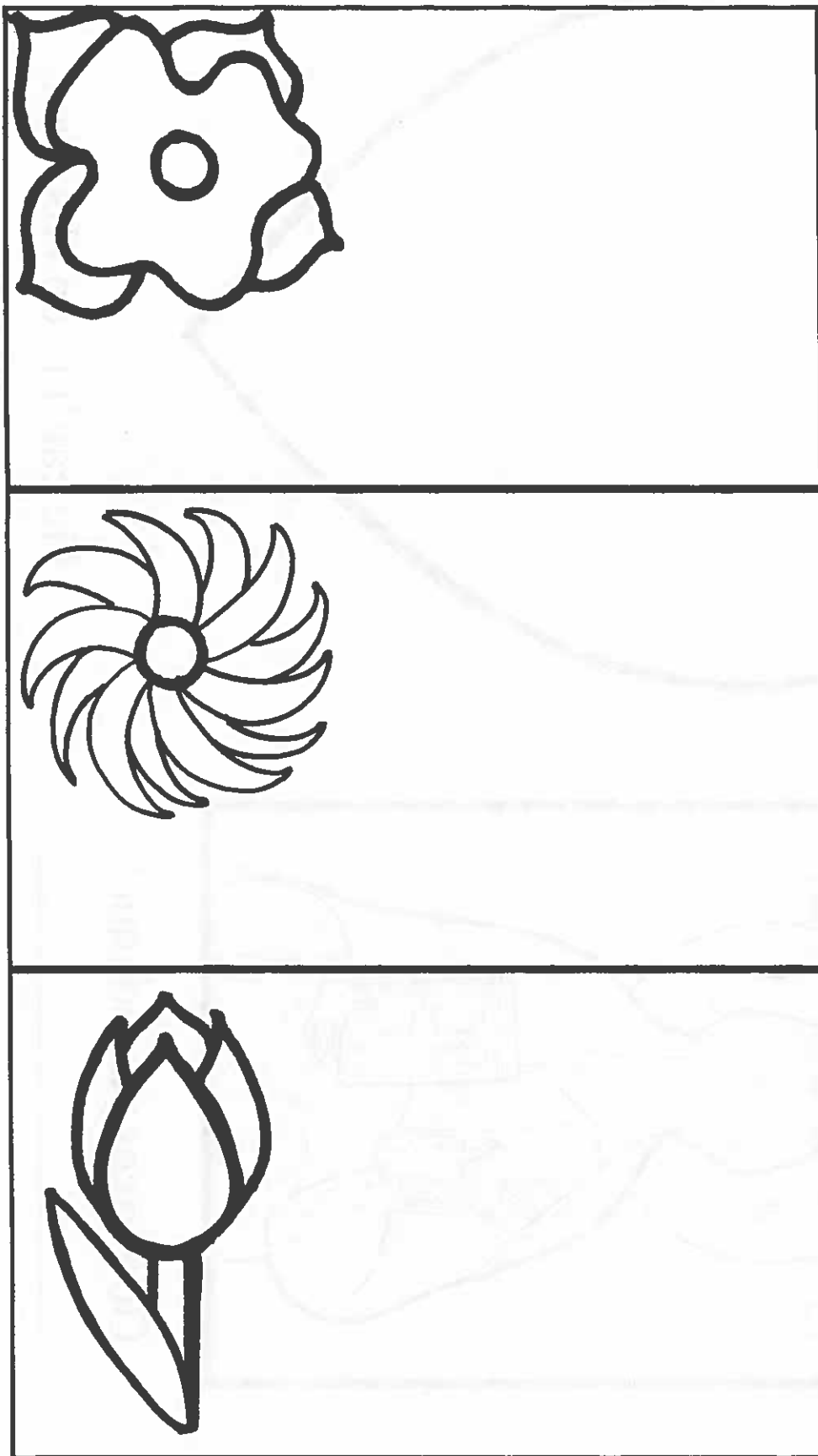
Materials: "God Loves Me" Card worksheet copied onto heavier paper, markers, glue, Polaroid camera to take photos of each child, OR pre-arrange for a photo from home (If not possible, children can draw their own face.)

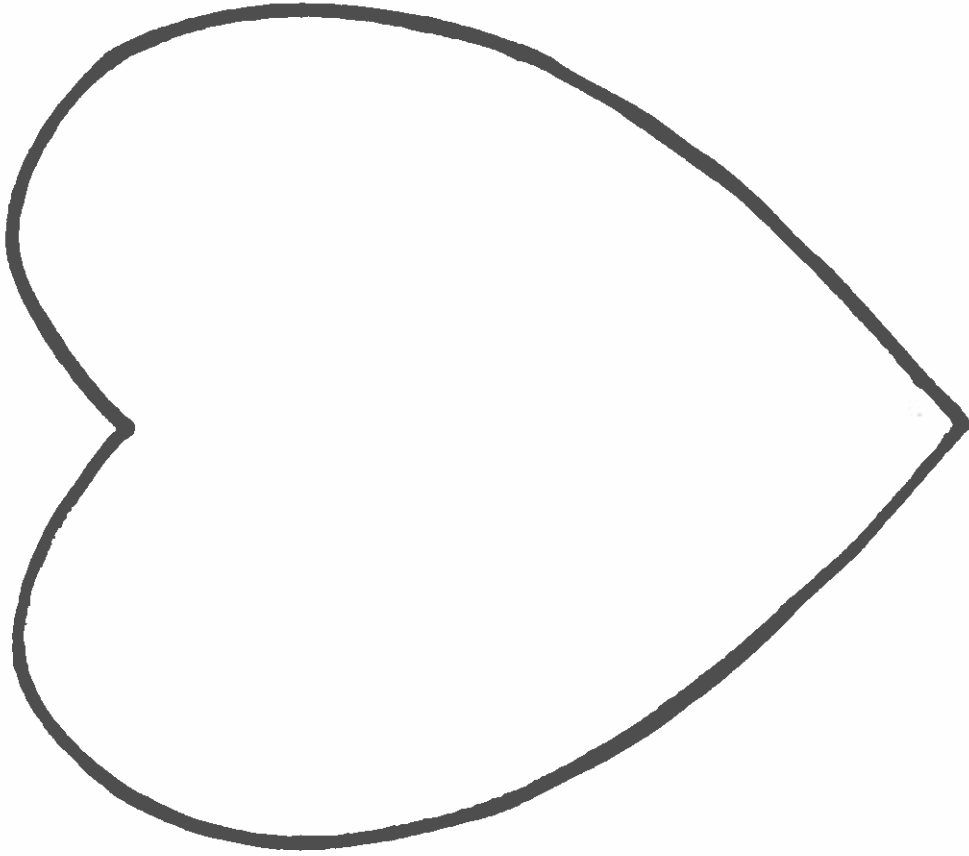
[Have sample ready to show children.] *God loves us very much because He made us. Here is a project to help you remember how much God loves you. It says, "God loves you so much (insert name), He can't keep His eyes off you!" Here is an icon of Jesus looking at you. Each of you will draw/paste photo of yourself in the heart.*



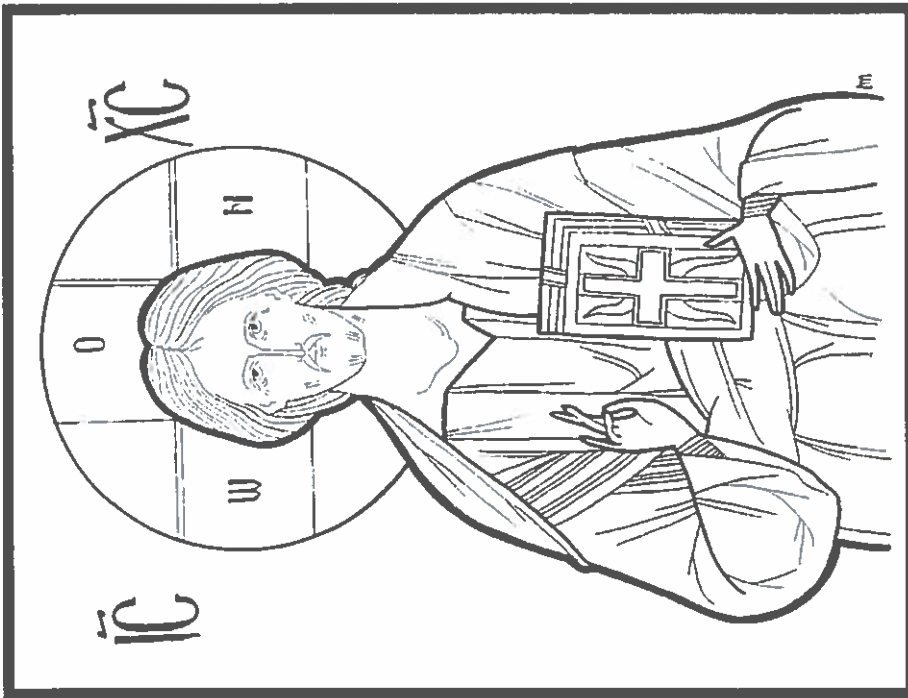
Closing

When we prayed earlier, we learned that the first thing we do is stand quietly. Let's try it. Let's stand quietly before the icon. [Gather children before the icon.] Next, we hold our hands palms up. Let's do this now. When we hold our hands open, we are telling God, "I am giving myself to you." For our closing prayer today, we'll thank God for . . . us! We'll say, "Thank You, God, for making me." Let's all say it together.





He can't keep His eyes
off you.



God loves you so much,
_____.