

We Are Called to Serve

Unit 5 Chapter 18

Background: Blessings

The Church teaches us that only God can bless us. And yet each Church member—ordained and non-ordained—can share a blessing. When we say a prayer of blessing before or after meals, we are really asking God to bless the food and those who eat it. Likewise, when we bless family members, we are also asking God to pour out his grace upon them.

Just as Jesus entrusted the Apostles to make disciples of all nations, so Jesus commissions each member of the Church to be his witness in today's world. One way we can give witness to God's continual love is by sharing prayers of blessing throughout the day—when we wake, when we leave home, when we study, when we eat, and so forth. Blessings remind us that each moment of daily life is holy because God is always with us. In this way, blessings are sacramentals. They are signs of God's grace and love.

Getting Ready

1. Before introducing Chapter 18 to your child, read the Take Home pages 203 and 204 of your child's book. To help develop this chapter's theme, gather the family at a convenient time during the week to participate in the Activity on page 203.
2. With your child, read about Saint Benedict the Black, the Saint of the Week. Learn more about him at SaintsResource.com.
3. Read together Scripture Background at the top of page 204 and the suggested Scripture passage (Numbers 6:22-27). Invite family members to turn to one another and to offer the blessing, "The Lord bless you and keep you!"
4. Read together Our Catholic Tradition. Learn even more about Catholic Charities USA at catholiccharitiesusa.org.



Focus

Prayers of blessing are signs that we believe God is always with us, sharing his grace and love.

The Church Teaches

Like the Lord into whom they have been baptized, parents should bless and pray for their children. Each one of us should remember the sick and those who suffer. Each time we gather around the family table, we should bless God and the food he has given us. On special occasions, we will [sanctify] by prayer and blessing all the seasons of grace that God has given to us.

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, Introduction

Prayer

Blessed be God.
Blessed be his holy name.
Blessed be the name
of Jesus.
Blessed be the great Mother
of God,
Mary most holy.
Blessed be God in his angels
and in his saints.

Adapted from The Divine Praises

Exploring the Chapter

Share

1. Light the candle. Read aloud the Table Blessing at the top of page 205. Talk about ways we can adore the Lord. Pray together the Table Blessing.
2. Read together the Share section. Discuss the question at the end of the story.
3. Review the directions to the Activity and invite your child to complete it. Discuss his or her responses, and share with your child the times when you pray too.

Hear and Believe

4. Look at the illustrations on page 206. Read together the first two paragraphs of We Pray Through the Day.
5. Read the five blessings, one at a time. Invite your child to choose one blessing that he or she would like to memorize and say each day of the coming week.
6. Read together Everyone Can Say Blessings and the We Believe statement on page 207. Emphasize that sharing a blessing is one way we spread the Good News and are signs of God's kingdom to others. Review the meaning of the Faith Words: **blessing, sacramental, and layperson**.
7. Read together Our Church Teaches. Recall with your child what sacramentals you have in your home.
8. Read the directions to the activity and give your child time to complete it. Invite your child to share his or her blessing with you.

Respond

8. Look at the photographs on page 208 and discuss what you see happening in each one. Read the directions to Activity 1 and give your child time to complete it. Work with your child to write the blessing at the bottom of the page.
9. Work with your child to complete Activity 2 at the top of page 209. Discuss your choices as you work together.
10. Read the directions to Activity 3 and give your child time to complete it. Discuss his or her choice.
11. Serve as the Leader and invite your child to join you in praying the responses marked All. Sing one verse of the Unit Song on page 192 and pray together A Prayer of Blessing.
12. Have your child complete the Chapter Review. See page 48 of this guide for the answer key.
13. Work with your child to complete Faith in Action on page 212. It highlights the Catholic Social Teaching of **Respect All Life (Life and Dignity of the Human Person)**.

We really liked . . .

We want to learn more about . . .