

Signs of God's Kingdom

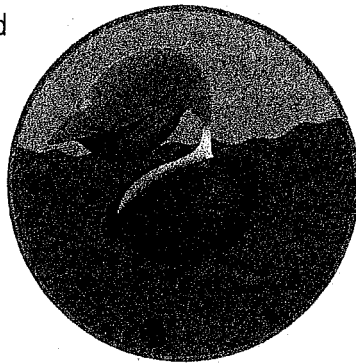
Unit 5
Chapter
17

3

Background: The Kingdom of God

Throughout history, philosophers and writers alike have speculated about what a utopian society might be like. This concept of a perfect place is similar to the Christian promise of the Kingdom of God—a kingdom of love, peace, and justice. We will know the fullness of this kingdom after the Second Coming of Christ.

The Church is a sign, or sacrament, of the beginning of God's kingdom on Earth. God is present in his people, the Church. As members of that Church we give witness to the idea of the kingdom. We know, however, that we will not experience the kingdom until the end of time. Jesus' parables about the Kingdom of God tell us not only about the future kingdom, but also about the present Church. Like the mustard seed, we must grow in love so that the Church will grow. We must promote peace and justice in all relationships so that everyone can find a home in the Church.



Getting Ready

1. Before introducing Chapter 17 to your child, read the Take Home pages 193 and 194 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 193.
2. With your child, read about Saint Pauline of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, the Saint of the Week. Learn more about her at SaintsResource.com.
3. If you have on hand a spice jar of mustard seeds, show the seeds to your child. Note how small the seeds are. Then read together Scripture Background at the top of page 194. You will read the suggested Scripture passage during today's lesson.
4. Our Catholic Tradition continues to tell the story of Saint Pauline of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus, the Saint of the Week. Read together Our Catholic Tradition. Point out how young Saint Pauline was when she began serving the Church. Discuss ways you can and do serve the Church too.

Focus

God calls us and all of creation into a relationship of love with him. He wants us to be signs of his kingdom.

The Church Teaches

... The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is.¹⁶⁵ They form Jesus' true family.¹⁶⁶ To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own.¹⁶⁷

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¹⁶⁵ Lk 12:32; cf. Mt 10:16; 26:31; Jn 10:1-21.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Mt 12:49.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Mt 5-6.

Prayer

Lord, yours is a kingdom of love, peace, and justice. Help me model those kingdom-building traits for my child and for my family. Strengthen us to share in the task of building your kingdom on Earth. Amen.

Exploring the Chapter

Share

1. Light the candle. Read aloud the Scripture verse at the top of page 195. Explain that the words *the kingdom* refer to Heaven. Pray together the Scripture verse.
2. Read together the Share section.
3. Review the directions to the Activity and give your child time to complete it. Invite your child to explain his or her travel brochure to you.

Hear and Believe

4. Look at and discuss the illustration on pages 196 and 197. Explain that the seed pictured on page 196 is a mustard seed and that the tree is a mustard tree.
5. Read together Jesus Describes God's Kingdom. Invite your child to recall what the Scripture story says about the mustard seed and the mustard tree. (*The seed is tiny and no one thinks it can grow to be large. The seed grows to be a big tree.*) Discuss what you think the Scripture story is telling us about the Kingdom of God.
6. Read together The Kingdom Has Already Begun on page 197. Help your child make the connection that every time we share the Good News of Jesus we plant seeds that grow into the Kingdom of God.
7. Read together Our Church Teaches and the We Believe statement. Affirm your child by naming times you saw him or her loving and caring for others this past week.
8. Review the meaning of the Faith Word, **eternal life**. Remind your child that if we plant seeds of love and share the Good News with others, we will share eternal life with God in Heaven.

Respond

9. Read the directions and invite your child to complete Activity 1 on page 198. (*Answer: Thy kingdom come.*)
10. Read the directions to Activity 2 and give your child time to complete it. Invite your child to share his or her poem or picture with you.
11. Work together to complete Activity 3 on page 199. Talk about what is happening in each picture as you make your choices.
12. Invite your child to take the part of Readers 1, 2, and 3. Take the part of Leader, and pray the All responses together. Sing one verse of the Unit Song on page 192 and pray together A Prayer of Petition on page 200.
13. Have your child complete the Chapter Review. See page 48 of this guide for the answer key.
14. Work with your child to complete Faith in Action on page 202. It highlights the Catholic Social Teaching of **Life in Community (Call to Family, Community, and Participation)**.

We really liked . . .

We want to learn more about . . .