

# What I See in CHURCH

## Teaching Plan

### Teaching Tips

Ahead of introducing *What I See in Church* to the children, take time to familiarize yourself with the contents. Review this handout and how it correlates to the children's resource.

The resource is designed for children to interact with. Have the children follow along as you read aloud, and engage them in hands-on interaction with the resource, as suggested in the teaching steps below.

### Background

Walk into any Catholic church anywhere in the world, and you will immediately sense that you are in a uniquely holy place. It's not the statues, flickering candles, or even the crucifix on the altar (although objects like these have an important purpose in drawing us into worship, prayer, and community). A Catholic church is holy because it is the dwelling place of God in our midst. It is built, set apart, and sanctified for the purpose of inviting us into God's loving presence. Here, we are reconciled and united with the Body of Christ in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and called to *be* Christ's church for the world.

Growing up in a stressful, technology-driven world, children need havens of peace where they know they will always find God's loving, accepting, healing presence. Help them understand that a Catholic church is their home; where Jesus is truly present, loving us immeasurably; and where every object is meant to help us experience and return this love.

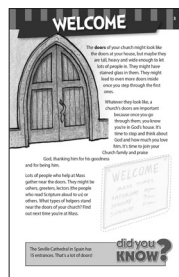
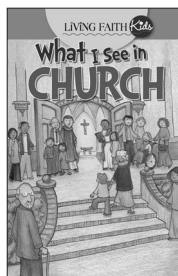
# Opening Prayer

Begin your lessons with prayer. Use the following or modify it each time you pray it with the group.

**Loving God, thank you for giving us holy places where we can experience your love for us. Help us seek you in always—in church and in each other. Amen.**

## Teaching Steps

Page(s)	
<b>COVER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct the children to look at the cover of their booklets.</b> Ask, <i>What are some things you see when you go to church?</i> Explain that we often see things that we might take for granted or not understand. But here we will learn that everything in a church has a special purpose and can lead us to understand how Jesus himself is truly present with us.</li> <li>• <b>Discuss the art.</b> Ask, <i>What are some ways the picture looks like our/your church? How is it different?</i></li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Read the header on page 2.</b> Ask, <i>What makes you feel comfortable at home?</i> Accept and affirm answers. Ask, <i>Did you know that your church is your home?</i> Explain that it's Jesus' home, which means it's our home too.</li> <li>• <b>Read the first paragraph.</b> Reaffirm that no matter where we go in the world, we will always be welcome in a Catholic church.</li> <li>• <b>Read the next two paragraphs.</b> Encourage the children to ask questions and share about their own church experiences as you read the booklet together.</li> <li>• <b>Offer help to complete the activity about the parish.</b> Refer to your parish bulletin or website if needed.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Read the header aloud.</b> Say, <i>We're going to learn about the...</i>[point to the picture and indicate that the children can complete the sentence.] Ask, <i>Why do you think the doors of the church are important?</i></li> <li>• <b>Read the first and second paragraph.</b> Ask, <i>Can you picture the doors at our/your church?</i> Invite the children to close their eyes and imagine themselves walking through these doors. Say, <i>Imagine Jesus is there, welcoming and loving you.</i> Give them some moments to imagine this. Ask, <i>What does Jesus say to you? Take a few moments to think about it.</i></li> </ul>



**3 (cont).**

- **Read the third paragraph.** Ask the children to pay attention the next time they are at Mass to the people at the doors—greeters, ushers, servers, etc. Ask, *Can you see yourself doing any of these jobs? Why or why not?*
- **Did You Know?** Read the information together. Feel free to share about any other notable churches you have visited or know of.
- **Have the children turn to the sticker insert** and find the corresponding sticker to place.

4-14

**For each page from 4–14, follow these steps:**

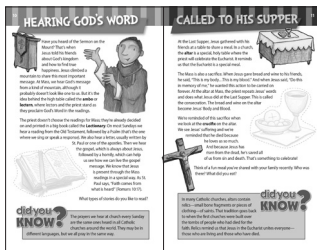
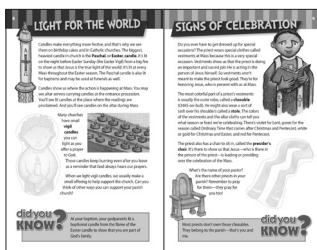
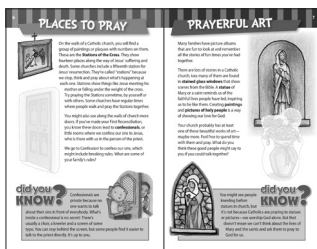
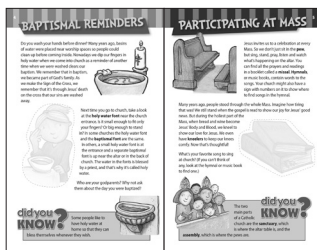
- **Plan.** Before reading each page with the children, re-acquaint yourself with the area of the church you are about to study by picturing it in your mind.
- **Read the header and first paragraph.** Invite the children to share about their family experiences and customs when prompted on pages 7, 9, and 12.
- **Vary the reading experience** with each paragraph. You might read as children follow along, ask for volunteers to read, or invite children to read together in pairs.
- **Build familiarity.** Invite the children to underline or highlight boldface terms, but keep in mind that it is not so important to correctly identify the names of each item. Emphasize, rather, how each is used to bring us closer to Jesus.
- **Pause frequently** in your reading to apply concepts to children's own experiences. You can do this in several different ways:

Plan a church visit with the children at a time when Mass is not being said to observe the various objects as you study them.

If a church visit is not possible, visit your parish website together, or share your own pictures of your parish.

Invite the children to share pictures of family church celebrations (weddings, baptisms, etc.).

If you are teaching children from various parishes, invite each to share what their church looks like.



**4-14  
cont.**

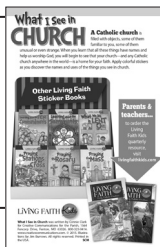
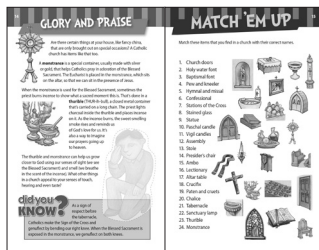
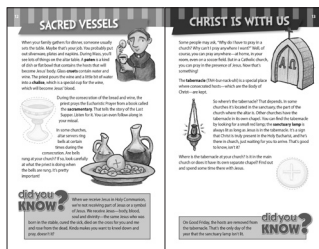
Build Mass participation by inviting the children to observe how each item is used at Mass the following Sunday.

Invite your pastor, deacon, or lay people you know (ushers, greeters, lectors, choir members, sacristan, altar servers, extraordinary ministers, caretakers, etc.) to talk about their roles, or provide a tour of the church. (For example, the pastor or sacristan might offer a tour of the sacristy or sanctuary. An usher might discuss accommodations for people with disabilities.)

- **Use the question in the last paragraph** as a springboard for discussion or activities. For example, you might invite the children to create a poster with a photo of your pastor and a “Pray for Me” caption as a reminder to pray for him (page 9).
- **Stickers.** After completing each page, have the children turn to the sticker insert and find the corresponding sticker to place.

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- **After completing the activity,** invite the children to bring the booklet into church and circle all the objects they can find.
- **Optional extension.** Invite the children to imagine a church they would build. They might draw or write about it, or use materials such as Legos to imagine it.



## Closing Prayer

Lead the children in prayer. Close with “Amen. Alleluia.”

**Jesus, open our hearts to your presence with us in church. Help us feel your love, mercy, healing, forgiveness, wisdom, joy, and peace. Help us carry your love with us wherever we go.**

# Living Faith Kids

**What I See in Church** was written by Connie Clark and corresponding Teaching Pages developed by Connie Clark, David Dzienna, David Mead, and Lindsay Taylor. Illustrations by Jim Burrows. Design by Jamie Wyatt. © 2020, 2015 Creative Communications for the Parish, a Division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Drive, Fenton, MO 63026, 800-325-9414. [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com). All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

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