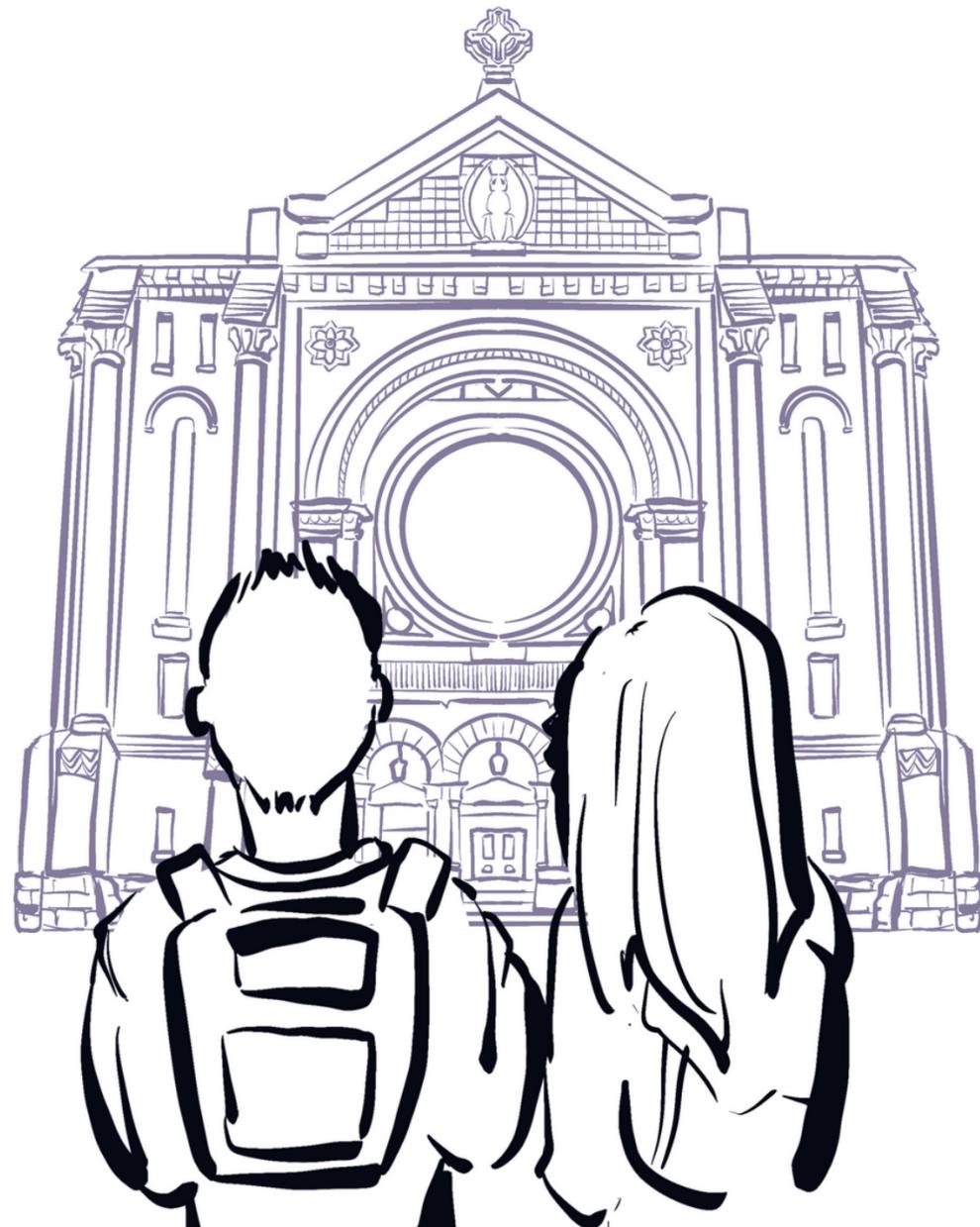


**Life Culture**

# WAY, TRUTH, LIFE

A Catholic Resource on Life Topics for Children & Youth



# LEGEND



QUESTION - Personal reflection, class discussion, or a way to start thinking about the class' topic.



BIBLE READINGS - Scripture excerpts to supplement or solidify the topic.



SAINT - Saints are friends of Jesus whose lives teach us to love Jesus better.



VIDEO - Some classes have optional videos if time and technology permit.



ACTIVITY - Complete the activity together.



PRAYER - Each class ends with a prayer.



ACTION - Each class ends with a call to action. This is something you *do* to live out what you just learned.

Way, Truth, Life was developed by Life Culture Canada.  
Life Culture Canada is a pro-life educational resource that seeks to equip churches and individuals to speak for life. To learn more or to get involved, please visit [www.lifeculture.ca](http://www.lifeculture.ca).

Illustrated by Jesse James Baris

Bible Verses are in the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)  
translation.

# YOU ARE MINE

Year 1



What is your favourite toy?  
How much do you love your toy?

Did you know that God loves us even more than you love your favourite toy? God loves us so much! He loves us because he created each one of us in a very special way. Your mom, dad, siblings, and cousins are all loved and created by God. We are all part of God's family.



Draw a picture of God's family.

## YEAR 1: YOU ARE MINE



Did you know that God knew us even before you were born? God knew us even when we were in our mom's tummy (womb). God knows and loves every person, even if they aren't born yet and are still in the womb. This is because God created every person in the most special way.

God asks us to love babies in their mom's womb. When you see a pregnant mom, you can smile and know that God loves her and the baby in her womb.



Draw a picture of God loving a mom and the baby in her womb.

God asks us to love our grandparents. When you see your grandparents, or someone who is elderly, you can smile and know that God loves them.

God asks us to love people who are different than us because he loves them too.

Now, we will talk to God about what we learned today - about how much God loves us and how much he loves the people around us. Everyday is a day that we can pray for ourselves and the people around us.

YEAR 1: YOU ARE MINE



Dear God,

Thank you for creating me and  
making me special.

Help me to see that you make all  
people special. Teach me to be  
loving and respectful, especially to  
people who are in the womb and  
the elderly. I love you, God.

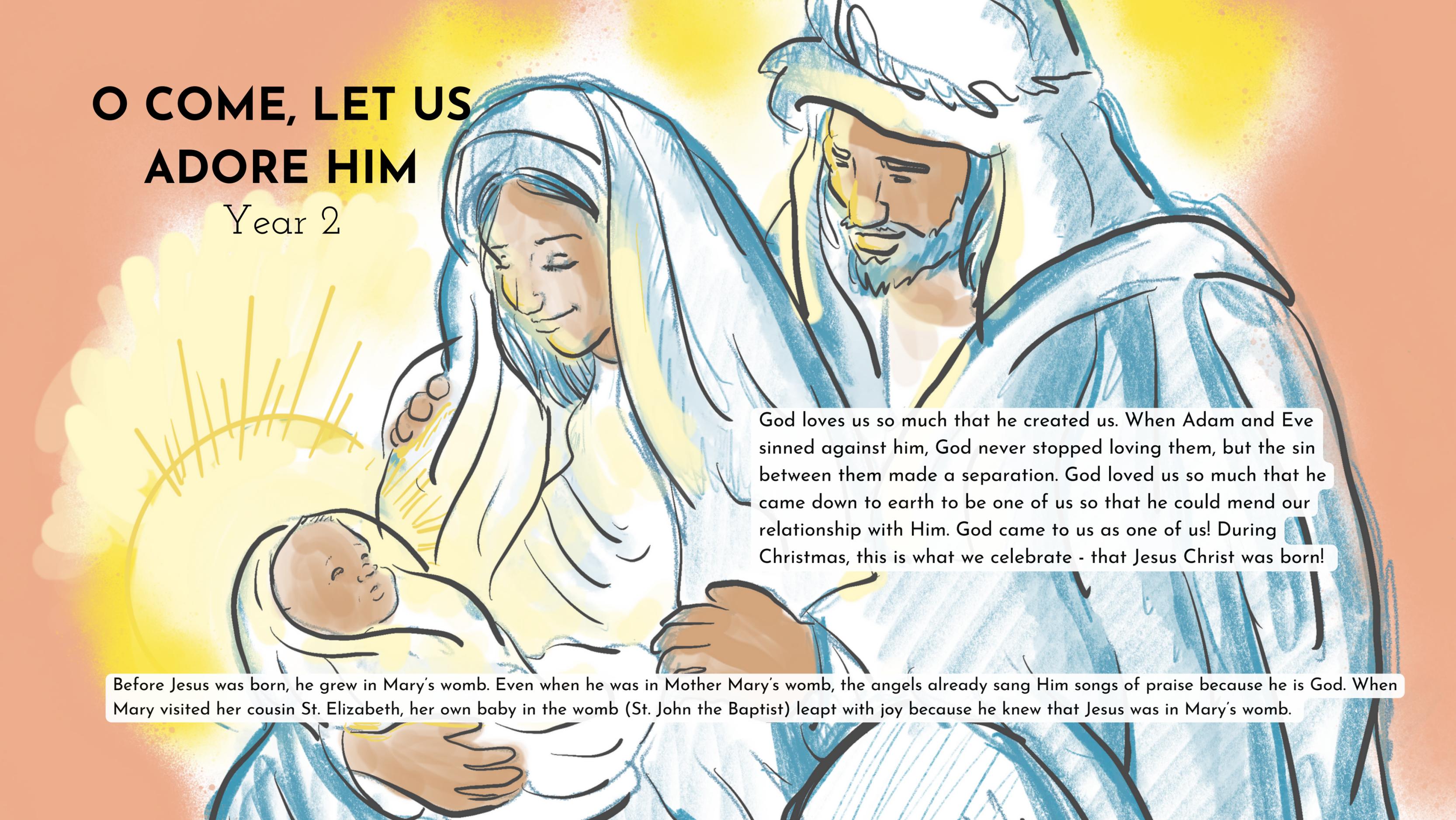
Amen.



Today, tell your family what you  
learned about.

# O COME, LET US ADORE HIM

Year 2

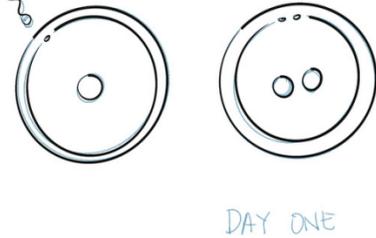


God loves us so much that he created us. When Adam and Eve sinned against him, God never stopped loving them, but the sin between them made a separation. God loved us so much that he came down to earth to be one of us so that he could mend our relationship with Him. God came to us as one of us! During Christmas, this is what we celebrate - that Jesus Christ was born!

Before Jesus was born, he grew in Mary's womb. Even when he was in Mother Mary's womb, the angels already sang Him songs of praise because he is God. When Mary visited her cousin St. Elizabeth, her own baby in the womb (St. John the Baptist) leapt with joy because he knew that Jesus was in Mary's womb.

# O COME, LET US ADORE HIM

Day 1 - We have all the "stuff" we need, called DNA. This DNA is like a map that tells us what our hair colour, eye colour, and gender will be. It also tells so many more amazing things about us that make us special! From this moment on, we are rapidly growing! We're called a zygote. Do you think Mary was guessing what Jesus would look like?



Week 3 - We have been called an embryo. We already have a heartbeat that can be heard from an ultrasound! The baby's heartbeat is 170 beats per minute.

Week 4 - We're smaller than a grain of rice. Even though we are that small, our organs like our stomach and lungs are starting to form by starting as little cells.

Week 7 - All of our organs are already starting to form. Little buds are growing, and those are our arms and legs.



WEEK 8

Week 8 - We're the size of a bean, and called a fetus. Our cute, funny face already has eyes, a nose, lips, and ears. Now we're called an embryo and our mom is starting to feel pregnant. Moms start to feel sick, so we can thank our moms for going through all of the hard times.

Week 18 - We're the size of a cupcake. When we move, our moms might start to feel us. When mom and dad talk about how much they love us or sing a lullaby before bed, we can already start to hear them. What kind of lullabies do you think St. Joseph sang to Jesus?

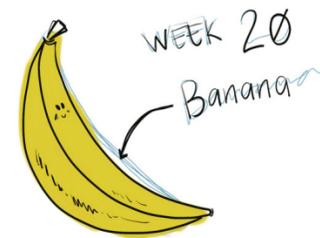
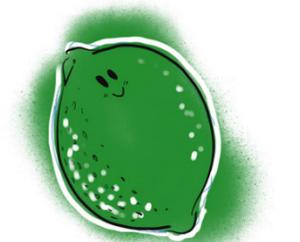


Week 14 - We're the size of a peach and covered in tiny hairs. We have our fingerprints, and we might have started to suck our thumb. Can you imagine Baby Jesus sucking his thumb?



Week 12 - We look like a fully formed person. Yay! Trimester 1 is complete!

Week 11 - We're as big as a lime! Our fingernails are starting to grow



Week 20 - We're halfway done and the size of a banana!

Week 23 - We're 1 pound in weight, and if we had to, we could survive outside our mom's womb with special hospital care. Our lungs are practicing breathing, and our brains are making so many connections.

Week 25 - This whole time, our skin has been clear and we could see our muscles and organs growing. Now, our skin is starting to be less see-through. We can hiccup. If dad puts his ear on mom's belly, he might be able to hear your strong heart beat.

## YEAR 2: O COME LET US ADORE HIM



Week 26 - Trimester 2 complete!



Week 28 - We can blink, hiccup, and even dream! Did Jesus dream about calming the storms, healing the sick, and loving you and me?



Week 40 - Happy birth day! Time to meet mom and dad face to face.



Week 37 - We're a full sized baby! Mom and baby's body is getting ready for delivery. Our moms are feeling a lot! Thank you mom for being so loving and patient, even when you're in pain. I love you.



Week 34 - We're the size of a yummy pineapple. We're getting ready in position to be delivered, which means being born.



Week 33 - Our bones are so strong! We just have one part of our skull that is still soft bone (called fontanelles) that mom and dad need to protect even after we're born.



Week 30 - We're the size of a cabbage - we have less room in our mom's womb so sometimes we kick her from wanting to take a nice stretch. Sorry mom!

**YEAR 2: O COME LET US ADORE HIM**



**Dear Jesus,**

**Thank you for being with us, even as a baby. Teach us to be loving children to our families, as you were to your own family. Help us to be thankful for all that our parents went through when we were in the womb, and help our parents to always love us and one another. Strengthen us in the Eucharist. Amen.**

# I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU

Year 3



What does it mean to be a Christian?

## YEAR 3: I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU

### Who is the Greatest?



Have 3 volunteers act out the scene from Matthew 18: 1-5.

Have three volunteers stand in front of the class. Volunteer 1 acts as the Disciples, Volunteer 2 acts as Jesus, and Volunteer 3 acts as a child.



V1



V2



V3

Volunteer 1 (disciples): "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Volunteer 2 (Jesus): Child, come here and stand by my disciples.

\*Volunteer 3 moves and stands between Volunteer 1 and Volunteer 2.\*

Volunteer 3 (child): stands beside the Volunteer 1 (disciple)

Volunteer 2 (Jesus): Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

## YEAR 3: I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU

So who did Jesus say was the greatest? Was it the strongest disciple, the smartest disciple, the fastest or richest disciple? No, it was the child who was among them because as children, we are curious, like to learn, and have lots of room in our heart for love. Jesus knows that children are sometimes forgotten in the world, so he says that if we welcome a child, *we welcome Him.*

### The Greatest

### A Feast for the Hungry

Have you ever been invited to a birthday party before? Maybe you have had a couple of your own birthday parties. They can be so much fun! You can play games and activities, spend time with friends and family, and enjoy a delicious meal including a yummy birthday cake.

One day, Jesus was invited to a party. He said to them, "when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Luke 14:13-14) Does Jesus really want you to eat dinner with different types of people? Yes and no. Yes: If your family is able to, volunteer at a soup kitchen where food is given to those who are hungry and usually homeless. Jesus would be very happy to see you taking the time to share love in this way. No: we can start in small ways - even if it starts with the way we think. The poor, crippled, lame, and blind are humans just like us. We need to see them, not as people who are less than us, but as brothers and sisters. Jesus spent his time taking care of the poor and healing the sick.



### YEAR 3: I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU

Even after Jesus went to Heaven in His Ascension, His followers continued to love the poor and take care of widows (women whose husbands have passed away) and orphans (children without parents).

Have you ever prayed for the people in poverty, people who experience disabilities, the elderly, and lonely women, men, and children before? Listen to the story of Mother Teresa whose friendship with Jesus led her to care for the poor in a unique way.



[Little People Big Dreams - Mother Teresa](#)  
[Click here to watch video.](#)

- When Agnes was a little girl, she grew to love God. A new priest who had been working in India came to her town, and she loved to listen to his stories about how he helped the poor.
- Agnes left home when she got older and became a nun. She became "Sister Teresa" and wanted to help the poor.
- She moved to India where she helped the poorest of the poor by opening up hospitals, schools, and orphanages.

YEAR 3: I WANT TO BE LIKE YOU



Dear Jesus,  
thank you for your loving  
friendship. I pray for children,  
women and men, the poor, and  
disabled all around the world who  
need your help today. Teach me to  
love them the way you want me to.  
Help me to be like you. Amen.



Think of one way your family can  
help those in need. Share it with  
your family and decide when and  
how you can do it.

# WHAT IF?

## Year 4

What was the hardest decision you've ever had to make? Was it deciding what to wear for a special occasion? Deciding which ice cream flavour to choose, or what kind of pet your family should get? Maybe it was a difficult decision that you hold close to your heart.

Sometimes decisions are difficult to make because we ask ourselves, "what if this happens?" Or "what if that happens?" We can get caught in our decision-making when we fear the outcome.

This lesson will look at three important decisions that changed everything - where "what ifs" were only a question.



## YEAR 4: WHAT IF?

### Decision 1: God Created Humanity

God created humankind. God loved so He created. Before he created us, he created the perfect place for us. With great care and love, God created the heavens and the earth, all the creatures of creation, and created our "first parents," Adam and Eve.

Everyday, God chooses to create more human beings. Not because he needs to create us, but because he *wants* to.

When you forget how amazing you are, try to remember just how much God wanted you to be in this world. You were created to be loved by God.

Sometimes, when we're annoyed with the people around us, like our siblings, friends, teachers, or parents, it can be helpful to remember that they, too, are created by God with love.

### Decision 2: Adam and Eve

God created the perfect place for the first people, Adam and Eve. It had everything they needed to feel happy and safe. God asked one thing from Adam and Eve. He said to Adam, "you may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." At the time, God did not want Adam and Eve to eat from that tree yet.

A serpent wanted to deceive Eve. The serpent, with his tricks and twisted words, made Eve question God. She had a "what if" moment.



### Genesis 3:1-7

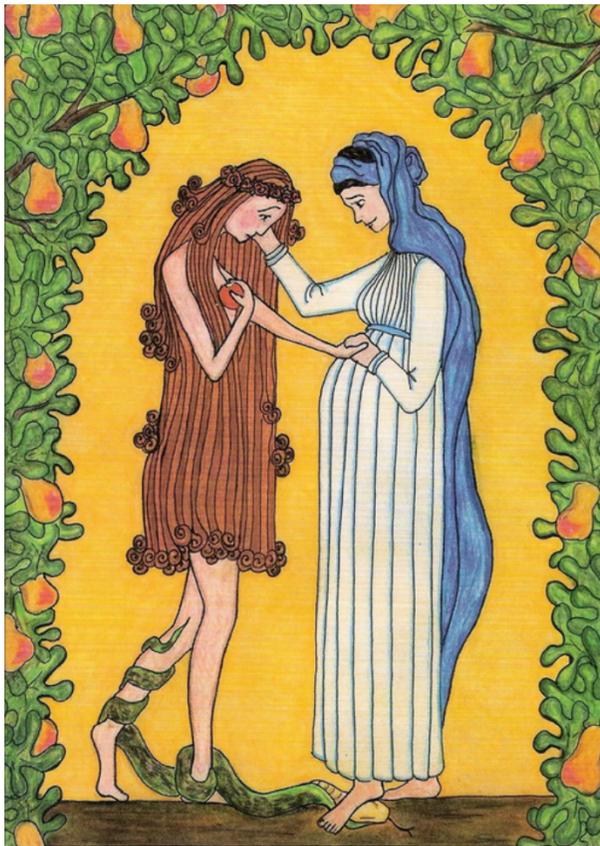
Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,<sup>[a]</sup> knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

After Eve and Adam ate, they realized that they completely disobeyed God and his beautiful plan for them. They were ashamed, and they realized that through their bad choice, there was a separation between them and God. Instead of enjoying the beautiful life that God had created for them, they would experience pain and death, until someone would come and restore their broken relationship with God.

## YEAR 4: WHAT IF?

### Decision 3: Mary and Joseph

God the Father sent Jesus to restore the broken relationship between God and humanity. He did this not with the wave of a magic wand, but by really bringing Jesus into the world. He carefully chose Mary to be Jesus' mother, and Joseph to be Jesus' earthly father. Since an angel came to announce this to Mary and Joseph, both could have said no. They both could have decided that the future was too uncertain and scary. Instead, they both answered "what if I say 'yes' to what God wants?" Because of Mary and Joseph's yes, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Jesus came into our world as a little baby. It was through their obedience to God's plan that they were blessed with abundant life.



Look at this beautiful image created by Sister Grace Remington, OCSO, from the Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey in Dubuque, Iowa. This artwork shows the hope that is shared from Mary to Eve. Mary invites Eve to hold her belly, where Jesus lived for nine months. We too can share hope when we allow Jesus to rest in us.

Through Mother Mary's & St. Joseph's yes, we can learn to say yes to God too, even when we are scared and uncertain about the future.

We can make good choices (now and when we're grown up) and say yes to God like how Mother Mary did. Pray for the people in our world who are afraid to say yes to God's invitation to have life.



In our world, many people say no to life by preventing and ending pregnancies - they are scared of what the future might hold. Being afraid, confused, or worried when you are uncertain of what will happen are all natural feelings.

We can pray for people who are afraid during their pregnancy so that they may experience joy and hope, and give their fears of the future to God. We can also be a helping hand by donating to centres that help women during pregnancy called, "crisis pregnancy centres".



## The Angelus

℣. The Angel of the LORD declared unto Mary,  
℞. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.\* Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

℣. Behold the handmaid of the LORD.  
℞. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.\* Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

℣. And the Word was made flesh.  
℞. And dwelt among us. (Bowing slightly.)

Hail Mary, full of grace; the LORD is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.\* Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

℣. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.  
℞. That we might be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray,  
Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O LORD, Thy grace into our hearts; that, we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

℞. Amen.

# NO GREATER LOVE

Year 5



What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say peace?

Do you imagine yourself throwing up your two fingers as a peace sign? Maybe you think about the peace symbol with three lines and a circle? In Mass, we exchange a sign of peace through a handshake, nod, smile, or hug before Holy Communion. We do this to extend love and forgiveness to one another. (Matthew 5:23-24). Giving a sign of peace frees up space in our heart to love God and to love our neighbour, the two greatest commandments that Jesus gave us.

## The Two Greatest Commandments

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.
2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

## YEAR 5: NO GREATER LOVE

Who is our neighbour anyway? Our family members and relatives, friends, classmates, teachers, teammates, and strangers are our neighbours. The person on the street asking for change is also our neighbour who deserves love through a smile and a wave.

We sometimes forget about our neighbours who are elderly, our neighbours who have disabilities, and our neighbours who are called the “preborn,” who are still developing in their mother’s womb. Jesus calls us to love these neighbours as we love ourselves.

### Loving Our Neighbour

The elderly in our society can sometimes be forgotten because we don’t see them. When was the last time you shared Jesus’ love to a grandparent? Sometimes the elderly are disconnected from their family and friends and don’t have anyone to check up on them. They can end up feeling lonely, isolated, hopeless, and unimportant. We know that they are not unimportant. We can learn a lot from them. How can you and your family give love to an elderly person who is forgotten?

People with disabilities are our neighbours. By sharing love to them, we can learn kindness and extending a hand when someone asks for help. Sometimes our society says that people are only useful if they can do certain things. We know that it does not matter if someone has certain abilities - everyone is worthy of God’s love.

The “preborn,” those who are still developing in their mother’s womb are also our neighbours. The baby, or sometimes called fetus, which means young one. Even though a preborn child is smaller than us, depend on their mother, are in their mother’s womb, and are less developed than us, the preborn deserves to be cared for and protected because they are our neighbour. How can you and your family show love to a preborn child and her mother?

### How to Love our Neighbour

All of these people, the elderly, disabled, and the preborn are made in God’s image. That means that they are all special, unique, and loved. As we’ve learned our society sometimes forgets that they are human and don’t see the value of human life. There was a time in history when a society did not recognize the value of human life in people. During the Second World War, Jewish people, along with people with mental and physical disabilities, the Polish, Roma, Soviet citizens, and homosexuals were not recognized as human beings and were victims of the Holocaust. They were imprisoned, starved, overworked, and killed in concentration camps because they were seen as “less than.”



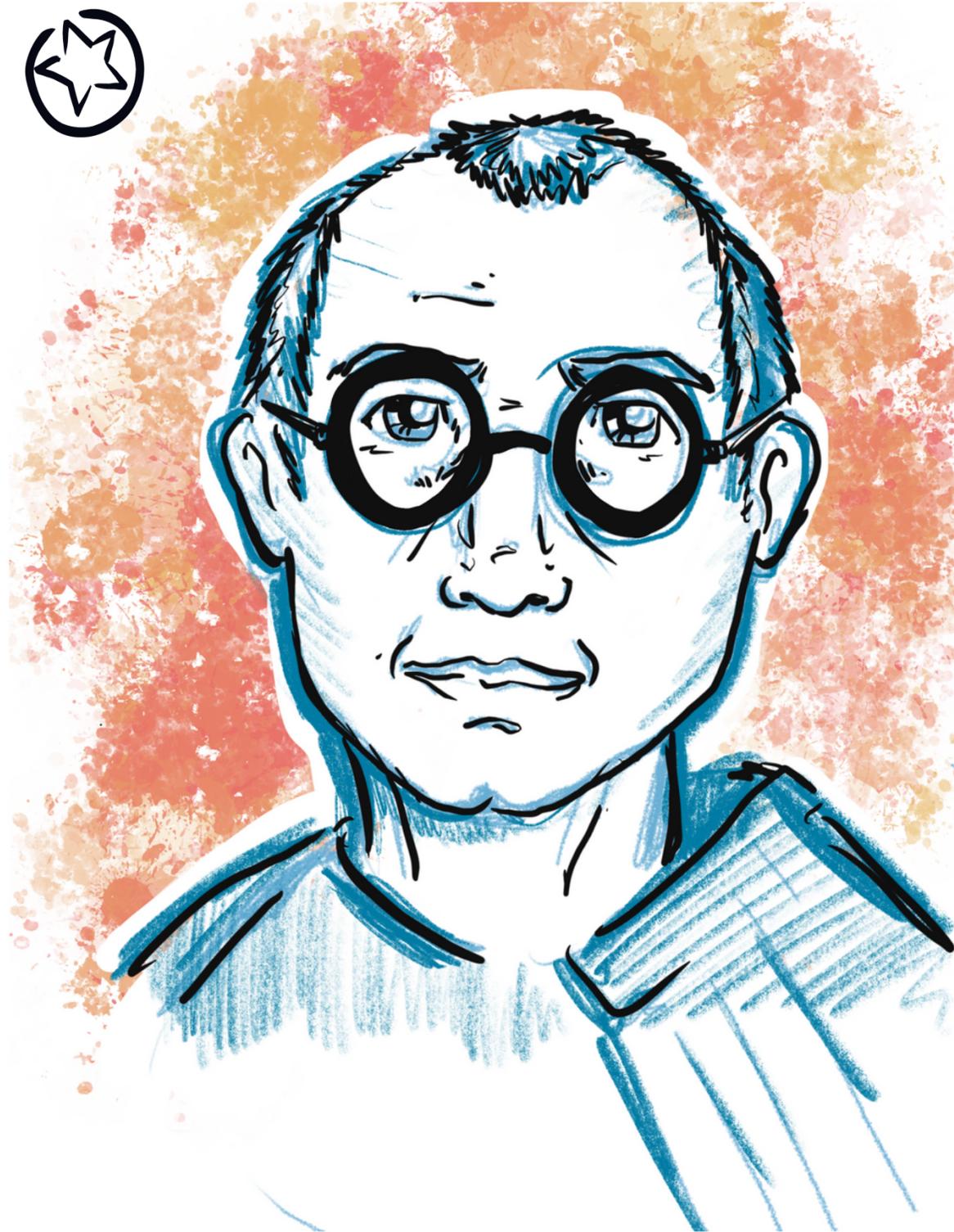
[Click here to watch CGI 3D Animated Short: "Ian" - by Mundoloco CGI Ian Foundation | TheCGBros](#)



Discuss how each character in the video might have felt at different parts in the film.

How did you feel while watching the video, and what did you learn?

## YEAR 5: NO GREATER LOVE



### St. Maximilian Kolbe

One of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners in the concentration camps was Fr. Maximilian Kolbe. He was a Polish priest.

One day, someone in the concentration camp tried to escape. Because of this, the guards wanted to punish those who remained. They picked a man who had a wife and children. The man cried out, asking for the guards to have mercy on him because he had a family, but the guards did not back down.

Fr. Maximilian Kolbe volunteered to take his place instead.

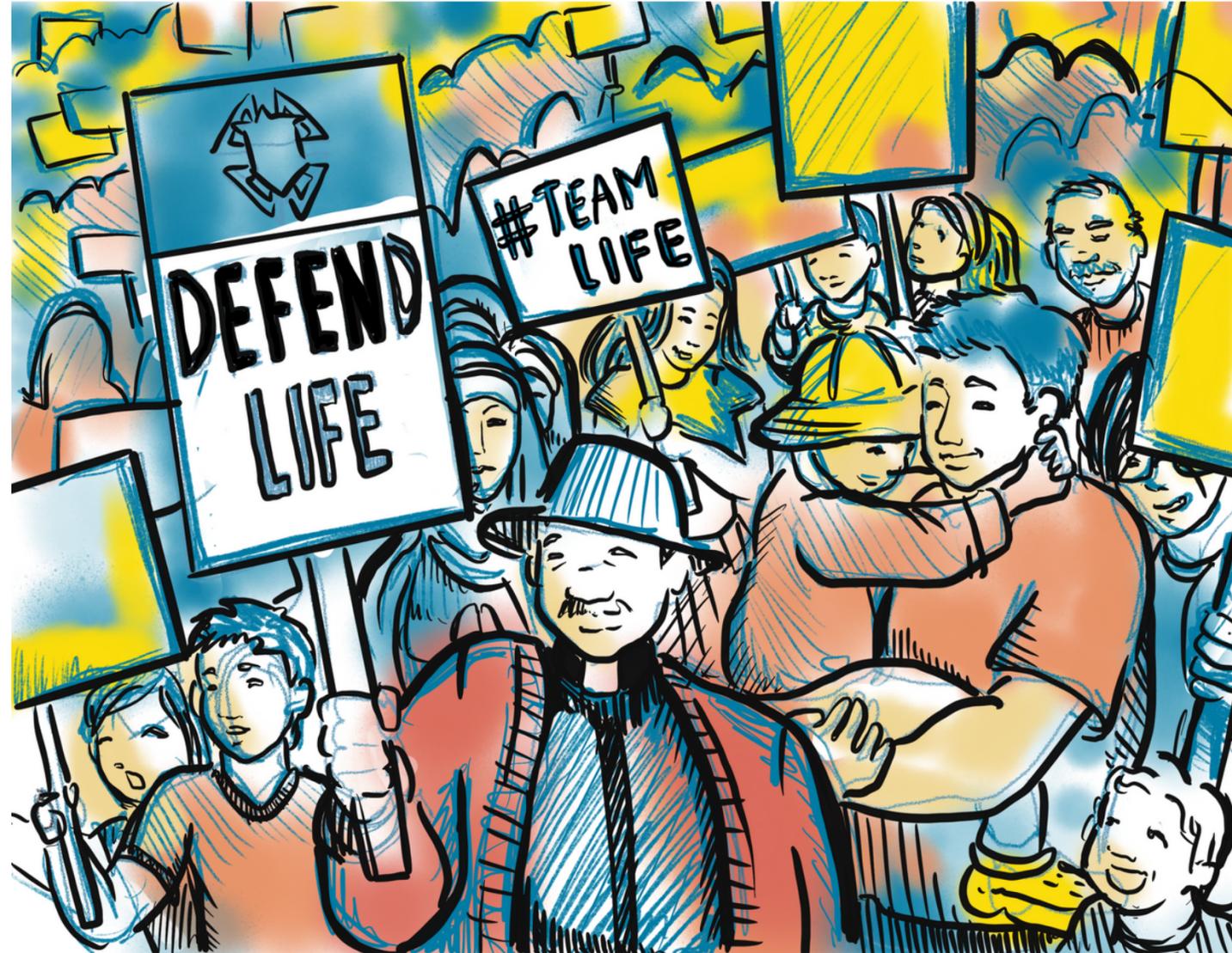
The guards switched the two men. On Fr. Maximilian's last day, he blessed those who were about to kill him. Today, Fr. Maximilian Kolbe is the patron saint of many things - one of them being the pro-life movement. This is because St. Maximilian Kolbe recognized that true love for our neighbour means to lay down our own life for another person, the way that Jesus taught us to love one another at the Last Supper.

### No Greater Love Than This

Does that mean we need to volunteer ourselves to die for another person? Of course not! Not in that way. Instead, it means to stand up for people like the elderly, disabled, and especially the unborn whose lives are at risk. Abortion teaches us that the baby must die so that the mother must live. Jesus taught us that he died so that all of us may have life.

We never want the tragedy of the Holocaust to happen again, where human beings are not recognized as human beings simply because they are different. Instead, we have to share our love directly to the elderly, disabled, and the unborn. We can also love them by promoting them in our society and show that their lives matter and that they are important. Many people will not like that we stand up for the unborn, but we can have hope that we truly sharing the best kind of love, which is to sacrifice our wants to protect the life of someone else!

## YEAR 5: NO GREATER LOVE



### Peace and Justice

When we love by protecting those who are most vulnerable in our society, we help bring God's peace and justice to the world. The same way that we need food to refuel our bodies to have energy, we must eat so that our souls can continue to have energy to stand up for our neighbour. It is important that we continue to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist at Holy Mass, so that we are strengthened in our commitment to loving our neighbour.



Prayer of Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

Reflect on the following questions.

- How can you and your family give love to an elderly person who is forgotten?
- How can you and your family give love to people with disabilities?
- How can you and your family show love to a preborn child and her mother?

# A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE

Year 5

Thank you God!  
Have you ever thanked God for  
giving you life?

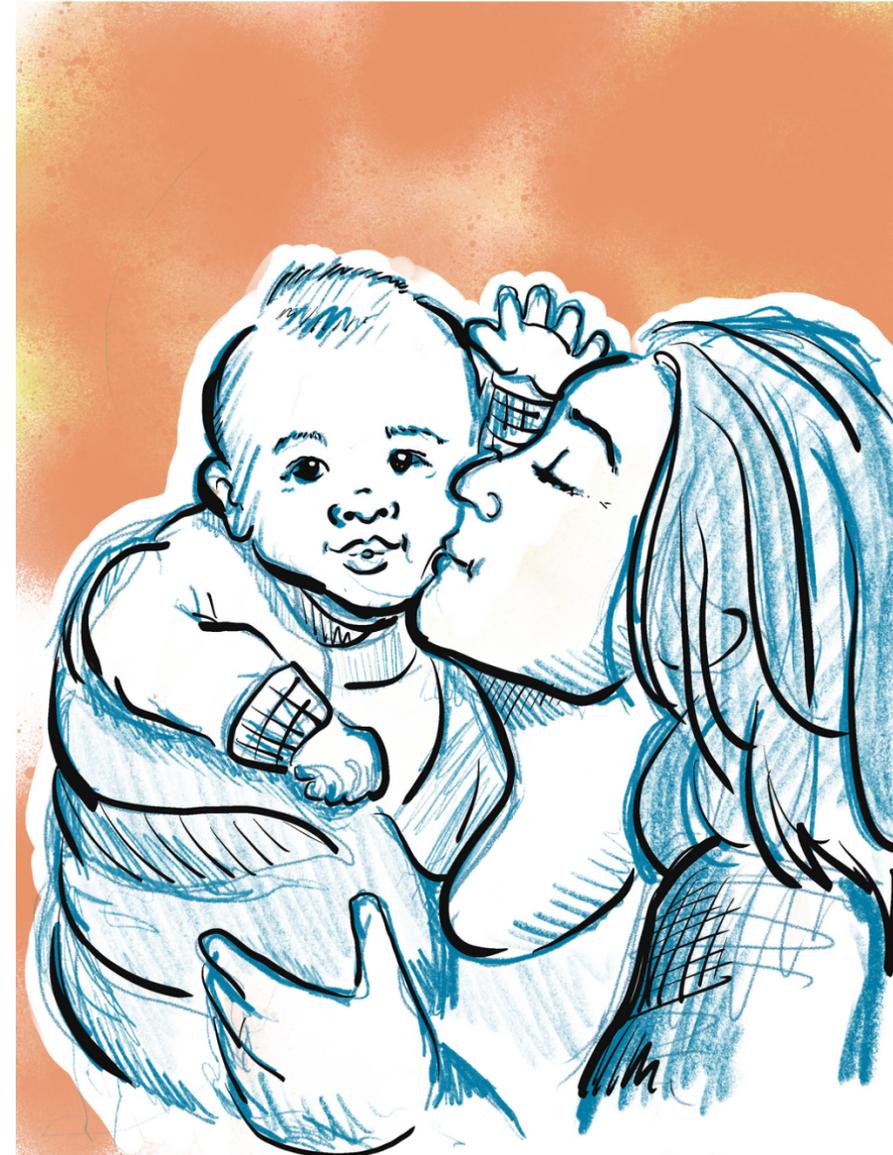
King David in the Psalms thanks God for making him, and he not only thanks him for the gift of life today, but also for the moment that God starting making him - in the womb. We too can say this prayer of praise to God for making us.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's  
womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and  
wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.



Let's take a look at how God knitted us  
together in our mothers' wombs.



You are so loved!

When have you felt most loved? Maybe it was through the words "I love you." Maybe it was during a birthday party where your family celebrated you! Maybe it was when you were sick and your parent made a special soup to help you feel better. You can feel loved when a friend comforts you after someone has bullied you. Sometimes we feel most loved when we see that our future is something we can hope for. God says to us, "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." (Jeremiah 29:11) From the moment that God created us, he had a plan of hope for each and every one of us.

### Hope for the Child, Hope for the Mother

What is our hope? Not only can we have hope in a better future, but we have someone to look to as our hope, so the better question is who is our hope. Jesus Christ is our hope. Jesus went through many moments of suffering and pain, and yet on the third day, he resurrected and beat death forever! Because of Jesus, we can have hope even on the darkest days.

When a woman becomes pregnant, we are often happy and want to celebrate with baby showers and gender reveal parties. However, when a couple has an "unplanned" pregnancy, she may feel unprepared and feel empty handed. Since she might feel like she is not yet ready to be a mother, others might even tell her that the solution to her "problem" is to end her child's life through abortion.

Instead of helping a woman choose to end her child's life, our church should help mothers during the difficult times. This could be through supporting her choice to continue her pregnancy, supporting her with materials (providing diapers, baby formula, clothing, and more), and supporting her emotionally by being a friend. Adoption is also a loving option that can allow for God's plan to unfold beautifully.



[Click here to watch Your Life Before Birth  
by the Endowment for Human Development](#)

## YEAR 6: A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE

Never forget God has plans of hope for that woman. God has plans of hope for the child. Even if they fear the pain and suffering that may come from the pregnancy, one can have hope for joy and love to fill our hearts and help them continue. Yes, the road may be difficult, but never forget that God has a plan of hope.

### A Mother's Love

St. Gianna Beretta Molla was born in Magenta Italy in 1922. As a young girl, she already loved Jesus so much and spoke to him through her prayers. In 1942, she dedicated herself to helping people by going to school to become a doctor. She had graduated with degrees in medicine and in surgery, and opened up a medical office. As a doctor, she loved to help mothers, children, the elderly, and the poor.



She was married in 1955 to Pietro Molla, and together, they promised to raise a truly Christian family. They were faithful and happy parents of three children. When she became pregnant with their fourth child, St. Gianna went through a lot of pain due to tumor. In her uterus was her growing baby, alongside a tumor.

She was given three choices. The first was to have an abortion that would save her life, but end her pregnancy, which meant that her child would die. The second choice was to have a hysterectomy, which meant that her uterus would be completely taken out - this could have saved her life, but meant that she could no longer be pregnant. The third choice was to remove the tumor, but could cause complications for her health. She chose the last. The doctors were able to remove the tumor and save the baby's life.

Before she gave birth, St. Gianna told the doctors that if complications came, they were to save her child, even if it meant she had to die. On April 21, 1962, St. Gianna's daughter, Gianna Emanuela was delivered through cesarean-section. Through it all, St. Gianna looked to God for strength. One week later after her baby's birth, St. Gianna passed away. She became a saint in 2004, where her husband and daughter Gianna Emanuela were present. Today, Catholics ask her to pray for us, as she is the patron of physicians and paediatricians, mothers, and unborn children.

## YEAR 6: A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE



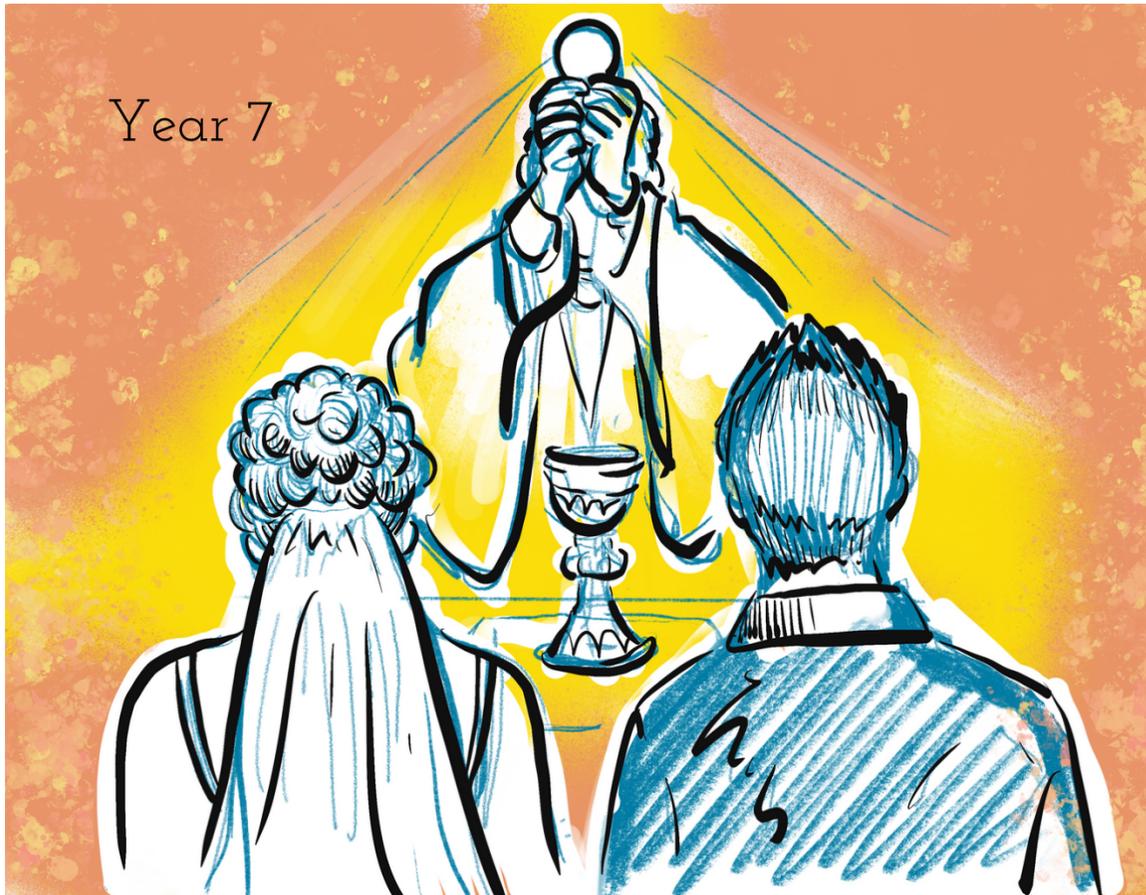
Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of life. I praise you for carefully making me in my mother's womb. I pray for all mothers, that they may choose life and be blessed with good health. I pray for all children in the womb that they may be protected from all harm. Help me to share to others about the great gift of life that you have blessed us with. In Jesus' name I pray, with the prayers of Mother Mary. Amen.



- Thank your parents for choosing the gift of life by caring for you in and outside of the womb
- Share something you've learned from today's lesson with your family members.

Year 7



## A PROMISE THAT LASTS

When you were in kindergarten, did you ever make pinky-swears? Maybe you kept that promise. Maybe you didn't. But in the moment you made the pinky-swear, something special happened. You built trust with a person. You started to build a friendship. At weddings, one of the most important moments is when the groom and bride say their wedding vows - a moment to say "I do" to their promise to love each other unconditionally.

In the Old Testament, we learn that God makes a special promise with his chosen people. This promise, or covenant, is one that is incomparable and unbreakable. It was a promise that God will always be their God, and that His people will always be his people. Did the people mess up and break their end of the promise? Most definitely. Did that stop God from holding up his end of the covenant? Of course not. And we know this because God loves and God is love.

### God's Love

We know God's love for us because the Father was willing to give Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, to restore our relationship with Him. God loves us much that he was willing to die for us, and give us new life through His Resurrection.



Romans 8:38-39: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Before Jesus died, he had his last supper with His apostles. There he told them that there is no greater love than to give your life for someone else. He makes this promise of love and calls it a new covenant: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

When we go to Mass and receive communion, we are taking part in Jesus' promise of love. We don't just celebrate God's love in the past, we celebrate God's love for us today and forever, and give thanks through communion out of love for God - almost as if it were a wedding anniversary every single Sunday.

### First comes Love, then Comes Marriage...

When God created Adam, he said "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." (Genesis 2:18) God created Eve to be Adam's partner, and he created her from Adam's rib while Adam was asleep. Why the rib? God created Eve out of Adam's rib to show that they are meant to be partners. Eve was not made to be the head of Adam, nor was she made to be below him. She was made to be by his side.

**St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (5:21-33) tells us how a husband and wife should love one another:**



Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

### Then comes God’s Gift

**Sex is good. Sex is one of the greatest gifts that God could ever give us because through sex, husband and wife who have been sacramentally married, are united in God’s love. God gives the husband and wife the opportunity to give life through the creation of another human being, a baby.**

**The important thing is to remember that sex is a gift that is to be opened in sacramental marriage.**

### A present to be cherished

Since sex is such a beautiful gift from God to humanity that is made for the sacrament of marriage, we must protect the the gift from a culture that seeks to sell and distort it.

- Sex before marriage takes the gift of sex and replaces patience with instant gratification.
- Contraception (like condoms and birth control, even in marriage) takes the gift of sex and removes openness to the gift of life for convenience.
- Pornography takes the gift of sex and replaces genuine connection with self-satisfaction.
- Sexual assault takes the gift of sex and replaces respect with violence.

Without patience, openness to life, genuine connection, and respect in sex, we’re left an act of love that takes love out of the equation. Without love in sex, we are left with sin. That’s why when we hear about sexual assaults and abuses, we are so deeply affected - sex is not just a physical act, it’s psychological, emotional, and spiritual act as well.

### Chastity

God gives us a gift called the virtue of chastity.

This virtue allows us to see the full beauty of sex in marriage and helps us deal with the temptation of lust if and when it comes.

Chastity is a virtue that doesn’t just tell us to say no.

Chastity tells us to say yes to Jesus Christ, whose love is greater than loveless sex. Take St. Maria Goretti’s example, who is the patroness for survivors of sexual assault, youth, and purity.



[Click here to watch The Incredible Story of St. Maria Goretti](#)

If anyone is trying to harm you in any way, inside or outside of the church, please tell someone you trust immediately, and ask them to help you report the person so that they can be held accountable.

## YEAR 7: A PROMISE THAT LASTS

### Is Abortion Okay in the Case of Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault and rape is a grave act of violence, and is a sin. Perpetrators of sexual assault should be held accountable for their actions. We must pray for their hearts and minds to be changed, and we must pray that violence against women ends. Equally, the survivor of sexual assault should have the utmost support of her community and church, and should be given the space to find healing in Christ through proper channels such as therapy, counselling, and spiritual direction.

If a woman becomes pregnant from rape, our church community should do everything the church can to support the life of the mother and the child in her womb, by financial, emotional, physical, and spiritual means no matter how difficult it may be. It will be challenging for the mother to see her body change and see potentially see the assaulter in the child, but the embryo or fetus is a human, and must be given the chance to live.

In sexual assault, there are two victims (the mother and the child), and one perpetrator (the assaulter). Since we know that abortion is the deliberate killing of a human embryo or fetus, an abortion on a child conceived from rape ends the life of an innocent human being. Ending the life of the child does not help heal a woman, rather it punishes the wrong person. We the Church must be a source of hope and light to lead survivors of sexual assault to find healing in Jesus.

### What Did Jesus Do?

Some of your friends or relatives might be having sex outside the context of marriage. Should we banish them from the church because they are living in sin? This is what Jesus did (John 8:1-11):

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

Jesus shows us that he knows we all sin in different ways, but even as sinners, we have a chance to accept His love and turn away from our sins. If you or someone you know has had sex outside of marriage, invite the Lord to help you to change your view of sex to God's view of sex.



Dear Jesus,

I know that every perfect gift, and especially that of chastity, depends on the power of your providence. Without you a mere creature can do nothing. Therefore, I beg you to defend by your grace the chastity and purity of my body and soul. And if I have ever sensed or imagined anything that could stain my chastity and purity, blow it out, Supreme Lord of my powers, that I may advance with a pure heart in your love and service, offering myself on the most pure altar of your divinity all the days of my life.

Amen.



Action Item

Make this covenant with God:

"From this day forward, I promise to seek God's help to grow in purity of heart, mind, and body, so that I can be free to love. Regardless of the past, I now choose to save the gift of my sexuality for my future spouse or to make a gift of myself in the vocation to which God calls me."

[www.chastity.com](http://www.chastity.com)



## OUR CHURCH, THE FIELD HOSPITAL

Year 8 and  
Confirmation Preparation

### A Big Heart Open to God

"I see clearly," the Pope Francis continues, "that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up."

What kind of wounds?

Is anyone here a doctor? Nurse? Maybe you aspire to work in the health care field or know someone who already does, but we are not qualified to heal physical wounds. What kind of wounds, then, do we the Church help heal? Pope Francis was talking about the wounds of the heart.

When we hear the word abortion, a lot of things come to mind. For some, they think it's a "choice," or a "a right," or "health." Many women and men are affected by abortion - including some of the people in our lives.

What is an abortion?

An abortion is the termination of a human pregnancy. In other words, through medicine or surgery, a human pregnancy is ended, and a human's life is ended. This doctor who used to perform abortions will teach us about the various abortion procedures that take the lives of little ones in their mothers' wombs. This video contains illustrations of sensitive subject matter. Viewer discretion is advised.



[Click here to watch Abortion Procedures by Live Action](#)

About 300 children in Canada die every single day to abortion. Women feel the pressure from society, their family, friends, and husband/boyfriend to have an abortion. They can ending up believing that it was a choice they needed to make. In the following video, you will see the pain in a mother's heart after having an abortion. Elizabeth will share the story of her abortion.

[Click here to watch Elizabeth - THE MISSING PROJECT CANADA](#)

## YEAR 8: OUR CHURCH, THE FIELD HOSPITAL

"I wake up every morning, and I know what I've done,  
and I regret it every single day."

As you can see, abortion is not the solution that people make it out to be. Instead of supporting a woman accomplish her dreams while having a child, abortion shows that she is not strong enough to do both. Moreover, abortion can leave women with physical scars inside her uterus, psychological scars, and emotional scars that the abortion industry does not address or help heal.

Elizabeth is not alone. Many other women have gone through similar feelings and experiences that she has. If Elizabeth, or women who have experiences like hers entered our church today, would she be met with judgement, or will she be met with the loving arms of the Father, extended to her through His children? She should be met with love and mercy, and encouragement to turn to God to ask for forgiveness and receive grace. Consider the woman at the well (John 4). Jesus was thirsty and asked the Samaritan woman at the well (someone a Jew like Jesus was not supposed to talk to) for water. While talking, Jesus revealed that he knew how uneasy she was - especially having been in relationships with six different men. Jesus offered her water that will never run out - the living water: Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14)

How has your church welcomed those who have made the mistake of abortion in the past?

When we encounter people who made choices that left wounds in their hearts, let us, the Church, help them heal in, through, and with Jesus Christ through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

IF A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER TELLS YOU THAT THEY ARE CONSIDERING AN ABORTION HERE IS WHAT YOU COULD DO:

### LISTEN

Listen to them and be willing to understand how difficult the circumstances must be - no judgement. Listen to listen, and not to reply. Often, these women in crisis will tell their stories and will be faced with pressure to have an abortion, or faced with condemnation from people who may call her names like "murderer." Just listen.

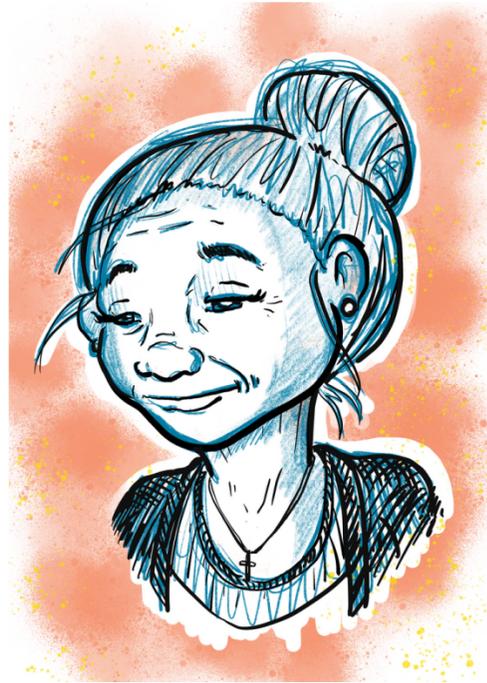
### CARE ABOUT THE MOTHER AND THE BABY.

The mother needs to know that her own life is precious to understand that the life inside her womb is precious. Let her know that you care about her and the baby in her womb. Make sure that the mother has a safe place to have a healthy pregnancy, and offer to help her contact the nearest crisis pregnancy centre. If the mother is willing, find other mothers in your church who could help you journey along the mother.

### SHARE THE TRUTH WITH LOVE.

Remind her that the embryo or fetus inside her womb is a human person who already loves her unconditionally. Since we know that life begins at fertilization, we know that God already has a plan of hope for her child. Go to the Pro-Life Apologetics section to learn how to communicate the humanity of the pre-born with love. 76% of women who have had an abortion would have made if a different choice if a loved one had encouraged them to do so. Be the one to give them a reason to choose life!

## YEAR 8: OUR CHURCH, THE FIELD HOSPITAL



Consider how the COVID-19 pandemic affected you. Did you feel lonely? Isolated? Alone? Many people experience this daily within the walls of personal care homes. Many people who are lonely, isolated, and alone seek out the help of a medical professional to end their life prematurely. Sometimes those with mental illness seek out ways to end their lives through medical assistance. In Canada, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) is available for individuals who meet certain criteria like illness, disability, and age. MAiD in Canada comes in two forms: 1. Euthanasia.  
2. Assisted Suicide.

**Euthanasia** is when a physician or a nurse practitioner directly administers a substance that causes death, such as an injection of a drug.

**Assisted Suicide** is when a physician or nurse practitioner provides or prescribes a drug that the eligible person takes themselves, in order to bring about their own death.

But what message does that send those who are disabled, lonely, and elderly? That their lives are not worth living? That it is better to be dead than to be disabled, lonely, or old? Surely, we know that that is not true! Every person, no matter their ability or age is made in the image and likeness of God and is our brother and sister. 82% of people who choose medically assisted death do so because they feel like they have lost the ability to engage in meaningful activities. How can we, the Church, be present for those who are lonely? How can we share Christ's waters to those who find no hope for their future?

Visit [www.epcc.ca](http://www.epcc.ca) for more information.

### Love comes with Community

When we are baptized, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. At Confirmation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and are tasked to change the world as we know it. We don't change the world by ourselves - God changes the world through us. Here is the story of Dorothy Day, Servant of God, whose love for God was expressed through justice.

**"WE HAVE ALL KNOWN THE LONG LONELINESS AND WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION IS LOVE AND THAT LOVE COMES WITH COMMUNITY."**



Dorothy Day is an example of someone who has had an abortion herself, but has found healing and has used her life to glorify God and uplift people around her.

## YEAR 8: OUR CHURCH, THE FIELD HOSPITAL



Dear Heavenly Father,  
Thank you for the gift of our Church, the field hospital that  
heals those who are hurting. Holy Spirit, bless us with the  
gift of courage to journey with broken. Remind us not to be  
afraid to share the good news of life. Bless those who are  
lonely, hurting, and most need of your mercy, and lead them  
to your Church to find healing in Jesus, your Son. Amen.



- Look up your local Crisis Pregnancy Center and see if they are looking for some items for donation.
- Save the Crisis Pregnancy Center phone number in case you need to help someone contact them.
- Place loving pro-life brochures at your church and school.
- Reach out to a local personal care home and visit with the residents there or reach out to an elderly family member.

# SPEAKING UP FOR THE PREBORN

PRO-LIFE APOLOGETICS



Lets's talk about it!

Pregnancy can be challenging! Let's learn how to talk about the pre-born in a compassionate, yet compelling way so that the next time you're asked about abortion, you can speak up for the mother and the pre-born.

Some "pro-choicers" call those who advocate for life "woman-haters." Those who advocate for life call abortion advocates "murderers." Let's stop the name calling, and let's start having productive conversations. We use three tools that allow us to acknowledging the mother's needs, while uplifting the life of the pre-born.

The three tools are:

1. Common Ground
2. Analogy
3. question

## COMMON GROUND

Through building common ground, we show the person we are conversing with that we are good listeners. We hear their concern for the mother in their difficult situation. We care about the mother as much as we care about her pre-born child.

Start by saying, "I agree it would be challenging to be pregnant and

-----

Fill in the blank with the difficult circumstance that they bring up like "not have enough financial resources," "be a young mother," "to learn that your child is diagnosed with a medical condition."

If they bring up sexual assault or the health of the mother, be even more understanding.

## ANALOGY

Using an analogy can help us understand ideas that are hard to grasp. Think about Jesus and how he uses parables to talk about the Kingdom of God!

Imagine that a mother of a two-year-old lost her job due to the pandemic. She no longer has the financial means to provide for herself and her child. Would it be okay for her to end the life of her child?

## QUESTION

Asking a question can help guide the conversation to lead us from the temporary circumstances to the humanity of the pre-born.

If it's not acceptable to kill the born child because of poverty, why is it acceptable to kill her pre-born child?

I'm Human Too!

After using the three conversational tools, your friend might say, "okay, it is wrong to kill a two-year-old, but it's not the same as abortion."

At this point in the conversation, we can ask four important questions.

- Do you believe all humans should get human rights?
- If something is growing, isn't it alive?
- If someone has two human parents, wouldn't she be a human too?
- If we agree that everyone in the human family deserves human rights, doesn't that mean that abortion is a human rights violation?

When does life begin?

**There are three possible answers to this question. Before, after, or at fertilization.**

**Before fertilization:**

**An egg cell or sperm left alone in a woman or man's body cannot become a human.**

**After fertilization:**

**We know that the person beside you did not appear out of thin air. We can trace them down to a younger version of themselves. Then younger, then younger, and even younger. You can trace every person back to one moment.**

**At fertilization:**

**"Human development begins at fertilization when a sperm fuses with an oocyte to form a single cell, the zygote. [This] marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual."**

**According to 95% of biologists, life begins at fertilization! It takes 9 months for a zygote to develop into a fetus that is ready to be birthed. At fertilization, a new, whole person is alive!**

Who is human?

**The SLED Theory, developed by Steven Schwarz answers the question, if the preborn are different from those who are born, are they still human? The answer is YES! Here's how we know.**

**S - SIZE**

**L - LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

**E - ENVIRONMENT**

**D - DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY**

## The SLED Theory

### **S - SIZE**

That's way smaller than you and I! The tallest person to ever live so far was Robert Wadlow who was 8'11." Just because you and I are shorter does not mean we are more or less human than people taller than us. The same goes for a toddler, fetus, embryo, and human zygote! Just because they are smaller, does not mean they are less human.

### **L - LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

Did you know that boys develop at a slower rate than girls? That doesn't mean that boys are less human than girls! In the same way, the pre-born are less developed than born children simply because they did not yet have the time to develop. At any stage of human development, we are still human.

### **E - ENVIRONMENT**

Do you like swimming in water? Flying in an airplane? Travelling to a country that has a completely different climate from yours? We're all still humans in these different environments aren't we? Just because the pre-born child is inside the womb of her mother, a different environment than us who are born, does not mean that she is less human.

### **D - DEGREE OF DEPENDENCY**

If a toddler fell into a pool and was rescued by a lifeguard, would we say that she is less human? Is a child who receives their nutrition through their mother's milk less human? Of course not! In fact, we might even say that depending on one another is what makes us most human - that we are all connected and are dependent on one another. A pre-born child is dependent on their mother for nutrition and oxygen, but that does not make the pre-born less human.

Since we know that the pre-born are equally human as those who are born, we know that they too, deserve to live their life!

### **Human = Human**

There have been many injustices throughout human history. This is because we failed to recognize humans as humans due to differences such as race, gender, and religion. At this time, the majority of our society fails to recognize the pre-born as humans because simply because of their age. Every day, about three hundred human beings die from an abortion in Canada.

Even though the pre-born are different than us because of their age, does not mean they should not be protected! You and I have the chance to stand up for the weakest, most forgotten, and most vulnerable people in our human family.

If you want to learn more about how to communicate the pro-life message, contact the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform. You may find your local CCBR office at [www.endthekilling.ca](http://www.endthekilling.ca).

# Sources

## Year 2

"Family & Pregnancy Center." WebMD. WebMD, n.d.  
<https://www.webmd.com/family-pregnancy>.

## Year 3

Vergara, Isabel Sanchez. "Little People Big Dreams - Mother Teresa."  
Edited by Natascha Rosenberg. YouTube. A World of Good, November  
18, 2020. <https://youtu.be/84YuQQ79Vcw>.

## Year 5

Catholic Online. "St. Maximilian Kolbe - Saints & Angels." Catholic  
Online, n.d. [https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=370](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=370).

TheCGBro. "CGI 3D Animated Short: 'Ian' - by Mundoloco CGI Ian  
Foundation | TheCGBros." YouTube. YouTube, December 18, 2018.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz\\_d-cikWml](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz_d-cikWml).

## Year 6

Catholic Online. "St. Gianna Beretta Molla - Saints & Angels." Catholic  
Online, n.d. [https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=6985](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=6985).

"Your Life Before Birth." The Endowment for Human Development, n.d.  
<https://www.ehd.org/your-life-before-birth-video/>.

## Year 7

Aleteia. "The Story of St. Maria Goretti." YouTube. YouTube, July 5, 2019.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syBV\\_FR6LWI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syBV_FR6LWI).

## Year 8

America - The Jesuit Review. Saints in :60 | Dorothy Day. YouTube.  
YouTube, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1UWjNcL-Mw>.

Canada, Health. "Medical Assistance in Dying." Canada.ca. Government  
of Canada/Gouvernement du Canada, March 18,  
2021. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>.

"Elizabeth - THE MISSING PROJECT CANADA." YouTube. LifeCanada,  
May 13, 2019.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXXCGcuDvNo>.

Spadaro, Antonio. "A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope  
Francis." America Magazine, March 13, 2017.  
<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis>.

## Apologetics

Jacobs, Steven, Biologists' Consensus on 'When Life Begins' (July 25,  
2018). Available at  
SSRN: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3211703>

Moore, Persaud, Torchia, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented  
Embryology, 10th  
edition, Philadelphia, PA: 2016. p. 11.