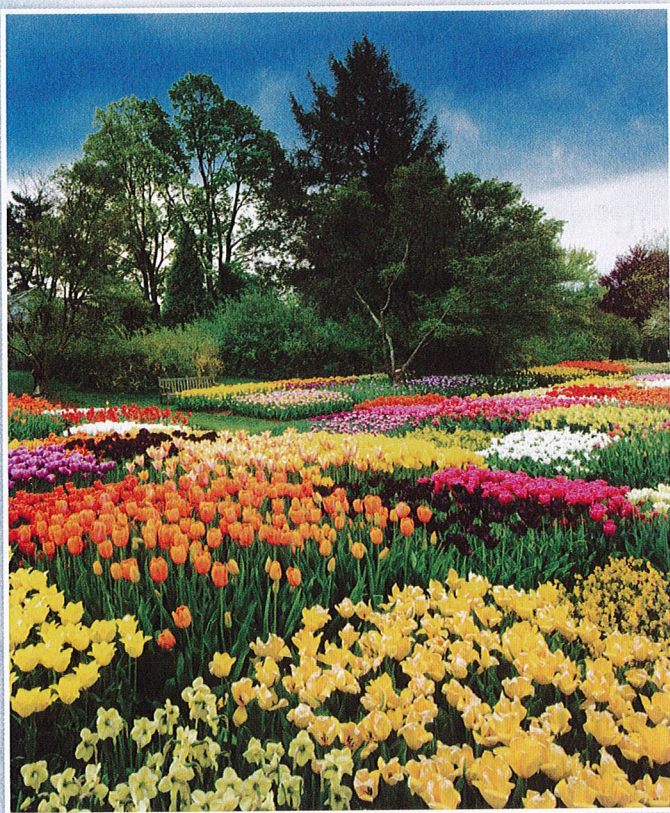


Peace and Reconciliation

Part 1 I Open My Heart

Some people find peace in nature.
Look at the picture.
Do you find it peaceful?



Draw a place where you
find peace.



Share your drawing with
the group.

Jesus shared peace. Jesus healed people and forgave their sins. He told them to “go in peace” (Mark 5:34).

Jesus also taught people to be peaceful and kind toward one another. He said:

“Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

Peace and Reconciliation

Part 2 We Come Together for Prayer

Reader 1: While Jesus was dining with the disciples, a woman came into the room. She knelt at Jesus' feet and cried. She was sorry for her sins and asked for Jesus' forgiveness. (Based on Luke 7:36–38)

Reader 2: Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:50).

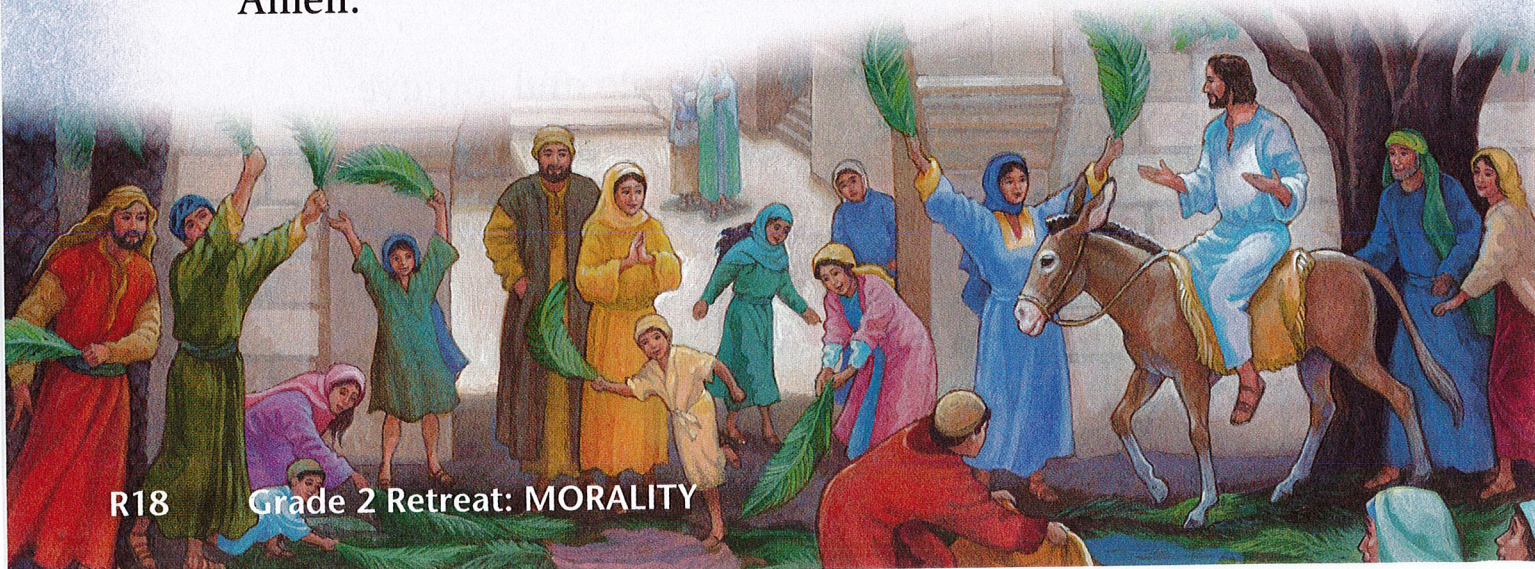
All: Jesus, you are loving and forgiving, and you give us peace.

Leader: Lord Jesus, you said to your disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (John 14:27). You also taught your disciples, “Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household’” (Luke 10:5).

All: We thank you for giving us your peace. Help us to share your peace with others. (*All name ways they can share peace with others.*)

Leader: Let us now pray in the words of your followers who proclaimed:

All: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.” (Luke 19:38)
Amen.



Peace and Reconciliation

Part 3 I Cherish God's Word

Peter asked, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, ‘I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times’” (Matthew 18:21–22).

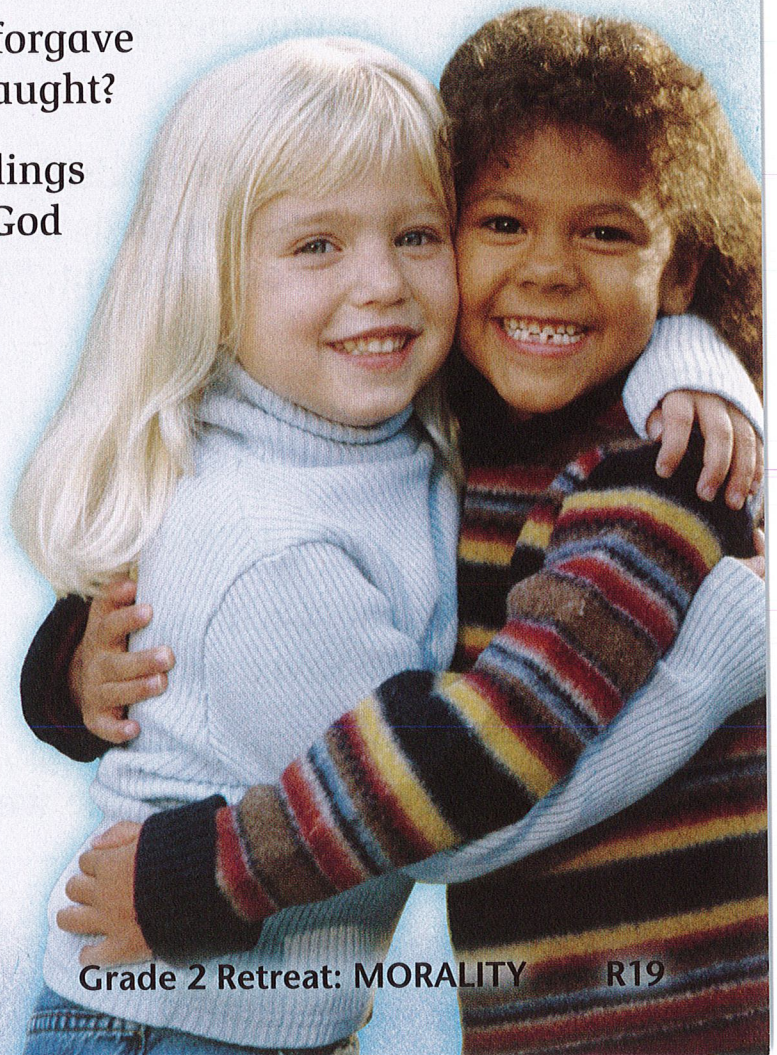
READ the quotation from Scripture. Read slowly. Pay close attention to what you are reading.

REFLECT on what you read. Think about:

- Jesus always forgives us. What does he teach us about how to forgive others?
- Ask Jesus for forgiveness and peace.
- What is a time when you forgave another person, as Jesus taught?

SHARE your thoughts and feelings with God in prayer. Speak to God as a friend.

CONTEMPLATE, or sit quietly and think about God's Word in the Scripture passage from the Gospel of Matthew above.



Peace and Reconciliation

Part 4 I Value My Catholic Faith

The Gospels tell many stories about Jesus forgiving and healing people. Jesus helped people know God's mercy. He helped them experience peace. This picture shows a time when Jesus healed someone and forgave his sins.

Listen to the Scripture story. It is based on Mark 10:46–52. Talk about the story with your group. Then role-play the story together. Imagine what the man might say and feel. How did Jesus bring the man peace?



Mark 10:46–52

A blind man sat by the roadside. The man was poor and troubled. Jesus walked by. The man cried out, “Jesus, have pity on me!”

Jesus said, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said, “Master, I want to see.”

Jesus told him, “Go on your way. Your faith has saved you.”

Immediately the blind man began to see! He then followed Jesus on the way.

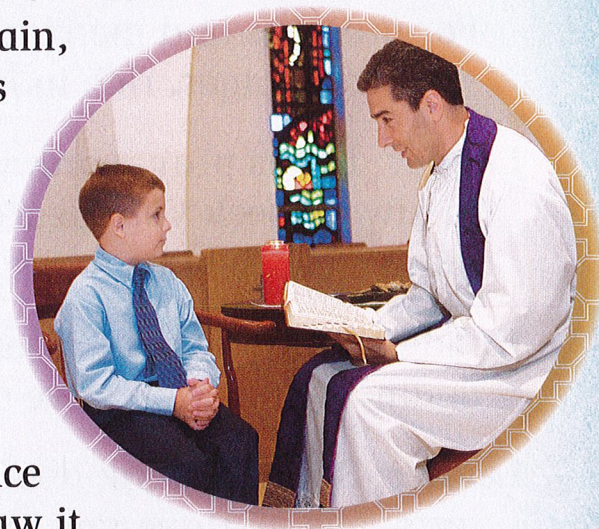
(Based on Mark 10:46–47, 51–52)



Peace and Reconciliation

Part 5 I Celebrate Catholic Identity

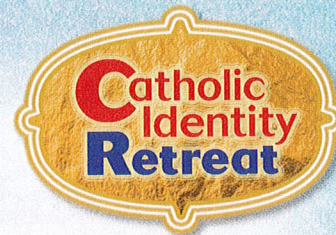
Jesus calls us to forgiveness and peace. He wants us to be reconciled, or joined together again, with God and one another. As Catholics we receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for the forgiveness of our sins. This sacrament reconciles us with God and the Church. We are given peace.



Think about ways that you, your friends, family members, or classmates share peace and reconciliation. Choose one way. Draw it on the prayer card below. Then write a prayer for peace next to it. You will pray this prayer in Part 6.

A Prayer for Peace

Wavy lines on the left and right sides of the form.



Peace and Reconciliation

Part 6 I Honor My Catholic Identity

Reader 1: "Return to the LORD, your God.

For gracious and merciful is he,
slow to anger, rich in kindness." (Joel 2:13)

Leader: Let us pray. Lord, you are our loving Savior. Help us to always seek your peace. Teach us to forgive others as you forgive us. Help us to get along peacefully with others.

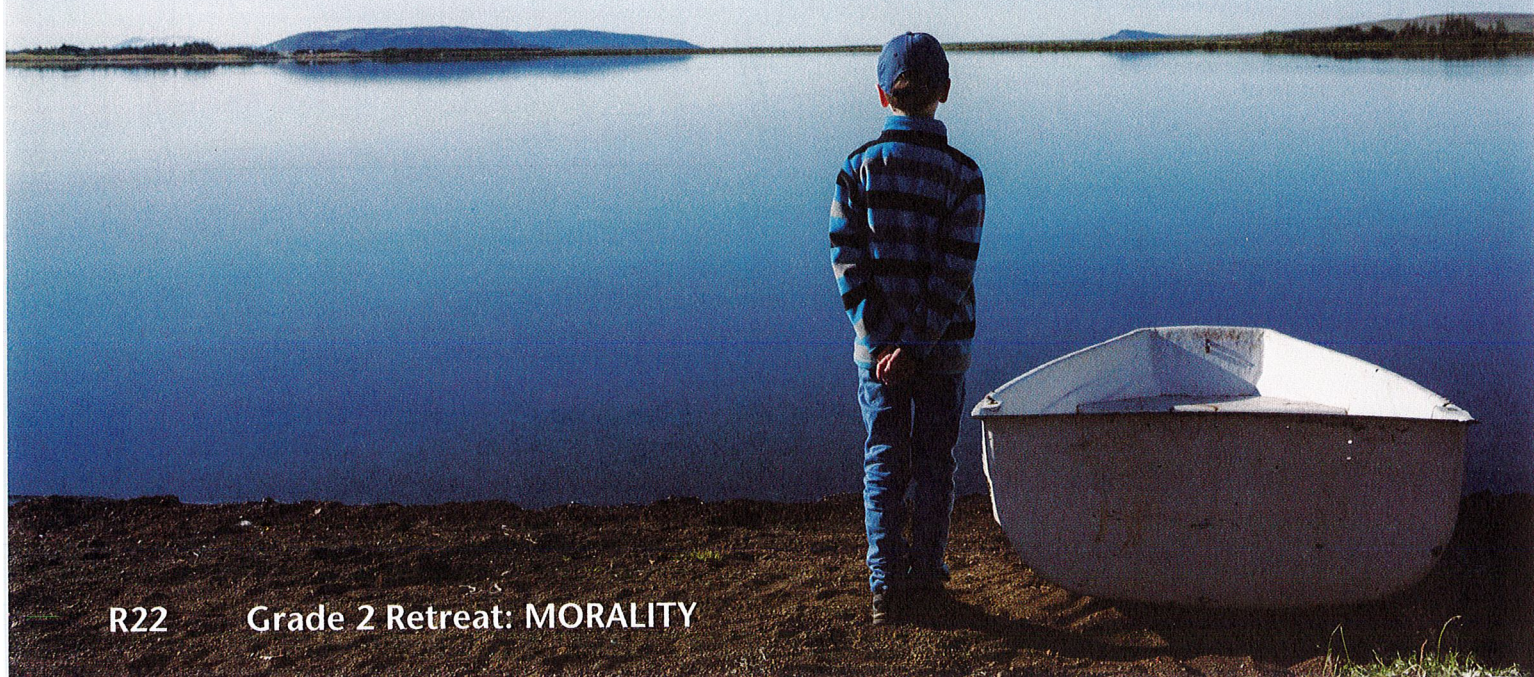
Reader 2: Jesus said, "When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a [disagreement]" (Mark 11:25).

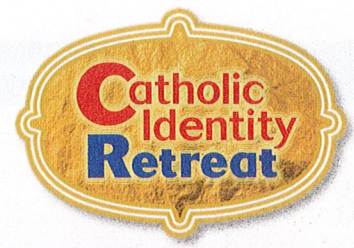
Leader: Be still. Think about today. Have you asked God for forgiveness? Have you forgiven others? Think about tomorrow. How can you be more peaceful and forgiving? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you.

All: *(Take turns praying the prayer you wrote in Part 5.)*

Jesus, help us to be peacemakers.

Amen.





Bringing the Retreat Home

Peace and Reconciliation

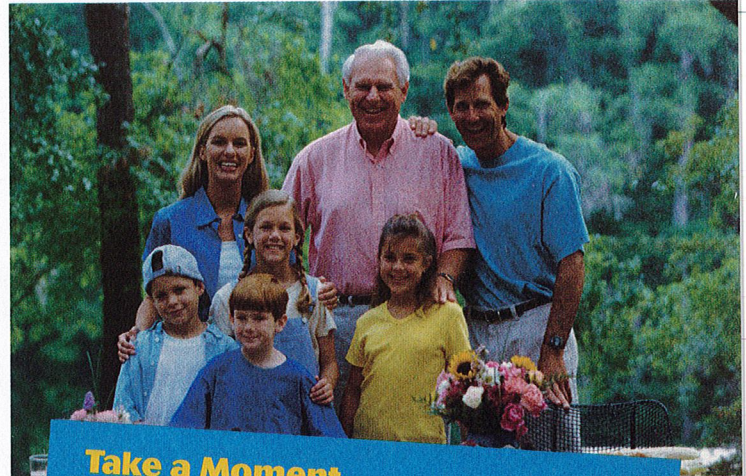
Retreat Recap

Review the pages of your child's *Celebrating Catholic Identity: Morality* retreat. Ask your child to tell you about the retreat. Talk about peace and reconciliation:

- Jesus shared peace and reconciliation.
- Jesus offers us peace and forgiveness of sin especially through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. This sacrament reconciles us with God and the Church.
- Jesus calls us to be peaceful and forgiving people.

A Path to Peace

Using the following image or one you have drawn together, write along the path three ways to build up peace in your household. You might wish to display your completed "path to peace" where your family can view it as a reminder to be peacemakers.



Take a Moment

Think of an outdoor location that your family finds peaceful, such as a local garden, beach, or park. Spend time with your child focusing on God's creation and the feeling of peace. Pray together for peace and reconciliation in your lives, the community, and the world.

Family Prayer

Saint Francis of Assisi, who lived from about 1181 to 1226, was known as a peacemaker. Pray together using his words:

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.

(Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi)

For more resources, see the *Catholic Identity Home Companion* at the end of this book.

Why We Believe As a Catholic Family

What if someone asks us:

- What is the Church's position on war?

The following resources can help us to respond:

As Catholics, we are opposed to unjust war and believe we must do everything possible to avoid it. We must honor the Fifth Commandment, "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). The Church teaches that several conditions must be carefully and seriously considered before there is any prospect of war. These are known as the conditions for a "just war." A war can be considered just only if it meets the following conditions all at once: (1) an aggressor is damaging a nation, or community of nations, in a lasting, grave, and certain way; (2) all other means of ending the conflict have been tried and failed; (3) the war has serious prospects of success; and (4) the war will not cause greater destruction and evil than the aggression it was meant to stop. (See CCC, 2309.)

The Church asks all government leaders and citizens to avoid war by seeking peaceful and just ends to hatred and conflicts.

What does Scripture say?

**"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God."**

(Matthew 5:9)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."

(Matthew 5:43-44)

"Let us then pursue what leads to peace and to building up one another." (Romans 14:19)

The Church continues to proclaim Jesus' message of peace and, in her social teachings, addresses the

causes of conflict as well. The Church encourages peace—in our families, among neighbors, and among nations.

As Catholics we must work for peace and justice by being peacemakers in our own daily lives. The Church calls us to pray for an end to wars and to address the root causes of war, insofar as we are able.

What does the Church say?

"Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. The Church prays: 'From famine, pestilence, and war, O Lord, deliver us.'" (CCC, 2327)

"I make a forceful and urgent call to the entire Catholic Church, . . . to every Christian of other confessions, . . . to followers of every religion and to those brothers and sisters who do not believe: peace is a good which overcomes every barrier, because it belongs to all of humanity!"

(Pope Francis, Angelus message, September 1, 2013)

"Who is there who does not feel the craving to be rid of the threat of war, and to see peace preserved and made daily more secure?" (Saint John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* ("Peace on Earth"), 115)

Notes: