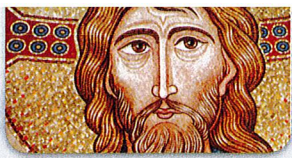


## Looking Ahead

In this chapter, the Holy Spirit invites you to: ▶



**EXPLORE** how sacred art helps us in worshipping God.



**DISCOVER** that the mystery of the Trinity is at the center of our faith.



**DECIDE** how you can give honor and praise to God.

# The Mystery of God

? What is your favorite mystery story? Which kinds of clues have helped you solve mysteries?

God is a mystery, but he is a mystery totally unlike human mysteries. The mystery of God is not something to be solved but rather accepted. In this reading, God gives us several clues that help us come to know him better.

*In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. . . .*

*What came to be through him was life,  
and this life was the light of the human race;  
the light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.*

JOHN 1:1, 3b-5

? What has God revealed about himself through this Scripture passage?



# Disciple Power

## Wonder and Awe

Often this Gift of the Holy Spirit is referred to as “fear of the Lord.” This gift of awe before God enables us to be aware of God’s mystery and majesty. We are humbled by his almighty power, perfect goodness, and unconditional love. Most sacred art reflects this kind of reverence to God and aids us in the worship due to God.

# THE CHURCH FOLLOWS JESUS

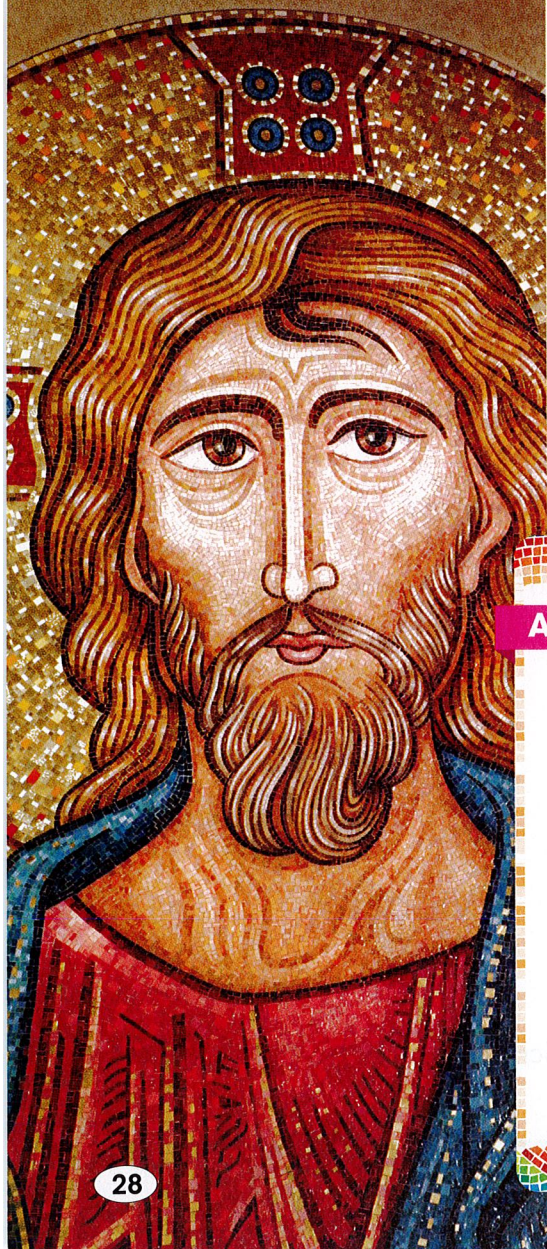
## Illuminating Mosaics

Christian artists can help us to know more about the mystery of the loving presence of God within us and among us. Long before we had Bibles for everyone to read, Christians used art to help people “hear” the story of creation and redemption.

Mosaics are one of the earliest forms of art used by Christians. Some of the earliest Christian mosaics date back to A.D. 320, in the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza in Rome, Italy. Mosaics are an art form consisting of colored pieces of material called tesserae pressed into soft plaster to form pictures. Often the material used comes from glass or ceramic tiles. The tesserae often reflect light. This gives the viewer the impression that the image is shimmering or glowing. Mosaics can help people enter into the mystery of God and see him as the source of all that is true, good, and beautiful.

Mosaics often decorate the ceilings and walls of churches. They give drama and life to scenes from the Bible that reveal the story of God’s love for us. They instruct the faithful about the majesty and mystery of God, the life of Jesus, and the lives of Mary and other Saints. They illuminate God’s plan of creation and Redemption as revealed to us by the Word of God, Jesus Christ.

Christian art, like all the sacramentals of the Church, helps us respond in faith to the mystery of the One God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Such art invokes in us a sense of wonder and awe for God. It sparks a desire within us to spread the story of God’s love and to be his living images in the world.



### Activity

Using small pieces of colored paper, glue, and a piece of cardboard, create a mosaic depicting the mystery of God. Sketch your idea for your mosaic here.

# The Nature of God

Our minds can never fully understand the holy mystery of God. God is like, and at the same time unlike, anyone or anything we know. God is One, and there is only One God. He is truth and love.

We can come to know something about God through our reason. For example, we can know that God exists. However, we cannot fully understand who God is on our own. We need God to reveal himself to us. We need **Divine Revelation**—God making himself and his divine plan of creation and Salvation known over time. We therefore depend on God revealing himself to us. Through the Word of God, we believe that he has done just that.

Here are some of the qualities or attributes that God has revealed about himself through Sacred Scripture:

**Faithful.** God is the One who is always faithful to his people (read Exodus 34:6).

**Truth.** God's Word is true, and all his promises come true (read 2 Samuel 7:28 and Deuteronomy 7:9). God the Son came to bear witness to the truth (read John 18:37).

**Merciful.** God's merciful love endures forever, and in his mercy, all sins are forgiven (read Psalm 136, Ephesians 2:4, and Jude 1:21).

**Love.** God is love (read 1 John 4:8,16). God loves us with an everlasting love (see Jeremiah 31:3). Moreover, God so loved the world that he sent his only Son (see John 3:16).

God has revealed these qualities, or attributes, and many others about himself. Each quality helps us to know something more about him. God has revealed himself to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**?** What other qualities of God have you learned?

## FAITH FOCUS

Who has God revealed himself to be?

## FAITH VOCABULARY

### Divine Revelation

Divine Revelation is God making himself and his divine plan of creation and Salvation known over time.

### original holiness

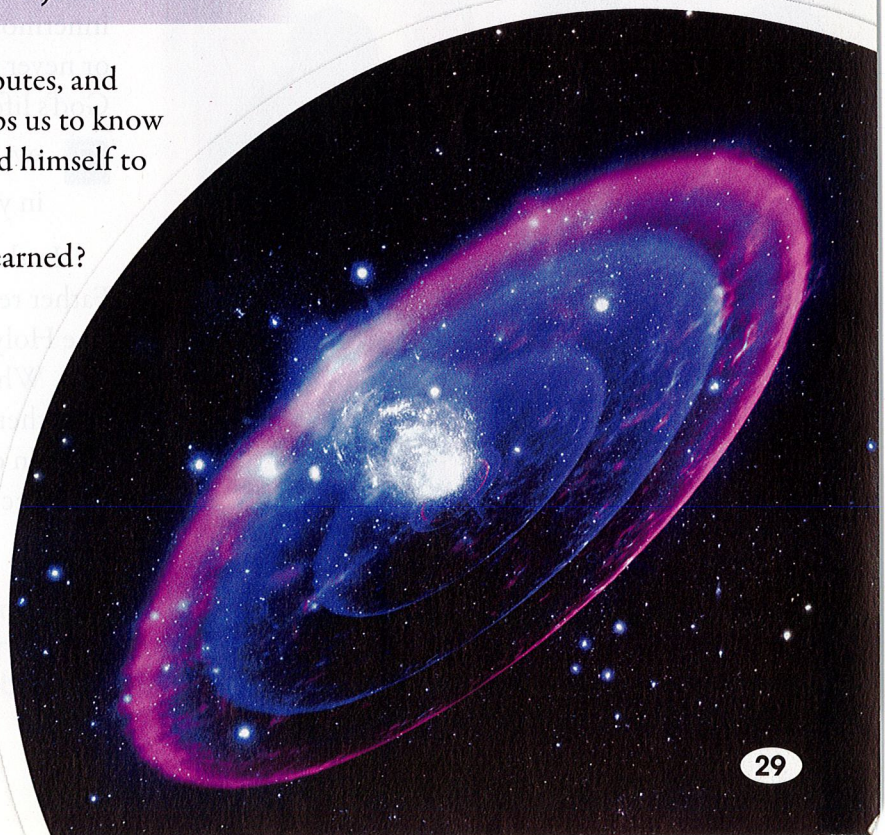
Original holiness is that first state of grace in which Adam and Eve shared in God's divine life. They were therefore in a perfect state of grace before the Fall.

### original justice

Original justice is that first state of grace before the Fall, when Adam and Eve and all of creation were in harmony.

### sanctify

To sanctify is to put one in that state of grace in which sin is removed and we are made holy.





# Faith-Filled People

## Saint Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas was such a quiet student that some people soon named him "the dumb ox." But Thomas was far from dumb. The question "Who is God?" was always on his mind, and he spent many years sharing his answers to that question as a university professor. Today, Saint Thomas Aquinas is honored as a Doctor, or great teacher, of the faith of the Church. His feast day is celebrated January 28.

## The Most Holy Trinity

God has also revealed himself to be the mystery of One God in Three Divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is who God is. This is the mystery of the Holy, or Blessed, Trinity. The Church has passed on this Divine Revelation in Sacred Scripture and in the Sacred Tradition of the Church. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is at the very center of our faith. Believing in God the Holy Trinity is essential to Christian living.

Many other mysteries of faith have their beginning in this mystery of mysteries. For example, the story of the human family begins with God creating us out of love in a state of **original holiness** and **original justice**. In the Fall, humanity then lost that original state of grace because of Original Sin. Eventually, God the Father sent God the Son, who became fully human. The Son became like us in all ways but sin so that we could become sharers in his divinity. The Father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit to make us holy, or **sanctify** us. He reconciles us with God, who created us to live eternally with him.

In God's plan of creation, human beings have an extraordinary and unique place. The greatness of every person rests on this revealed truth:

*God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.*

GENESIS 1:27

God created each person with a soul. The soul bears the imprint of God's image and is the innermost spiritual part of us. The soul is immortal, or never dies. Our soul gives us the ability to share in God's life and love forever.

**?** Which qualities of a holy person do others see in you?

In the Son and through the Spirit, God the Father reveals the innermost aspect of who God is. The Holy Trinity is a perfect, eternal exchange of love. When we choose to live as images of God, we tell others about his love and give honor and glory to God. In our loving relationships with one another, we reflect the love within the Holy Trinity.

*The Trinity, painted by the Russian artist Andrei Rublev around 1410*



## God the Creator

The very first words of the Bible begin with God's love:

*In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth . . .*

GENESIS 1:1

If we listen carefully to the Word of God revealed in the Book of Genesis, we come to know something about God the Creator. We also understand more about the world and ourselves. Here are three things we learn about God the Creator and his creation:

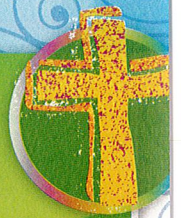
"In the beginning" means that the world had a beginning. The world was not always in existence.

"God created" means that only God creates. Only he makes everyone and everything, out of nothing, without any help.

"Heavens and the earth" is another way of saying "everything, visible and invisible," as in the Nicene Creed. Angels, part of God's unseen creation, are spiritual beings who always give glory to God. They serve his saving plan for all creatures.

In creation, God reveals his plan. Because God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are inseparable, they are one in being and act as one. Each Divine Person of the Trinity has a unique role. God the Father not only created the universe out of love but also keeps it in existence by his Word, the Son, and by the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life. Thus, creation is the work of the Holy Trinity.

## Catholics Believe

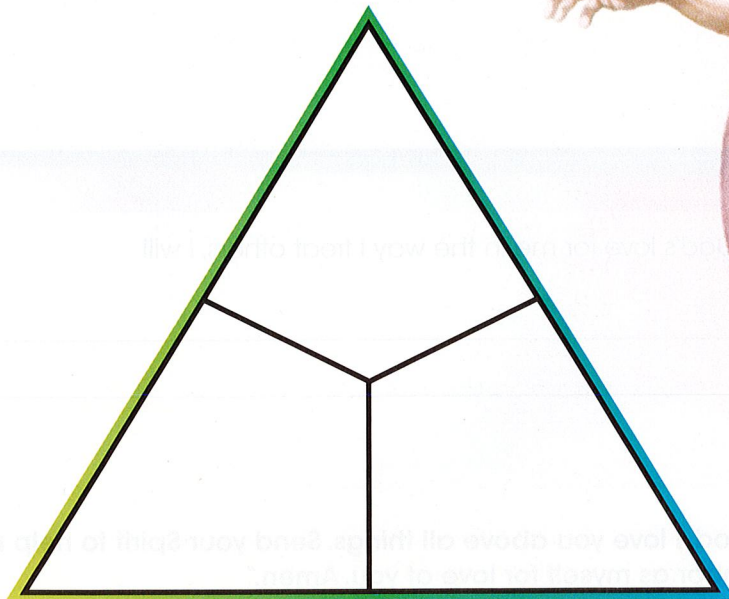


### Faith in God

Faith leads us to turn to God alone as our origin and our ultimate goal. We are neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him. Scripture and Tradition never cease to teach and celebrate this fundamental truth: "The world was made for the glory of God." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 229, 293–394).

### Activity

In each part of the triangle, write a phrase about the Holy Trinity's work as Creator.



# I FOLLOW JESUS

God always manifests his love. God never stops giving you signs of his love. If you look closely, there are many clues that give you a glimpse into the mystery of God.

## SIGNS OF THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Make a collage of words and pictures of people, places, things, and events that have come to be signs of God and his love for you.

## MY FAITH CHOICE

This week, I will reflect God's love for me in the way I treat others, I will

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Pray, "O my God, I love you above all things. Send your Spirit to help me love my neighbor as myself for love of you. Amen."

# Chapter Review

Complete the sentences to decipher the hidden message below. Unscramble the highlighted letters to discover the belief about God that is at the center of our faith.

1. God has revealed himself to be the \_\_\_\_\_ **o** \_\_\_\_\_ **o** \_\_\_\_\_ **o** of One God in Three Divine Persons.
2. Divine \_\_\_\_\_ **o** \_\_\_\_\_ **o** is God making himself and his plan of creation and redemption known over time.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ **o** \_\_\_\_\_ is God making everyone and everything, visible and invisible, out of nothing and without any help.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ **o** \_\_\_\_\_ Sin is the name given to the first sin.

The central belief about God is the mystery of the \_\_\_\_\_.

## TO HELP YOU REMEMBER

1. God is the Mystery of mysteries who has revealed himself and his plan of creation and Redemption.
2. Creation is the work of the Holy Trinity. God is the source of all truth, goodness, and beauty.
3. The mystery of the most Holy Trinity is at the center of our faith.

# Give Thanks to God

The Church prays the psalms each day in the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is the official daily prayer of the Church. One way we can pray a psalm is by alternately praying the verses aloud. We call this praying a psalm antiphonally.

**All:** Come and see the works of God,  
awesome in the deeds done for us.

**Group 1:** Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth;

**Group 2:** sing of his glorious name.

**All:** Come and see the works of God,  
awesome in the deeds done for us.

**Group 1:** All on earth fall in worship before you;

**Group 2:** they sing of you, sing of your name!

**All:** Come and see the works of God,  
awesome in the deeds done for us.

BASED ON PSALM 66:1-2, 4



# With My Family

## This Week . . .

**In Chapter 3**, “The Mystery of God,” your child learned:

- ▶ God is the Mystery of mysteries. We receive the gift and grace of wonder and awe, or fear of the Lord, to help us give praise and thanks to God.
- ▶ Although we can come to know with certainty that God exists by reason, we depend on his Divine Revelation. Through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition in the Church, God has revealed himself to be the most Holy Trinity—the Mystery of One God in Three Divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, has revealed this truth about God to us. This mystery of the Holy Trinity is at the center of our faith.

**For more** about related teachings of the Church, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 198–231, 249–267, 355–387, and the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, pages 50–53, 56–69.

## Sharing God’s Word

**Read together** Exodus 34:6, Deuteronomy 7:9, and 1 John 4:8. Emphasize that through Sacred Scripture, God reveals who he is and his plan of loving goodness for the world. The teachings of the Church help us to understand the true meaning of Sacred Scripture, God’s Word.

## We Live as Disciples

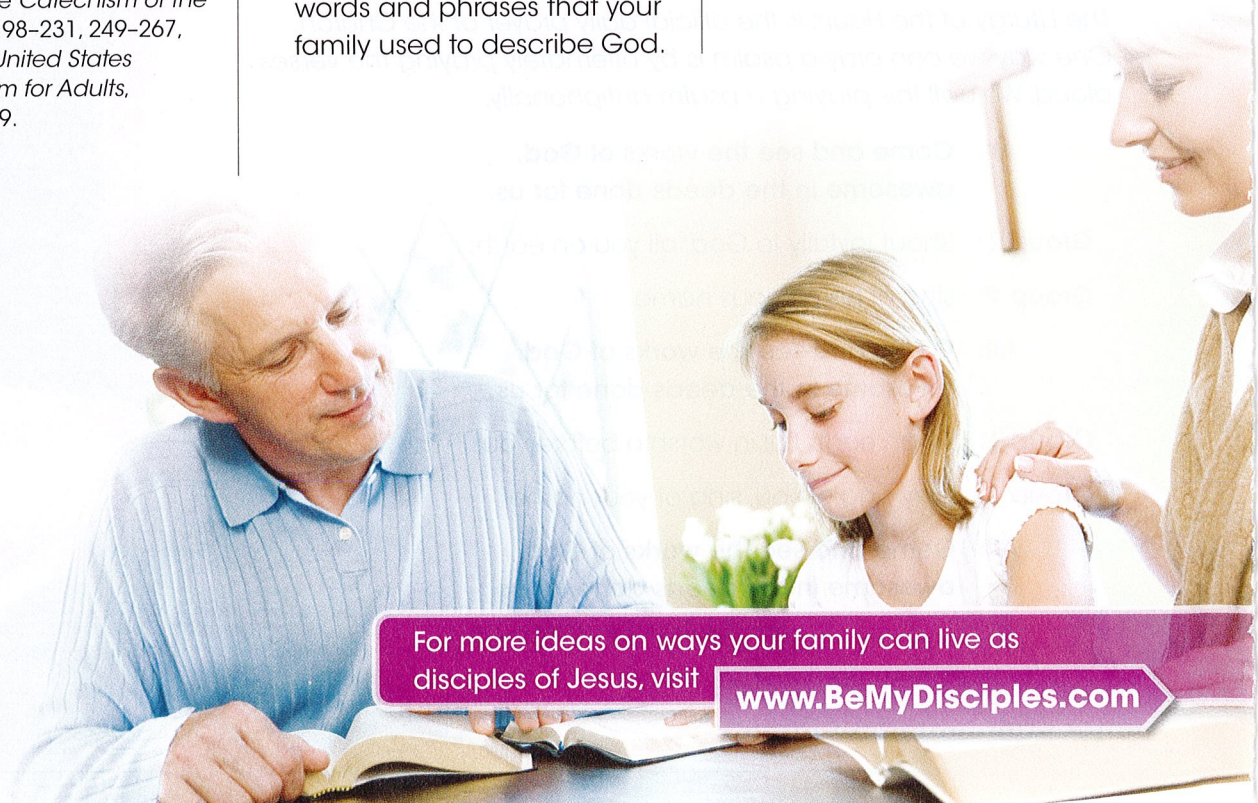
**The Christian home** and family is a school of discipleship. Choose one of the following activities to do as a family, or design a similar activity of your own:

- ▶ Invite family members to take turns completing the sentence, “God is . . .” Continue until no one is able to complete the sentence. Distribute art materials and create tablemats displaying words and phrases that your family used to describe God.

- ▶ Recall that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. Share ideas about how your family is an image of God.
- ▶ Discuss as a family how religious art in your home can help you keep God and prayer at the center of family life. Start with a family crucifix as a central and important reminder of Catholic family living.

## Our Spiritual Journey

**Daily prayer** is vital to the life of a Christian family. In this chapter, your child prayed a prayer based on Psalm 66. Read and pray together this prayer on page 33.



For more ideas on ways your family can live as disciples of Jesus, visit

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