

## KINDERGARTEN: *The Sign of the Cross*

### In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Praying and focusing on the *Sign of the Cross* and the related prayer *Glory Be* throughout the entire year will help the children begin to know and adore the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The following resources are meant to foster this process. Please consider implementing frequently one aspect from the resources below, to take the children further in their understanding of the *Sign of the Cross*.

#### God's love for us

The Father sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross for each one of us so that our sins could be forgiven and we could become adopted children of God. Making the *Sign of the Cross* on ourselves and praying in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will remind us of God's incredible love for each one of us.



The Blessed Trinity blessing the world, with Biblical images of the Father portrayed as a grandfather and the Holy Spirit as a dove.

#### Why do we want to pray the *Sign of the Cross* every day?

- 1) To learn how to pray the *Sign of the Cross* reverently, being aware that we are addressing the Person of the Father, the Person of the Son, Jesus, and the Person of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) To recognize the gesture we are making is a Cross, because Jesus died on the Cross for our sins.
- 3) To become aware how much God loves us and how close He is.
- 4) To begin to know that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### The Meaning of the Words and the Gestures

- As Catholics, we always begin and end our prayer with the *Sign of the Cross*. When we make the *Sign of the Cross*, we are telling God we believe in Him. We are offering our prayers to Him.
- The Sign of the Cross is a prayer – not just an introduction. Each time that we make the *Sign of the Cross* and pray the words we give praise to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.
- **In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit** We are praying in the *name* of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. “Christians are baptized in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: not in their *names*, for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity.” (CCC 233) In the words of this prayer of the *Sign of the Cross*, we are calling upon the power of the name of God. The words “In the name of” are synonymous with “in the Person of”. We are placing ourselves under the power and authority of the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is essential to know that the prayer, the *Sign of the Cross*, is not complete when leaving out the words “In the name of.”
- **Amen.** The word Amen at the end of the prayer means, “So be it.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Hereafter CCC, paragraph 2856) This signifies that we believe the words that we are praying.



- The *Sign of the Cross* expresses two chief mysteries of our Faith:
  - 1) God is a Trinity of Persons – three Persons, One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  - 2) And Jesus died on the Cross for us.

### Learning the Principles

- The *Sign of the Cross* is a sign in the form of a cross made by a Christian as a prayer honoring the Blessed Trinity, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Glossary of the Catechism, p. 899)
- When we pray by making the *Sign of the Cross*, we acknowledge that Jesus is God, and it gives us grace, which makes us happy.
- Each time we pray the *Sign of the Cross*, we remind ourselves of God's love for us, of the sacrifice Jesus made to give us eternal life in Heaven, and of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. This *Sign* marks us as Christians and is a visible expression of our belief and hope in God. Therefore the *Sign of the Cross* is very important and cannot become routine.
- We can “sign” ourselves at any time as “the *Sign of the Cross* strengthens us in temptations and difficulties.” (CCC 2157)
- We make the *Sign of the Cross* to show God we believe in Him as the Blessed Trinity.
- When we pray the *Sign of the Cross*, we are professing a very short version of the Apostles’ Creed. We are professing our belief in the Father, and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, while acknowledging their Presence and coming into their Presence. In praying the *Sign of the Cross*, we are honoring the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity.
- The *Sign of the Cross*, on the threshold of the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, marks with the imprint of Christ on the one who is going to belong to Him and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by the cross. (CCC 1235)



- The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the *Sign of the Cross*: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Savior's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father.

- “The *Sign of the Cross* makes kings of all those reborn in Christ” through the waters of Baptism (CCC 786). Christ is a King, who served us to the point of giving His life for us. When we were baptized, and the *Sign of the Cross* was made on our foreheads, we were spiritually

remade into the likeness of Christ and His kingship. To be a king means to serve others with complete self-giving love. Therefore, we are to be kings under the *Sign of His Cross*, who serve others, especially those in most need.

- Praying the *Sign of the Cross* is a powerful sacramental. When we make this Sign and pray the words, we are declaring that we belong to Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism and that we desire to obey Him. “Sacramentals are sacred signs which bear a certain resemblance to the Sacraments, and by means of which spiritual effects are signified and obtained through the prayers of the Church.” (Glossary of the *Catechism*, page 898)

- Prayer is a vital necessity. Prayer and Christian life are inseparable. (CCC 2744-2745) In other words, when we pray with our heart, we will come to know the Persons of our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit personally and deeply. As our friendship with Jesus grows, we recognize more and more how much He loves us and how much we love Him. From this love, received and given, we respond from a natural desire to be one with Jesus in all things, and live our lives in a way that is reflective of His own. This brings much peace and joy to ourselves and those around us.
- In Sacred Art, our Heavenly Father is portrayed as a grandfather. The Father is not a grandfather. He is outside of time and space. He is a Person; pure spirit, without a body. The Holy Spirit is portrayed in Sacred Art by Biblical symbols such as the dove. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is a Person, pure spirit, without a body.

### Activities for Learning the Gesture and Words

- Begin by teaching the gesture. Show the children a Crucifix. Explain the meaning of a gesture by giving an example such as putting your finger to your mouth, to be quiet; or pointing in a direction to show a person the way. Show them other gestures and ask what they mean, such as motioning with a finger - to come here, or a wave – to say goodbye. A gesture is a movement that has meaning. Make the *Sign of the Cross* and then point to the points of the Crucifix. What are we saying when we make this gesture? Whose sign is it? It is Jesus' sign and His sign is our sign too! This sign means that Jesus is very close to us and that He loves us. What a gift! We can use Jesus' sign as our sign. We can make this gesture whenever we want to remember that Jesus is very close to us.
- We can then add the words. We make the *Sign of the Cross* by:
  - touching our forehead and praying "in the name of the Father",
  - then touching our chest (near our heart) and praying "and of the Son",
  - then touching our left and right shoulders and praying "and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
 The teacher needs to have his/her back to the class so as to properly orient the children in the correct movements. Show them each movement separately, first finding the right hand and pointing to the right; pointing to an object in that direction. Then practice up, down, across and back. When all say the prayer together, the teacher may stand next to the class, facing the same direction and exaggerate the movements, slowly, so they can see what the teacher is doing.
- Always begin and end prayer with the *Sign of the Cross*.
- Use pictures that depict the gestures and then allow the children to color the pictures.
- Echo prayer – have students repeat after you.
- Explain each phrase for better understanding.
- Cut out a small picture of each of the gestures of the *Sign of the Cross* and then allow the students to paste them together in the right order to learn the hand movements.
- Put a simple puzzle together, in the shape of a Cross, with the words of the Prayer.



- Using the numbers 1 through 12, place numbers in order in the 12 corners of a Cross. Have the children draw a line to each number, as well as making the connection between numbers 12 and 1. The visual experience of making a Cross by connection the numbers will excite them.
- Explain how we call upon God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer.
- Teach the children how to pray with their heart; not just rattling words. “Prayer is internalized to the extent that we become aware of Him ‘to whom we speak.’” In the case of the *Sign of the Cross*, we are speaking with the Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (CCC 2700)
- Encourage parents to pray with their children at home both at mealtime and bedtime, beginning prayer with the *Sign of the Cross*. Place the one-page prayer card into a plastic sleeve and tie a small loop of yarn to the top loop. Parents may place the prayer card on the child’s bedroom door knob (so it won’t be misplaced). Prayer commitments at the beginning of the academic year, and during Advent and Lent are especially welcomed. A gift, such as a medal and chain or a small statue could be given for an incentive to be faithful each day during a period such as Advent to develop a daily habit of prayer.

#### Spiritual Comprehension – do they understand?

- Ask questions to ensure that children know the words of the prayer, understand the meaning of the words and the gestures.
- **This one prayer is the prayer the girls and boys should know by heart and with good understanding before they advance to the next grade level. Therefore, it should be prayed at every opportunity.** During the year, please continue to teach the other prayers as listed in the Diocesan Religion Curriculum for Kindergarten that are to be introduced at this age level.

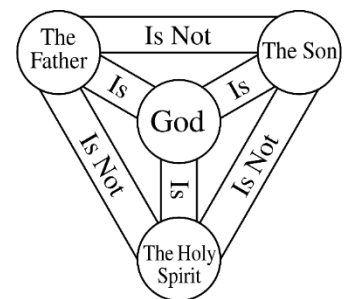


#### Encountering the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in Prayer

- After children have become very familiar with this prayer, pray the *Sign of the Cross* aloud and have students listen, preferably with their eyes closed. Have them take notice of a word or phrase that stood out for them. Allow some time of silence for the students to think about why the word or phrase stood out for them. As a further progression, provide silence so that girls and boys may have a “heart-to-heart” conversation with Jesus or our Heavenly Father, which takes prayer to the next level of a deep personal encounter.
- We want to pray this prayer with great reverence and love for our Heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit which will lead to a deeper friendship with and adoration of each Person of the Blessed Trinity.

#### Scriptural Foundation

- Jesus said, “Full authority has been given to Me both in Heaven and on earth; go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world.” (Matthew 28: 18-20)





***The Glory Be***  
**Glory be to the Father,**  
**and to the Son,**  
**and to the Holy Spirit.**  
**As it was in the beginning, is now,**  
**and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

- The *Sign of the Cross* is a most important prayer. If the *Sign of the Cross* becomes well understood for the children, and there is time before the end of the year, the children are to be led deeper in their understanding of the *Glory Be* prayer.

#### Why do we want to pray the *Glory Be* every day?

- 1) To be ever conscious of God's love and goodness because He created us out of love, in His image and likeness. We are His creation; we are His children.
- 2) To learn how to pray the *Glory Be* reverently, being aware that we are giving glory and praise to the Person of the Father, the Person of the Son, Jesus, and the Person of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) To be constantly reminded to turn upward toward God, knowing that He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 4) To offer praise and glory to God in *everything* that we do.

#### The Meaning of the Words

##### ▪ **Glory be to the Father,**

We are to give glory and praise to God because He created us out of His love and goodness, and He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from Satan, sin and death. "Praise [giving glory] is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds [exalts, magnifies] God for His own sake and gives Him glory, quite beyond what He does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing Him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God, testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we **glorify** the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward Him who is its source and goal: the 'one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist.'" (CCC 2639) God is the Supreme Being and nothing exists outside of His will, goodness and love. God does not need to be glorified but He deserves to be given glory – our ultimate expression of honor and worship – through our belief, prayer and actions. "St. Bonaventure explains that God created all things 'not to increase His glory, but to show forth and communicate it,' for God has no other reason for creating than His love and goodness." (CCC 293) God is love itself and love is always giving to the other; God is always giving to us.

We are made whole, blessed, fulfilled, and brought to perfection in our glorifying God. God is thrilled when someone receives His love and gives Him glory by thanking and praising Him.

"The glory of God consists in the realization of this manifestation and communication of his goodness, for which the world was created. God made us 'to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of his glorious grace', for "the glory of God is man fully alive..."

##### **And to the Son**



We are to give glory and praise to God the Son – Jesus – because He is our Savior. Due to sin, we were separated from our Heavenly Father. Jesus willingly gave His life for us by dying on the Cross, so that we could be reunited with the Father, as His adopted children. He rescues us from the consequences of sin and death.

**And to the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus, through His passion, death and Resurrection, obtained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, from the Father, enabling us to become His children and to live our lives as He would have us, free from the poison of sin and its consequences. We give glory and praise to God the Holy Spirit because He now lives within us through Baptism, and He strengthens us with His power to live free from sin.

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.**

God is eternal without beginning or end. This is how it was in the beginning and will be forever.

**Amen.** The word Amen at the end of the prayer means, “So be it.” (CCC 2856) This signifies that we believe the words that we are praying

Learning the Principles

- We are called to give glory to God, because He is our Creator and Lord.
- The *Glory Be* prayer is a doxology. This is a Greek word meaning an expression of glory or praise of God. We give Him glory because He is our origin and destiny. Christians pray this prayer as a way of summing up all their feelings and intentions at the end of some longer prayer. In a sense, the glory of God is the purpose and the content of all our prayers and actions, and so we bring them all together as our act of glorifying God in the Blessed Trinity.
- “All the activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, to the sanctification [purification of Christians and making us holy] of men in Christ and the glorification of God [giving God glory].” (CCC 824)
- This kind of prayer – of giving glory to God – is found most of all in the Mass.

The *Gloria prayer* is prayed at Mass every Sunday except during Lent. The words of this prayer help us to understand the meaning of giving glory to God.

**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You,  
we give You thanks for your great glory,**

Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

You take away the sin of the world,

have mercy on us;

You take away the sin of the world,

receive our prayer;

You are seated at the right hand of the Father,

have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One;

you alone are the Lord.

You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,



with the Holy Spirit,  
**in the glory of God, the Father.** Amen

The *Eucharistic prayer*, which contains the high point of each Mass—the consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ—ends with the beautiful prayer:

Through Him, with Him, and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, **all glory and honor is Yours, Almighty Father**, forever and ever. Amen.

At Holy Mass on Sunday, another prayer of glory is prayed at the end of the Our Father. This doxology is similar to the *Glory Be* prayer and has the same purpose.

For the kingdom, and the power, and the **glory are Yours**, now and forever.

Ending a prayer with this kind of praise was common in Old Testament worship and is often used in the New Testament by St. Paul in his epistles, St. Peter in his letters, and St. John in the book of Revelation.

- We pray the *Glory Be* prayer most often when praying the *Rosary*, at the end of each decade, or a set of ten *Hail Marys*.
- If at any point in our lives, in joy or in sorrow, in the middle of troubles or struggles, in hope and in fear, when perhaps we cannot find the words, we can always pray perfectly that God may be glorified always, and so we will be praying for all we really want. In a way, we will be praying as God “prays,” since the Savior prayed in the face of His deepest suffering, “Now, Father, glorify your Son with the glory He had before the world began”—that is, “as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

### Scriptural Foundation

- All creation, including the angels give glory to God: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Luke 2:14
- “The only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Romans 16:27)
- “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)
- “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11)
- “Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Philippians 4:20
- “And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 1:6
- “Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him.” Revelation 14:7
- “Give glory to the LORD your God.” Jeremiah 13:16
- “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.” (Psalm 19:1)
- Chronicles 29:11; Daniel 3:24-90

