

Let the Little Children



Come to Me

## **Included in this sample packet**

1. The Program Manual
2. Samples from the coloring books series
3. Picture of 2<sup>nd</sup> article craft

# Program Manual

## Let the Little Children Come to Me

### Introduction

Little children were brought to Jesus, but His disciples tried to prevent them from coming to Him. Jesus rebuked the disciples and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18: 13-15)

The little children to whom Jesus referred are in the toddler stage, perhaps even infants. This text has reminded the Church throughout her history that her ministry must not only include children (which is why we baptize them), but must also understand the faith of children as an ideal to which every Christian strives.

What is it about children's faith that is an ideal for the whole Church?

First, there is one attribute of children that defines them as unique from adults, all the more so the closer they are to infancy. That is, they can be nothing but given to. They cannot give to themselves. They cannot feed themselves. If they are to live, it must be completely by another's providence, namely, their parents. Leading up to such providence often includes crying, begging, and the feeling within the child of utmost need that can only be satisfied by another. Jesus would have all Christians have this sort of faith with regard to their Heavenly Father. We learn from children to be nothing but given to by our Father. We learn that the cry of utmost need – crying "Lord, have mercy" – is the very faith that Jesus loves to hear. Even as the child cannot live a day without his parent – and he knows it! – so also must we humble ourselves and understand that every moment we live is by God's grace.

Second, a child's faith is simple. Experts in education tell us that the younger a person is, the more they must learn in concrete terms. To learn in concrete terms means that the object of one's learning is presented in a way that can be seen, felt, heard, smelled, or tasted. Children's books nowadays may even have pictures of animals with real fur as if growing out of the page, or princesses with real silken gowns that the little child can feel. Such is done because children do not learn by abstractions and concepts. As far as the Christian faith is concerned, the Church has always had to guard against a faith that drifted off into abstractions and concepts, making it too esoteric or distant from the simple, childlike faith for which Jesus called. Jesus, rather, taught in simple terms, using stories and parables. The Gospels are narratives that are quite available even for the very young. Indeed, the heart and center of the Christian message – that God came in human flesh to save us – puts God Himself in "concrete terms," even as Jesus is "the Word made flesh" and dwelling among us.

A final point is inferred from the previous two. When we understand what is ideal about a child's faith – even a baby's faith – we better understand the glories of the Gospel. To understand this point, we might look at the opposite position, asking, "What is the opposite of a childlike faith?" That would be a faith that is adult, that conceptualizes and intellectualizes, that puts much stock into human free will and ability to do things, that defines the faith in categories, that is shaped by forces from a lifetime of experience and emotion. Adults break free from their upbringing and pursue their own "spiritual journey" as they set about the object of their quest and then proceed to search for it. An adult is more likely to come upon his own personal "philosophy of life." Little children, being nothing but given to and understanding only in concrete terms, do not understand a single concept behind, say, breast feeding. They do not understand the hormonal biology behind it. They do not understand the psychology of the mother behind it. They could not even explain what "mom" means! Yet, they understand the only two things that matter: *Milk* [concrete thing] *comes from that breast* [nothing but given to]. And in many ways, this infant understands the concept of "mom" better than the brainiest scientist, the most subtle philosopher, or the most artful poet.

Where are we as Christians most given over to that sort of faith? Which sort of faith best understands the mysteries of Holy Baptism or Holy Communion? The faith for which Jesus calls is the faith that understands the two things that matter: Salvation is located in Jesus' flesh and blood given from the cross [concrete thing], and it is given out from the pulpit, font, and altar [nothing but given to]. This previous point explains why infant baptism is such an important issue for the Christian Church. If we lose our understanding of infant baptism we lose our understanding of faith itself. Faith is not an active, adult, willful pursuit of some end, but it is the childlike, passive, reception of a concrete gift. Understanding the childlike faith for which Jesus calls liberates us from the burdens demanded by adult faith, the need for self-improvement toward some abstract end rather than simply living each moment by God's grace, the need for understanding and explaining mysteries that the greatest theologians have never been able to explain, the oppression of our experiences and emotions on our faith.

As is typical in their childlike simplicity, the children in the Gospel quoted above did not even seek Jesus. They were brought to Jesus by their parents. In this spirit, this program is offered to congregations and to parents, with the encouragement that they will use the tools here to nurture their tender faiths in Jesus Christ.

### What is included in this program?

Included in this program are two items: (1) A mini-VBS program on the Holy Trinity and (2) an "A to Z" coloring book series.

Congregations and parents who ordered the "do-it-yourself" kit will have received a CD with all the necessary files.

Parents who purchased the full kit will have received hard copies of all the items from the CD in addition to a CD with other items. They will have also received materials for the crafts.

**Congregations are given full permission to print and copy materials for the use within the congregation. Parents are given permission to copy and use materials within their immediate families.**

Beyond the additional hard copies and craft materials that parents who ordered the full kit will have received, there is little difference between the congregational edition of this program and the parental addition, except the price and the copyright allowances respective of each edition. Pax Domini Press asks that parents who purchase this program do not use it beyond the natural parameters of their family.

## **Instructions for the mini-VBS**

### **The Father (The 1<sup>st</sup> Article)**

Two activities will teach two truths about the Father, that He is the Creator of all things, and that everything we have is a gift from Him. For the first activity, the children will make a "Creation Book." For the second activity, the children will learn from the 1<sup>st</sup> Article Catechism Cards.

For congregations, the PDF files on the CD will need to be printed out onto card stock; the catechism cards will need to be quartered.

Parents who purchased the full kit will receive the following items: (1) 1<sup>st</sup> Article Catechism Cards, (2) Creation coloring cards, (3) Creation story cards, (4) 3-D paint, (5) two stiff felt pieces, and (6) yarn. The pages of the book and the stiff felt pieces (the cover and the backing) are not punched with holes. A hole punch will be needed.

For the first activity, the children may first color the creation coloring pages, at least as much as they can; they can continue coloring after the book is assembled. When ready, the card stock coloring pages and the card stock creation story cards (in color) will be assembled in the order of creation, the creation story card being followed by its corresponding colored page. The cover and backing of the book will be of stiff felt (included in the parent's edition). The cover may be decorated in any number of ways. Included in the parent's edition is 3-D paint that the child can use to make designs. An adult should write "My Creation Book" on the cover. Other ways to decorate may be glue and glitter, yarn, stickers, or pictures. When everything is dried, the book may be bound. The holes of the pages should be lined up with the cover and backing, and yarn will be laced through the holes to bind the pages.

The second activity involves the 1<sup>st</sup> Article Catechism Cards. These cards may be handed out to the children. With all the cards seen on a desk or table, the adult may read the explanation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism. As it is read, the children must find the item listed. After reading the list several times, the children may be challenged to put the cards in order without any assistance.

### **The Son (The 2<sup>nd</sup> Article)**

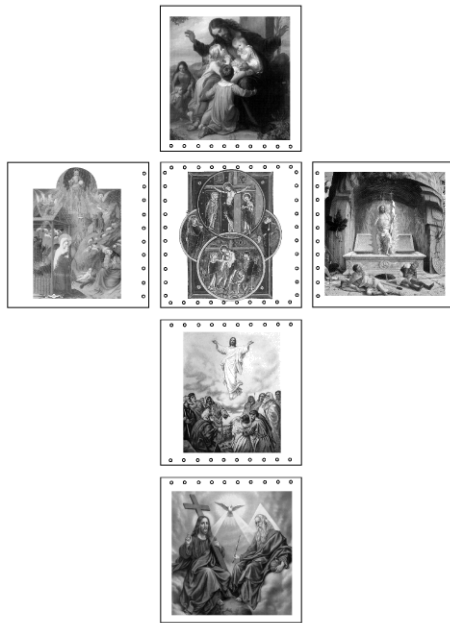
Two activities will teach the basic outline of Jesus' life as given in the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed. The first activity is a coloring book based on the words of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article. The second activity is a "2<sup>nd</sup> Article Cross Box," a box that folds out into a cross, on the panels of which are scenes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article.

Congregations will need to print out the PDF files for the coloring book and for the images that will be glued onto the panels of the box. (These files are also given as image files that can be fit to other sizes.) They will also need to cut out (or purchase) square wooden panels about 5 ½" X 5 ½". 1/8" plywood is ideal for these panels, but basswood from a hobby store will also work. Finally, paints, brushes, and Modge Podge are also needed.

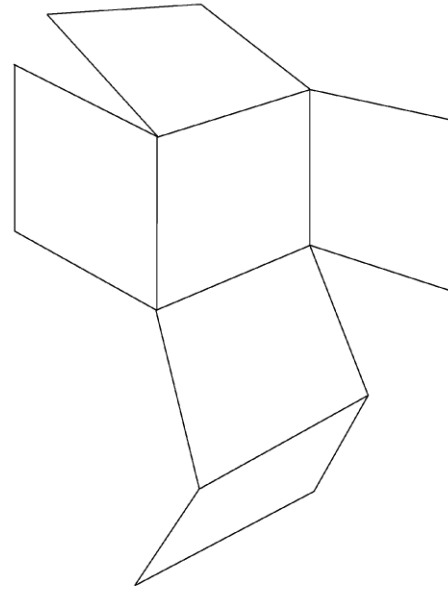
The coloring book and the wood panels are included in the full kit for parent, as well as the images that will be placed on the wood panels. Also included in the parent's edition are paints, a brush, and Modge Podge.

The children may first be given the coloring book to work on. They should be led through each part of the book in order, one by one, as the creed is confessed.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Article Cross box involves six panels on which will be glued six parts from the 2<sup>nd</sup> article. The children will first paint each panel in any way they wish, front and back. When dried, the panels on one side will be Modge Podged. Each of the six pictures will then be set into the six panels, so that the parts the children painted will serve as borders to these pictures. Then, the front of these pictures will be Modge Podged. The pictures may buckle, but buckling will contract somewhat when the glue dries; however, pictures should be pressed as flat as possible on the panels. The backs of the panels may be left as the child painted them, or the other black and white pictures (which may be colored before completion of box) may be Modge Podged onto them in the same manner directed above with the color pictures. Panels are assembled as indicated in the images on the following pages (Image A). The holes will need to match up! Yarn will be laced through the holes so that the panels are bound together as a cross. Bound in this way, the six panels will be able to be folded into a box (see Image B). Children will enjoy playing with their box, and it can be used to teach the parts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article



**Image A**



**Image B**

### **The Holy Spirit (The 3<sup>rd</sup> Article)**

Two activities will teach the Holy Spirit, a “3<sup>rd</sup> Article Coloring Book” and a dove ornament. The ministry of Word and Sacraments will be the emphasis of this section.

The coloring book and wood dove cut-out are included in the parent’s edition, along with paints, brush, Modge Podge, and shell fragments.

Congregations will need to print out the PDF files for the coloring book, cut out dove from 1/8 plywood, and purchase shells to be fragmented.

The coloring book will simply reinforce the teaching that the Holy Spirit works through Word and Sacraments. Outlined in the coloring book are items seen in church through which the Holy Spirit works. First given are the places where He works – altar, font, and pulpit. Then given are pictures of the minister administering baptism, communion, absolution, and preaching. There is a picture of a dove with “Holy Spirit” to be traced out, and finally, there is a puzzle that may be copied onto card stock and cut out.

One side of the dove cut-out should be painted in blended tones of blue – blue, dark blue, and light blue – so that they flow together like water. The children will need to be guided slightly in this endeavor, but they should do fine. When dried, Modge Podge will be thickly applied. While the Modge Podge is still wet, the shell fragments will be sprinkled onto the dove. This side confesses that the Holy Spirit works in the waters of Holy Baptism.

On the other side of the dove should be painted in mixed tones of red and yellow, like fire. After dried, Modge Podge may be applied with a normal application. This side represents the fire of God’s Word, seen on the first Pentecost.

To give a better look (but a bit more expensive), quality stained glass paints of blues, reds, and oranges may be substituted for the craft paints for both sides. Applied thickly, the finished look will give a glassy appearance to both the fire and the water. Also, the stained glass paint will easily hold the shell fragments. (Note: red and yellow stained glass paint do not mix to produce orange; therefore, red and orange should be used.)

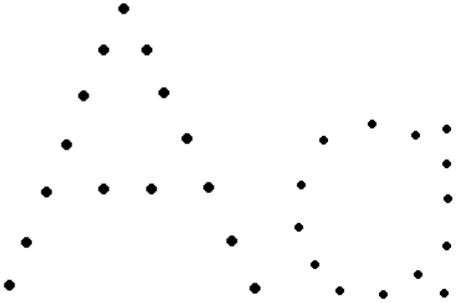
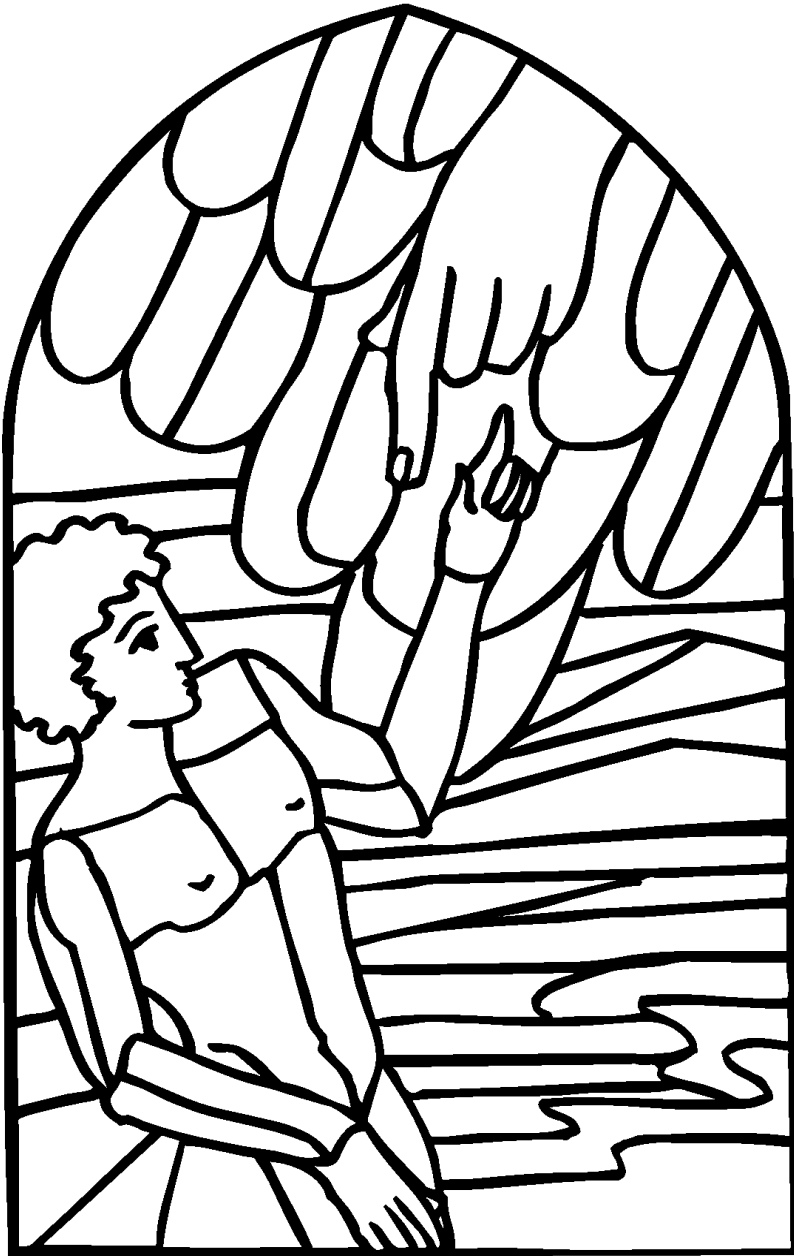
### **A to Z Coloring Book Series**

The *Coloring Books* series includes three coloring books whose themes are the Old Testament, the New Testament, and “Things I See and Hear in Church.” Each coloring book has capital and small letters to be traced out from A to Z. With each letter is an image to be colored.

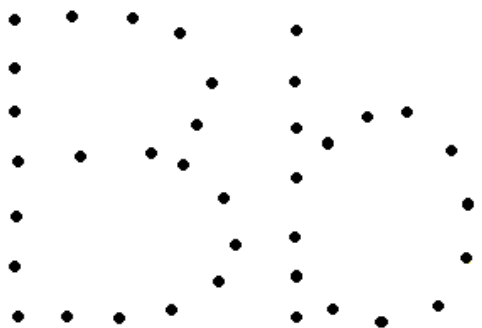
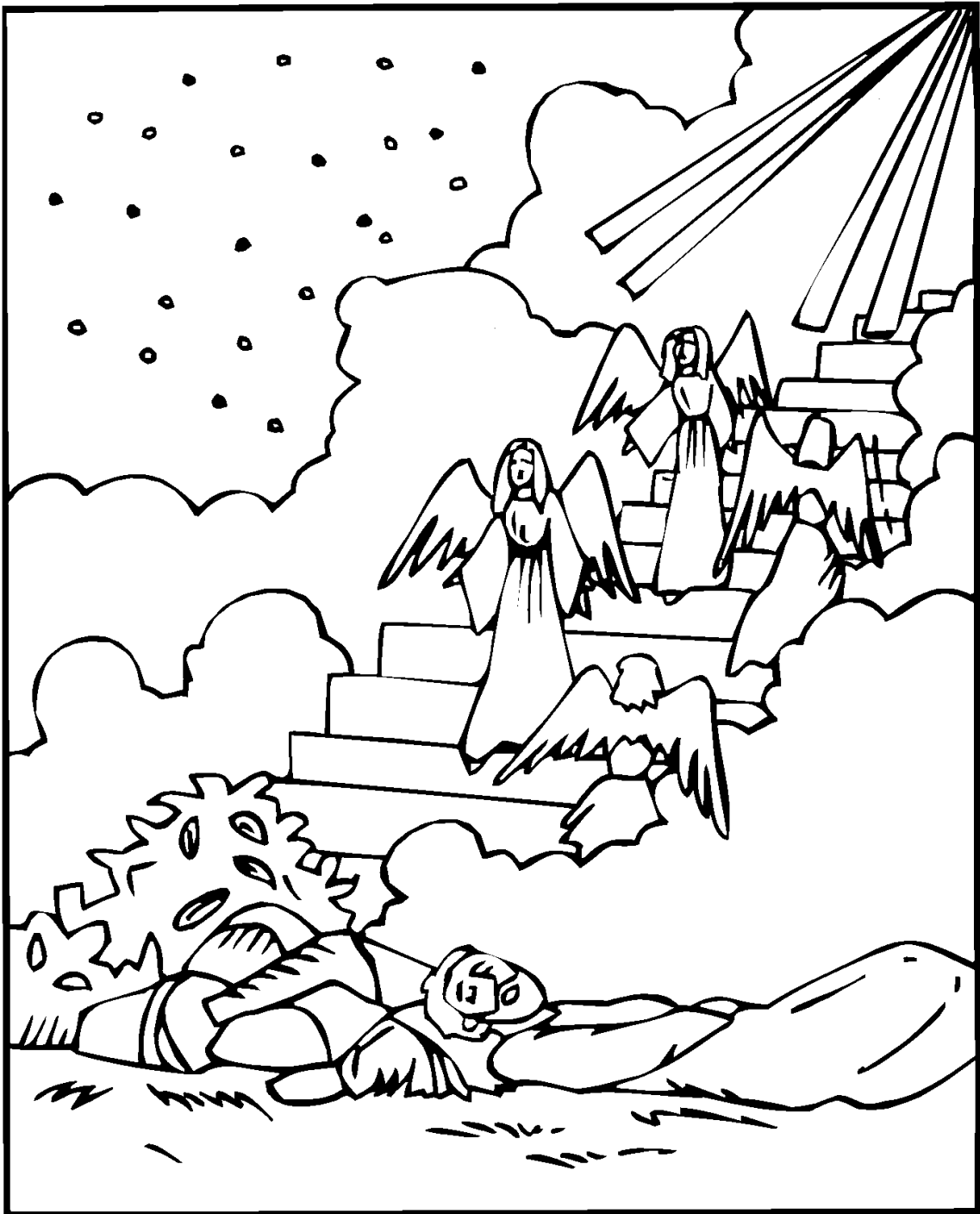
Also included is a coloring book with Biblical themes based on the numbers 1-10.

These books should be used several times with the children. Parents or teachers should work with the children, teaching each page carefully, having the children repeat the phrases. Shortly, the children will learn the alphabet and numbers according to the words of our biblical and doctrinal heritage. Parents or teachers should not worry if children do not understand all the words. They will grow into the teachings. Much like the words they hear their parents use daily, they may use them even if they do not understand them. They will grow into their understanding as they mature.

Sample from Old Testament A-Z coloring book.



**A** is for Adam, whom  
God created first.



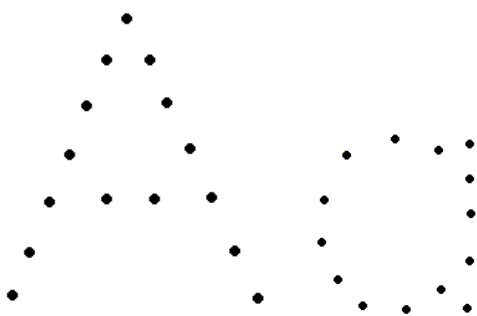
**B** is for Bethel, where  
Jacob dreamed of God.

Sample from "What I See and Hear in Church from A to Z" coloring book.

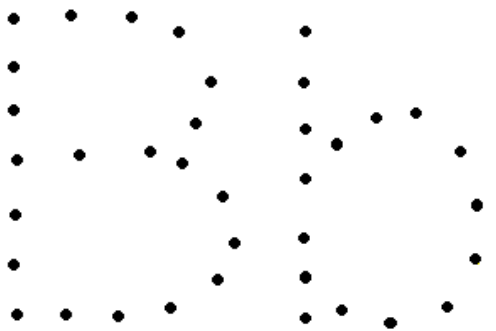


**A** is for Alleluia.

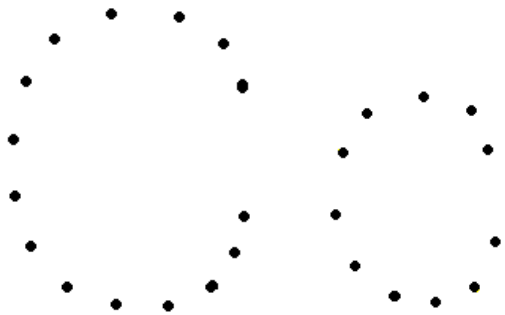
This means "Praise  
the Lord."







**B** is for Baptism.  
Our sins are washed  
away.



**C** is for Christ,  
the Son of God,  
our Lord.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Article Craft (a box that becomes a cross with six pictures from the 2<sup>nd</sup> article of the creed on them.)**

