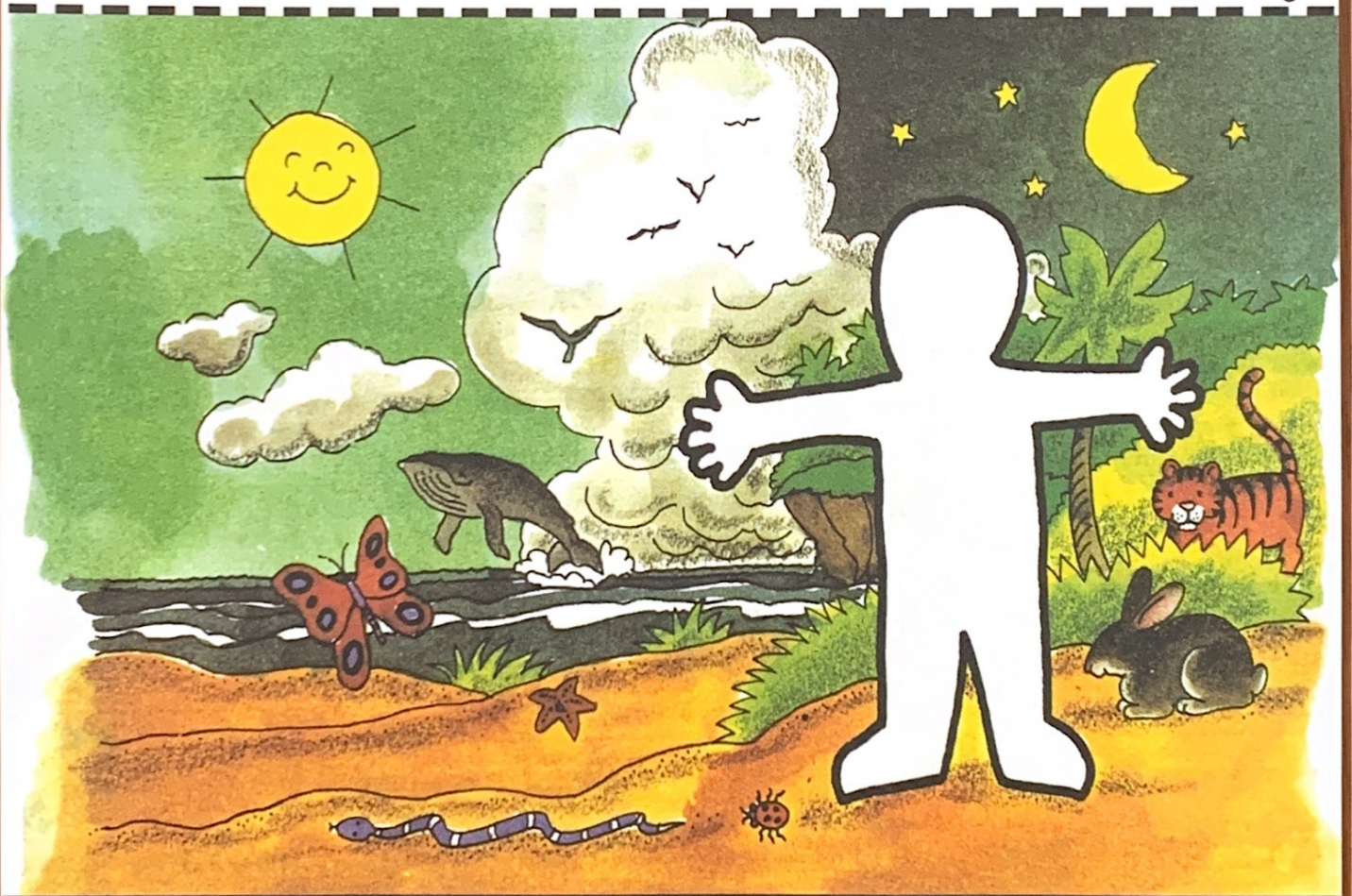


Lesson 17

God's Gift of Life



In the Bible we read that
God made the earth and the sky.
God made the sun and the moon and the stars.
God made our wonderful birds and animals and plants.
Can you guess what is the greatest of everything God made?
People are the greatest of all that God made!
God made you.
Draw yourself in God's world.

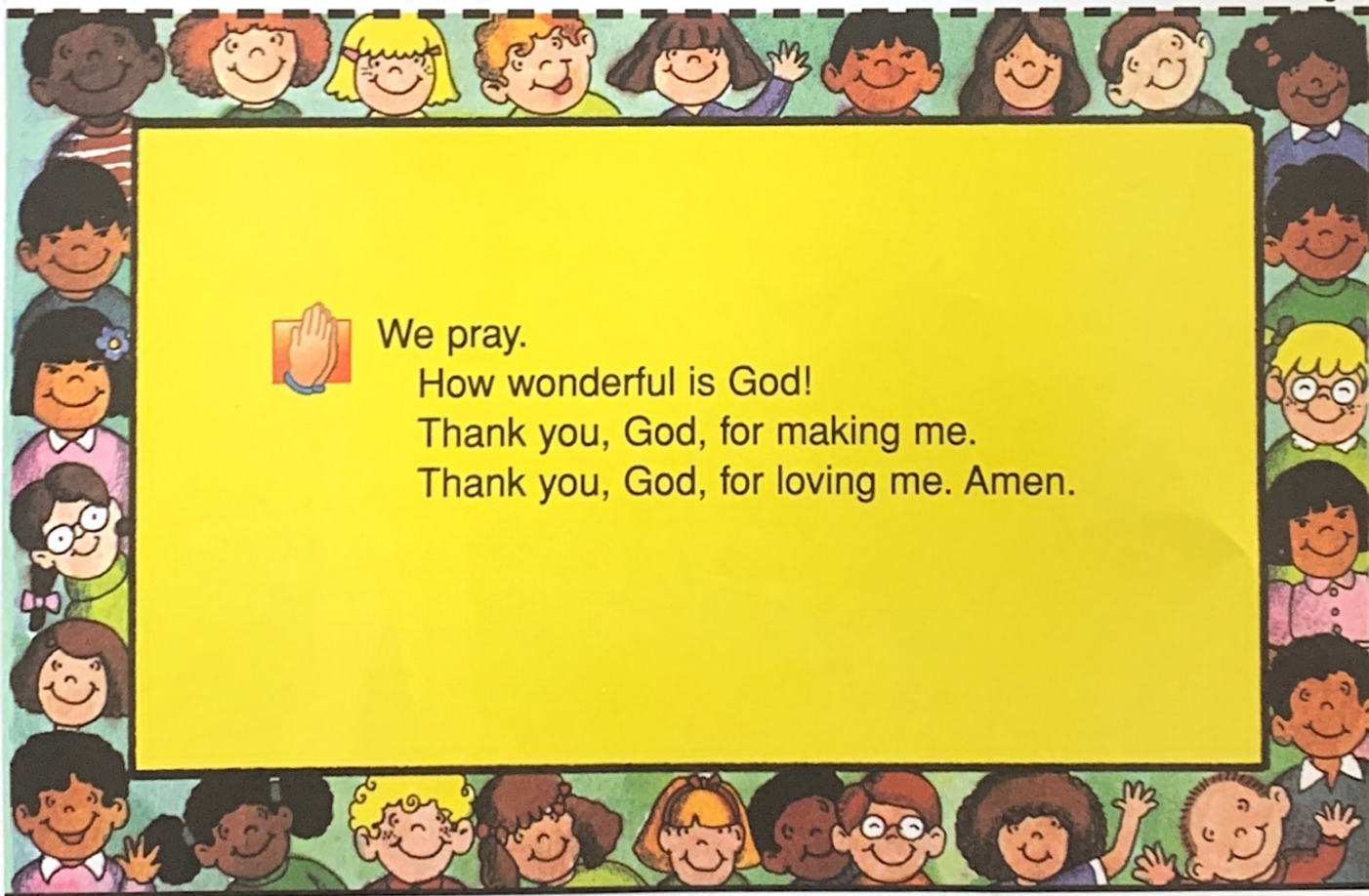


(fold)

God made millions and millions of people.
But God made only one person like you.
No one else is exactly like you!
God made you and loves you
just the way you are.

Tell what is special about you.

Learn this prayer to pray at home.

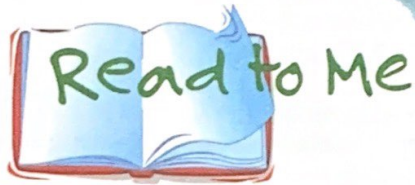


We pray.

How wonderful is God!

Thank you, God, for making me.

Thank you, God, for loving me. Amen.



Take Good Care of Yourself

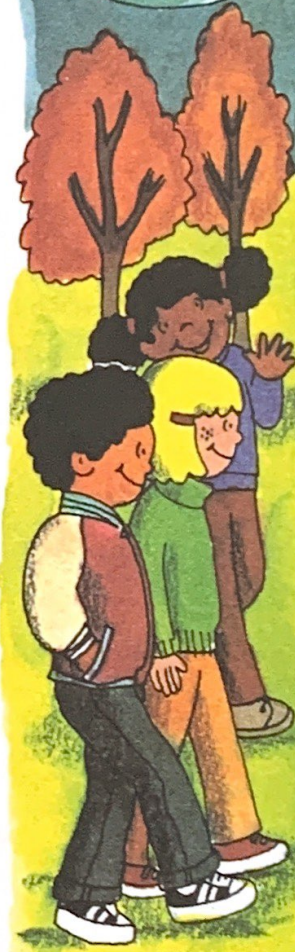
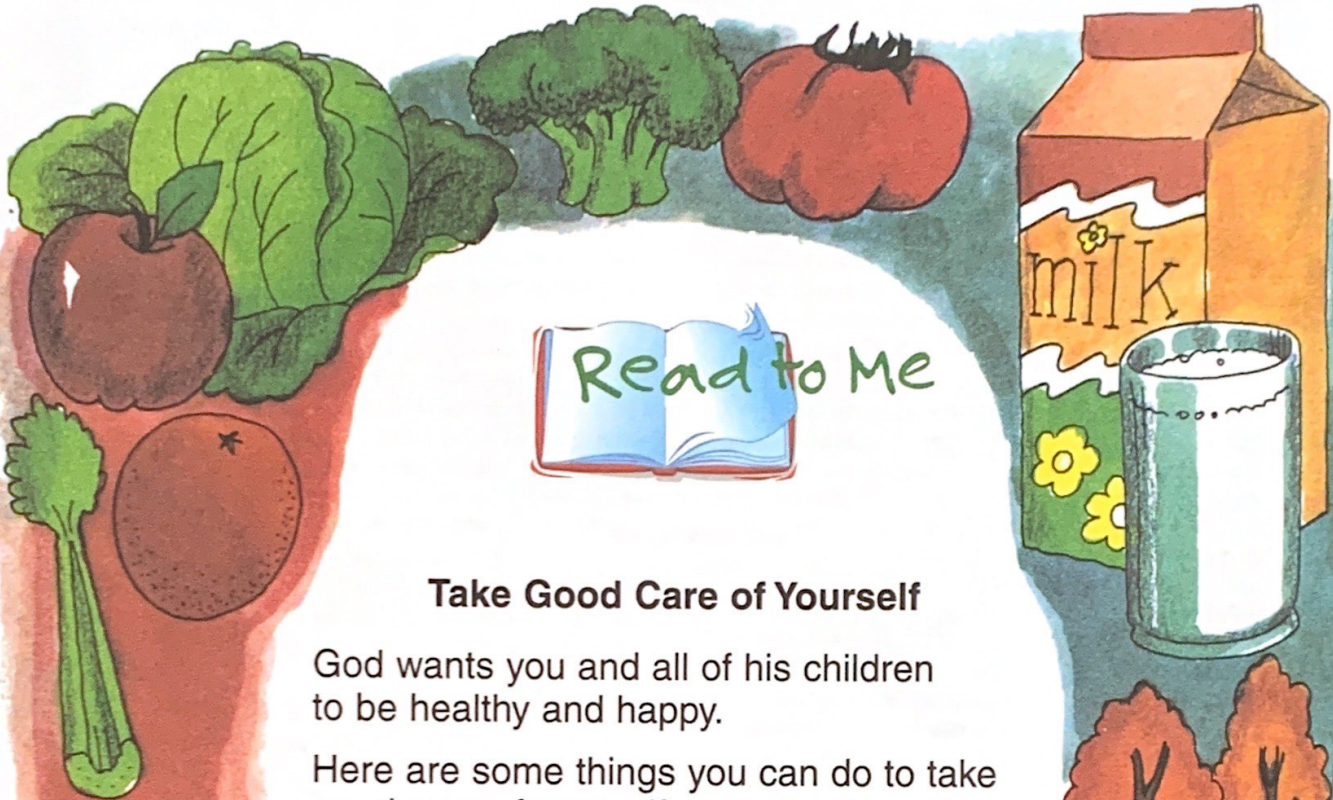
God wants you and all of his children to be healthy and happy.

Here are some things you can do to take good care of yourself.

1. Eat things that are good for you. What foods help you to grow and be healthy?
2. Get some exercise every day. What is your favorite way to get some exercise?
3. Stay together with your friends. Who plays or walks with you?
4. Only go with people you know. Why is this a good rule?

Does your family have other safety rules?

Talk about them with your family at home.



Parenting your 4-Year-Old

Birthday Time!

Will your four-year-old be turning five soon? Are you planning a party? A birthday party and a special birthday cake mark growth and change. These time-honored customs tell the ones we love: "You are special. We're so glad God brought you into the world!"

In planning a party for four-year-olds, remember that, for some children, the need for independence and individual choice may at times override the desire to go along with the group. A game planned for the group may meet with a firm refusal on the part of one or more children. (Some resistance may also be due to shyness or fear of failure.) Perhaps the birthday person will be the first to run off! Be sure to provide alternate activities. Children who may not want to play games will eagerly help put together a special puzzle or do a craft activity. Make sure other adults are available to help with these other games and activities.

"I praise you, so wonderfully
you made me."

Psalm 139:14

A spacious area may invite children to run and chase one another. To discourage this, try to strike a balance between too little space and too much.

If your party is at home, you may wish to set limits in regard to where the guests may go. Be sure to point out the way to the bathroom. Fours should sit at the table during the refreshments. A shy child may need to be paired with a friend in order to be put at ease. It is generally a good idea to serve refreshments near the end of the party.

Fours love party favors. Wrapped surprises "just for coming" are much appreciated, as is a goodie bag for each child to take home.

How many guests to invite? One rule of thumb suggests no more guests than the child's age. A four-turning-five would invite five guests. A birthday party for children this age should last no more than two hours. As the children are leaving, be prepared to hear, "This was the best party!"



At Home with Your Family

The goal in Lesson 17 is to affirm and encourage your child's emerging sense of self-worth. During this lesson, the children were encouraged to see themselves as the greatest of all the wonders God has created for us. Such affirmation and acceptance can help your four-year-old confidently find his or her place in a widening world of peers and siblings.

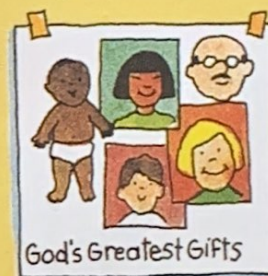
Your four-year-old's sense of wonder and awe was enhanced by helping him or her to realize that of all the millions of people created by God, only *one* person was made exactly like him or her. This uniqueness reflects God's glory, for, as the Church teaches, "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God" (*Catechism*, 1700).

Your child was encouraged to thank God by praying a brief prayer illustrated on the *Activity Page*. Try to pray with your child at home.

Also in this lesson, your son or daughter was encouraged to take care of the beautiful child God made by learning and following some health and safety rules. You may wish to spend some time reading together the list on the *Read to Me* page to be sure that these elements of personal health and safety are understood. Are there other rules you feel would be helpful to add at this time?

A People Collage

Help your child cut or tear from magazines pictures of people who represent a variety of ages and ethnic groups. Help your child to arrange and paste them on a large piece of white paper. Stress that people are God's greatest gifts, no matter how we differ. God has no favorites. God loves each person. Print on the bottom of the picture-collage the words, "God's Greatest Gifts." Tape to a wall in your child's room.



I Am Special

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

Here I am, and I am special,
I'm special, I'm special.

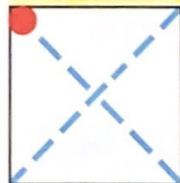
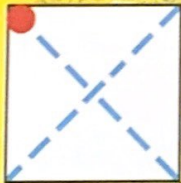
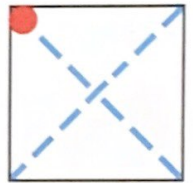
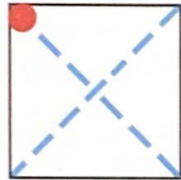
Here I am, and I am special—
There's no one like me!

I can look into the mirror,
The mirror, the mirror.
I can see that I am special—
There's no one like me!

Lesson 18

Look What I Can Do

Tell what these children can do.
Mark the things you can do. (X)
Paste the star on your favorite thing to do.
Act it out.

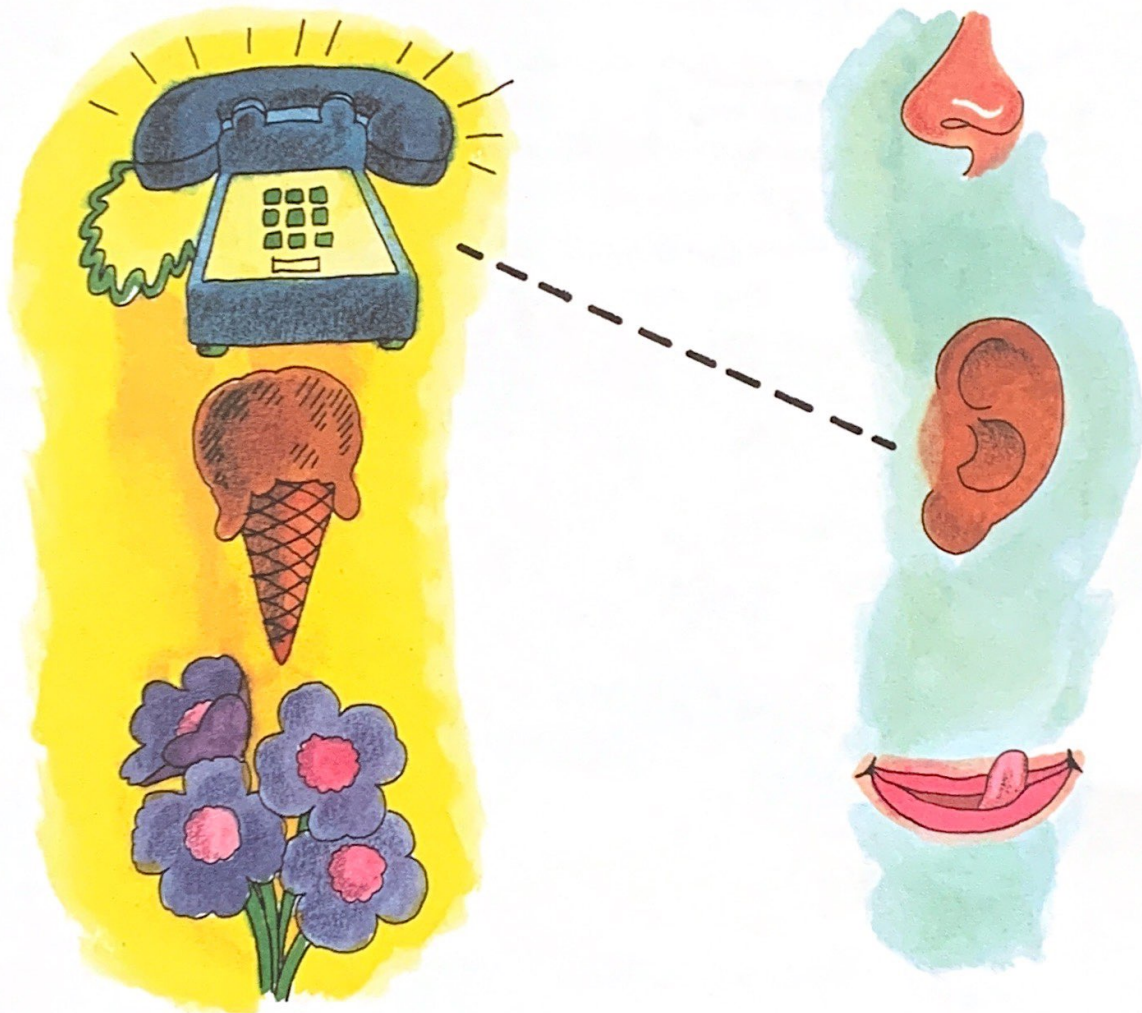


What wonderful things you can do!
You can see. You can hear.
You can feel. You can smell. You can taste.
Match what you can do.

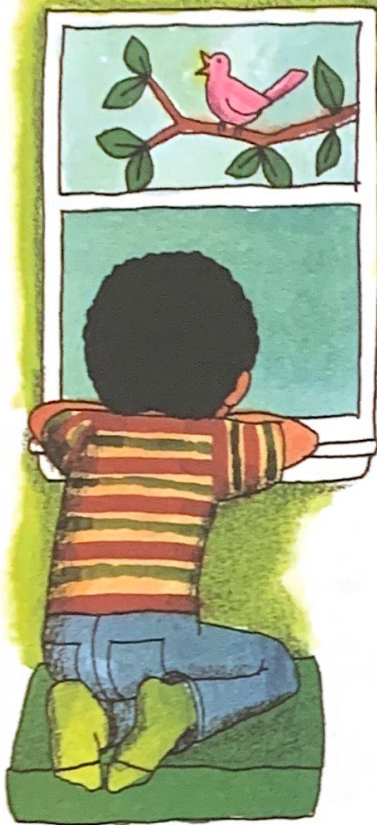


In the Bible we find this prayer to God:
"I praise you, so wonderfully
you made me."

Psalm 139:14



We pray.
How wonderful is our God!
Thank you, God, for making me so special!
Thank you, God, for loving me. Amen.



Look What I Can Do!

(can be sung to the tune of "This Old Man")

With my eyes I can see
All God made for you and me.
With my ears I know that I can hear
Sounds around me, far and near.

With my nose I can smell
Flowers blooming very well.
With my tongue I really like to taste
Things to eat I never waste.

With my hands I can touch
Things I like so very much.
Thank you, God, for all that I can do!
All my good gifts come from you.

What is your favorite thing to
see?

hear?

smell?

taste?

touch?

Who gave you your five senses?



Parenting your 4-Year-Old

Children Listen

Children listen to everything. And they believe everything they hear because in most situations they cannot evaluate the facts for themselves. They must gradually learn how the world works by matching what they experience to what they have heard and believe.

To whom do children listen? Most of all, children listen to their parents. And they believe what their parents tell them. Children are magnets for all the messages their parents give them, especially messages about themselves. These messages, both positive and negative, stick. And these messages are believed and lived out for years and years. If a child hears, "You're wonderful! We're so glad you're you!" that message will stick and give that child a step forward in self-esteem and confidence. If a child hears, "There you go again! Why do you have to be so . . . ?" (careless, shy, stupid, messy, loud, smart, fill in the blank) that message, too, will stick.

As Catholics, we believe in the power of the word of God expressed in human language. Saint Paul

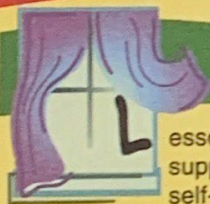
wrote that our faith itself depends on hearing: "Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

All of our human listening prepares us to open our hearts to listen to the word of Christ in our lives. For parents, listening to this word often means listening to their children as well as talking to them. As their child's first teachers, parents are challenged to teach, by careful word and example, the most important lesson in the world: how to live a good and happy life in love of God and others. This major lesson requires many parental messages of guidance, direction, and loving correction along the way. Sometimes a child may not get such a message on the first try. Like good teachers, parents must often try, with great patience and understanding, to say something or teach something in another way. Listening to a child makes the job of teaching a little easier. Feedback is good! You may even hear your own lessons "fed back" to you from your four's perspective!

"Then they believed [God's] words and sang songs of praise."

Psalm 106:12

Lesson 18 continued to encourage and support your child's emerging sense of self-worth and self-esteem. The children discussed and acted out some of the new physical skills they have been mastering. You can affirm and encourage development of these new skills by inviting your child to play "Simon Says" and show you how well he or she can hop, skip, jump, and balance.



At Home with Your Family

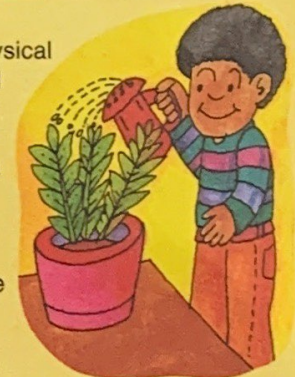
Be sure to praise your child as new physical abilities are used and allow your child to help you with clean-up tasks around your home. Choose tasks that you are quite sure can be done successfully and will not frustrate your child. Such success will also add to his or her growing self-esteem.

In Lesson 18 the five senses were also presented. You may wish to enjoy the *Read to Me* page with your child. Encourage him or her to tell you about favorite experiences of the five senses.

The children again prayed with the words of Scripture, Psalm 139, verse 14. They praised and thanked God for making them so wonderfully special.

See What I Can Do

Recall with your child all the physical abilities he or she has mastered so far. Point out the ways these skills help contribute to the welfare of the entire family. Share a new skill with your child each week. Encourage your child to help you fold clothes, make a bed, dust a table, water a house plant, set the table, or scrape the plates. Praise your child for tasks well done! Reward him or her with positive words and a big hug!



God's Gifts to Me (Fingerplay)

God gives me eyes with which to see (*point to eyes*)

All the gifts God has for me. (*point to self*)

God gave me hands so I can clap, (*clap hands*)

Legs to walk, (*fingers "walk" in palm of hand*)

A mouth to talk. (*point to mouth*)

I'm happy, happy as can be (*hug self*)

For all that God has given me. (*arms up high*)

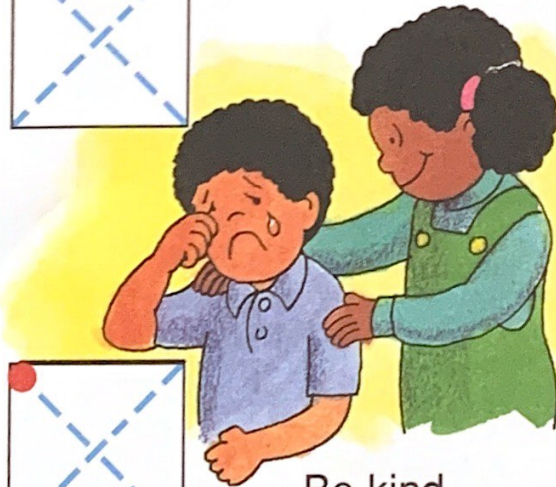
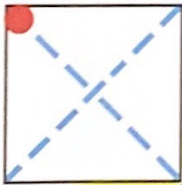
Lesson 19

Learning and Discovering

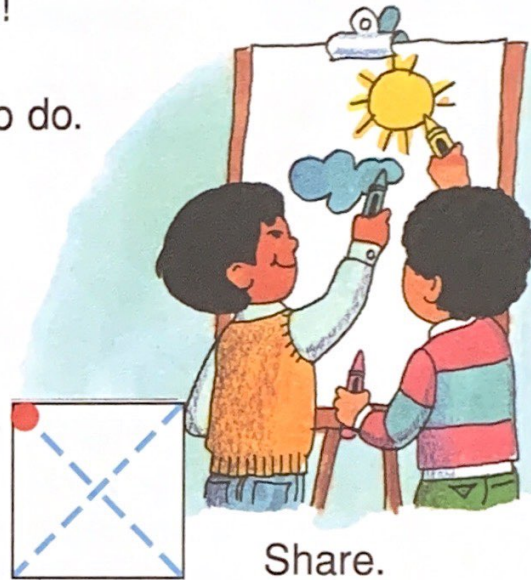
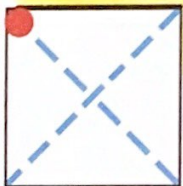
How wonderfully made by God you are!
You can learn so many new things!
Tell what these children have learned to do.
Mark what you have learned
with your new preschool friends. (X)



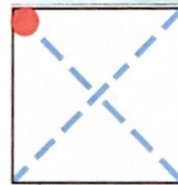
Pray.



Be kind.



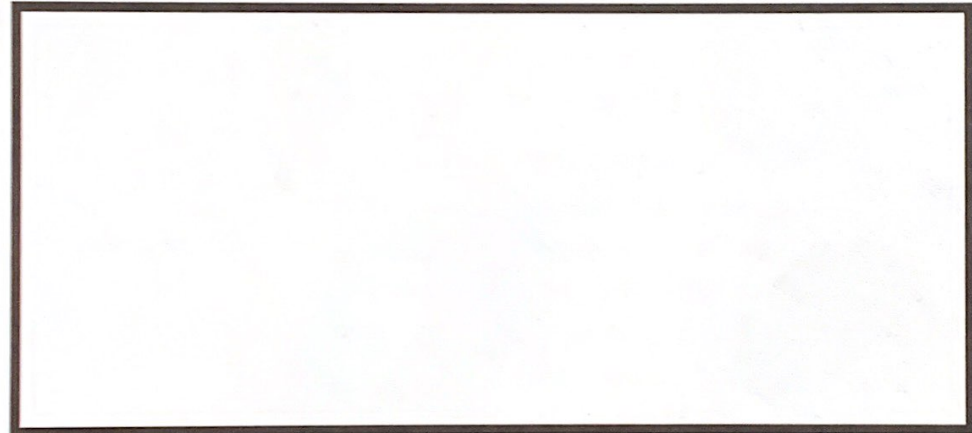
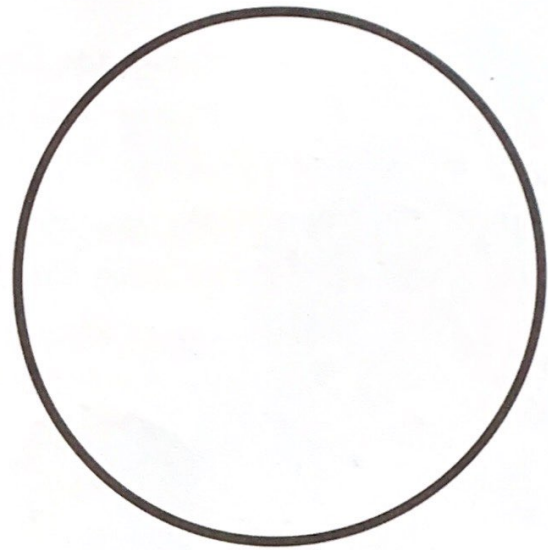
Share.



Take turns.



God gives us imagination.
Our imaginations help us to learn new things.
Use your imagination to make these shapes
look like animals.



We pray.
Dear God, help me to use my wonderful
imagination to learn new things. Amen.



Imagine What Happened Next

One day Lorrie was walking in the park with her grandfather when a big frog hopped by. The frog looked at Lorrie and said, "RIBBIT, RIBBIT."

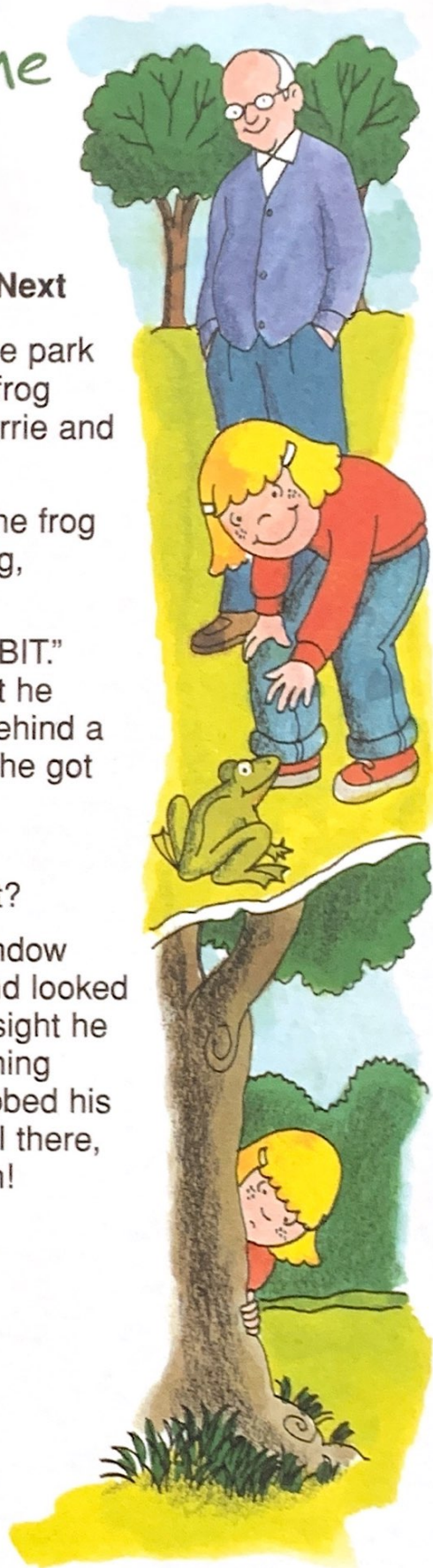
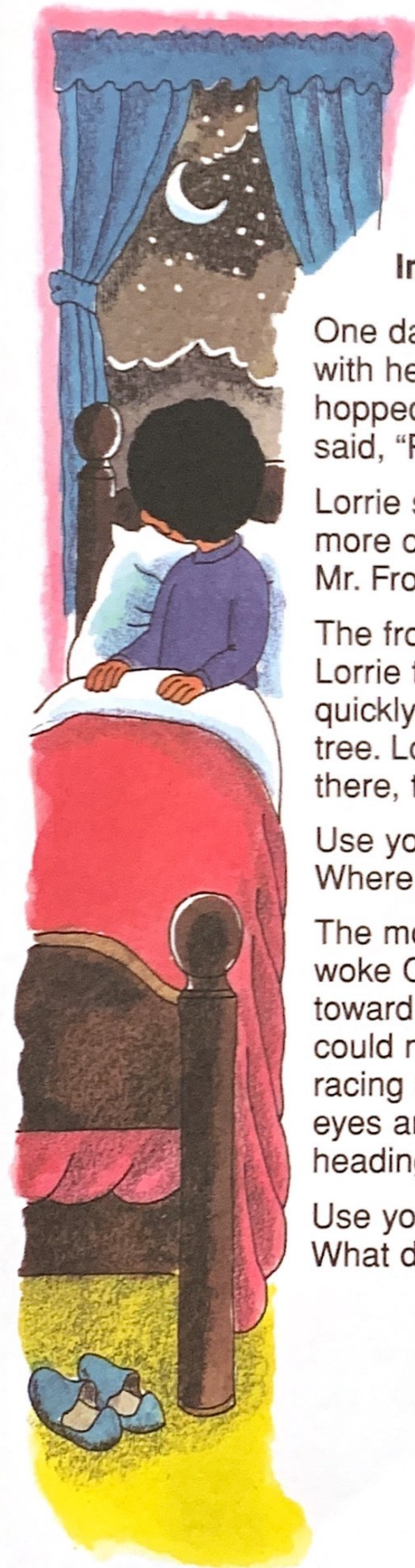
Lorrie sat on the ground to see the frog more closely. "What are you doing, Mr. Frog?" Lorrie asked.

The frog answered, "RIBBIT, RIBBIT." Lorrie tried to pick up the frog but he quickly hopped away and went behind a tree. Lorrie ran after him. When she got there, the frog was gone!

Use your imagination.
Where do you think the frog went?

The moon shining outside his window woke Carlos up. Carlos sat up and looked toward his window. There was a sight he could not believe. He saw something racing against the sky. Carlos rubbed his eyes and looked again. It was still there, heading straight toward the moon!

Use your imagination.
What do you think Carlos saw?



Parenting your 4-Year-Old

Imagine This

The four-year-old lives in the world of possibility. Commanding a dependable vocabulary with which to communicate ideas, the four can now draw others into this world. "Let's play. . ." and the world is transformed into a kitchen, a tea party, a schoolbus, a spaceship. The four is writer, actor, producer, and director in an ever-changing scenario based in imagination.

Imagination is a precious gift from God. Imagination helps expand horizons and teaches empathy. But imagination must be nurtured in children if it is to help them to grow and to understand the world.

In this age of mass media, parents have previously unimagined opportunities to bring the best of human culture into family life. Good television for children, while not as plentiful as parents might like, is still more available than in earlier years. Tapes and CDs, with both catchy tunes and beautiful music, are everywhere. Award-winning videos made for children are easily available. We need

"Then I saw a new heaven
and a new earth."

Revelation 21:1

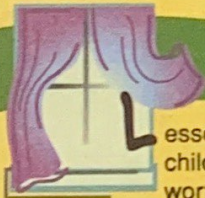
not complain about junk if we keep choosing the best we can find. (One video in particular comes to mind: "The Snowman." There are no words. The children figure out the story through the beautiful visuals and music. Videos like these are true gifts from one imaginative mind to another!)

Of all the media, however, books still retain their place as primary sources and expressions of human imagination.

Children's books are beautifully made and illustrated. It is not too soon to bring your child to the library in

order to choose books. Some libraries have story hours for young children to introduce them to books and reading. Some have puppet shows and craft activity afternoons. You may wish to set aside an hour or so to visit the library.

A religious brother was once asked why, along with hot meals, he brought flowers to the poor. "We cannot feed only the body," he replied. "We must also feed the heart." As flowers feed the heart, imagination feeds the spirit.



At Home with Your Family

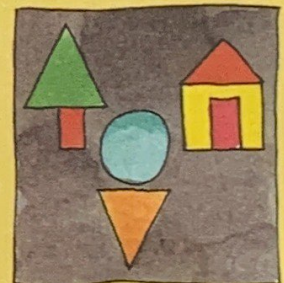
Lesson 19 continues to enhance your child's self-esteem and sense of self-worth by helping him or her to appreciate how much has been learned in preschool. Invite your child to tell you the story of each of the illustrations on *Activity Page 75*.

Most four-year-olds are gifted with wonderful imaginations that need to be nurtured and stimulated. You will enjoy listening as your child tells you about the animals he or she made from each of the geometric shapes.

Storytime offers wonderful opportunities to encourage imaginative expression in your child. Ask him or her to pretend to be in the story, or to imagine what happened before the story began. The *Read to Me* page invites your child to imagine what is going to happen next. How many different endings to the stories can you encourage your child to imagine? Most fours will enjoy imagining games endlessly. This can help make long car trips pleasant fun for everyone.

Imaginary Shapes

Arrange in a box many pieces of felt fabric cut in basic geometric shapes (circles, squares, triangles, rectangles) along with a large piece of black felt fabric to serve as a working mat. Make your child aware of the fact that many things in our everyday environment have basic geometric shapes. Examples: We can draw the top part of a tree as a circle, the trunk as a rectangle; an ice cream cone looks like a triangle; the shape of a scoop of ice cream is a circle. Help your child create and imagine other objects on the work mat using the basic geometric shapes.



Let's Pretend (A Singing Game)

(To the tune of "London Bridge")

Let's play a game of I Pretend,
I Pretend, I Pretend.

Let's play a game of I Pretend.

What will you be?

I will be an (astronaut),
(astronaut, astronaut).

I will be an (astronaut).
What will you be?