



# Finding God<sup>®</sup>

Our Response to God's Gifts

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

### PAGE 2: "Come, and you will see."

Discipleship is a response to Jesus' invitation.

### PAGE 3: Rights and Responsibilities

Our human rights come from the fact that we are made in God's image.

### PAGE 4: What does "being present" have to do with faith?

Just as God is present to us, we are called to be present to others.



## 3-Minute Retreat

### Love Your Enemies

**Praying for people we like is easy.** The real challenge, however, is when we ask God to bless those we don't like.

Jesus explains clearly the demands of discipleship: "For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:46-48)

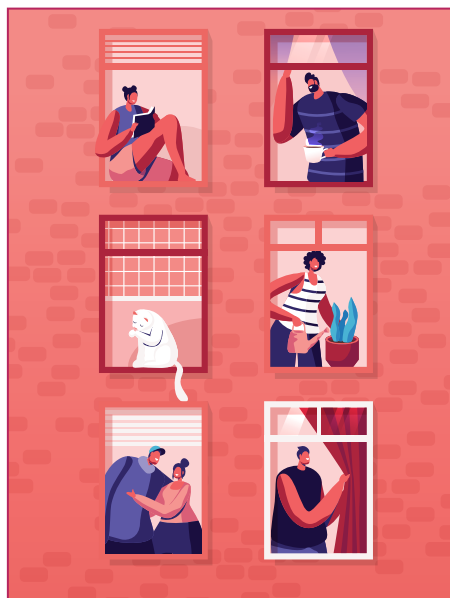
Take a moment and rest in God's presence. Bring to mind someone you have difficulty with. Recall as many details of that person as you can. Ask God to shine his love, mercy, and kindness on that person. Ask God for the grace to see that person as a brother or sister. ■



For a daily online 3-Minute Retreat, go to [www.3MinuteRetreat.com](http://www.3MinuteRetreat.com).

## Finding God in Others

When I was a child, I remember my grandmother saying, "Love God in the person standing in front of you." At the time, I did not fully appreciate or understand what she meant. I sometimes still struggle with it today.



Experience teaches me that I can easily love people who look, think, act, and vote like me. I find it much harder to find the face of God in those who make me uncomfortable, draw me into conflict, or challenge my beliefs. When my children were young, I tried to model behaviors I wanted them to follow. Now that they are older, I recognize my example is more necessary than ever. My reactions to events in the world, comments on the news, and interactions with others on social media shape their thoughts and behaviors in deep and meaningful ways.

When I consider my grandmother's words, I must ask myself if I even notice the person standing in front of me. With every interaction comes choices that I

have to make: Do I look for the easy way out or am I willing to encounter others in the messiness of their lives? Am I able to put aside my own agendas and plans to be truly present for another?

Then there is the inconvenient truth that to recognize God in others, I need to know God myself. Daily prayer, reading Scripture, and participating in the sacraments help me deepen my connection with God. Walking in nature, listening to music, experiencing art, and sitting in quiet meditation are other ways to be in God's presence and open my eyes and heart to the hearts of others.

I'm still learning my grandmother's lesson. I work daily to show compassion, offer grace, and listen with my whole heart. Most of all, I will never stop seeking the face of God in others as I try to be the face of God for others. ✝

**Denise Skomer** is a mom, wife, and writer living in the Chicago suburbs.

### Saint Martin of Tours



### Saint Martin of Tours

Use the QR code to [watch a video](#) about how Saint Martin showed love, compassion, and kindness to others.



## START WITH JESUS

### Our Identity

Our identity as the People of God comes not from a “what” (here’s what Catholics do) but a “who” (Jesus is the reason for our existence). So, where do we start? We start with the person of Jesus—the who, what, and why of our lives. Jesus is not simply what the Church teaches but whom the Church lives. At a conference in Norfolk, Virginia, in 2014, Father Cantalamessa, the preacher to the pontifical household, reminded us that “people will not accept Jesus based on the word of the Church, but they will accept the Church based on the word of Jesus.” Rarely do we talk about the who or the why: introducing people to Jesus Christ and his Body, the Church, and the unique expression of who Jesus is in our lives. As Catholics, the miracle of transubstantiation is at the heart of who we are as a people of faith. And it is our baptism that has unleashed in us the grace to live as disciples of Christ. A recovery of “who” and “whose” we are is critical. This is an echo of the words of St. Augustine, who said that we should behold what we are (made in the image and likeness of God) and receive who we are (Jesus Christ). ■

Excerpt from [Start with Jesus](#) by Julianne Stanz (Loyola Press, 2019).



## Come and See

Saint Ignatius of Loyola taught a way of praying with Scripture by using our imaginations. Praying this way helps us “love Him more and follow Him more closely” (*Spiritual Exercises*, #104). As we pray with the Gospels this way, it reveals the many aspects of Jesus’ life that show us a model to live out our call as missionary disciples.

I invite you to contemplate Jesus’ invitation to “come and see.”

*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.”*

—John 1:35–39

**Read.** Read the Scripture passage a few times so that you know the story well enough to share it with another person.

**Imagine.** Picture yourself in the scene. See John the Baptist with his two disciples. Imagine John the Baptist pointing toward Jesus and the two disciples getting up to follow him.

**Notice.** Watch and listen as the scene unfolds. What is happening around you? How do you react when Jesus walks by?

**Respond.** How do you answer Jesus when he asks, “What are you looking for?” Where do you find Jesus in your life? How do you respond to him?

**Rest.** Let God speak to you about what you saw, heard, and felt.

**Reflect.** What did you learn about Jesus, God, or yourself? How might you invite your children to follow Jesus? ■

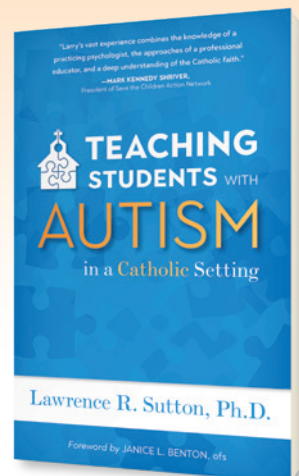
**Becky Eldredge** is a wife, mother, spiritual director, and the author of the book [The Inner Chapel](#) (Loyola Press, 2020).



## Teaching Students with Autism

Are you looking for a comprehensive guide to equip you with the tools, knowledge, and strategies you need to better understand and effectively respond to children with autism? In *Teaching Students with Autism in a Catholic Setting*, Deacon Lawrence Sutton draws on case studies, personal experiences, and best practices to provide educators with the necessary skills and strategies to identify and respond to the needs of their students with autism ■

[Teaching Students with Autism](#) by Lawrence Sutton (Loyola Press, 2020).





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## FAITH IN ACTION

# Basic Rights for Basic Necessities

**There are some things in life that we need to live, like food, water, and shelter.**

These are basic necessities, and we all have a right to them. But so many of our brothers and sisters around the world don't have what they need to live. That's where we come in: We know we have a responsibility to make sure everyone, everywhere, has a right to the basic necessities of life.

Water used to be scarce at Irzan Bladimir's elementary school in Honduritas, El Salvador. And it tasted like mud. Think about all of the things you use water for on a daily basis:

drinking, bathing, cooking, watering, and even using the bathroom. But Irzan's school didn't even have bathrooms until he was in the fourth grade. The school had a toilet outside, but he and his classmates wouldn't use it because the concrete seat was loose and they were afraid they would fall in!

Everything changed when Catholic Relief Services helped the school build a water tank, two bathrooms—one for boys and one for girls—and a sink with five faucets for hand-washing. The new bathroom is spacious and has running water and



light. Irzan's teacher is teaching students about the importance of hand-washing, and now he and his classmates don't get sick as often. Their drinking water tastes a lot better too.

"We must speak of man's rights," wrote Saint John XXIII in his encyclical *Peace on Earth*. "Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services." (*Peace on Earth*, no. 11)

You may want to gather as a family and list your basic needs. Which families have those same needs? Which families struggle to meet those needs? How might your family help them? ■

Adapted from "Rights and Responsibilities Lesson Plan: El Salvador" by Catholic Relief Services ([www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org)).

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## A Faith That Does Justice

### *Rights and Responsibilities*

Not only does every person have a right to life, everyone also has a right to those things necessary to live a life of dignity. Corresponding to those rights are duties and responsibilities to one another. As Catholics, we are called to protect those rights and meet our responsibilities in order to build a healthy society.

**Here are some ideas for how your family can help protect**

**human rights and meet our responsibilities to others.**

Determine the activities that are the most practical for your family: donate to a local food bank; eliminate food waste; donate lightly used clothing to a charity; educate your family about obstacles that prevent people from meeting their basic needs; send get-well cards to relatives who are ill; enjoy time to rest and relax as a family. ■





What does “being present” have to do with faith?

**a:** *The answer to this question points us directly at the reason we celebrate Christmas: we celebrate the day on which*

*God became present to us through his Son, Jesus Christ.* Jesus, in turn, gave us the sacraments, so that he can continue to be present to us in a very concrete way. In fact, in the Eucharist, we speak of the “real presence” of Jesus, which means that his presence—under the appearance of bread and wine—can be



**Parents understand that one of their greatest priorities is being present to their children.**

encountered, touched, tasted, and consumed. We, in turn, are then sent forth to bring the presence of Christ to others.

Parents understand that one of their greatest priorities is being present to their children. Parents do everything they can to ensure that they are present at not only their children’s significant life events,

but also in their everyday lives. In the same way, God our Father wants to be present to his children and he relies on us to bring his presence to others so that they know that God is always near. ■

**Joe Paprocki** is National Consultant for Faith Formation for Loyola Press and the author of *Living the Sacraments* (Loyola Press, 2018).

## Liturgy in the Family

### Liturgical Catechesis

The celebration of the Sacred Mysteries is vital to the spirituality of the family, as it is the very moment when the Church is most fully actualized. Participation in the Sunday Eucharist as a family is very important for children. Liturgical catechesis is conveyed not only through the liturgy, but also through the actions, gestures, postures, and prayer of the

older members of the family. Despite our faults and failings, through the liturgy, families witness to others the saving power of God. This, in turn, helps children convey their understanding of Church teaching, faith and morals, and liturgical practice.

Visiting a rural parish in central Texas, I observed a small child strike his breast after the breaking of bread when saying, “Lord, I am not worthy . . .” After Mass, I approached him and asked why he struck his chest with his right fist. Looking up at me

with certainty and passion, he replied, “To remind myself that Jesus still comes into my body even though I’m not worthy. He’s my friend.” This child further conveyed that he had learned that gesture from his grandmother who is now “resting with Jesus in heaven.” He learned this not from a book or in a classroom; he learned it from his family. ■

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**5**  
THINGS

## Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

### Distance Learning

Where can I find God when the four walls that make up my classroom are gone?



#### 1. Peaceful Pace.

Without bells and an audience of their peers, students are less anxious and can be still and know God (see Psalm 46:10).

is “meek and humble of heart.” (Matthew 11:29)

#### 2. Words Matter.

Just as Jesus chose his words carefully, I’ve been reminded of the significance of thoughtfully chosen words.

#### 4. Sweet Goodbyes.

I catch a glimpse of God’s face in seeing my class on a Zoom screen, which makes me reluctant to click the “Leave Meeting” button.

#### 3. Humble Knowing.

Distance learning allows us to see one another in our native environments. In this humble way of knowing one another, we imitate Jesus, who

#### 5. Classroom Reimagined.

Porches, parks, parked cars—the whole world is our classroom and we continue to experience God’s presence. ■

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### Contact Us!



We’d love to hear from you! You can send us your questions, comments, and requests by using the QR code above or by e-mailing us at [newsletter@loyolapress.com](mailto:newsletter@loyolapress.com).