

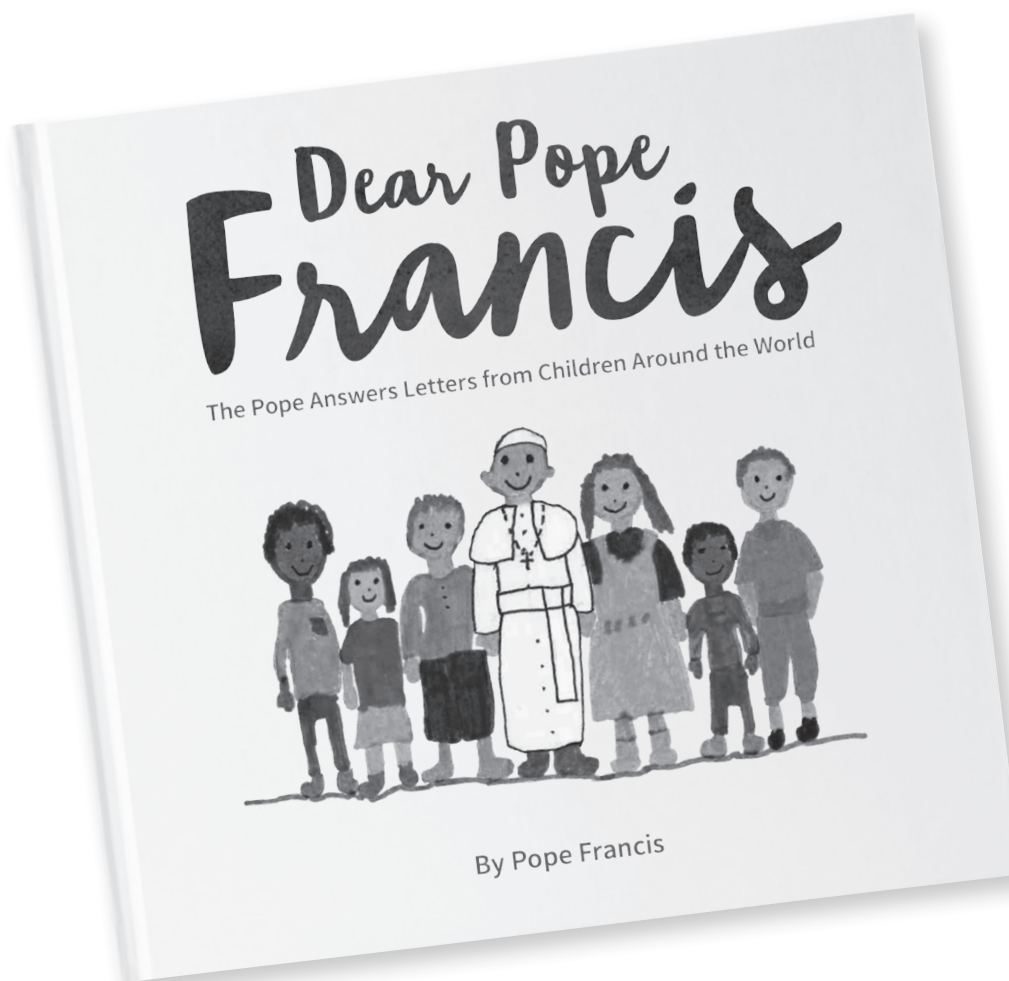
# Introduction

## 1 Before You Read Aloud

The letters to Pope Francis collected for this book were written by children in cities and towns, camps and villages, around the world. They were chosen as exemplars from 259 letters that covered a range of topics and addressed myriad concerns.

Say: ***God calls on us to share his love and help those in need. Pope Francis leads us in this effort, reaching out to people around the world with compassion and urging all of us to be instruments of God's mercy.***

*(Continued on next page.)*

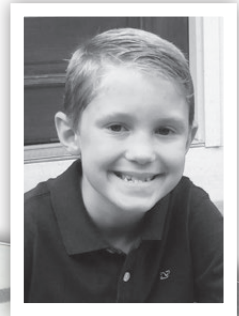


## 2 Connect

As you share these letters, encourage discussion and empathy. Many of the letters bring up questions and concerns that all of us share. Others will address topics and issues that are unfamiliar, giving children an opportunity to explore new ideas and better understand the challenges that others face. In all cases, Pope Francis counsels a consistent commitment to following Jesus' example and relying on God's constant and unconditional love.

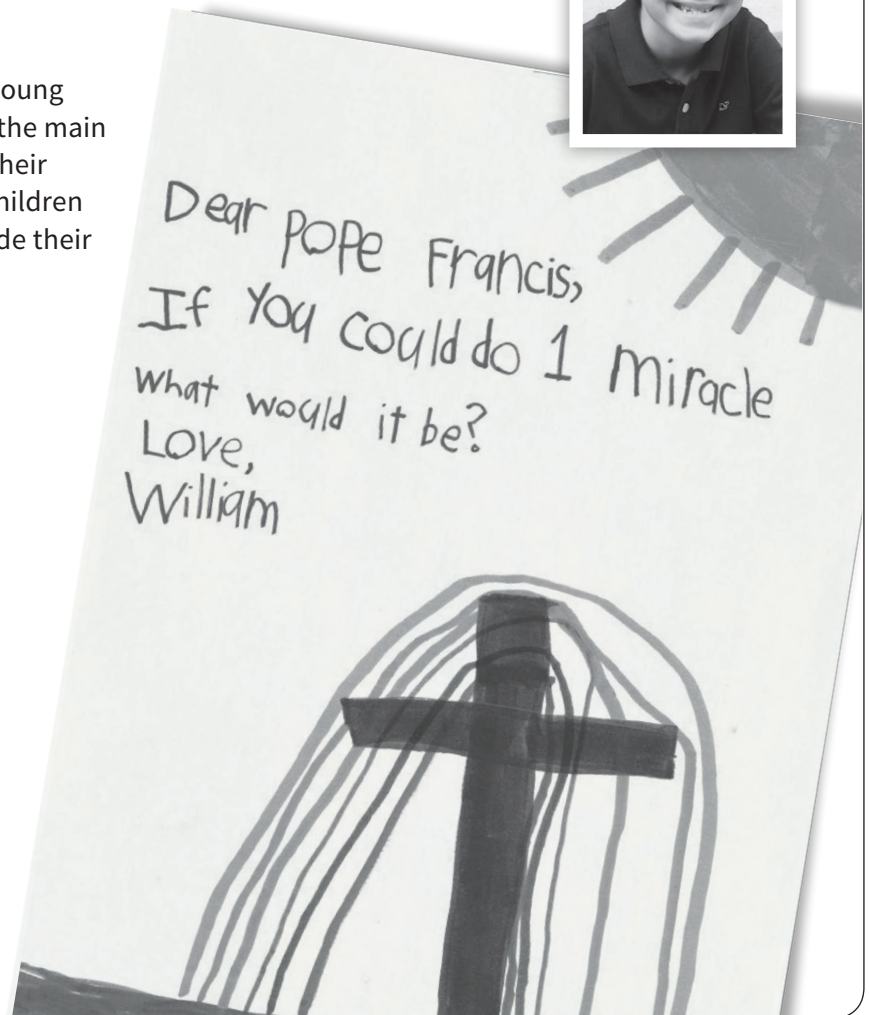
## 3 Stories

Say: ***The letters in this book were written by children just like you. They have questions. They have hopes and fears. Some of them face challenges that are difficult and confusing. Pope Francis answers each question with understanding, wisdom, humor, and compassion. His words offer hope and inspire action.*** Children will be able to apply the advice that Pope Francis gives to their own lives, taking to heart his overriding message of mercy and love.



## 4 Moving On

The activity pages give children and young people an opportunity to respond to the main ideas and apply the Pope's words to their own lives. Pope Francis encourages children to trust in God's love and use it to guide their actions and decisions in daily life.



# We Can Know Jesus More Fully

## 1 Begin

Say: ***Have you heard the saying “Practice makes perfect”? The more you do something, the easier it gets.***

Distribute the activity page to each child. Read aloud the introduction. Discuss challenges that get easier as children practice, such as schoolwork and sports. Point out that the same “practice makes perfect” rule applies to living our faith.

## 2 Connect

Read aloud the letter from Ana on page 38 and the answer from Pope Francis on page 39. Have a volunteer paraphrase the Holy Father’s message: *We need to find out about Jesus’ life, go to Mass, study the Catechism, and pray so that we know how to follow Jesus’ example.* Ask: ***What do you do to know Jesus better?*** (Possible answers: go to Mass, read the Bible, help others, do good things for my family, love my mom and dad)

Read aloud the activity directions. Ask the children to complete the activity. (Possible answers for wanting to know Jesus better: to follow him, to act more like him, to know God)

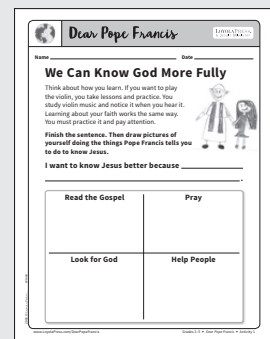
## 3 Close

Invite children to share their drawings and reasons for wanting to know Jesus better. Discuss the things they can do every day to help them know Jesus better.

Write the following prayer on the board. Pray the Sign of the Cross. Then pray aloud as the children pray with you: ***Thank you, God, for helping me know Jesus better as I show your love to others.*** Close by praying the Sign of the Cross.

### FOR USE WITH

- *Dear Pope Francis* pages 38–39
- Grades 3–5, Activity 1



**Dear Pope Francis**

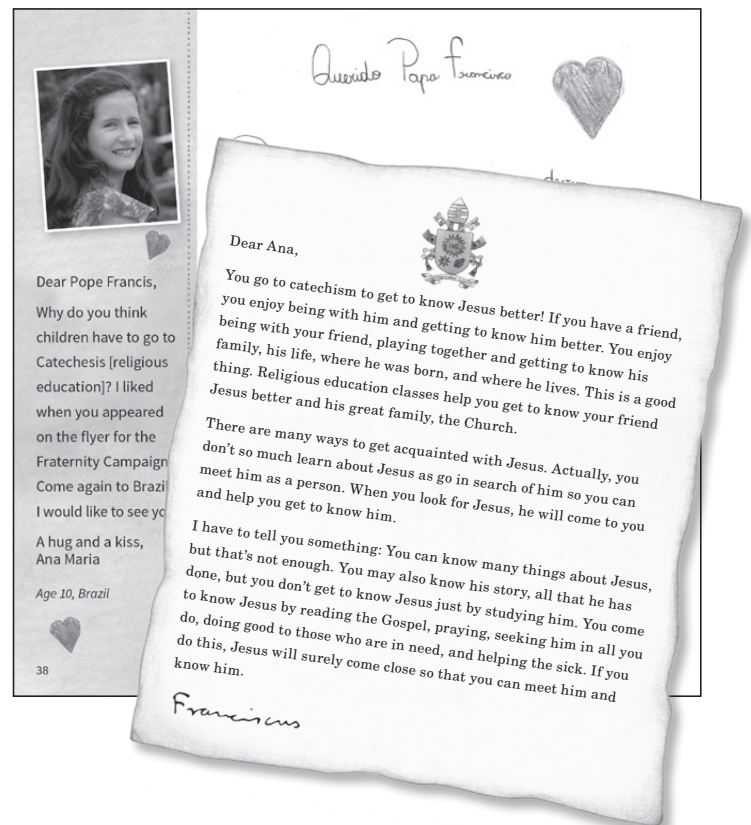
**We Can Know God More Fully**

Think about how you learn. If you want to play the violin, you take lessons and practice. You study violin music and notice it when you hear it. Learning about your faith works the same way. You must practice it and pay attention.

Finish the sentence. Then draw pictures of yourself doing the things Pope Francis tells you to do to know Jesus.

I want to know Jesus better because \_\_\_\_\_

Read the Gospel	Pray
Look for God	Help People





# Dear Pope Francis

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## We Can Know Jesus More Fully

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**Finish the sentence. Then draw pictures of yourself doing the things Pope Francis tells you to do to know Jesus.**

**I want to know Jesus better because \_\_\_\_\_**

\_\_\_\_\_ •

<b>Read the Gospel</b>	<b>Pray</b>
<b>Look for God</b>	<b>Help People</b>

# Knowing God's Love

## 1 Begin

Say: *There is no better way to understand God's love than to love one another. This is the Great Commandment. Showing God's love to the people around us will fill our lives with his goodness.*

Distribute the activity page to each child. Read aloud the introduction. Talk about what it means to receive God's grace and help it grow.

## 2 Connect

Read aloud the letter from Mansi on page 50 and the answer from Pope Francis on page 51. Have a volunteer paraphrase the Holy Father's message: *Know God's love every day and use that knowledge to bring God's love and peace to your own life.*

Ask: **How does Mansi's drawing show God's grace in her life?**

(Possible answers: Mansi is happy and safe; she has what she needs—food, shelter, clothing; she is surrounded by beauty and love.)

Then read aloud the activity directions. Ask the children to complete the activity.

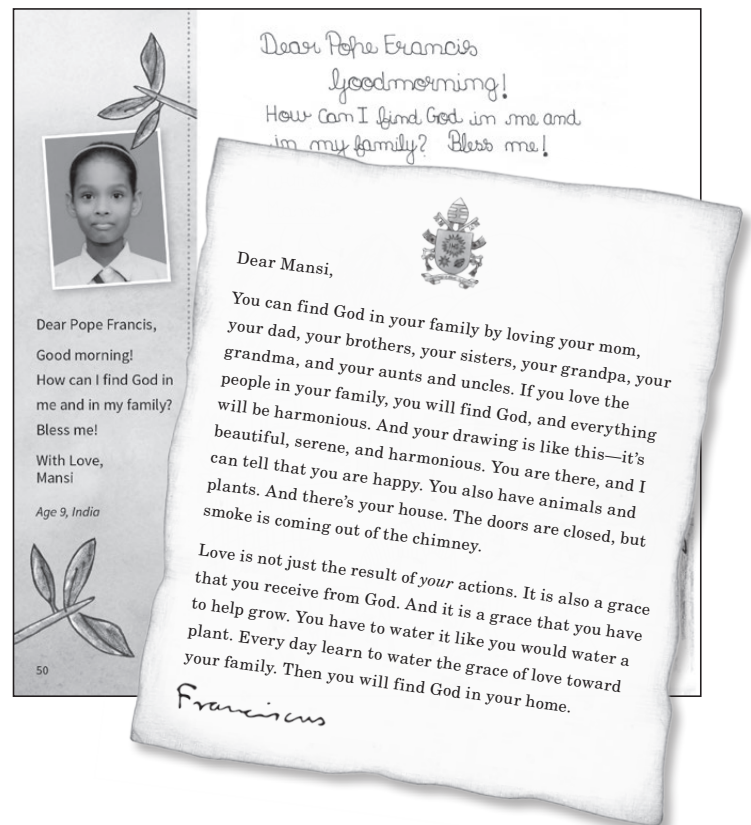
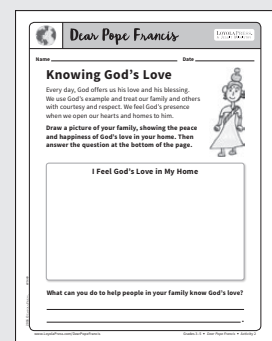
## 3 Close

Invite children to share their drawings and ideas. Remind children of the things they can do to show God's love to their families.

Write the following prayer on the board. Pray the Sign of the Cross. Then pray aloud as the children pray with you: **Dear God, thank you for showing me how to fill my home with the peace and happiness that come from your love.** Close by praying the Sign of the Cross.

### FOR USE WITH

- *Dear Pope Francis* pages 50–51
- Grades 3–5, Activity 2







Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Knowing God's Love

Every day, God offers us his love and his blessing. We use God's example and treat our family and others with courtesy and respect. We feel God's presence when we open our hearts and homes to him.

**Draw a picture of your family, showing the peace and happiness of God's love in your home. Then answer the question at the bottom of the page.**



### I Feel God's Love in My Home

**What can you do to help people in your family know God's love?**

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