

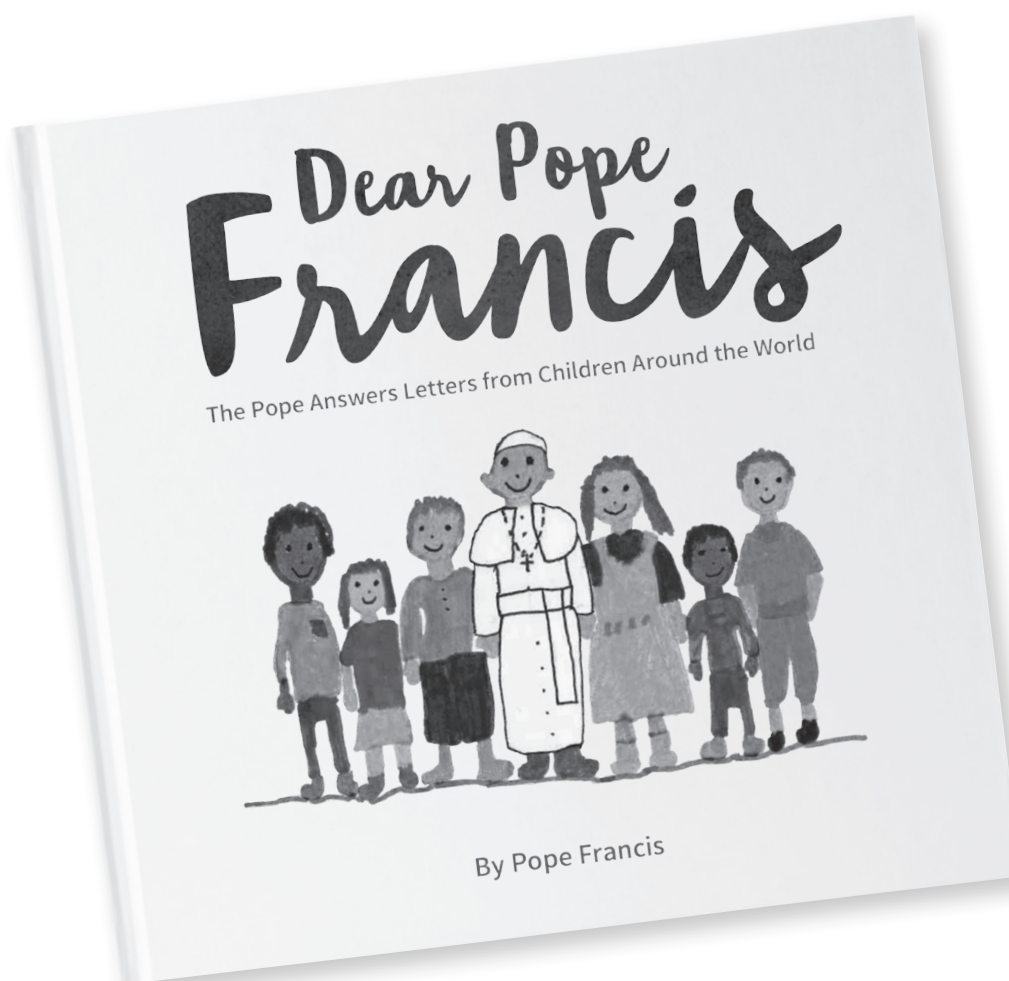
Introduction

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.

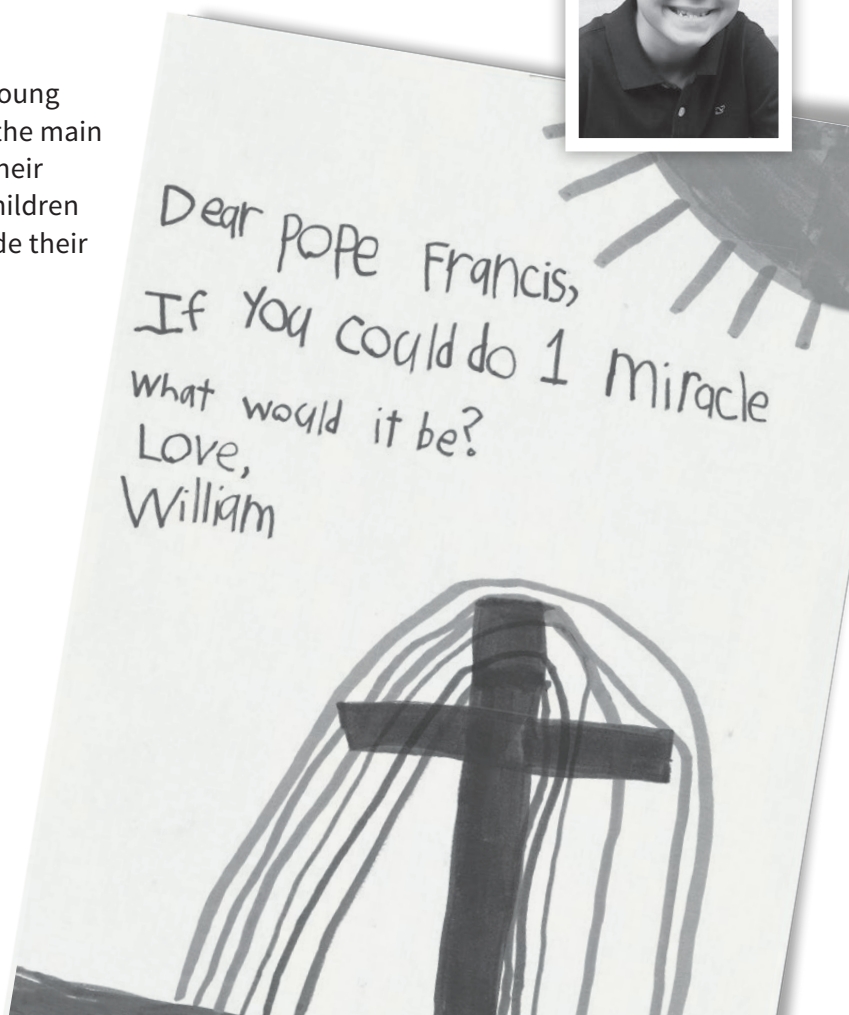
3 Stories

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.



Dear Pope Francis,
If you could do 1 miracle
what would it be?
Love,
William

Keep the Peace

1 Begin

Say: *God knows that people are not perfect. We do not always have all the answers we need. We do not always understand the best course to follow. God is always present to help show us the way with love and compassion.*

2 Connect

Have young people read the letter from Alexandra on page 28 and the answer from Pope Francis on page 29. Have a volunteer paraphrase the Holy Father's message: *Find God's love and peace in your heart and show it to the people around you who need it most.* Discuss the challenge that Alexandra is facing. Ask: **How can showing love for her parents help Alexandra feel better?** Explain that Alexandra cannot solve her parents' problems, but showing love will help her surround herself with God's love.

Then read aloud the activity directions. Ask the young people to complete the activity. (Possible answers: see God in all people, use kind words, treat people fairly)

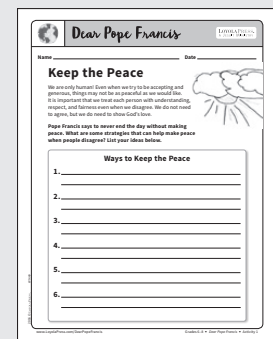
3 Close

Invite young people to share their lists. Encourage young people to use their strategies when they think a difference of opinion might escalate into an argument.

Write the following prayer on the board. Pray the Sign of the Cross. Then pray aloud as young people pray with you: **Dear God, help me treat others with generosity even when we disagree, and help me show your love by treating people fairly even in difficult situations.** Close by praying the Sign of the Cross.

FOR USE WITH

- Dear Pope Francis pages 28–29
- Grades 6–8, Activity 1



Dear Pope Francis

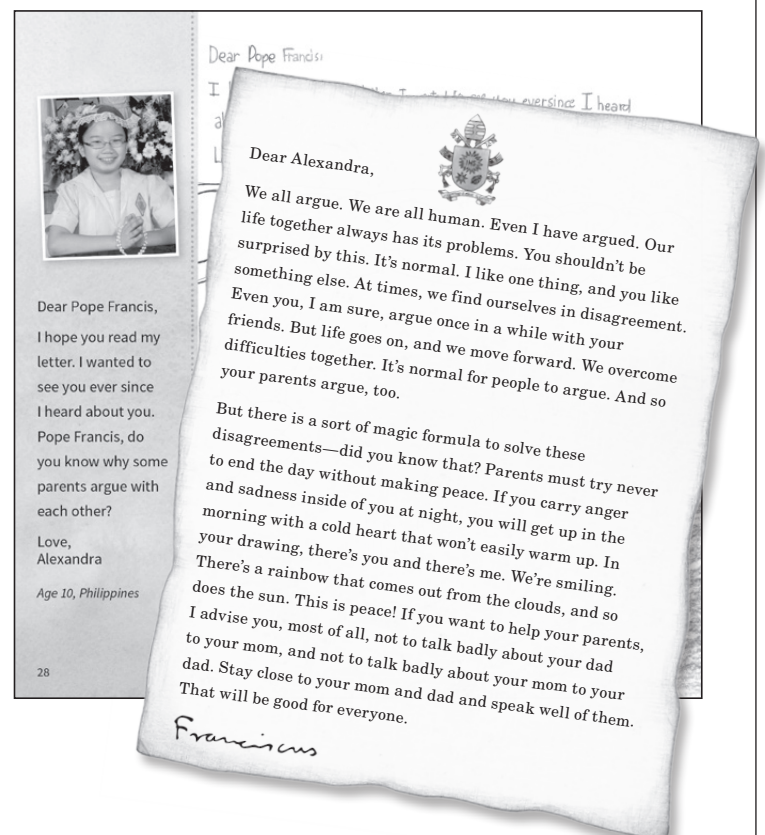
Keep the Peace

We are only human. Even when we try to be forgiving and generous, things may happen that are painful or uncomfortable. It is important for us to be kind and patient with each other, respect, and listen even when we disagree. We do not need to agree, but we do need to love each other.

Pope Francis says to never end the day without making peace. What are some strategies that can help make peace when people disagree? List your ideas below.

Ways to Keep the Peace

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____





Dear Pope Francis

Name _____ Date _____

Keep the Peace

We are only human! Even when we try to be accepting and generous, things may not be as peaceful as we would like. It is important that we treat each person with understanding, respect, and fairness even when we disagree. We do not need to agree, but we do need to show God's love.



Pope Francis says to never end the day without making peace. What are some strategies that can help make peace when people disagree? List your ideas below.

Ways to Keep the Peace

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Make the World a Better Place

1 Begin

Say: *As members of the Church, we have a responsibility to people in need all over the world in all situations. Vulnerable people touched by poverty or conflict need our help, care, and love.*

2 Connect

Have young people read the letter from Thierry on page 46 and the answer from Pope Francis on page 47. The letter from Michael on page 56 and the Pope's answer on page 57 convey a similar theme. Have a volunteer paraphrase the Holy Father's messages: *There are ways that we can make the world a better place, always remembering God's love and Jesus' example to guide us and inspire us to reach out when we see wrongs that must be righted.* Ask: **What are some of the problems that we face around the world?** Facilitate a class discussion about current events with a focus on poverty and conflict, including local issues and worldwide concerns. Ask the young people to complete the activity. (Possible answers: bullying/include everyone; pollution/care for God's creation; loneliness/reach out to those in need)

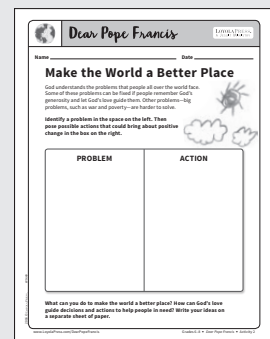
3 Close

Invite young people to share the change they would like to see in current problems and their sentences about showing God's love to make the world a better place.

Write the following prayer on the board. Pray the Sign of the Cross. Then pray aloud as the young people pray with you. **Dear God, let your love guide my actions as I reach out to help people in need.** Close by praying the Sign of the Cross.

FOR USE WITH

- *Dear Pope Francis* pages 46–47, 56–57
- Grades 6–8, Activity 2



Dear Pope Francis

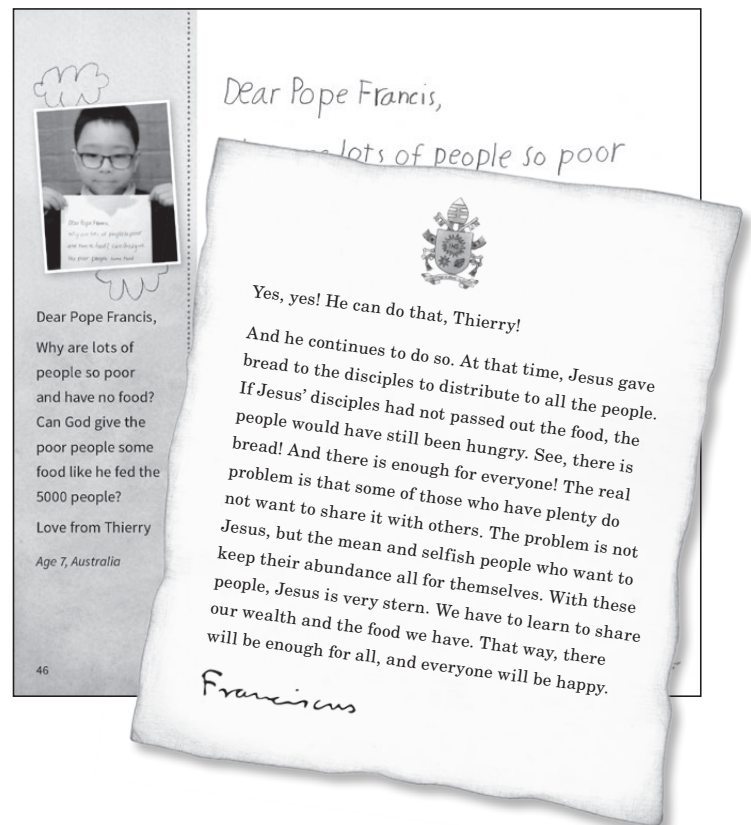
Make the World a Better Place

God understands the problems that people all over the world face. Some of these problems can be fixed if people remember God's generosity and do each other good deeds. Other problems, like problems such as war and poverty, are harder to solve.

Identify a problem in the space on the left. Then write possible actions that could bring about positive change in the box on the right.

PROBLEM	ACTION

What can you do to make the world a better place? How can God's love guide decisions and actions to help people in need? Write your ideas on a separate sheet of paper.





Name _____ **Date** _____

Make the World a Better Place

God understands the problems that people all over the world face. Some of these problems can be fixed if people remember God's generosity and let God's love guide them. Other problems—big problems, such as war and poverty—are harder to solve.

Identify a problem in the space on the left. Then pose possible actions that could bring about positive change in the box on the right.



PROBLEM	ACTION

What can you do to make the world a better place? How can God's love guide decisions and actions to help people in need? Write your ideas on a separate sheet of paper.