



# Finding God

Our Response to God's Gifts

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## WHAT'S INSIDE

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Communication is a gift and an art.

**PAGE 3:** Faith, Hope, and Love

We know which is the most important.

**PAGE 4:** Is it normal not to “feel” love?

Love is more than a feeling.

## Trusting My Son . . . and Myself

I often find it hard to trust my 14-year-old son. My impulse as a parent is to protect him from pain, embarrassment, and failure. I find it very difficult to set my son free knowing that his brain is still developing and his moral compass is still adjusting.

Trust grows when we spend time together. As much as I wish our time together always consisted of shared focused activities—like cooking dinner together or even the silence we share while playing chess—I realize that it is often a quick hello as we pass each other in the house while he is in his own world. I often forget the fact that my influence on him is deep, particularly when it may not manifest as I want it to.



In that way, I also set him free. That's not to say that he's free to make bad decisions or do things that could be harmful to himself or others. Rather, I allow him to live his own experiences. I will always believe in the essential person I know him to be. If I trust him—and that doesn't mean that I would expect him to always perform perfectly—I'm sure those seeds I planted will grow in new and unexpected ways and that they will bear the fruit of our relationship. †

**Sol Robledo** is the mother of a high schooler. She enjoys discussing films and playing chess with her son.

One way of making myself feel more comfortable about trusting him and ensuring he knows he can trust me is discussing things I know he will be honest about. By talking about things that don't threaten his growing individuality and respecting his opinion and preferences, we discover our shared values. I realize that these values are going to guide his life. He may take a direction different from the one I would have mapped out, but I know his actions will reflect values we have shared throughout his life.



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### MINUTE RETREAT

#### Comfort and Support

**On days when nothing seems to go right, a dose of confidence, a word of comfort, and a sign of support can be welcome reminders that we are not defined by our bad days.** Confidence helps us discover renewed strength, and that strength helps us inspire those around us.

Sit quietly and think of a day that was particularly hard. Who helped lift your spirits? Call to mind as many details as you can about the people who gave you confidence, comfort, or support. Thank God for the gift of those people in your life and offer blessings for them. Ask God for the grace to be a source of confidence, comfort, and support for others. ■



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



## HOLY DESPERATION

### Where to Start

There is no other or deeper way of prayer than simply trying to live the Gospels.

But what does that look like in everyday terms? How to start?

How do we translate the bland, generic remarks we hear about being kind to our neighbor and living in joy into the daily events of our messy, hurried lives? What does loving our neighbor look like in actual practical terms?

Instead of blaming, judging, and criticizing everyone around us, we get to start by asking, What triggers me in the course of my day? What makes me anxious? What makes me angry? What makes me feel hopeless, sad, depressed? . . .

The insistence on seeking beauty, the cultivation of a heart that feels the universe pressing back, the self-examination that gradually leads us to see the interconnectedness of all people, times, and things: these contemplative practices are not separate from the life of action. Rather, they lead our prayer, our thoughts, and our actions to become increasingly integrated.

So instead of thinking our way into right acting, we get to act our way into right thinking. ■

Excerpt from *Holy Desperation* by Heather King (Loyola Press, 2017)

## LOVE IN MARRIAGE | Apart But Not Alone

Almost two years ago, my husband's job required six months of significant travel. Often, he would leave on a Monday morning and return Friday evening. Even though we were in our 12th year of marriage, and both of our jobs had required us to travel in short spurts before, the long period of his extensive traveling challenged our marriage in a new way.

We both felt the stress of this time period. He felt it because he was away from family life. I felt it due to shouldering the additional responsibilities while he was gone. Often, our family schedule at home was on a different rhythm and routine than his work schedule. We had to learn to trust each other as we lived shared, but somewhat separate, lives for part of the week. To carry us through each other's absence, we had to apply one of the most important lessons we had learned during our marriage: the importance (and art) of communication. Even if our only communication was exchanging texts, we continued to share each other's stories of the day, reminding us that even though we were apart, we were not alone.

We were both thankful when he no longer had to travel so much. However, the difficulty of these six months did bear some good fruit: it brought us to a new level of trust in each other, in our relationship, and in our love. And I am thankful for the shared story of our love and marriage that helped us bear our time apart. ■



Becky Eldredge is a spiritual director, a retreat facilitator, and author of the book *Busy Lives and Restless Souls* (Loyola Press, 2017).

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## The Joy of Love

POPE FRANCIS

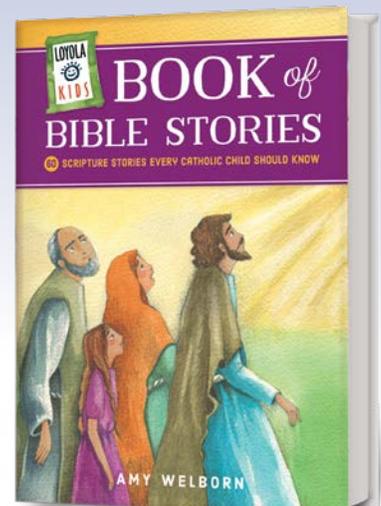
Love trusts, it sets free, it does not try to control, possess, and dominate everything. This freedom . . . can only enrich and expand relationships. ■

Jkom / Shutterstock.com

## Bible Stories for Kids

This collection of illustrated Bible stories is unlike any other offered to children in the Catholic faith. Following the liturgical calendar, the book includes 60 Scripture stories every Catholic child should know. Children can experience God's Word at Mass, and parents can reinforce the experience at home with this book. ■

*Loyola Kids Book of Bible Stories* by Amy Welborn (Loyola Press, 2017)



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# THE GREATEST IS LOVE

So faith, hope, and love remain, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

—1 CORINTHIANS 13:13

I recently reflected on this popular passage from St. Paul's letter to the community of believers at Corinth while with high school students during a mission trip to Quito, Ecuador.



As often as I have heard it proclaimed—or seen it framed for a wedding gift—I was still struck by something new.

Another adult leader had lived among the “poorest of the poor” in Quito for two years as a teacher. Now back in the United States and working as a public



defender, he has spent time with the people living on the margins of society.

St. Paul writes that while faith and hope are not to be dismissed, one must love above all else. Like many of us, my friend struggles mightily with God's presence in the plight of the oppressed and abandoned; he struggles to be hopeful in a world racked with violence and hate. His heart, however, is full of compassion, his life a witness to the power of love.

Jesus knows how difficult it is to always be faith-filled; he knows that we sometimes feel hopeless. Even in those moments, however, we are commanded to be patient, kind, and slow to anger. That is, we are commanded to be loving. ■

**Judie Gillespie** is chair of the theology department at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School in Milwaukee, WI.



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## SAINTLY HABITS

# Love of Learning



I love to learn things.

Not that I have a desire to be an expert in any one area; I don't learn to accumulate knowledge that I can then use to im-

press my friends or intimidate my foes. Rather, I enjoy the process of discov-

ery that happens whenever I learn something new.

I might be a lot like St. Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779–1865). She also loved to learn. Tutored in Greek, Latin, history, physics, and mathematics by her brother Louis—himself a seminarian—Madeleine discovered her vocation to be a teacher. For her, education wasn't just about learning abstract ideas or concepts. Rather, education was about learning how to live a life of virtue, and the best way to teach people how to live a life of virtue



is to live a virtuous life yourself. “Your example,” she said, “even more than your words, will be an eloquent lesson to the world.”

St. Madeleine reminds me that if I want to learn about Christ, then I can't just read about him. I have to imitate him. I can best learn about Christ by living a life of love, mercy, and compassion. ■

**Bob Burnham** is the author of *Little Lessons from the Saints: 52 Simple and Surprising Ways to See the Saint in You* (Loyola Press, 2017).



Sometimes I don't always "feel" love for another person. Is that normal?

**a:** *The challenges of life—and even the mundaneness of life—can*

*sometimes overwhelm us until the feeling of love gets buried.*

That's why Scripture reminds us that "love bears all things." (1 Corinthians 13:7) This means that love endures and even perseveres through difficult moments. Love is much



**love endures and even perseveres through difficult moments**

is a love that creates an "armor" to protect the relationship from that which may harm it. True love does not try to possess another human being but rather seeks to walk with that person in a relationship, trusting that the love that is shared will sustain and protect you from harm. ■

more than a feeling: it is a commitment to the well-being of another person.

At those times when we may not feel particularly loving, it is important to recognize that it is love itself that is carrying us through—bearing us up—in the face of challenges. Biblical love is much deeper and more complex than the superficial sense of love we often see portrayed in popular culture: it

**Joe Paprocki** is national consultant for faith formation for Loyola Press and author of *A Church on the Move* (Loyola Press, 2016).

## The Meal Box

How to Enjoy *The Meal Box*.

1. Learn more about one another by asking this question from *The Meal Box* at your next family meal.
2. Allow people time to respond, encouraging them to expand on their answers whenever possible.
3. Watch the mealtime conversation get cookin'!

More mealtime fun can be found in *The Meal Box* by **Bret Nicholaus** and **Tom McGrath**. (Loyola Press, 2009)

**5**  
THINGS

## Five Things I Learned From . . .

WEB • BOOKS • MUSIC • MOVIES • TV

### Beach Glass

I've learned a lot about my faith from collecting beach glass on the shores of Lake Michigan.



1. **Seek and you will find.** The more I collect certain items, the more I find them. If I seek God in my daily life, I'll find him.



2. **Take time to listen.** Walking along the beach is an opportunity to listen to God speak in the silence of my heart.
3. **Recognize beauty.** A piece of discarded

glass can be incredibly beautiful. God often transforms things we disregard into things of beauty.

4. **God always surprises me.** I'm surprised by the range of colors of glass in my collection, from pink to cobalt blue; God must love diversity.

5. **God loves each of us uniquely.** Each piece of glass is beautiful in its own unique way. So is each of us. ■

**Julianne Stanz** is the coauthor, with Joe Paprocki, of *The Catechist's Backpack* (Loyola Press, 2015).

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