Week One, Unit Two: October 13
Celebrating God’s Family

Please Share With Your Family
● Our lessons can be found at: http://stjohns-ed.org/

Opening Prayer
The Lord is my strength and my shield;
In him my heart trusts;
So I am helped, and my heart exults,
And with my song I give thanks to him. Amen.

Our Common Heritage
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/

● The Bible
The Old Testament reveals God’s mighty acts in creation, the deliverance of the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt, and the making of the old covenant with the chosen people. God’s saving will for his people is made known in the OT through the gift of the Law in the Ten Commandments and through the witness of the prophets. The OT is also known as the "Hebrew Scriptures." The New Testament describes the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, whose coming was foretold in the OT. It also tells the story of the creation of the Christian church through the gift of the Holy Spirit and presents the new covenant, based on love, which is the new relationship with God given by Jesus Christ to all who believe in him. (BCP, pp. 850-851).

● The Book of Common Prayer
The Book of Common Prayer is the book of services and prayers used by Episcopalians and the Anglican Communion throughout the world. It was originally published in England in 1549. No matter how diverse we are, we come together through our common worship.

● The Creeds
“The Creeds are statements of our basic beliefs about God” (BCP, p. 851). We will always have questions, but in the two foundational statements of faith – the Apostles’ Creed used at baptism, and the Nicene Creed used at communion – we join Christians throughout the ages in affirming our faith in the one God who created us, redeemed us, and sanctifies us.

● Baptism
“Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body, the Church” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 298). In the waters of baptism we are lovingly adopted by God into God’s family, which we call the Church, and given God’s own life to share and reminded that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ.

● Holy Communion
“We thank you ... for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of
your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 366). It goes by several names: Holy Communion, the Eucharist (which literally means "thanksgiving"), mass. But whatever it’s called, this is the family meal for Christians and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. As such, all persons who have been baptized, and are therefore part of the extended family that is the Church, are welcome to receive the bread and wine, and be in communion with God and each other.

- **The Sacraments**
  "Sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace" (Book of Common Prayer, p. 857). Besides baptism and the Eucharist (Holy Communion), the church recognizes other spiritual markers in our journey of faith. These include:
  - Confirmation (the adult affirmation of our baptismal vows), pp. 413-419, Book of Common Prayer
  - Reconciliation of a Penitent (private confession), pp. 447-452, Book of Common Prayer
  - Matrimony (Christian marriage), pp. 422-438, Book of Common Prayer
  - Orders (ordination to deacon, priest, or bishop), pp. 510-555, Book of Common Prayer
  - Unction (anointing with oil those who are sick or dying) pp. 453-467, Book of Common Prayer

  These help us to be a sacramental people, seeing God always at work around us.

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**Activity**

Let’s create a St. John’s scavenger hunt. Carefully explore the inside and outside of our church. Make a list of details that we can use to create questions that we can use to help others learn more about the details of our church.

**Our Next Project**

For our next project, we will record some of the stories of our parishioners. We’ll ask them about their memories of St. John’s, why they come to St. John’s, and what they hope to see in St. John’s in the future. For next Sunday, make a list of questions in your journals that we might ask someone about St. John’s.

**Closing Prayer**

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall always be on my lips.
I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
O taste and see that the Lord is good
Happy are those who trust in Him. Amen