

Son of David, Son of Abraham

Matthew 1–2

What We Found

- Matthew opens with a genealogy on purpose: the promises God swore to Abraham (blessing for all nations) and to David (an everlasting throne) both come true in Jesus.
- The family tree includes outsiders and scandal-shadowed stories. God has always worked through crooked lines, and no one's past disqualifies them from his plan.
- The child carries two names. Jesus means “the Lord saves” and announces his mission: to save his people from their sins. Emmanuel means “God with us” and announces who he is.
- Scripture and the Church's constant faith hold together: Mary conceived by the Holy Spirit and remained ever-virgin. What looked like a problem verse turned out to be an invitation to read the Bible with the family that wrote it down.
- The Magi sought, found, and worshiped; the scribes could point to Bethlehem from the prophets, yet Matthew records no journey of their own to worship him. Knowing about Christ is not the same as coming to him.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

The evangelist hides none of the sins of Jesus' ancestors. The Physician of souls was not ashamed of the family he entered; he came to heal the wounded line, and the honesty of the genealogy is good news for anyone who fears their past disqualifies them.

Voices of the Church: St. Jerome (Against Helvidius)

In Scripture's own way of speaking, “until” marks a point of emphasis without asserting what follows, and “brothers” in Scripture's idiom can denote kinsmen. Mary's perpetual virginity is the constant faith of the Church, not a later sentiment.

Voices of the Church: St. Leo the Great (Sermons on the Epiphany)

The Magi are the firstfruits of the nations, our ancestors in faith walking ahead of us to Bethlehem. In their gifts the whole mystery is confessed: gold for the King, incense for God, myrrh for the Man who would die.

Live It This Week

- Each morning, pray the Holy Name slowly, “Jesus, save me from my sins,” and let the name mean what the angel said it means.
- Read Matthew 1–2 once more on your own, marking every place Matthew quotes the Old Testament. Bring your count next week.
- Practice Emmanuel: give someone the gift of unhurried presence this week, a visit, a call, a meal, with your phone out of reach.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 1:23 (RSV2CE): *“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us).*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 3–4.

Catechism References

CCC 430 · CCC 496–497 · CCC 500 · CCC 528

My Guess (sealed until we reach the scene). Who do you say Jesus is, and how will the world come to know him?

When you have written your answer, fold this section closed and write your name on the outside. Do not discuss it yet. Bring this sheet back when your leader tells you the scene has arrived.

The New Exodus Begins

Matthew 3–4

What We Found

- John preaches at the Jordan announcing, in Isaiah's words, that the long exile is over and the Lord himself is returning to his people.
- At Jesus' baptism the Trinity is manifest: heaven opens, the Spirit descends, the Father declares his beloved Son. The same pattern is spoken over every Christian at baptism, which gives the Holy Spirit and is far more than a symbol.
- The Father's voice braids together Psalm 2 (the King) and Isaiah 42 (the Servant), and many readers from the earliest centuries have also heard Genesis 22 (the beloved son offered): the whole Gospel in one sentence.
- Forty days in the wilderness replay Israel's forty years. Jesus answers every temptation from Deuteronomy, standing firm exactly where Israel fell. He is the New Israel, rewriting the story from inside.
- Temptation opens by attacking identity: "If you are the Son of God." Jesus does not debate who he is; he answers with the word of God.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory Nazianzen (Oration 39, On the Holy Lights)

Christ is baptized so that we might go down into the water with him and rise with him. The Light needed no cleansing; he sanctified the Jordan for our sake and made water the beginning of new birth.

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory the Great (Homilies on the Gospels)

The ancient enemy tempted the Lord by the same approaches through which he conquered the first man. Christ overcame him with the patience of the word of God, teaching us how the battle is fought.

Voices of the Church: St. Hilary of Poitiers (Commentary on Matthew)

What was manifested over Christ at the Jordan is bestowed on the baptized: the heavens opened, the Spirit given, the Father's voice declaring sonship. We become sons in the Son.

Live It This Week

- Find out the date of your baptism and write it somewhere you will see it. If you can, thank someone who was there.
- Memorize this week's verse and pray it once each day before your first meal.
- Notice this week where temptation begins with “if”, with doubt about your identity as God's beloved child, and answer it out loud with Scripture.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 4:4 (RSV2CE): *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 5, and keep your running count of the places Matthew quotes the Old Testament.

Catechism References

CCC 535–537 · CCC 538–540 · CCC 1223–1225

The Beatitudes and the Fulfilled Law

Matthew 5

What We Found

- The road we have been tracking (Egypt, water, wilderness) arrived at a mountain. Like Moses at Sinai, Jesus ascends and God's teaching is given, but Jesus gives it as his own: the Lawgiver has come in person.
- The Beatitudes are a portrait before they are a program, and the face in the portrait is Christ's. They answer the human hunger for happiness, and their first and last lines promise the kingdom now.
- Jesus came not to abolish the Law but to fulfil it, and "but I say to you" moves every command from the hand to the heart.
- The righteousness of 5:20 is impossible on our own strength, and the Church agrees. The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which does not merely cover us but truly transforms us, so the Sermon can actually be lived: gift before it is task.
- Salt and light are for others: Jesus wants our good works visible so that glory passes through us to the Father.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount)

This sermon is the perfect measure of the Christian life, and the Beatitudes are an ordered ascent: from poverty of spirit the soul climbs step by step to the vision of God. It is the pattern for every disciple, not advice for the few.

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory of Nyssa (Homilies on the Beatitudes)

The Beatitudes are a mountain the Word himself leads us up, each blessing a higher step. The climb is possible because the One who commands the ascent climbs with us; the summit is seeing God, for which the heart must be made pure.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

Christ entrusted the flavor and brightness of the world to his disciples. Our good works are meant to be seen precisely so that praise passes through us and lands on the Father.

Live It This Week

- Pray one Beatitude each morning, slowly, asking Christ to make his portrait true in you.

- Take the antithesis that names your battlefield to confession or to honest prayer, asking not for willpower first but for grace.
- Do one good work someone could see, and when it is noticed, deflect the glory upward.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 5:16 (RSV2CE): *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 6–7, the rest of the Sermon on the Mount.

Catechism References

CCC 1716–1719 · CCC 577–578 · CCC 1965–1968

The Hidden Life of the Kingdom

Matthew 6–7

What We Found

- Jesus assumes his disciples give alms, pray, and fast (“when,” never “if”) and relocates all three into the secret where only the Father is watching. The angel Raphael commended the same three pillars in Tobit (Tobit 12:8), one of the seven books Catholic Bibles have always carried.
- What Jesus forbids in 6:7 is empty pagan word-piling, not familiar words: two verses later he gives a fixed prayer, in Gethsemane he prays “the same words” (Matthew 26:44), and heaven itself repeats its praise without ceasing (Revelation 4:8). The answer to bad repetition is not no repetition; it is attention.
- The Our Father’s seven petitions put the Father’s priorities first and our needs inside them: the whole Gospel in summary, and never merely a private prayer, always “our.”
- Against anxiety Jesus argues like a father: if God feeds birds and dresses lilies beyond Solomon, how much more you. Seek first the kingdom, and tomorrow is the Father’s business.
- The Sermon ends in dead earnest: not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” enters, but the one who does the Father’s will. Hearing these words and doing them is the rock.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Cyprian of Carthage (On the Lord’s Prayer)

We dare to call God Father only because the Son authorized the words: what could God refuse to those who pray in his Son’s own prayer? And every pronoun is plural: the prayer of Christians is never a private possession but the voice of the whole Church.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Letter to Proba, on Prayer)

Whatever words we pray, if we are praying rightly, we are saying nothing that is not already contained in the Lord’s Prayer. Run through its petitions and you will find every legitimate desire of the heart gathered there.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

The applause of men is paid in full on the spot and is worth exactly what it costs. What is done for the Father’s eyes alone is stored where no moth or thief can reach it.

Live It This Week

- Pray the Our Father once a day at walking speed, one petition at a time, and let it audit your other prayers.
- Choose one secret act: an alms nobody learns about, a fast nobody notices, a prayer with the door shut. Tell no one.
- When anxiety starts its speech this week, interrupt it out loud with this week's verse.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 6:33 (RSV2CE): *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 8–9, watching for how many different kinds of people come to Jesus and what he does for each.

Catechism References

CCC 1434 · CCC 2761 · CCC 2837 · CCC 2608–2615

The Messiah's Works

Matthew 8–9

What We Found

- After the Messiah's words come the Messiah's works: ten miracles showing the Sermon's authority touching lepers, commanding storms, forgiving sins, and raising the dead.
- Jesus heals through touch, word, and even the fringe of a garment: grace working through visible, physical things. The sacraments continue exactly this pattern.
- The centurion's humble sentence so pleased the Lord that the Church puts it on our lips before Communion at every Mass: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.
- Psalm 107 already told us who stills storms so the waves are hushed. The disciples' question in the boat, “what sort of man is this,” has an answer waiting in Israel's own prayer book.
- At the paralytic's healing, Jesus proved that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, and Matthew records the crowds glorifying God who had given such authority to men. Only God forgives sins, and God forgives through the men his Son sends.
- The first people in Matthew's narrative to address Jesus as “Son of David” are two blind men begging for mercy. The blind see who he is.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Sermons on the Gospels)

By declaring himself unworthy to receive Christ under his roof, the centurion showed himself worthy to receive Christ into his heart. Humility is the doorway the Lord delights to enter.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

At the paralytic's healing, the visible cure was given as witness of the invisible one: the healed body walked out as evidence of the absolved soul.

Voices of the Church: St. Peter Chrysologus (Sermons)

The woman reached for the hem and touched heaven: faith made a border of cloth a channel of divine power. God does not disdain to work through the smallest things his Son has touched.

Live It This Week

- At Mass this week, pray the centurion's line slowly and deliberately, remembering the man who first said it.
- Make a plan for confession this month: pick the day and put it where you will see it.
- Show one act of mercy-not-sacrifice this week: choose a person over a performance.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 9:13 (RSV2CE): *"Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 10–12, noticing what Jesus promises his messengers and what opposition begins to gather.

Catechism References

CCC 1503–1505 · CCC 1441–1442 · CCC 1386

Sent Out and Pushed Back

Matthew 10–12

What We Found

- Jesus gave twelve men his own authority and bound himself to them: he who receives you receives me. In Jewish law the commissioned agent stood in the sender's place; the apostles are Christ's agents, and the sending the apostles would later extend by appointing others begins here, with Christ sending the Twelve.
- Jesus promised his messengers wolves and crosses, not comfort, and declared that decision about him would divide even households. Whoever loses his life for his sake will find it.
- To John's question from prison, Jesus answered with Isaiah happening: the blind see, the lame walk, the poor hear good news. Blessed is the one whose broken expectations do not become offense.
- No one knows the Father except the Son, and the Son with that privilege immediately throws the door open: come to me, all who labor. The yoke is easy because he is yoked alongside.
- "Something greater than the temple is here." The temple housed God's presence; Jesus is that presence in person.
- "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother" does not demote Mary; by Jesus' own criterion she is the charter member of his family, blessed in body and more blessed in faith.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Clement of Rome (Letter to the Corinthians)

Christ was sent from God, the apostles from Christ, and the apostles appointed tested men to succeed them. The pattern of sent men sending men is as old as the Gospel itself.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (On Holy Virginity)

Mary is more blessed in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving his flesh. Far from demoting her, the Lord's words crown her twice: mother in body, first of all disciples in heart.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

The Lord does not remove the yoke but changes its nature: what makes labor light is love. Christ is yoked alongside, and what is carried with him ceases to crush.

Live It This Week

- Pray Matthew 11:28–30 each evening, naming your actual burden out loud before the Lord.
- Do one act this week as Christ's representative on purpose: a visit, an apology carried, a mercy delivered in his name.
- If Matthew 12:31 has ever frightened you, take heart. The Church teaches that there are no limits to God's mercy; the sin that cannot be forgiven is the deliberate, persistent refusal to accept that mercy, hardened into final impenitence (CCC 1864). Pastors have long observed that anguish over this sin is ordinarily a sign of a conscience still alive to grace, not of the sin itself. If the fear lingers, bring it to a priest or confessor.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 11:28 (RSV2CE): *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 13: seven parables of the kingdom. Note which one you understand least.

Catechism References

CCC 858–860 · CCC 551 · CCC 590 · CCC 1864

The Kingdom in Parables

Matthew 13

What We Found

- Parables reveal and conceal at once: to the open heart they carry the kingdom's secrets, to the closed they are riddles. A parable is a mirror; what you hear in it reveals what you have become.
- In the sower, the seed is never the variable; the soil is. The path, the rock, the thorns, and the good soil are four conditions of one heart, and soil can be worked.
- The kingdom's present season is mixed by the King's own design: wheat and weeds in one field, every kind of fish in one net, with the sorting reserved to God at the close of the age. Jesus says the field is the world (Matthew 13:38), and the Church has always read her own mixed life by the same light, since the weeds are gathered at the end out of his kingdom (Matthew 13:41). Sinners in the Church do not refute her; they confirm this description, and today's weeds may be tomorrow's wheat.
- The mustard seed and the leaven: smallest of beginnings, hidden operation, unstoppable growth, until the nations nest in the branches.
- The treasure and the pearl: the kingdom costs everything and is a bargain at the price. The finder sells all "in his joy."

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Sermons on the Gospels)

Those who are weeds today may be wheat tomorrow, and the reckless uprooter destroys what God is still growing. The separation is certain, but it belongs to the harvest and the Harvester, not to us.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

From twelve obscure men the faith has filled the world, as quietly and irresistibly as leaven works through dough. The smallness of the beginning is the demonstration of the power.

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory the Great (Homilies on the Gospels)

The treasure hidden in the field is the desire for heaven hidden in an ordinary life. What looks from outside like renunciation is, from inside, the shrewdest purchase ever made.

Live It This Week

- Reread the parable you understood least, once a day, and let it interrogate you rather than the reverse.

- Pray for one person whose place in the Church scandalizes or irritates you, remembering that someone may be praying the same way about you.
- Do one hidden, leaven-like act inside an ordinary structure of your life. Tell no one; let it work.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 13:44 (RSV2CE): *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 14-16. And do not forget: **bring your sealed Take-Home Sheet 1 with you next week.**

Catechism References

CCC 543-546 · CCC 827 · CCC 1036

You Are Peter

Matthew 14–16

What We Found

- The question you sealed in Session 1 was Jesus' own question at Caesarea Philippi: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter's answer, the Christ, the Son of the living God, came not from flesh and blood but from the Father. Right answers about Jesus are gifts before they are achievements.
- And the second half of your sealed question, how will the world come to know him, Jesus answered himself: "on this rock I will build my Church."
- Jesus taught in Aramaic; in that language the saying would be one word, twice: "you are Kepha, and on this kepha I will build my Church." A new name in Scripture is never decoration; Simon becomes Rock to become a foundation.
- The keys come from Isaiah 22: the royal steward of the house of David, an office under the king, over the household, that passes from holder to holder. The Son of David gave his kingdom a steward.
- Four verses after the keys, Peter is called Satan. The office never rested on Peter's perfection: the powers of death shall not prevail is a promise secured by the Builder, not by the strength of the building material.
- On the sea, the One who trampled the waves said "Take heart, it is I," and the boat worshiped. Peter's sinking prayer still works: Lord, save me.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Cyprian of Carthage (On the Unity of the Church)

The Lord built the Church upon Peter and established one chair, so that her unity would have a visible origin and sign. The primacy is given to Peter to show that the Church of Christ is one.

Voices of the Church: St. Leo the Great (Sermons)

The strength Christ conferred on Peter is not extinguished by Peter's death: in Peter's see, Peter's confession and Peter's care continue. The solidity given to the rock is bestowed through him on his successors.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

He who once could not bear a servant girl's question became, after grace perfected him, the shepherd Christ set over his flock. The change itself is the proof of what grace can build on weak stone.

Live It This Week

- Rewrite your answer to the sealed question on the back of your Session 1 sheet, dated this week. Keep both versions; we will look once more when the study ends.
- Pray for the Pope by name this week, and for your bishop: Christ sustains his Church through weak stones, and the men who carry apostolic office deserve the Church's prayers.
- Pray Peter's sinking prayer, "Lord, save me," in the moment this week when you feel the wind.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 16:16 (RSV2CE): *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 17–18.

Catechism References

CCC 442 · CCC 552–553 · CCC 881

The Transfigured Christ and His Church

Matthew 17–18

What We Found

- The Transfiguration is Sinai come back: six days, the mountain, the cloud, the voice, the shining face. But Moses shone with borrowed light; Jesus shines like the sun from within, with the Law and the Prophets standing witness.
- The Father's "listen to him" echoes Deuteronomy 18:15: the prophet like Moses has come, certified from heaven. When the cloud lifts, they see no one but Jesus only.
- Jesus gave his Church a real process for a brother's sin against you: go alone, then two or three witnesses, then tell it to the church. A church you can tell things to is a church you can find, and her binding and loosing is ratified in heaven.
- What Peter received alone in Matthew 16 (the rock, the keys, the new name) is never repeated; what is shared in 18:18 is truly shared. Neither a headless college nor a head without a body: a college with a head.
- Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is in the midst of them: a promise only God can make, and a bell we have heard ringing since chapter 1.
- Ten thousand talents forgiven; a hundred denarii choked out of a fellow servant. Forgiveness from the heart is the family resemblance of the forgiven.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Leo the Great (Sermon on the Transfiguration)

The Transfiguration removed the scandal of the cross in advance: the chosen witnesses saw the glory the crucified One possesses by right, so that what shone in the Head might be hoped for by the members.

Voices of the Church: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Letter to the Smyrnaeans)

Writing around the year 107 on his way to martyrdom, Ignatius already describes a visible, gathered, ordered Church: where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

Nothing we forgive one another compares with what God has forgiven us: a hundred coins against ten thousand talents. Mercy received and not passed on curdles into a worse debt than the first.

Live It This Week

- Name your ten thousand talents in prayer once this week: say out loud what God has actually forgiven you.
- Take one step of Matthew 18:15: one direct, private, gentle conversation you have been outsourcing to resentment.
- Before your group or family gathers this week, pray verse 20 and mean it: Lord, be in the midst of us.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 18:20 (RSV2CE): *“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 19–20.

Catechism References

CCC 554–556 · CCC 1443–1445 · CCC 881 · CCC 2843

The Road to Jerusalem

Matthew 19–20

What We Found

- Asked about grounds for divorce, Jesus went behind Moses to the beginning: what God has joined, no human authority may sever. Moses' certificate was a concession to hard hearts, never the design.
- The disciples' shock ("better not to marry") shows Jesus taught something stricter than every rabbinic school. Catholic tradition has often understood the exception clause to concern unions that were never true marriages, which is also what an annulment declares: not a Catholic divorce, but a finding that no valid bond existed. However the clause is read, it gives no permission to dissolve a valid marriage.
- Jesus answered their shock with a second gift: celibacy embraced for the sake of the kingdom, given to some as total availability for God. Two vocations, both graces.
- The rich young man was one possession away from following; his possessions possessed him. With men salvation is impossible; with God all things are possible.
- The vineyard's householder cheated no one and scandalized the dawn shift: grace is not wages, and the denarius is eternal life, God's own gift of himself, given whole to the eleventh-hour worker.
- The Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many: Isaiah 53 in Jesus' own mouth, and the reason for Jerusalem. Christ died for all, without a single exception.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (On Adulterous Marriages)

The bond of a consummated Christian marriage is dissolved by death alone. Separation may be permitted, but the bond endures: the Lord's appeal to the beginning admits no exception that ends a marriage God has joined.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

Jesus did not say riches are evil, but that clinging is fatal: the young man's possessions possessed him. What Christ asks, he asks as a physician prescribing freedom.

Voices of the Church: St. Gregory the Great (Homilies on the Gospels)

The hours of the vineyard are the ages of a life: some are called in the morning, some at evening. Let no one presume on a late call, and let no one despair of one; the denarius the householder pays is eternal life, which is communion with God himself.

Live It This Week

- If you are married, pray this week for your spouse by name and for one married couple under strain; if you are single, pray for the grace to hear your vocation as a call, not a verdict.
- Give something away this week that costs you: money, time, or the eleventh-hour grudge you have kept against someone God treated generously.
- Pray the Jericho prayer once each day: Son of David, have mercy on us.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 20:28 (RSV2CE): *“...even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 21–23: the King arrives at his city and his temple.

Catechism References

CCC 1614–1615 · CCC 1618–1619 · CCC 2053 · CCC 605

The Son of David in His Temple

Matthew 21–23

What We Found

- Jesus staged Zechariah 9:9 at the gates: the humble King on a donkey, greeted with Psalm 118's Hosanna. The Son of David list completed itself: the blind, a Canaanite mother, beggars, crowds, and children, never the experts. The small see.
- The temple cleansing spliced Isaiah's house of prayer for all peoples with Jeremiah's den of robbers: a mission failed and a judgment announced, with the fruitless fig tree as its sign.
- In the tenants parable, Jesus narrated his own death to the men planning it, and the rejected stone became the cornerstone.
- Psalm 110 answered whose son the Christ is: David's son according to the flesh, David's Lord according to his divinity. Only the Incarnation holds both, and no one could answer him a word.
- Jesus affirmed Moses' seat while condemning the men on it: the authority of an office does not depend on the holiness of its holders, a distinction we first met with Peter's keys.
- "Call no man father" targets the appetite for honor, not the vocabulary of love: Stephen, John, and Paul all claim or address spiritual fathers, and Paul tells the Corinthians that he became their father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (1 Cor 4:15). The warning's true edge cuts clericalism, and priests are commanded to be servants.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Andrew of Crete (Oration for Palm Sunday)

Let us spread before Christ not garments and branches but ourselves: lay down our own selves like cloaks before his feet, that he may ride into our souls as he rode into Jerusalem.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Expositions on the Psalms)

As man, Christ is David's son; as God, David's Lord. They could not answer because they would not confess both; the Church answers daily.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

Christ's severest words fall not on ignorance but on display. The disease is not the seat of Moses but the love of the seat; not the title but the appetite for it.

Live It This Week

- Pray Psalm 110 once this week and let its first verse carry the weight it carried in the temple courts.
- Perform one act of hidden honor: give away a seat, a credit, a salutation you could have kept.
- Pray for your priests by name, that they be the fathers the Gospel demands: the servants of all.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 22:37 (RSV2CE): *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 24–25: the last discourse, on the end of the temple and the end of the age.

Catechism References

CCC 559–560 · CCC 583–586 · CCC 439

Watch, Therefore

Matthew 24–25

What We Found

- Jesus foretold the temple's fall, and it happened within a generation, in the year 70; many interpreters read “this generation” as pointing to that event. The close of the age he expressly left undated: no one knows the day or hour. Anyone selling a date contradicts the discourse itself.
- “Son of man” has an address: Daniel 7, where one like a son of man comes on the clouds to the Ancient of Days and receives everlasting dominion. The humble-sounding title was an enthronement claim hiding in plain sight.
- The waiting time is a stewardship: oil that cannot be borrowed, talents that must not be buried. Watch means become someone, and be found so doing.
- At the judgment, the King is found hidden in the least: hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned. As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. Six of the Church's corporal works of mercy come straight off this list; tradition adds a seventh, burying the dead, and the Church names seven spiritual works besides (CCC 2447).
- Both sheep and goats are surprised: no one was keeping a ledger. Salvation is grace from first to last, and the grace that saves transforms: the sheep are what grace looks like when it has been allowed to finish its work.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homily 50 on Matthew)

Do not adorn the altar with silks while Christ shivers naked outside. The same Lord who said “this is my body” also said “you did it to me”: he is honored at the altar and in the poor together, or dishonored in both.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Sermons on the Gospels)

The oil could not be borrowed because it is inward: no one can lend you their conscience, their charity, their readiness. The difference at midnight was not wakefulness but what each had become before the cry.

Voices of the Church: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures)

We preach not one coming only but a second far more splendid: the Lord who was judged will come as Judge. The time between is given for mercy.

Live It This Week

- Choose one of the six works of mercy named in this scene and do it this week, in person where possible: the scene joins material help to personal presence; give what is needed, and where possible give it face to face.
- Pray each morning: Lord, let me recognize you today in the least, and not walk past.
- Set aside a few extra quiet minutes before next session: we will stand at the cross, and we will do it reverently.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 25:40 (RSV2CE): *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 26–27, slowly and prayerfully. Come quietly next week.

Catechism References

CCC 671–673 · CCC 1038–1041 · CCC 2447

The Blood of the Covenant

Matthew 26-27

What We Found

- At Passover, over a sacrificial meal, the four verbs of the feedings returned: he took, blessed, broke, and gave, and said: Take, eat; this is my body. At a Passover table, the lamb was never a symbol of a lamb.
- “My blood of the covenant” quotes Sinai (Exodus 24) and seals the new covenant Jeremiah promised, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins: the mission his name announced in chapter 1, accomplished. This is why the Mass is a sacrifice: the one offering of the cross made present, never repeated.
- St. Paul warns that unworthy communion profanes the body and blood of the Lord, and St. Ignatius, within living memory of the apostles, calls the Eucharist the flesh of our Savior. The Church's realism is as old as her martyrs.
- In Gethsemane the cup was accepted with the Our Father's own words: not as I will, but as you will. Under oath at trial, Jesus spent Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 in one sentence, and died for the claim.
- Peter and Judas both failed the same night; the difference was the direction of the sorrow. Peter wept toward the Lord and was restored. The Church has never needed her first pope sinless, only repentant.
- The cry from the cross is the first line of Psalm 22, a psalm that begins in dereliction and ends with all the ends of the earth turning to the LORD. At his death the curtain tore from top to bottom, and a Gentile soldier confessed: truly this was the Son of God.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Ignatius of Antioch (Letter to the Smyrnaeans)

The mark of false teachers is that they abstain from the Eucharist because they do not confess it to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father raised.

Voices of the Church: St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Mystagogical Catecheses)

Do not judge by taste, but be fully assured by faith: since Christ himself declared of the bread, this is my body, who shall dare to doubt? He who changed water to wine is worthy of trust over bread and wine.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Expositions on the Psalms, on Psalm 22, summarized)

Augustine teaches that in this psalm the Head cries out in the words of our darkness, taking the voice of sinful humanity into his own mouth; and the same psalm runs on to the feast of the poor

and the turning of the nations. The cross it describes is the cross that conquers.

Live It This Week

- Attend Mass with this session in your hands: at the words of institution, hear Exodus 24, Jeremiah 31, and the upper room.
- Pray Psalm 22 once, whole, for someone in dereliction right now.
- If it has been long since confession, let Peter's tears lead you there before this study ends.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 26:28 (RSV2CE): *"...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 28, our final chapter. And bring **both versions of your guess:** your Session 1 sheet with the rewrite you added after Session 8.

Catechism References

CCC 610-611 · CCC 1339 · CCC 1365-1366 · CCC 603

He Is Risen: The Great Commission

Matthew 28

What We Found

- He has risen, as he said: the sign of Jonah, the only sign promised, paid in full on the third day. The first witnesses were women, a detail no inventor would choose, and the risen Lord met them on the road, and they took hold of his feet, a body they could grasp, and worshiped him.
- The guards' bribe is the oldest objection, and it concedes the decisive fact: the tomb was empty, and both sides knew it. Men die for false beliefs sincerely held; they do not die for what they know they invented.
- All authority in heaven and on earth: Daniel 7 fulfilled, the Son of man enthroned. All nations: Genesis 22 kept, Abraham's promise become the Church's marching orders. One name, three Persons, over every baptism. All that I have commanded, handed on as the Church's curriculum.
- The Gospel's last sentence answers its first chapter: Emmanuel, God with us... I am with you always, to the close of the age. Matthew ends with no departure, only a presence that never leaves. That was the study's title, and the Gospel's master key, all along.
- Where does the presence live now? In the Church built on the rock, in the least of these, and above all on the altar: the tabernacle lamp is Matthew 28:20 burning in real time.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Athanasius (On the Incarnation)

The surest proof of the resurrection is its ongoing effect: death, once mankind's tyrant, is trampled and mocked by Christians who face it without fear. A dead man works no such change.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

"I am with you always" was not spoken to the apostles alone, for they would not remain until the close of the age: the Lord speaks to the whole body of the faithful in every generation, one Church accompanied by her Head until the end.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Expositions of the Psalms)

It is no great thing to believe that Christ died; the pagans and the wicked believe that too. The faith of Christians is the resurrection of Christ. That he rose is the Church's own treasure and the hinge of everything, and our faith stands with the empty tomb.

Live It: The Commission at Your Size

- Visit the Blessed Sacrament once this week and pray Matthew 28:20 there: the promise, kept, in the room with you.
- Tell one person outside this group one thing you found in this Gospel.
- Keep both versions of your guess inside your Bible at Matthew 16, and read them again in a year.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 28:20b (RSV2CE): “...and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”

Where to Go from Here

Matthew ends with the Church sent; the Acts of the Apostles begins with the Church going. Consider Acts, or a Gospel with a different voice (John), as your next companion. And whatever you read next, keep the method this study taught you: the new Gospel with the old Scriptures open beside it, like a scribe trained for the kingdom, bringing out treasure new and old.

Catechism References

CCC 641-644 · CCC 645, 656 · CCC 849-850