

RESCUED

Family Page • Session 1: Come and See • John 1:35-42

WHAT WE READ

John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and called him the Lamb of God, and we flashed back to Exodus 12 to see how a lamb's blood on the doorposts spared the firstborn of Israel on the night they left Egypt. Two of John's followers went after Jesus, and Jesus turned and spoke his first recorded words in John's Gospel, a question: What do you seek? When they asked where he was staying, he said, Come and see. They spent the afternoon with him. One of them, Andrew, went to his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, and Jesus gave Simon a new name: Peter, which means rock.

THE BIG IDEA

Being a Christian starts with meeting a person, not passing a test. Jesus invites people before he asks anything of them. For those who have been baptized, that friendship began at Baptism, and it is meant to keep growing (CCC 1254).

MEMORY VERSE

“Come and see.” (John 1:39)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

If Jesus asked you, What do you seek?, what would you say? (Parents, answer it too. Your child wrote a private answer in class on a card they keep; do not ask to see it unless they offer.)

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Two minutes a day: ask Jesus, What do you want me to see today? Then be quiet for the rest of the two minutes.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you asked your first friends what they were looking for. We are looking for you. Help our family come and see. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 2: What He Came For. We read about Zacchaeus, the man who climbed a tree to see Jesus (Luke 19:1-10). Reading the story ahead of time as a family is a great idea, but not required.

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Family Page • Session 2: What He Came For • Luke 19:1-10

WHAT WE READ

We flashed back to Genesis 3, where the first sin began with distrust, the man and woman hid, and God came looking with his first question after sin: Where are you? Then, in the present: Zacchaeus was a wealthy chief tax collector in Jericho. When Jesus came through, Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed a tree to see him. Jesus stopped, called him by name, and invited himself to dinner before Zacchaeus said a word. The crowd complained that Jesus was the guest of a sinner. Zacchaeus promised half his money to the poor and promised to repay anyone he had cheated four times over. Jesus said: the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

THE BIG IDEA

Sin is real, and it began in the garden: distrust, hiding, blaming. Because of that first sin we are all born without the holiness God intended, which the Church calls original sin, not a sin a baby committed (CCC 404-405). But God came looking in the garden, and Jesus goes looking for lost people. He goes first, before we deserve it, and meeting him changes what we do: with his help we turn around and make things right. No one is too far gone for him.

MEMORY VERSE

“For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

Jesus went first with Zacchaeus; he called his name before Zacchaeus did anything to earn it. When has someone reached out to you first, before you deserved it?

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Make one thing right this week: an apology, something borrowed, a promise broken. Parents, your child chose one; you might choose one too.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you knew Zacchaeus by name and you know each of us. Come to our house today. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 3: Who Is This? We read about four friends who dig through a roof to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus (Mark 2:1-12).

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Family Page • Session 3: Who Is This? • Mark 2:1-12

WHAT WE READ

We flashed back to Isaiah 43:25 and Psalm 103:2-3, which speak of God forgiving sins and healing diseases. Then, in the present: four friends carried a paralyzed man to Jesus, could not get through the crowded door, and dug through the roof to lower him down. Jesus saw their faith and said, My son, your sins are forgiven. The religious experts were outraged: only God can forgive sins. Jesus asked which is easier to say, and then told the man to get up and walk, to prove he had the authority to forgive. The man walked out, and the crowd said they had never seen anything like it.

THE BIG IDEA

Only God can forgive sins. Jesus forgave a man's sins and healed him to prove it. So Jesus is not just a good teacher. He is God, true God and true man (CCC 464, 1441). That is why what he does on the cross next week can save us.

MEMORY VERSE

“The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” (Mark 2:10)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

The four friends would not give up until their friend was in front of Jesus. Who has carried you toward God? Who could our family carry?

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Every day this week, pray for one person by name for one minute, someone you would like to bring closer to Jesus.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you are God, and you can forgive what nobody else can. Forgive us, and help our family carry others to you. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 4: He Gave His Life for You. We read the crucifixion in Luke 23, and we find Isaiah 53, written centuries before the cross.

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Family Page • Session 4: He Gave His Life for You • Luke 23:32-46

WHAT WE READ

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. His first words were a prayer for the men killing him: Father, forgive them. The rulers, the soldiers, and one criminal all told him to save himself. He did not, because saving himself would have meant not saving us. The other criminal admitted he deserved his sentence, said Jesus had done nothing wrong, and turned to him: Jesus, remember me. Jesus promised him: today you will be with me in Paradise. We flashed back, in pairs, to Isaiah 53, written centuries earlier: he was wounded for our transgressions; and we remembered the Passover lamb from our first session. Then we answered the question the whole study has been reading toward: why did Jesus have to die?

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus freely gave his life for our sins, for every single person (CCC 605, 613-614). The Father already loved us; the Father and the Son chose this together. The criminal beside Jesus could not earn God's first gift of grace, but he admitted his sin and turned to Jesus in trust, and Jesus welcomed him. We cannot earn God's first gift of grace; with his help we respond in faith, repentance, and love. It is never too late to turn to Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

The criminal beside Jesus admitted what he had done and turned to Jesus. If you turned to Jesus tonight, what would you want him to remember about you? Parents, you go first.

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Once a day, look at a crucifix and say one sentence: You did that for me.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you did not save yourself, so that you could save us. We are sorry for our sins. Remember our family. Amen.

ONE MORE QUESTION

Ask your child the study's big question: why did Jesus have to die? Listen to how they answer it now, four sessions in.

NEXT TIME

Session 5: Death Did Not Win. We read the story of two disciples walking home on Easter Sunday who do not recognize the stranger beside them, and then Jesus proving to his friends that he is not a ghost (Luke 24:13-43).

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Family Page • Session 5: Death Did Not Win • Luke 24:13-43

WHAT WE READ

We read Psalm 16 and saw how St. Peter applied it to Jesus: God did not abandon him to death, and his body did not decay. Jesus truly died, was buried, and rose again. Then, in the present: on Easter afternoon two disciples walked home to Emmaus, sad, telling a stranger how they had hoped Jesus was the one. The stranger explained the things concerning himself in the Scriptures. At dinner he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened: it was Jesus, alive. He vanished, and they went straight back to Jerusalem that same hour, where the other disciples greeted them with the news: The Lord has risen indeed. Then Jesus himself stood among them, showed them his hands and feet, and ate a piece of fish to prove he was not a ghost.

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus really rose from the dead, in a real body that could be touched and could eat; it is the foundation of everything we believe (CCC 638-639, 645). And the two disciples met him the way we still do: in the Scriptures opened on the road and in the bread broken at the table. That is the shape of every Mass, the readings and then the Eucharist (CCC 1347).

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord has risen indeed.” (Luke 24:34)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

The two disciples did not recognize Jesus walking right beside them. Where might Jesus be walking beside our family this week without us noticing?

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

At Mass this Sunday, watch for the two halves of Emmaus: the readings, and the bread taken, blessed, broken, and given. Talk about where you saw them on the drive home.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you are alive. Walk beside our family, open the Scriptures to us, and open our eyes. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 6: Come Home. We read the story of the son who ran away and the father who ran to meet him (Luke 15:11-24).

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Family Page • Session 6: Come Home • Luke 15:11-24

WHAT WE READ

We flashed back to Isaiah 55: return to the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon. Then, in the present: a son asked for his inheritance early, left home, wasted everything, and ended up feeding pigs, so hungry he wanted their food. He came to himself and headed home, planning to ask for a job as a servant. But his father saw him while he was still far off, ran to him, and embraced him before he could finish his speech. Then the father gave him a robe, a ring, shoes, and a feast: my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

THE BIG IDEA

God is like this father. He runs when we turn around. The Church uses this story to describe what happens in Confession (CCC 1439): we tell the truth to the priest, and through his absolution Jesus himself forgives us and welcomes us home. Coming back to God is not about getting the speech right. It is about turning around and walking.

MEMORY VERSE

“While he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran.” (Luke 15:20)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

What is the difference between feeling sorry about something and actually taking a step to put it right? Parents, share a time you had to walk home.

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Help your child take the appropriate next step. Those already prepared for Confession can go with the family before the next session, each person making a private confession; the parish schedule came home tonight. Those preparing for Baptism or First Reconciliation should speak with the parish about preparation. Do not ask your child to tell you what they confessed.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, you saw us while we were still far off, and you ran. Give our family the courage to turn around. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 7: You Are Not on Your Own. We read what happened when three thousand people asked, What shall we do? (Acts 2:37-47).

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Family Page • Session 7: You Are Not on Your Own • Acts 2:37-47

WHAT WE READ

We flashed back to Ezekiel 36, where God promised clean water, a new heart, and his own Spirit within us, six centuries before Pentecost. Then, in the present: at Pentecost, after St. Peter preached that the crucified Jesus is Lord, the crowd asked, What shall we do? Peter told them: repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand were baptized that day. Then they devoted themselves to four things together: the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers, and the Lord added to their number day by day.

THE BIG IDEA

The answer to what shall we do is not try harder. It is be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit (CCC 1213). If your child has been baptized, they have already walked through that door; if not, the door is open and the parish will help. We also heard plainly what the Eucharist is: at Mass the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, truly present (CCC 1374). And the Christian life is lived with the Church: its teaching, its community, the Eucharist, and prayer together (Acts 2:42). We can pray alone, but we are not meant to follow Jesus in isolation.

MEMORY VERSE

“You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

If your child was baptized, do they know the date, and who their godparents are? Tell the story of that day. If you have a photo, get it out. If your child has not been baptized and you would like to talk about it, the parish would be glad to help.

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Your child picked one of the four things in Acts 2:42 to do this week. Ask which one, and do it together if you can: Mass, a parish activity, reading the Gospel together, or praying with one other person.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Holy Spirit, you are God, and you come to us as a gift. Thank you. Make our family part of your family. Amen.

NEXT TIME

Session 8: Your Next Yes. Our last session: the risen Jesus sends his friends out, and promises to be with them always (Matthew 28:16-20).

RESCUED

Family Page • Session 8: Your Next Yes • Matthew 28:16-20

WHAT WE READ

We read how God called Abram to leave his homeland and promised that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Then, in the present: the risen Jesus met his disciples on a mountain. They worshiped him, though some doubted, and he sent them anyway: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And his last words were a promise: I am with you always, to the close of the age. We also found Acts 1:8: you shall be my witnesses. Then each student told the story of these eight sessions in their own words, in under a minute.

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus sends his followers to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to live what he commanded, and the Church has done exactly that for two thousand years, all the way to your family (CCC 849). Everyone who has received the faith is called to pass it on (CCC 3). Your child is the next link. It is not a burden, and it begins with God's grace, not with a perfect speech; it comes with a promise: I am with you always.

MEMORY VERSE

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

ONE QUESTION FOR DINNER

Ask your child to tell you the story of these eight sessions in one minute: who Jesus is, what he did, what he offers. Then you tell it back to them.

THIS WEEK'S ONE STEP

Your child wrote the name of one person they could invite, the way Andrew invited his brother, and a sentence about how they will follow Jesus with someone's help. Ask who, and help them do it, leaving the other person free to say yes or no.

A PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, you are with us always. Send our family, and go with us. Amen.

THANK YOU

Eight sessions, eight passages, one story. Your child has practiced finding passages in a Bible, telling the story of what God has done in Jesus, praying honestly, and choosing one step at a time. Keep the family pages: eight passages introducing the heart of the Gospel and inviting your family into continued life with Christ and his Church. And keep coming and seeing.

NEXT TIME

There is no next session, but there is a next yes. Keep the dinner question going: what did you see this week?