

Behold My Servant

Isaiah 42-45 • Leader Preparation Guide

SESSION OVERVIEW

DISCOVERY AIM

Participants meet the Servant: God's job posting in 42:1-9 for one who will bring justice to the nations without shouting, without breaking a bruised reed, and they discover Matthew quoting the posting's opening lines (42:1-4) over Jesus. They hear the most tender chapter in the book, 43, spoken over exiles and over themselves: called by name, carried through waters, precious, honored, loved. They laugh at the idol-carpenter of 44, meet the most surprising hire in Scripture, Cyrus the anointed pagan, in 45, and then discover Paul doing the unthinkable: taking the fiercest monotheistic oath in the Old Testament, every knee shall bow, and placing Jesus at its center.

CATHOLIC TOUCHSTONE

The divinity of Christ, confessed from inside Israel's strictest monotheism, and the dignity of the baptized: called by name through the waters, as the Church's font-typology hears these chapters (CCC 1220-1221). Also the Catechism's doctrine that the Messiah's identity is revealed above all in the Servant Songs (CCC 713), the trail your group begins walking tonight.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Tonight the study's most important character walks on stage. Isaiah 42:1-9 is the first of four passages scholars call the Servant Songs (42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Read the opening as what it is, a royal presentation: *"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him."* The Catechism says plainly that the Messiah's characteristics are revealed *above all* in these songs (CCC 713), so handle them as the treasure they are. Tonight's song gives the Servant's job description: he will bring forth justice to the nations, and his method is the strangest in the history of power: *"He will not cry or lift up his voice... a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench."* No shouting, no propaganda, no trampling of the almost-broken. And his commission widens with a phrase your group has been tracking since 2:5: God gives him *"as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind"* (42:6-7).

Now the puzzle you must set carefully and refuse to solve: who is the Servant? Because Isaiah seems to answer it, twice, in these very chapters: *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen"* (41:8); *"Hear now, O Jacob my servant"* (44:1). Israel is the servant. And yet the servant of the songs has Israel's job description turned toward Israel itself, and next session the tension becomes explicit. Tonight, plant the question honestly, let 41:8 and 44:1 be read aloud, and keep your leader's poker face. The sealed guesses come out in two sessions; everything between now and then should feel like evidence accumulating.

Chapter 43 is the most tender sustained passage in the book and should be read slowly and personally: *"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the*

waters I will be with you” (43:1-2), and the sentence exiled Israel had stopped believing anyone could say about them: “*Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you*” (43:4). The Church’s baptismal typology naturally gathers these waters (CCC 1220-1221 read the water-crossings as baptism prefigured); let the group hear it too, but let them hear it first as what it was: love declared over people who had earned the exile they were sitting in. Add 43:25, a verse to bank for Session 11: “*I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake.*” Forgiving sins belongs properly to God, stated in the divine first person; the scribes of Mark 2:7 were voicing that same biblical conviction when they asked who can forgive sins but God alone. The question is what follows when Jesus does it.

Chapter 44 contains the Bible’s funniest sustained satire: the carpenter who cuts a log, burns half to roast his dinner and warm himself, “*and the rest of it he makes into a god*” (44:16-17). Read it for the comedy and then turn the blade: our idols are less obviously ridiculous only because we do not see ourselves kneeling. Then the hire no one saw coming: “*Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus*” (45:1), *his anointed*, Hebrew *mashiach*, a pagan emperor given the messiah-word, called “*my shepherd*” (44:28), grasped by the right hand to set exiles free, “*though you do not know me*” (45:4). God’s providence employs people who do not know him; history’s Auditor signs paychecks in every currency. And the chapter that starts with a pagan messiah ends at the widest horizon in the Old Testament: “*Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!... To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear*” (45:22-23), sworn by God’s own life, in the chapter that repeats *I am the LORD, and there is no other* like a drumbeat. Hold the group on that verse; the discovery that follows it is the summit of the night.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Roots. The Servant’s presentation formula (*behold... my chosen... my Spirit upon him*) gathers the anointings of Israel’s story: the Spirit rushing on David (1 Samuel 16:13), the shoot of 11:1-2 on whom the Spirit rests. The waters of 43:2 are the Red Sea and the Jordan remembered forward. Cyrus as shepherd stands in the line of God wielding Assyria as an axe (10:15): pagan powers as instruments, now for restoration rather than judgment; Ezra 1:1-4 records Cyrus doing exactly what 44:28 said, decreeing the return and the temple’s rebuilding.

Fulfillment. Matthew 12:15-21 quotes the opening of tonight’s Servant Song, Isaiah 42:1-4, the longest formal Old Testament quotation in his Gospel, over Jesus healing crowds and ordering silence: the unshouting Servant, identified by name. At the Jordan the Father speaks the song’s opening over Jesus, “*my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*” (Matthew 3:17), fused with Psalm 2. Mark 2:5-12 shows Jesus exercising 43:25’s divine prerogative and proving it with a healing. And Philipians 2:9-11 performs the boldest citation in the New Testament: the oath of Isaiah 45:23 with the name of Jesus installed at its center, “*that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (CCC 449).

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Thérèse of Lisieux • *Story of a Soul*

The bruised reed finds a natural Doctor in St. Thérèse. Read Isaiah 42 alongside *Story of a Soul* and the resonance is immediate; her little way breathes the Servant’s method: God does not break what is bent or snuff what barely burns; he stoops to weakness, and it is precisely our littleness, offered with confidence, that draws down his mercy. Souls afraid they are too damaged for God have, on

the authority of Isaiah 42, exactly the qualifications the Servant is looking for.

St. Hilary of Poitiers • *On the Trinity*

Defending Christ's divinity against the Arians, St. Hilary insists that Scripture's monotheism is not embarrassed by the Son but expressed in him: the honors, prerogatives, and worship that Isaiah reserves for God alone are, in the Gospel, rendered to Jesus without any protest from heaven, because the Son is not a second god beside the LORD but the LORD's own eternal Son, true God from true God. Read with him, Philippians 2 is not an exception to Isaiah 45 but its unveiling.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem • *Catechetical Lectures*

Preparing candidates for baptism, St. Cyril taught them to hear Israel's water-crossings, the Red Sea above all, as their own biography in advance: the water that drowned the tyrant and carried Israel out is the water they were about to enter. Set Isaiah 43 beside that catechesis and the promise becomes personal in the font: *when you pass through the waters I will be with you*; called by name, claimed as his, brought through the water into freedom.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

- **CCC 713-714.** The Messiah's characteristics are revealed above all in the Servant Songs: he will pour out the Spirit not by speaking but by giving himself, taking the form of a slave. The Catechism hands you tonight's hermeneutic in advance.
- **CCC 449.** By attributing to Jesus the divine title *Lord*, the first confessions of faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honor, and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus. Philippians 2 is the Catechism's own exhibit.
- **CCC 2112-2113.** Idolatry is not only false pagan worship; it consists in divinizing what is not God: power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money. The carpenter of Isaiah 44 has modern franchises.
- **CCC 1220-1221.** The Church reads Israel's passages through water as prefigurations of baptism; hearing Isaiah 43:1-2 there is this study's application of that typology. The promise belongs to every baptized person by name.

THREAD WATCH

THREADS TONIGHT

The Servant: the puzzle set. Israel is named the servant (41:8; 44:1); the Servant of the song has a mission that will turn toward Israel. Plant both facts, resolve nothing, and do not say the word *guess*.

Light to the nations: 42:6, the thread's third station (2:5; 9:2; now 42:6). One more major station next session, then the sunrise in Session 13's reading.

The arm: it recurs at 48:14 in this stretch. If anyone notices, nod and move on.

Forgiveness as divine prerogative (43:25): bank it. It returns when a Servant bears sins, and when a Galilean forgives them.

SESSION GOALS

1. Present the first Servant Song as royal presentation and job description, and discover Matthew 12's full quotation.
2. Set the Servant puzzle honestly with 41:8 and 44:1 on the table, resolving nothing.
3. Let 43:1-7 be heard personally and baptismally, and bank 43:25.
4. Run the idol satire of 44 for laughter and conviction, with CCC 2113's modern inventory.
5. Meet Cyrus the anointed pagan and articulate providence working through those who do not know God.
6. Discover Philippians 2:10-11 quoting Isaiah 45:23, run the unitarian steelman at full strength, and confess the divinity of Christ from inside monotheism.

TIME NOTE (90 MINUTES)

SUGGESTED CLOCK

Gather and opening prayer, 5 min. Win, 10 min. Build, 55 min. Send, 10 min. Live It, memory verse, Take-Home, closing prayer, 10 min.

Pre-chosen cuts if running long: cut Question 6 (Cyrus detail and the Cylinder Dig Deeper) first; compress Question 5 (the idol satire) second. Never cut the Servant Song, the 43 reading, or the Philippians 2 discovery and steelman.

Behold My Servant

Isaiah 42-45 • Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Father, you have called us by name, and we are yours. Through every water we have passed, you were in it with us.

Tonight you present your Servant. Give us eyes to study him: the quiet voice, the hands that will not break the bruised, the light kindled for every nation. Teach us his method, and make us unafraid of his identity.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

WIN • OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Think of the gentlest strong person you have ever known, someone with real power who never used it to crush. What made them safe to be weak around?
2. Fill in the blank honestly, no theology required yet: right now I feel like a bruised ____ or a dimly burning ____ in the area of my life where ____.

BUILD • INDUCTIVE STUDY

The Job Posting (Isaiah 42:1-9)

1. Read Isaiah 42:1-4 aloud, twice. This is a royal presentation: God introducing someone to the court of heaven and earth. Collect the details: what is the Servant given, what is his task, and, most carefully, what is his *method*, stated three times in negatives?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

Given: God's upholding, God's choosing, God's delight, and God's Spirit put upon him, the group met that resting Spirit in Session 4 at the Jordan. The task, repeated three times in four verses: to bring forth *justice*, *mishpat*, the very thing the vineyard failed to yield in Session 1, and to bring it *to the nations*, and not to quit until it is established in all the earth.

The method, in negatives: he will not cry aloud or lift up his voice in the street, no shouting campaign, no propaganda machine; "*a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench*", the almost-broken and the barely-burning are precisely the ones he refuses to write off; and "*he will not fail or be discouraged*", gentleness with infinite stamina. Every empire the exiles had ever seen brought its justice by breaking reeds. God's Servant conquers the world without raising his voice. St. Thérèse's little way lives by this method: if you are bruised and dim, you are not disqualified; you are his specialty.

2. Read 42:5-9. The Creator himself commissions the Servant with two phrases in verse 6 that name what he *is*, not just what he does. What are they, and which one have we been tracking since Session 1?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

"I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations." Not merely a covenant messenger: the covenant in person; not a lamp-carrier: the light itself. And *light to the nations* is our oldest thread at its third station: *walk in the light of the LORD* (2:5), the great light on Galilee (9:2), and now light with a worldwide address, opening blind eyes and freeing prisoners from dungeons (42:7). Whoever this Servant is, in him God's covenant and the nations' illumination are a *person*. Say it and move on; the identity question is about to get properly complicated.

LIVE DISCOVERY

One evangelist quotes the opening of tonight's job posting in full, Isaiah 42:1-4, the longest Old Testament quotation in his whole Gospel, and hangs it on a specific behavior of Jesus that puzzled everyone: after healing crowds, he ordered people not to make him known. Find the scene and the quotation in Matthew 12. Pairs, 3-4 minutes.

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Matthew 12:15-21. Jesus heals *all* who followed, then orders silence, and Matthew explains the strange publicity policy by unrolling Isaiah 42:1-4 in full: *"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen... He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will any one hear his voice in the streets; he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick."* The no-shouting clause explains the no-publicity order: the Servant's method is constitutionally allergic to the machinery of fame. And the Father had already spoken the song's first line over him at the Jordan: *"my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). The Catechism says the Messiah's identity is revealed *above all* in these songs (CCC 713); Matthew evidently agreed, and tonight your group has begun the same dossier.

3. Now the complication, and it needs to be read aloud from your own Bibles: Isaiah 41:8 and 44:1. Who does God explicitly call *"my servant"* in these verses? Sit with the difficulty honestly: what tension does this create with the Servant of the song, and, for now, what should we do with it?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Israel. *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen"* (41:8); *"Hear now, O Jacob my servant"* (44:1). The nation itself carries the title, which was always Israel's vocation: to be God's servant-people, light for the world. And yet the Servant of the song is presented with a mission of world-justice and prisoner-release that battered, exiled Israel is in no condition to perform, and the coming songs will sharpen the problem considerably. So the honest state of the evidence tonight: the Servant is Israel; and the Servant seems to be more than Israel. Do not resolve it. Write the tension in your margin, keep reading, and let Isaiah build his case. The study will open this question formally soon enough.

Called by Name (Isaiah 43:1-7, 25)

4. Read Isaiah 43:1-4 aloud slowly, and then have someone read it a second time replacing *Jacob* and *Israel* with their own name. What does God declare over exiles who fully earned their exile, and what, in verse 2, is the actual promise about waters and fire?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

The declarations: I created you; I formed you; *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”* And verse 4, the sentence the exiles had stopped believing was sayable about them: *“Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you.”* Notice the tense and the audience: this is not spoken to Israel at her best; it is spoken into the middle of the punishment. God’s love is not the wage of our performance; it is the ground under our repentance, the same prevenient grace the group met at 1:18.

And verse 2 promises presence, not exemption: *when* you pass through the waters, not *if*, *“I will be with you.”* The waters come; the promise is company and preservation through them, Red Sea and Jordan remembered forward. The Church’s font-typology belongs here (CCC 1220-1221 read the water-crossings as baptism prefigured), and St. Cyril of Jerusalem taught his catechumens to read Israel’s crossings as their own biography in advance: at your baptism, you were called by name, through water, and claimed: *you are mine*. If anyone at the table does not know the date of their baptism, finding it out is this week’s homework; it is the date this verse became yours by name.

5. Read Isaiah 43:25. Who forgives sins, on whose account, and why bank this verse? (Keep Mark 2:5-12 in your pocket.)

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

“I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.” The doubled *I* is emphatic: forgiving sins belongs properly to God alone, exercised for his own name’s sake. Which means the scribes in Mark 2:7, *“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”*, were not being legalistic; they were voicing the very conviction Isaiah 43:25 puts in God’s own mouth. The scandal is what happens next in that room in Capernaum: a Galilean rabbi says *“your sins are forgiven”* and heals a paralytic to prove the sentence stuck. Bank tonight’s verse; it is one of the quiet hinges on which the identity of Jesus, and of Isaiah’s Servant, will turn.

The Carpenter and the Emperor (Isaiah 44:9-20; 44:28-45:7)

6. Read Isaiah 44:13-17, and permit yourselves to laugh; the prophet intends it. Walk through the carpenter’s day: what does he do with the two halves of the same log, and what is the one question verse 19 says he never asks? Then turn the blade with CCC 2113: what are the respectable modern franchises of this workshop?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

He cuts a cedar he watered and grew; burns half to bake bread and roast meat, *“Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!”*; *“and the rest of it he makes into a god”* and falls down to it: *“Deliver me, for thou art my god!”* The unasked question, verse 19: no one stops to say, half of this I burned for dinner, *“shall I fall down before a block of wood?”* Idolatry survives on never doing that arithmetic.

Then the blade: the Catechism refuses to let this stay a museum piece. Idolatry consists in divinizing what is not God, and it lists the franchises: power, pleasure, race, ancestors, the state, money (CCC 2113). Our idols are less funny only because we do not see the kneeling: the account balance consulted like an oracle, the career fed like an altar fire, the phone checked with more constancy than any monk’s office. The carpenter’s test still works and still stings: identify the thing you made, or bought, or built, from which you are asking what only God can give. Half of it is already ash; the arithmetic has simply not been done.

7. (Optional, first cut for time.) Read Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1-7. What titles does God give Cyrus, why is one of them shocking, and what does 45:4-5 twice say about Cyrus's own knowledge of God? What doctrine of providence follows?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

"My shepherd" (44:28), David's own title, and "his anointed" (45:1), Hebrew *mashiach*, the messiah-word, hung on a Persian emperor. God grasps Cyrus's right hand, opens doors before him, names him by name, "though you do not know me", said twice (45:4-5). And Cyrus performed the assignment: his decree sent the exiles home and rebuilt the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The doctrine: providence is not confined to the people who pray. God can steer an empire through a man who does not know him, for the sake of a people that emperor barely notices, and history's Auditor, whom we met holding Assyria as an axe, also holds liberators. It should make us slower to despair of secular powers and quicker to notice God's left-handed instruments. It should also recalibrate the word *anointed*: Israel now knows the category can surprise you.

DIG DEEPER • The Cyrus Cylinder

In 1879, archaeologists at Babylon unearthed a clay barrel inscribed with Cyrus's own proclamation after taking the city in 539 BC. On it, Cyrus boasts of returning displaced peoples to their homelands and restoring their sanctuaries and their gods' worship, empire-wide policy, from his own mouth, on his own clay. It is the same empire-wide policy under which Ezra 1 records Judah's own decree, go home, rebuild the house of your God; the Cylinder names other peoples, not Judah, and stands as broad corroborating context. The cylinder sits in the British Museum a few rooms from Sennacherib's prism: two emperors, one who besieged God's city and one who sent God's people home, both filed as exhibits in the case Isaiah 41 announced: ask history who declared these things beforehand.

Every Knee (Isaiah 45:22-23)

8. Read Isaiah 45:22-23 aloud, and read around it: verses 5, 6, 14, 18, 21 keep repeating one claim like a drumbeat. What is the claim, what does God swear by in verse 23, and exactly what does he swear?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The drumbeat: "*I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides me there is no God.*" Five times and more in one chapter: the fiercest monotheism in Scripture. Then the oath: God swears *by himself*, there being nothing higher, a word that "*shall not return*": "*To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*" Universal homage, to the LORD alone, sworn on the divine life. In its own context this is the exclusion of every rival: no idol, no emperor, not even anointed Cyrus, gets the knee. Whatever receives that bow is God, and nothing else may receive it. Hold the verse exactly that tightly; you are about to watch an apostle handle it.

LIVE DISCOVERY

A Pharisee trained under Gamaliel, a man who could recite tonight's chapter from memory, quotes this exact oath in a letter, and does something with it that would be blasphemy if it were not revelation. Find it in Philippians 2, in the hymn near the start of the chapter. Read verses 5-11 and watch for Isaiah's words. Pairs, 3-4 minutes.

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Philippians 2:9-11: God has highly exalted Jesus and “bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Every knee, every tongue: Isaiah 45:23, quoted by a strict monotheist, with Jesus installed at the center of the oath God swore by his own life. Paul has taken the most rival-excluding text in the Old Testament and identified Jesus inside it, not as a second god beside the LORD, but as the bearer of “the name above every name”, the Name the Church has always heard as the divine Name itself, so that confessing *Jesus is Lord* is precisely how “the glory of God the Father” is served, not rivaled (CCC 449).

And notice what the hymn says this exaltation crowned: one who “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant... obedient unto death.” The form of a *servant*. Paul is reading the same book you are, and he has connected the Servant of the songs to the LORD of the oath. The Catechism observes the same fusion: the Messiah of the Servant Songs pours out the Spirit not by speaking but by giving himself, taking the form of a slave (CCC 713-714). Keep your composure, leaders; the group is holding live cable.

STEELMAN • BUILD IT AT FULL STRENGTH

Now the objection, and it is made today by Jehovah's Witnesses and unitarians, and pressed on different grounds by Jewish readers who take Isaiah 45 with total seriousness. Build it strong:

Isaiah 45 itself forbids what Christians do with Jesus. *I am the LORD, and there is no other.* And Isaiah 42:8, from tonight's own reading: “*I am the LORD... my glory I give to no other.*” Nothing could be plainer. So when Philippians says every knee bows to Jesus, read the last clause: *to the glory of God the Father*. Jesus is God's supremely exalted *agent*, honored the way a king's viceroy is honored, for the king's glory; the bowing terminates in the Father. To worship the man Jesus as the LORD himself is to do exactly what Isaiah 45 anathematizes: give God's glory to another. Christians did not discover the Trinity in these texts; they read it into them centuries later.

Give it full voice. Then work the next question.

9. Answer from the texts on the table: (a) what, precisely, does Philippians say was bestowed on Jesus, and what does “the name above every name” have to be; (b) does the viceroy reading survive Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11, or collide with it; (c) what does John 17:5 report Jesus asking for, and how does 1 Corinthians 8:6 handle the Shema; (d) what dilemma did the first Christians, fierce Jewish monotheists, actually face?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

(a) Not a promotion but *the name which is above every name*. In Isaiah 45's world there is exactly one name above every name, the Name God swears by, the LORD's own. Paul then applies to Jesus the LORD-formula of the oath (every knee, every tongue) and crowns it with the confession *Jesus Christ is Lord*, *Kyrios*, the very word Paul's Greek Bible uses to render the divine Name throughout Isaiah 45. The hymn does not say Jesus is honored *like* God; it places him, in the Church's confession, at the divine center.

(b) The viceroy reading collides head-on with the verses the objection itself cites. “*My glory I give to no other*” (42:8); “*My glory I will not give to another*” (48:11). If Jesus were an exalted creature,

however supreme, then heaven ordaining that every knee bow at his name would be God doing the one thing God swore never to do. The objection proves too much: it convicts the Father. The reading that keeps Isaiah's oath intact, the Church confesses, is that the Son is not *another*: not a second god, not a creature, but the LORD's own eternal Son, within the one divine life, which is exactly St. Hilary's answer to the Arians: Read with him, Philippians 2 is not an exception to Isaiah 45 but its unveiling. And *to the glory of God the Father* is the signature of that reading, not the viceroy's: within God, the Son's worship glorifies the Father; there is no rivalry to manage.

(c) John 17:5: Jesus asks to be glorified "*with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made*", glory possessed, not glory aspired to; the exaltation of Philippians 2 returns him to what the self-emptying veiled. And 1 Corinthians 8:6 shows Paul doing it deliberately: he takes the Shema, *the LORD our God, the LORD is one*, and distributes its words: "*one God, the Father... and one Lord, Jesus Christ*," placing Jesus inside Israel's foundational confession of the one God, not beside it.

(d) The dilemma the first Christians faced, and it is the pastoral close: they were Jews of Isaiah's own school, people who would die, and did die, rather than burn one pinch of incense to a divine Caesar. And within living memory of the crucifixion, these fierce monotheists were singing hymns to Christ, baptizing into his name, and praying to him. Either the strictest monotheists in history committed, en masse, the exact idolatry their scriptures scream against, or something had been revealed: that the one God of Isaiah 45 has eternally within himself a Son, and every knee that bows to Jesus is doing what Isaiah swore all knees would do, bowing to the LORD. No middle option survives contact with both texts comfortably, and tonight's group now knows the texts well enough to see why.

SEND • TAKING IT OUT

1. The Servant's method: no shouting, no breaking bruised reeds, no snuffing dim wicks, and no discouragement. Which bruised reed in your life have you been handling like an empire instead of like the Servant, and what would his method look like there this week?
2. Do the carpenter's arithmetic on yourself, gently but honestly: name one made or bought or built thing from which you are currently asking what only God can give. What is one concrete step to take that request back to its rightful Address?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Find out the date of your baptism this week, ask your parents, call the parish, and once you have it, read Isaiah 43:1-4 aloud with your own name in it, on principle, every year on that date, starting now.
- Practice the Servant's method once deliberately: choose the most bruised person in your week and refuse, for one whole conversation, to fix, correct, or advise. Just do not break the reed. Watch what happens.
- Pray the Philippians hymn (2:5-11) slowly once this week, kneeling at verse 10, because the text says knees, and yours is one of them.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

Isaiah 43:1 (RSV2CE)

Closing Prayer

Father, you have shown us your Servant: quiet as dawn, gentle with the bruised, unbreakable in purpose, light for every nation.

We do the arithmetic tonight: everything else we have knelt to is half ash already. So we bring the knee where the oath says it belongs: at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Call us by our names, Lord. We are yours. Amen.

Before next session: read Isaiah 49:1-7 and 50:4-9. The Servant is going to speak in the first person, and something is going to start going wrong for him. Read closely.

Leader Reference Card

Every passage used tonight, in order

Primary Text

- Isaiah 42:1-4 (the first Servant Song: presentation, task, method)
- Isaiah 42:5-9 (covenant to the people, light to the nations; my glory I give to no other)
- Isaiah 41:8; 44:1 (Israel named the servant; the puzzle set)
- Isaiah 43:1-7 (called by name; through the waters; precious, honored, loved)
- Isaiah 43:25 (I, I am He who blots out; banked for later)
- Isaiah 44:9-20 (the idol-maker satire; vv. 13-17, 19 read aloud)
- Isaiah 44:28-45:7 (Cyrus: shepherd, anointed, though you do not know me; optional)
- Isaiah 45:22-23 (turn to me, all the ends of the earth; the oath: every knee, every tongue)

Live Discovery Targets

- Matthew 12:15-21 (the first Song's opening, 42:1-4, quoted in full over Jesus)
- Philippians 2:5-11 (the oath of 45:23 with Jesus at its center)

Supporting Passages

- Matthew 3:17 (the Father speaks the Song's opening at the Jordan)
- Mark 2:5-12 (Jesus exercises 43:25's prerogative)
- Ezra 1:1-4 (Cyrus's decree; with the Cyrus Cylinder, Dig Deeper)
- Isaiah 42:8; 48:11 (my glory I give to no other; steelman core)
- John 17:5 (the glory I had before the world); 1 Corinthians 8:6 (the Shema distributed)
- 1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit on David and the shoot; roots)

Catechism

- CCC 713-714 (the Messiah revealed above all in the Servant Songs)
- CCC 449 (the divine title Lord given to Jesus)
- CCC 2112-2113 (idolatry's modern franchises)
- CCC 1220-1221 (water crossings prefigure baptism)

Memory Verse

- Isaiah 43:1 (RSV2CE)