

New Heavens and a New Earth

Isaiah 61-66 • Leader Preparation Guide

SESSION OVERVIEW

DISCOVERY AIM

The finale. Participants read the anointing of 61:1-3 and discover a carpenter in Nazareth standing up, reading these exact verses, and sitting down with the words *"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* They hear Zion renamed and married (62), watch the heavens torn open on request (64:1) at a river in two Gospel scenes, and arrive at the new heavens and new earth (65-66): the wolf and the lamb returning from Session 4, mother Jerusalem nursing her children, and, in the book's closing paragraph, God taking priests *"from the nations."* The study ends where it began: with the question of Isaiah 6 put to the whole table, and fourteen weeks of evidence behind the answer.

CATHOLIC TOUCHSTONE

The Church as our mother (CCC 757), the priesthood among the nations, the new creation (CCC 1043-1045), and the honest last word about judgment (CCC 1036-1037). And the study's own title, finally paid in full: the sent people of 66:19 are the room.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Chapter 61 opens with the anointing: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted... to proclaim liberty to the captives... to comfort all who mourn... the oil of gladness instead of mourning"* (61:1-3). The speaker gathers everything the study has met: the Spirit that rests (11:2; 42:1), the herald of good tidings (40:9; 52:7), the comfort of the mourners (40:1; Sirach 48:24). The Catechism quotes these verses and says plainly: these are the words Jesus makes his own at Nazareth (CCC 714). Luke 4:16-21 is tonight's crown discovery: Jesus, handed the Isaiah scroll in his hometown synagogue, finds this place, reads it, rolls the scroll, sits, and says: *"Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."* If your group has alumni of the *Today* study of Luke, let the recognition ring: Luke's *sēmeron*, the today of fulfillment, is planted here first, in the reading of tonight's chapter. Jesus' first public sermon was one sentence long, and it was an Isaiah citation with a timestamp.

Chapter 62 is nuptial: Zion gets a new name, *"You shall no more be termed Forsaken... you shall be called My delight is in her (Hephzibah), and your land Married (Beulah)... as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you"* (62:4-5). Chapter 63 opens with the divine warrior in crimsoned garments from the wine press, judgment imagery the Church's tradition has also read at the foot of the cross, and then turns to one of the Old Testament's most intimate prayers: *"Thou, O LORD, art our Father"* (63:16), *"we are the clay, and thou art our potter"* (64:8), and the cry that gives the session its second discovery: *"O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down"* (64:1). Mark answers with a verb: at the Jordan, Jesus saw the heavens *torn open*, Greek *schizō*, and the Spirit descending (Mark 1:10), the request of 64:1 granted, and Mark uses that violent verb exactly once more, at the moment the

temple veil is *torn* from top to bottom (15:38). See the Dig Deeper; it is one of the New Testament's quietest masterstrokes.

Chapters 65-66 are the summit. God was *"ready to be found by those who did not seek me"* (65:1, quoted by Paul of the Gentiles, Romans 10:20). Then: *"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth"* (65:17), Jerusalem created a joy, no more the sound of weeping, and the wolf and the lamb of Session 4 return to graze together (65:25); the book closes its own inclusio with 11:6-9. Chapter 66 gives the study its final portraits: the God whose throne is heaven looking to *"he that is humble and contrite in spirit"* (66:2); Zion in labor, delivering her children in a day, and the maternal finale: *"that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts... As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem"* (66:11-13); chapter 40's *comfort* thread resolves in a mother's arms, and the mother is Jerusalem, whom Paul already named ours (Galatians 4:26; CCC 757). Then the ending almost no one knows is there: God gathers *"all nations and tongues"*, sets a sign, and sends survivors *"to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame... and they shall declare my glory among the nations"* (66:18-19), bringing the nations as an offering, *"and some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD"* (66:21). Gentile priests: a promise in the book's closing paragraph which the Church has long heard as the dawn light of her own priesthood among the nations. And be honest about the actual last verse: 66:24 ends the book with the unquenched fire and the undying worm, the verse Jesus himself quotes of Gehenna (Mark 9:48). The synagogue custom is to reread verse 23 after 24 so the public reading ends in worship; tonight's steelman faces the hard verse instead of skipping it, because a study with 100% fidelity owes its people the whole book.

End the night as a commissioning. The final Send returns to Isaiah 6: the study's title question, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"*, put to a table that now knows the Sender, the Servant, the message, and the mission field. The closing prayer has the whole group answer it aloud, together, in Isaiah's own words. Fourteen weeks were the preparation; the last five minutes are the point.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Roots. The anointing of 61:1 is the Spirit-resting of 11:2 and 42:1 arriving in the first person; jubilee release (*liberty to the captives*) is Leviticus 25 proclaimed at last. Mother Zion completes the barren woman of 54:1. The new heavens and earth answer Genesis 1 as re-creation; the wolf and lamb close the arc opened at 11:6.

Fulfillment. Luke 4:16-21 (Nazareth: today, fulfilled); Mark 1:10 and 15:38 (the heavens and the veil torn, *schizō*); Romans 10:20 (found by those who did not seek); Galatians 4:26 with CCC 757 (Jerusalem above, our mother); 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1-4 (new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells; the holy city, no more tears, drawing on Isaiah 65:17-19 and 25:8); Revelation 2:17 (the new name promised); Mark 9:48 (Jesus quoting 66:24). The Bible does not merely end after Isaiah; it ends *with* Isaiah.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose • *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke*

Commenting on Nazareth, St. Ambrose lingers where Luke lingers: the Anointed One reads the prophecy of his own anointing, and the eyes of all are fixed on him. And the anointing presses outward, as the Church's chrismal tradition, which Ambrose's Milan knew well, makes explicit: the Christ, the Anointed, shares his chrism; from his fullness Christians are anointed in him, so that the

mission read aloud in that synagogue is henceforth read over everyone the Church anoints. The scroll of Isaiah 61 is quietly handed to the baptized.

St. Cyprian of Carthage • *On the Unity of the Church* (5-6)

St. Cyprian states the household rule of Isaiah 66's nursing Jerusalem in one unforgettable sentence: he cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother. The maternal imagery of the prophets is not decoration; it is doctrine: we are born of her womb in baptism, nourished at her breast in the sacraments, and animated by her Spirit, and there is no such thing as a motherless Christian.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons • *Against Heresies* (4.20.7)

Surveying the whole sweep from creation to new creation, St. Irenaeus coins the line that could stand over Isaiah 65-66: the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man is the vision of God. The new heavens and new earth are not God's escape from his creation but its healing: what he made, he remakes; what sin ruined, glory fills; and the creature fully alive, beholding God, is the point of the entire project.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

- **CCC 714.** The Catechism quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 and states: these are the words Jesus makes his own at Nazareth. Tonight's crown discovery, pre-certified.
- **CCC 757.** The Church is our mother: the Jerusalem above, the bride of the Lamb, the spotless mother of holy children. Isaiah 66:13's comfort has an ecclesial address.
- **CCC 1043-1045.** The new heavens and the new earth: the universe itself renewed, the human race's unity consummated, God's dwelling among men. The Catechism's eschatology article teaches the same hope, citing 2 Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21.
- **CCC 1033, 1036-1037.** Hell as definitive self-exclusion from communion with God (1033); the affirmations of Scripture as a call to responsibility and conversion (1036); God predestines no one to hell, which requires a willful turning away persisted in until the end (1037). The frame for tonight's steelman on 66:24.

THREAD WATCH

FINAL THREAD LEDGER (READ IT WITH THE GROUP AT THE CLOSE)

The Holy One of Israel: heard from the seraphim (S2), tracked through sixty-six chapters, dwelling in Zion's midst (12:6), and at the last, looking to the humble and contrite (66:2). The thrice-holy One ends the book at eye level with the lowly.

Zion: harlot city (S1), smelted faithful (1:26), banqueting mountain (S5), barren woman singing (S12), house of prayer for all peoples (S13), and tonight: bride (62), and mother nursing her children (66): the Church (CCC 757).

Light: resolved at the sunrise (S13); tonight the city beyond the sun stands confirmed in Revelation 21.

The arm of the LORD: guessed, sealed, revealed (S11): the Servant, pierced and risen, interceding still.

Comfort: commanded (40:1), embodied (61:2: *to comfort all who mourn*), and delivered in a mother's arms (66:13).

Here am I, send me: Isaiah's brief answer (S2), the Servant's whole career, Philip's chariot (S11), the beautiful feet (52:7), and tonight, 66:19: *I will send survivors to the nations*. The title of the study is its last assignment.

SESSION GOALS

1. Discover Luke 4:16-21: the anointing read and claimed, today, and the handshake with the Gospel of Luke honored.
2. Hear Zion renamed and married (62:4-5), and connect the new name to Revelation 2:17.
3. Discover the torn heavens: 64:1 answered by Mark's schizō at the Jordan and the veil.
4. Stand in the new creation (65:17-25) with the wolf-and-lamb inclusio closed, and receive mother Jerusalem's comfort (66:10-13; CCC 757).
5. Face 66:24 honestly in the final steelman, with CCC 1036-1037 and the mercy of the warning.
6. Land 66:18-21: the sent survivors and the priests from the nations, and close with the commissioning: the whole table answering Isaiah 6:8 aloud.

TIME NOTE (90 MINUTES)

SUGGESTED CLOCK

Gather and opening prayer, 5 min. Win, 8 min. Build, 52 min. Send, 8 min. Final thread ledger, memory verse, Take-Home, 7 min. Commissioning and closing prayer, 10 min: do not let this get squeezed; it is the study's destination.

Pre-chosen cuts if running long: cut Question 3 (chapter 62) first; compress Question 4 (the torn heavens) second. Never cut Nazareth, the new creation, the steelman, 66:18-21, or the commissioning.

New Heavens and a New Earth

Isaiah 61-66 • Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Father, fourteen weeks ago you summoned heaven and earth and put your people on trial, and we sat down at the defendants' table. Tonight you are creating new heavens and a new earth, and you have made us witnesses.

Anoint this last evening with the oil of gladness. Read your scroll over us one more time. And when the reading ends, ask us your question; we have been practicing our answer.

Through Christ our Lord, the Anointed. Amen.

WIN • OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Fourteen sessions: name the single moment, verse, or discovery from this study that you know will still be with you in ten years.
2. If you could rename a hard season of your life the way God renames Zion tonight, what would the old name be, and what new name would you give it?

BUILD • INDUCTIVE STUDY

The Anointed One Reads His Anointing (Isaiah 61:1-3)

1. Read Isaiah 61:1-3 aloud. Whose voice is this? Inventory the anointing: what is the speaker anointed to do, item by item, and which items has this study met before?

ANSWER *(share after the discussion)*

The Spirit-anointed herald: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me,"* anointed, *mashach*, the messiah-verb. The commission: good tidings to the afflicted; bind up the brokenhearted; liberty to the captives, jubilee language from Leviticus 25, the economy-resetting release proclaimed at last; opening of the prison; the year of the LORD's favor; *comfort all who mourn*; the oil of gladness instead of mourning; a garland instead of ashes. The study recognizes nearly every line: the Spirit that *rests* (11:2; 42:1), the herald with beautiful feet (40:9; 52:7), and the comfort of Zion's mourners, which is Sirach's own one-line summary of Isaiah's legacy (48:24, Session 7) and chapter 40's first word. The whole Book of Consolation has been compressed into one speaker's job description, in the first person. The only question is whose voice it is, and someone answered it, out loud, in a small synagogue in the hills of Galilee.

LIVE DISCOVERY

The crown discovery of the study. Jesus' hometown congregation hands him the scroll of Isaiah (a carpenter of about thirty, the Gospels tell us elsewhere: Mark 6:3; Luke 3:23). He finds tonight's passage, reads it, rolls the scroll, hands it back, sits down, and preaches a one-sentence first sermon. Find it in Luke 4. Read verses 16-21 and report his sermon word for word. Pairs, 3 minutes.

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Luke 4:16-21, Nazareth. Jesus stands, receives the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, finds the place, and reads 61:1-2 (with a line of 58:6 folded in: *to set at liberty those who are oppressed*, the fast God chooses, on his lips). Then: closed the scroll, sat down, every eye fixed on him, and the sermon: “*Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*” One sentence. The Anointed One reading the prophecy of his own anointing and stamping it with a timestamp. The Catechism certifies the reading: these are the words Jesus makes his own at Nazareth (CCC 714).

Three landings. First, note where he stopped reading: mid-verse, before *the day of vengeance of our God* (61:2b). Many Christians have heard the scroll's next clause held for his return; the year of favor, at any rate, is now, which is why the Church still calls this the acceptable time. Second, for anyone who has made the journey through Luke's Gospel: this is where Luke's great *today*, *sēmeron*, is planted, the today that will sound at Zacchaeus's house and from the cross to a thief; the timestamp of Nazareth runs to Paradise. Third, the anointing presses outward, as the Church's chrismal tradition makes explicit: the Christ shares his chrism; the scroll read that morning is read over everyone the Church anoints, which means the job description of 61:1-3, good news to the poor, the brokenhearted bound up, is now, quietly, yours. Hold that; the end of the book is about to make it explicit.

2. (Optional, first cut for time.) Read Isaiah 62:2-5. What happens to Zion's name, what are the new names, and what is the closing image? Where does the New Testament keep the new-name promise personal?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

The renaming: no more *Forsaken* (Azubah) and *Desolate*; instead *Hephzibah*, my delight is in her, and *Beulah*, married. And the image: “*as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.*” Not tolerates: *rejoices over*. The covenant's final register is nuptial, which is where the Bible ends: the marriage supper of the Lamb, the new Jerusalem “*prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*” (Revelation 21:2). And the promise goes personal in Revelation 2:17: to the one who conquers, “*a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.*” The God who renames cities renames people; ask the room what old name, forsaken, failure, dry tree, he may be in the middle of retiring for them.

Rend the Heavens (Isaiah 63:16; 64:1, 8)

3. Read Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8, and then the cry of 64:1. What does Israel dare to call God, twice? What is the potter image asking for? And what, exactly, does 64:1 beg God to do?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

“*Thou, O LORD, art our Father*”: twice, 63:16 and 64:8, some of the Old Testament's clearest Our-Father language, centuries before a Galilean hillside made it a prayer. The potter: “*we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand*”: surrender to being shaped, and a quiet argument: a potter does not abandon his own workmanship mid-vessel. And 64:1: “*O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down.*” Not open, gently: *rend*, tear, rip. Stop transmitting through prophets; tear the ceiling of the world and come down here yourself. It is the boldest prayer in the book, and the New Testament's answer to it is one Greek verb, used with surgical

precision.

DIG DEEPER • Schizō: The Verb Mark Uses Twice

Mark's Gospel uses the violent verb *schizō*, to tear, rip, rend, exactly twice. At the baptism: Jesus "*saw the heavens torn open and the Spirit descending*" (1:10): Isaiah's plea answered in Mark's telling, the heavens rent, God come down (the verb is Mark's own; the Greek Isaiah says *open*, so the allusion is Mark's art, not quotation). And at the death of Jesus: "*the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom*" (15:38): the veil between God and man rent, from the top, from God's side. Two tears, bracketing the whole Gospel: heaven torn open so God could come down, the veil torn open so man could come in. Mark composed the frame; Isaiah wrote the prayer it answers.

New Heavens, New Earth, and a Mother (Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:10-13)

4. Read Isaiah 65:17-19 and then verse 25. What does God announce he is creating, what sound is banished from the new Jerusalem, and who shows up in verse 25 that this study has met before, thirteen chapters and ten sessions ago?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth," and the verb is *bara*, Genesis 1's verb, used in Scripture only of God's own creating: not a renovation of Eden but creation's own sequel, and note what the new creation does not do: it does not scrap the old for a bare heaven; God remakes *heavens and earth*, matter included, bodies included (26:19 already told us), which is why the Creed says *resurrection of the body* and the Catechism speaks of the universe itself renewed, God's dwelling among men (CCC 1043-1045). St. Irenaeus gave the project its motto: the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man is the vision of God. Banished from the city: "*no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress*" (65:19), the acoustics of the new Jerusalem, which Revelation keeps at the end of the Bible: God "*will wipe away every tear... neither shall there be mourning nor crying*" (Revelation 21:4), Session 5's mountain, arrived. (Be honest about the canvas: Isaiah's own picture still contains long life rather than deathlessness at 65:20; prophetic imagery reaching toward what Revelation, drawing on this page and on 25:8, states absolutely.)

And verse 25: "*The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.*" Session 4's peaceable kingdom (11:6-9), returned to close the book's own frame: what the shoot of Jesse inaugurated, the new creation completes. The already/not-yet the group learned in the Session 4 steelman has been the book's architecture all along, and tonight is the *yet*.

5. Read Isaiah 66:10-13. The study's Zion thread reaches its last portrait, and chapter 40's first word comes home. What is Zion in these verses, what are her children doing, and what does God say in verse 13, in his own voice?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

Zion is a mother: her children nursing, "*that you may suck and be satisfied with her consoling breasts,*" carried on the hip, dandled on the knees, prosperity flowing to her like a river. And verse 13, God speaking: "*As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*" The *comfort* commanded in 40:1 is delivered here, in a mother's arms, and the mother is Jerusalem, whom Paul has already named for us: "*the Jerusalem above... she is our mother*"

(Galatians 4:26), the barren woman of Session 12, nursing at last. The Church is where God mothers his people (CCC 757), and St. Cyprian wrote the household rule over the whole scene: he cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother. Notice, fourteen weeks in, how the threads have braided: the maternal God of 49:15, the singing barren one of 54:1, and the nursing Jerusalem of 66:13 are one continuous revelation: the tenderness at the center of omnipotence, which is what the arm of the LORD turned out to mean too.

STEELMAN • BUILD IT AT FULL STRENGTH

Now the honest ending. Read Isaiah 66:24, the actual last verse of the book, aloud: the dead bodies of the rebels, *“their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched.”* And build the objection at full strength, because someone at your table carries it:

A book of comfort that ends in unquenchable fire refutes itself, and so does a God of love with a hell. Sixty-five chapters of scarlet-made-white, bruised reeds unbroken, mothers who cannot forget, a Servant who bears everyone's iniquity, and the final image is corpses and fire? Either the love was not serious or the fire is not: a genuinely loving and omnipotent God would simply ensure that everyone, eventually, is saved; eternal punishment is infinite penalty for finite crimes, morally monstrous on its face. The synagogue itself flinches, rereading verse 23 after 24 so the public reading ends in worship. Honest modern people should flinch harder, and drop the doctrine.

Give it its full weight; it is felt in good faith. Then answer from the whole book you have just read.

6. Answer it: (a) who quotes 66:24 in the New Testament, and why does that matter; (b) what does the Church actually teach hell is, and who is predestined to it (CCC 1036-1037); (c) what has this very study shown about the anatomy of refusal; (d) what is the warning, at the end of a book of comfort, actually for?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

(a) The uncomfortable fact first: the person who quotes Isaiah 66:24 is Jesus, of Gehenna, verbatim: *“where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched”* (Mark 9:48). The same voice that said *let the children come to me*. You cannot recruit Jesus against this verse; the Lamb who bears the sin of the world is also the one who kept its warning in circulation. Whatever hell is, the most loving man who ever lived thought you needed to know about it, which reframes the question: the warning is not the opposite of the love; it is one of the love's urgent forms.

(b) What the Church teaches, precisely, against every caricature: hell is *“definitive self-exclusion from communion with God”* (CCC 1033), the state of those who refuse, freely and to the end; God *predestines no one* to it (CCC 1037), desires *all* to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4, the group's own Session 2 text), and died to make it so. Hell is not God's torture chamber appended to the Gospel; it is the possibility that love's offer can be finally declined, because, as the Church's pastors have often put it, a love that could not be declined would be coercion, and coerced love is not love. The fire imagery is Scripture's language for what it is to be a creature set against the only Source of joy there is; the door, as the Church's teachers have long observed, is barred from within.

(c) And this study has already shown you the anatomy, from the inside: Isaiah 6's hardening that follows practiced refusing; Ahaz declining an offered sign with piety on his lips; *and you would not* (30:15); the vineyard given every advantage and yielding wild grapes; the carpenter who never asks

the question about the half-burned log. Sixty-six chapters of grace pursued, and every rejection in them freely made. 66:24 is not a new god appearing in the last verse; it is the trajectory of *and you would not*, followed to its terminus. The same book holds 25:8 and 66:24 without contradiction because both are what love's freedom makes possible: death swallowed for all who will come to the mountain, and the standing possibility of refusing to come.

(d) So what is the warning for? Exactly what warnings are for: to be heeded, not suffered. The Church asserts the *possibility* of final loss and has never once asserted the damnation of any individual; she prays at every Mass for all the dead and hopes with a wide hope, while refusing the presumption that would make the warning meaningless. Note the pastoral genius of the synagogue custom the objection cited: rereading verse 23 after 24 does not delete the warning, it refuses to give the warning the last word in worship, which is the exact balance to strike: sober about the stakes, singing about the Savior. And notice, finally, whom the book's closing verses are actually addressed to: not the far-off but the religious, we who have spent fourteen weeks in the scroll. The last question Isaiah asks his readers is not *is God nice?* but *which line are you in?*, and the whole point of asking is that, tonight, the answer is still yours to give: seek the LORD while he may be found.

Priests From the Nations, Survivors Sent (Isaiah 66:18-21)

7. Read Isaiah 66:18-21, from the book's closing paragraph, and read it slowly, because almost no one knows it is there. What does God gather, whom does he send, where, to do what, and what office does verse 21 hand out, to whom?

ANSWER (share after the discussion)

He gathers "*all nations and tongues... and they shall come and shall see my glory*": Session 1's streaming mountain, one last time, now universal. He sends *survivors*, the remnant, the stump-people, "*to the nations... to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.*" World mission, in Isaiah's own final paragraph: the sent people carrying the glory to those who have never heard, and bringing the nations home "*as an offering to the LORD.*" Every mission trip, every missionary order, every Philip beside every chariot, was filed here first.

And verse 21, the sentence to read twice: "*And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD.*" Them: the gathered nations, Gentiles. God's promise in the book's closing paragraph is a priesthood drawn from the nations, which the Church has long heard as her own priesthood among the Gentiles: twenty-seven centuries later, the parish down the street: men of every nation and tongue at altars on every coastland, offering the '*asham* made present. If anyone at this table has ever wondered whether the Catholic priesthood was a late invention, here is the promise the Church has always heard behind it, in the same book that gave us the key, the cornerstone, the Suffering Servant, and the house of prayer for all peoples. And feel what the verse does to the study's title: the book that began with one volunteer, *here am I, send me*, ends with God sending a whole people, and taking priests from among the sent.

SEND • THE COMMISSIONING

1. The final thread ledger is in your leader's guide: walk it aloud together, thread by thread, and let people say where each one caught them. Then the last question of the study, and take it slowly: fourteen weeks ago, Isaiah heard, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"* You now know the Sender, the Servant, the message, and your coastland. Name your coastland out loud: the actual place, table, or person to whom you are sent when you leave tonight.
2. Who is one person you will invite into the next study, meal, or Mass, this month, by name, so that the tent keeps enlarging after tonight?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK (AND AFTER)

- Pray Isaiah 61:1-3 over your own life once this week, as St. Ambrose says you may: the Anointed shares his anointing, and the job description is now yours: good news to the poor, the brokenhearted bound up, in your coastland.
- Go back to your sealed guess one last time, and on the back of it, write tonight's date and Isaiah 6:8 in full. Keep the paper in your Bible at Isaiah 53. It is now a relic of your own formation.
- Begin the book again, alone, one chapter a week, sixty-six weeks. You will find it is a different book now, because you are a different reader. That was the plan all along.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives."

Isaiah 61:1 (RSV2CE)

The Commissioning and Closing Prayer

Leader: In the year that King Uzziah died, one man saw the Lord, high and lifted up, and heard the question that has waited on every page of this study.

Leader: And the voice of the Lord says still: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

All, together, aloud: HERE AM I. SEND ME.

Leader: Then go: to your coastlands and your chariots, your tables and your Nazareths. The Spirit of the Lord is upon you. The scarlet has been made white. The arm of the LORD has been revealed to you, and his name is Jesus.

All: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. Amen.

The study is complete. Take-Home 14 carries the full thread ledger and a map for reading Isaiah again on your own. Thank you for fourteen weeks of showing up; the sending starts now.

Leader Reference Card

Every passage used tonight, in order

Primary Text

- Isaiah 61:1-3 (the anointing; jubilee; comfort for mourners; oil of gladness)
- Isaiah 62:2-5 (Hephzibah and Beulah; the bridegroom rejoices; optional)
- Isaiah 63:16; 64:1, 8 (our Father; rend the heavens; the potter)
- Isaiah 65:1 (found by those who did not seek); 65:17-19, 25 (new creation; no weeping; wolf and lamb return)
- Isaiah 66:2 (the humble and contrite); 66:10-13 (mother Zion; as one whom his mother comforts)
- Isaiah 66:18-21 (all nations gathered; survivors sent; priests from the nations)
- Isaiah 66:24 (the last verse; the steelman text)

Live Discovery Target

- Luke 4:16-21 (Nazareth: today this scripture has been fulfilled)

Supporting Passages

- Leviticus 25 (jubilee; liberty proclaimed)
- Mark 1:10 and 15:38 (schizō: heavens and veil torn; Dig Deeper)
- Romans 10:20 (65:1 quoted of the Gentiles)
- Galatians 4:26 (Jerusalem above, our mother; Session 12 handshake)
- Revelation 2:17 (the new name); Revelation 21:1-4, 23-26 (the Isaian hope taken up)
- 2 Peter 3:13 (new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells)
- Mark 9:48 (Jesus quotes 66:24); 1 Timothy 2:4 (God desires all to be saved)
- Isaiah 11:6-9 (the inclusio closed); Isaiah 6:8 (the commissioning)

Catechism

- CCC 714 (Isaiah 61:1-2: the words Jesus makes his own at Nazareth)
- CCC 757 (the Church our mother)
- CCC 1043-1045 (new heavens and new earth)
- CCC 1033, 1036-1037 (hell as self-exclusion; a call to conversion; God predestines no one)

Session Logistics

- End with the commissioning: the whole table answers Isaiah 6:8 aloud, together. Protect the last ten minutes.

Memory Verse

- Isaiah 61:1 (RSV2CE)