

RESCUED

God's Story. Your Invitation.

Session 8: Your Next Yes

Matthew 28:16-20 • about 60 minutes • Leader Guide for 6th Grade TRE

Part 1: Before You Begin

Read this before class. The last session. Tonight the risen Jesus sends his friends out, and the students discover that they are now inside the story, not reading about it. End with a commissioning, not a quiz, and if your parish can manage it, end with food.

Where we are in the story

The students have the whole story now: Jesus invites (1), seeks the lost (2), forgives as God (3), dies for us (4), rises (5), welcomes us home (6), and gives us the Spirit and the Church (7). Tonight he sends them. The last question of the study is the one every disciple has to answer: what is my next yes?

Tonight's aim

Students discover that Jesus sends his followers to make disciples, that he sent them even though some doubted, and that he promised to be with them always. By the end of the hour every student should be able to tell the Gospel in their own words in under a minute, name one person they could invite the way Andrew invited Simon, and say that Jesus is with them.

The passage in plain terms

The eleven disciples go to a mountain in Galilee where Jesus told them to meet him. When they see him they worship him, but some doubted (28:17). Jesus does not send the doubters home. He says: 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 lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age (28:18-20). The governing command is make disciples; baptizing and teaching are how it is done, and the teaching is about living what Jesus commanded, not only hearing it.

The supporting verse tonight is Acts 1:8, the last thing Jesus says before he ascends: you shall be my witnesses. A witness is not an expert. A witness is someone who tells what they saw.

Three details for the students. First, some doubted, and Jesus sent them anyway; having questions does not disqualify you. Second, the sending is one command with two parts inside it: make disciples, by baptizing and by teaching them to live what Jesus commanded, which is what the Church has done ever since, including to them. Third, the last words are a promise, not a command: I am with you always.

On doubt, be precise, because students will hear this one. Having questions or struggling to understand is not rejecting Jesus, and it is not a sin. The Church does distinguish that kind of difficulty from a deliberate refusal to believe what God has revealed, which is a different thing (CCC 2088). Faith means trusting God and accepting what he reveals while our understanding keeps growing. Reassure the questioner; do not tell the students that all doubt is harmless.

What the Church teaches

The Church teaches that this passage is her missionary mandate: the reason she exists is to bring the Gospel to everyone (CCC 849). And everyone who has received the faith is called to pass it on: the Catechism opens by saying that those who have come to believe are called to proclaim the Gospel in every generation (CCC 3). That includes an eleven-year-old.

For the baptized students, their own Baptism happened because of tonight's verse: someone went, someone baptized, someone taught. Tonight they learn they are the next link. Keep the safeguard: this is not a burden laid on them, and our ability to respond begins with God's grace, not with a good personality or a speech (CCC 1996, 2001-2002). It is Jesus, with all authority, promising to be with them while they do it.

Do not end the study with a private decision disconnected from the Church. The sending in Matthew 28 is into Baptism and teaching, which is the Church's life. The next yes for most students is to keep coming and bring someone. Those preparing for Confirmation can look forward to receiving that gift; those already confirmed can keep learning to live from it. Help them distinguish sharing faith from pressuring someone; an invitation leaves the other person free.

Saints who said yes

St. Francis Xavier

A Spanish priest and one of the first Jesuits who sailed to India in 1541 and then to Japan, teaching the faith to people who had never heard the name of Jesus. He baptized thousands and died in 1552 on an island off the coast of China, still trying to get farther. He took go and make disciples of all nations literally, and the Church made him the patron of missions.

St. Pier Giorgio Frassati

An Italian college student who loved mountain climbing, jokes, and his friends, and who quietly spent his money and his time on the poor of Turin. He died of polio at twenty-four in 1925, and thousands of poor people his family had never heard of came to his funeral. He was declared a saint in 2025. On a photo of himself climbing he wrote the words that became his motto: Verso l'alto, to the heights. He was a witness through ordinary friendship, prayer, and service, every day, in the city where he lived.

Questions students may ask

- Some of them doubted? Really? Yes, Matthew says so plainly, and Jesus sent them anyway. Having questions or struggling to understand does not mean you have rejected Jesus. Bring your

questions to him and ask for help. Faith means trusting God and accepting what he reveals, even while your understanding keeps growing. You can have questions and still be sent.

- I am eleven. How am I supposed to make disciples? The same way Andrew did in Session 1: you find one person and bring them. You do not have to explain everything. You have to know Jesus and tell what you have seen.
- What if I do not know enough? Nobody in tonight's passage knew everything. Jesus builds teaching into the sending because learning never stops. Keep coming, keep reading, and go anyway.
- What does I am with you always mean if I cannot see him? It means what it meant on the road to Emmaus: he walks beside you whether you notice or not. And in the Eucharist he is with you in a way you can actually receive.

Materials

Catholic Bibles with page numbers ready for Matthew 28, Acts 1, and Genesis 12, pencils, name tents, the students' own reflection cards, and, if at all possible, food for a celebration at the end.

Timed plan

Welcome and opening prayer, 5 minutes. Opening situation, 4. Reading Matthew 28:16-20 in segments, 4. Discovery questions, 11. Flashback to Genesis 12, 5. Acts 1:8, 3. Three quick checks, 5. Tell the story, 7. Personal question, 4. Catholic connection, 4. Commissioning and prayer, 5. One step and closing, 3. Total: 60 minutes, before the celebration.

If you are running long: shorten the opening situation to one answer. Never cut the flashback, Tell the story, the commissioning, or the prayer.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Leader prays, everyone answers Amen. Jesus, you have all authority in heaven and on earth, and you promised to be with us always. Tonight, send us. And go with us. Amen.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Read aloud: *In our first session Jesus asked two people, What do you seek?, and said, Come and see. We came, and we saw: he seeks the lost, he is God, he died for us, he rose, he welcomes us home, and he gives us his Spirit and his Church. Tonight he tells us what comes next.*

OPENING SITUATION

Read aloud: *Imagine you found out something that could change a friend's whole life for the better, and nobody had told them yet. What would stop you from telling them? Fear of sounding weird? Not knowing how to start? What would make you do it anyway?*

Leader: Two or three answers; keep it moving. Then say: Tonight Jesus gives his friends exactly that job, and a promise to go with it.

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

Read the passage in segments, in parts: a narrator and Jesus. Read verses 16 to 18, then questions 1 and 2. Read verses 19 and 20, then questions 3 and 4, and have a student read verses 18 to 20 a second time. Anyone may pass on reading aloud. Give the page number for Matthew 28 before you start.

Leader: *Lo means look, or behold. To the close of the age means until the end of the world.*

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Read verses 16 to 18

1. In verse 17, what do the disciples do when they see the risen Jesus? Read the whole verse; there is a surprise in the second half.

Answer • share after the discussion

They worship him, but some doubted. Even standing in front of the risen Jesus, some of them were not sure. Matthew does not hide it, and Jesus does not send them away; he sends them out. Having questions or struggling to understand does not mean you have rejected Jesus. Bring them to him and ask for help; faith means trusting God and accepting what he reveals while your understanding keeps growing.

2. In verse 18, what does Jesus say he has? Why does he say that before he gives them a job?

Answer • share after the discussion

All authority in heaven and on earth. He says it first because the job is going to sound impossible, all nations, and he wants them to know whose authority they are going with. It is not their power; it is his.

Read verses 19 and 20

3. Verses 19 and 20 give the disciples one job with two parts inside it. What is the job, and what are the two parts? Is Jesus asking them to pass along information, or to teach a way of living? Which words tell you?

Answer • share after the discussion

The job is make disciples. The two parts are baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded. Observe means live it, not just know it. And the Church has done exactly this: someone went, someone baptized with those words, and someone is teaching you right now. If you have been baptized, you are here tonight because of this verse.

Leader: *Let the students make the connection to their own Baptism before you say it. The words in verse 19 are the words the priest used. Use conditional wording; do not assume every student was baptized.*

4. What are Jesus's last words in verse 20? Is that a command or a promise?

Answer • share after the discussion

Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. It is a promise. The passage starts with a job and ends with a promise, and the promise is what makes the job possible. He does not send anyone alone.

FLASHBACK: A BLESSING FOR ALL NATIONS

Read aloud: *Go, Jesus says. God has been saying that word for a long time. We flash back to the beginning of God's people, about two thousand years before this mountain, where God calls one man to leave everything he knows.*

Read Genesis 12:1-3 (give the page number; one reader)

1. What does God tell Abram to do, and what does he promise will happen for all the families of the earth?

Answer • share after the discussion

Go: leave your country and your family for a land I will show you. And God promises that through Abram all the families of the earth will be blessed. St. Paul explains that Christ is Abraham's promised descendant and that through him the blessing reaches the nations (Galatians 3:8, 14, 16). So when Jesus says, Go and make disciples of all nations, he is finishing the sentence God started with Abraham. The blessing for every family on earth is Jesus, and the people in this room are how it keeps traveling.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Read aloud: *Back to the mountain in Galilee. Go, he says, and then the promise: I am with you always.*

FIND IT: ACTS 1:8

Read aloud: *Just before Jesus went up to heaven, he said one more sentence about what his friends would be. Find Acts 1, verse 8, and read it. What word does he use for them?*

Answer • share after the discussion

Witnesses: you shall be my witnesses. A witness is not an expert or a lawyer. A witness is someone who tells what they saw. That is the whole job description. You do not have to explain everything. You have to know Jesus and tell what you have seen.

Leader: Give page numbers. Then move to the three quick checks.

THREE QUICK CHECKS

Read aloud: Before you tell the story, three questions, and any of you can answer. Who is Jesus? What does his death and Resurrection make possible for us? What happens in Baptism, in Confirmation, and in the Eucharist?

Share after the checks

Who is Jesus? True God and true man, the Son of God who came to seek and save the lost. What does his death and Resurrection make possible? The forgiveness of our sins and a new life with God that death cannot end. What happens in the sacraments? In Baptism, God forgives sins, gives new life, and makes us members of his Church. In Confirmation, he gives a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and strengthens us to live and share the faith. In the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, and he is truly present.

Leader: These are teaching moments, not a test of anyone's faith. If an answer is off, fix it warmly and move on; the box gives you the clean version.

TELL THE STORY IN A MINUTE

Read aloud: Now the whole story. Turn to the person next to you. You have one minute to think. Then you have one minute to tell them the whole story we have read over eight sessions, in your own words: who Jesus is, what he did, and what he offers. Then switch. No notes.

Leader: One minute to prepare, then one minute each to tell it. Walk around and listen; you will hear the study come back to you in eleven-year-old words, which is the goal. If a pair gets stuck, offer four words: invites, dies, rises, sends. Afterward, ask one or two volunteers to tell it to the whole group.

THE PERSONAL QUESTION

Read aloud: In our first session, Andrew spent one afternoon with Jesus and went and got his brother. Who is your Simon? On your reflection card, write one name: one person you could invite the way Andrew did. Then finish this sentence: With God's help, I will _____, and I will ask _____ to help me.

Leader: A full minute of silence. No sharing required. Welcome a specific, modest response rather than a dramatic promise. The reflection cards have stayed with the students all eight weeks; remind them to keep them.

THE CATHOLIC CONNECTION

Share after the discussion

Here is what the Church says about tonight. This passage is the reason the Church exists. Jesus sent his friends to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to live what he commanded. The Church has been doing it for two thousand years, all the way to you (CCC 849). And everyone who has received the faith is called to pass it on. The very first pages of the Catechism say that those who have come to believe are called to proclaim the Gospel in every generation (CCC 3). That means you.

You are not being handed a burden. You are being handed a promise. Jesus has all authority, and he is with you always. Our ability to respond begins with God's grace, not with having the right personality or a perfect speech. Your next yes is not to become an expert. It is to keep coming, and to invite one person while leaving them free to say no. Those of you preparing for Confirmation can look forward to receiving that gift; those already confirmed can keep learning to live from it.

Leader: Then commission them. Have the students stand. Say each name, and say to each one: [Name], go and share the good news. Jesus promises to be with you always. It takes two minutes and they will remember it. Say it as his witness, not in his person.

PRAYER

Leader: Remind them, every time: you do not have to feel anything special. Feelings are not the measure of God's grace.

Read aloud: Let us pray. Talk to Jesus in your head while I say these words. Jesus, you have all authority, and you are with me always. Here is the name of my Simon. Give me the courage to invite them. Send me. Amen.

ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Read aloud: One thing this week, and one thing for the rest of your life. This week: invite your Simon to one thing, Mass, youth group, or just a conversation about what you learned. For the rest of your life: keep coming and seeing. He is with you always.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in our first session you asked what we were seeking. We found you. Now you send us. Go with us, as you promised, to the close of the age. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

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

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

TONIGHT'S PASSAGE

Matthew 28:16-20 (read aloud in segments); flashback Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 1:8 (found live by the group)

SUPPORTING REFERENCES

- Galatians 3:8, 14, 16 (Christ, Abraham's promised descendant; the blessing reaches the nations)
- John 1:40-42 (Andrew brings Simon, Session 1)
- Acts 8:26-39 (Philip and the Ethiopian, if a student wants to see a witness at work)

CATECHISM

- CCC 849-852 (the missionary mandate)
- CCC 3 (those who believe are called to proclaim the Gospel)
- CCC 2088 (questions and difficulty are not the same as refusing to believe)
- CCC 1996, 2001-2002 (our response begins with grace)
- CCC 1213 (Baptism, Session 7)

SAINTS WHO SAID YES

- St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552, patron of missions)
- St. Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925, canonized 2025)

MATERIALS

Catholic Bibles with page numbers ready for Matthew 28, Acts 1, and Genesis 12, pencils, name tents, the students' own reflection cards, and, if at all possible, food for a celebration at the end.

NOTE

Order of the night: questions, Genesis 12 flashback, Acts 1:8, three quick checks, tell the story, personal question, Catholic connection, commissioning, prayer; the script follows this order. End with food if you can; eight weeks deserve a table.