



# Discovering Our Family Treasures

Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.

Matthew 6:21

2020 At-Home Vacation Bible School

Dear Parents, Grandparents, and Caregivers,

Welcome to At-Home Vacation Bible School! Our theme, Discovering Our Family Treasures, is drawn from the Scripture verse, "Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart." Mt 6:21.

This is a creative opportunity for you and your child(ren) to discover together the hidden treasures that faith brings to your family. Sessions explore the important family values of forgiveness, respect for all life, care for each other and for our neighbors in need. By exploring the lives of men and women of the Bible and saints you will discover how following God brings treasure into your family.



## Session Themes

- The Treasure of Family – discovering the treasure before your eyes
- Joseph and His Brothers – families forgive
- Moses and Miriam – families treasure life
- Ruth and Naomi – families take care of each other
- Good Samaritan – families take care of people in need
- Jesus, the Good Shepherd – families follow Jesus



## Each Session Includes

- Opening Song and Prayer
- Bible Story
- Enrichment Activity
- Related Craft
- Saint Witness
- Snack Idea



## Corresponding Parent Resources

- Brief overview of the Bible Story
- Talking points for the family connection
- Activity and Craft directions



Prayer for Parents:

Let us make this journey as families, let us keep walking together. What we have been promised is greater than we can imagine. May we never lose heart because of our limitations, or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us.

Pope Francis, On Love in the Family, 325.

# Getting Started:



Each lesson begins with a parent overview. This overview provides background information on the Scripture verse and session theme to help you prepare in advance.

Conversation Corners provide sample comments and/or questions you can use when talking with your children during the session.



Scripture: Each session is drawn from a passage in Scripture. Take time to read the passage before beginning the session. If you don't have a Bible at home, you can access a Catholic Bible through this url: <http://usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>.



VBS Song: Each session begins with the VBS "Theme" Song.

Even if you don't normally sing - join in the song! Singing and dancing are two of the most joyful things we can do. Remember, your singing and dancing ability is not important! Your child(ren) will be pleased even if you are off-key or miss the steps.



Saints: One of the great treasures of the Church is our Communion of Saints. The Communion of Saints refers to "the holy ones" on earth, in purgatory and in heaven. Being a member of the Communion of Saints, we look to other witnesses of faith to help us grow in holiness. Each session includes a saint who exemplifies the treasure focus of that session.



Activity and Craft: Each session includes an activity or craft. If you do not have all of the resources mentioned, be creative. Substitute materials or create your own craft.



Treasure Chest: Each session concludes with children finding and adding a treasure to the Treasure Chest. Children will hunt in your home or yard for items that reminds them of the treasure taught in the session. Items could be from nature (rock, flower), pictures of family, rosary, prayer book, cross, etc.

## Have Fun!



In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Thank you God, for this special time.  
We know that You are our greatest treasure,  
and all our blessings come from You.  
Help us discover the treasure of our families.  
Help us to share Your love in the world.  
Amen.



In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



## Session 1

### The Treasure of Family – Discovering the treasure before your eyes

#### Get Ready

In Scripture we hear “all good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). Over the course of the next five VBS sessions, you and your child will discover anew the treasures that God gives to you and your family every day. These gifts include the necessities of life – they also include God’s gifts of love, mercy and forgiveness, kindness and generosity. Like all gifts from God, we are called to share these gifts with the world.

Read the following Scripture passage: Matthew 6:19–21 Treasure in Heaven

This session lays the foundation for this At-Home VBS. You and your child will be encouraged to consider the “big” questions about what brings you happiness, who and what do you love, how do you share the treasures of your life with others. Most importantly, you will ask: Is Jesus the greatest treasure of my life? Does your family life reflect that Jesus is the greatest treasure in your hearts and home?

Children notice how we spend our time and our money. Look at the things you spend your time and money on and then ask yourself, “What do I treasure? Where is my heart?” What are some of the earthly treasures you hold dear? What memories and experiences do you treasure? What are the family moments you treasure most?

Begin the session with the Opening Prayer and VBS Song.



#### Conversation Corner – Start

Talk with your child about how treasure has value because it is important to us. Share with your child some of the people, memories, and things you treasure.

#### Conversation Corner – Saints

Saints are people who treasured Jesus in their hearts and shared His love with the world. There are so many saints we cannot name them all.

Did you know that we can be saints too? When we follow Jesus and love as He teaches us to do, we grow in holiness. The more holy we try to be by following Jesus, the more saintly we are. I hope that we will live together with Jesus and all the saints in heaven someday.

#### Conversation Corner – Treasure of the Heart

What symbol do we use to represent love? Yes, a heart is a symbol for love. Our hearts remember the things we love – so what we love shows the things we treasure, the things that are most important to us. But love is not just about material things – love is especially about people. Jesus teaches us that people are always more important than things. Who we love also shows who we treasure. Jesus tells us that our hearts teach us what is most important. He says that our hearts will always be where our treasure is.

Imagine your heart is a like a treasure chest. Who are the people, and what are things, that you love most and keep in your heart?

The people and things in your heart help you to decide how to spend your time and money. You may not have much money, but you do have time. How do you use your time? Who are the people you most like to be with? These people are your treasures – they hold a special place in your heart.

Is Jesus in your heart? Do you ever spend time with Jesus? Jesus thinks you are His treasure – you are in His heart every minute of every day! Each of us holds a special place in His heart. He loves each of us and wants to be with us forever in Heaven.



### Make Your Treasure Chest

Go on a "treasure hunt" around your house with your child to find items to make a VBS Treasure Chest. You will use this treasure chest for the remaining VBS sessions.

- Find a box you can use – any box with a lid can be used.
- Cover the box – you can use paint, wrapping paper, or other colorful paper.
- Decorate the box with things you find around the house – stickers, gems, fabric or felt scraps, etc.
- Put a picture of your family inside the box.
- Place the box and the 'What are My Treasures?' list in a special place – beside your bed, on a prayer table, etc.



### Tasty Treasures Snack

- Using a small bowl or cup your child cannot see through, add any combination of the following: raisins, small pretzels, Cheerios (or similar circle cereal), gummy candies, animal crackers, etc.
- Cover the snack with foil, or an opaque lid.
- When it is snack time, say a simple prayer of thanks. Then have your child open the snack to discover the treasures inside. As your child enjoys the treasure, you can talk about how each treasure is good by itself, but even better, when they are together – just like the gifts, that God gives us.



### Name your Treasures

Help your child to complete the 'What are My Treasures?' worksheet.

- When you are done, count together all the blessing on the page. Remind your child that Jesus gives us more treasures than we could ever count.
- Say a simple prayer of thanks.



### Meet a Saint – Mary Immaculate

We have talked a lot about family and how we are a treasure to one another. Did you know Jesus grew up in a family like ours? Mary is the mother of Jesus and Joseph was his father on earth. They loved and cared for one another, just like we do. They loved Jesus with their whole heart. There was no greater treasure for them than Jesus. Now they live together in heaven with Jesus. They are saints.

Because Mary is so important to us, we have many names for her. In this coloring page, Mary is called the Immaculate Conception. This name shows that God wanted Mary to be perfect so that she could be the mother of Jesus. God made Mary a perfect treasure "chest" for his most precious treasure, Jesus.

# What are My Treasures?

Use the space below to write or draw people and things you treasure.



When you finish, count how many you have.  
Jesus gives you more treasure than you could ever count!

# Mary, Our Mother, Our Treasure





## Session 2

### Joseph and His Brothers – Families Forgive (Genesis 37, 40–44)

#### Get Ready

The story of Joseph and his brothers has all the elements of a great piece of literature: jealousy, famine, journey and courage. In this story, we also see the dynamics of family relationships including love and forgiveness. Most importantly, it shows that God is always at work in bringing good to the lives of His people. Jacob, father of twelve sons, causes division in his family by his favoritism of Joseph, the son of his favorite wife. This causes division between Joseph and his brothers. The relationship becomes more difficult when Joseph starts telling his brothers of his dreams. Joseph's dreams of ruling his brothers may seem to be brotherly competition, and they bring him only trouble. However, the events of his life make it clear that the dreams were from God. The reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers teaches us the power of forgiveness to bring new life to a situation that seemed broken and dead.

Pope Francis says, "the family is a great training ground for the mutual giving and forgiving without which no love can last for long..." Every day in our families we wrong one another in small – and sometimes not so small – ways. Learning to forgive in our family gives our child(ren) the gift of healing, allowing our relationships to grow stronger. Families that forgive each other reflect the mercy of God's forgiveness and love.

Begin the session with the Opening Prayer and VBS Song.



#### Conversation Corner – Start

- Ask your child(ren) to remember a time when they were angry and unkind to someone in the family. Did you say I'm sorry? How did that make you feel?
- Ask your child(ren) if someone in the family has ever been mean or unkind to them. Was it hard to forgive?
- Today, I'm going to tell you a story about Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's brothers were mean to him, but Joseph trusted in God that everything would be ok.

#### Conversation Corner – Families Forgive

- What do you think it would be like to have eleven brothers?
- Can you describe how you think Joseph's beautiful coat looked?
- How do you think Joseph felt when his brothers sold him? Do you think the brothers felt bad?
- Do you think it was hard for Joseph to forgive his brothers?
- What good things did God bring out of the hard times in Joseph's life?
- How do you think Joseph's father, Jacob, felt to have all his sons together again?

#### Conversation Corner – Wrap Up

Forgiveness is one of the best treasures we can give our families. The words "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" are treasures that show our love for one another. Forgiveness keeps our family strong and united.





### Colored Coat Hunt

- Hide small pieces of colorful paper, stickers, felt, ribbon, etc. around your house.
- Have your child(ren) hunt to find the colorful materials you have hidden.
- When they have found all the materials, have them glue the items on the "Joseph's Coat of Many Colors" page.
- Add a face, hands and legs to complete the picture of Joseph in his beautiful coat.



### Tasty Treasures Snack

- Make a "bundle of wheat" by tying 5 pretzel sticks together with a piece of yarn. Like Joseph's dream, see if you can get a bundle of sticks to stand upright.

Or

### Make "Sacks of Grain"

- Put one half cup of granola or other grain cereal in a small plastic bag, tie the bag closed.
- Remind your child(ren) that Joseph's brothers were reunited with Joseph when they went to ask for grain.



### Make a Family Chain

- Have 2 copies of the Paper Family Chain.
- Cut on the dotted line so you have two long strips of paper (4.25 x 11) long.
- Fold the paper in half lengthwise down the center of the person - with half a person (head/arms/legs) on each side of the fold.
- Fold the paper in half lengthwise again - keep the image of the half person on top as you fold the paper again.
- Turn the paper over and fold in half.
- The image of the person should be on top again.
- Cut along the image lines.
- Gently unfold the cut image - you should have 4 people.
- Repeat the process two more times.
- Connect the three chains together with a small piece of tape to have the 12 sons of Jacob together.
- Draw faces and clothes on the brothers.
- Decorate the 11th brother, Joseph, with his beautiful coat of many colors.



### Meet a Saint - Martin de Porres

- Our saint for the day is a model of forgiveness.
- He was born in 1579 and came from a poor mixed-race family that was not accepted by society.
- Because his family was not accepted, he always felt unworthy.
- But he felt called by God to help others.
- Martin wanted to be a Dominican lay Brother, but they made him wait for 8 years working as a servant.
- He took care of the sick and poor regardless of their race.
- Like Joseph, he had a choice to either become bitter and complain, or devote himself to hard work and trust in God.

### Treasure Chest

Go on a treasure hunt around your house. Find something that helps you to remember to say you are sorry, or to forgive someone. Add this item to your treasure chest. Say a prayer of thanks to God for His forgiveness. Ask Him to help you to be loving and forgiving with your family.



## Bible Story

This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. He had 12 sons. Jacob loved God and taught all of his children to have faith in God. Jacob loved everyone in his family, but he loved his 11th son, Joseph, best of all. He loved Joseph in a special way because he was born when Jacob was an old man.

Joseph helped his family by taking care of their flock of sheep. Joseph and his brothers would take care of the sheep, but they were mean to him. They would not say anything nice to Joseph.

When Joseph was seventeen years old, his father showed him how much he loved him by giving him a beautiful coat made with all the colors of the rainbow. This made Joseph's brothers jealous.

One night Joseph had a dream. He told the dream his brothers, saying to them, "Listen to this dream I had. We were wrapping wheat together in the field, when suddenly my wheat stood up and your wheat formed a ring around mine and bowed down to it!" His brothers said to him, "so you think that makes you a king over us?" They started to hate him even more because of this dream.

One day, Jacob asked Joseph to a faraway field to check on his brothers and the flock of sheep. So Joseph went to see his brothers. They saw him coming in his beautiful coat, and because they were so jealous, they decided to hurt him.

When Reuben - Joseph's oldest brother - heard what his other brothers were planning against Joseph. He tried to save Joseph from their mean plan. When Joseph came up to his brothers, they took his beautiful coat then put him in deep hole while they ate their lunch.

While they were eating, the brothers saw some merchants coming and decided to sell Joseph to them as a slave. They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. The merchants took Joseph to the far-away country of Egypt. Reuben, who was not part of this plan, was so upset when he saw that Joseph was gone, that he tore his clothes and scolded his brothers. He said their father would be angry to hear what the brothers had done to Joseph. They decided to lie and make it look like a wild animal had killed Joseph. They took his beautiful coat, and put some blood on it. Then they sent a messenger to take the coat to their father, with the message: "We found this. See whether it is your son's tunic or not." Jacob recognized the coat and said, "That is my son's coat! A wild beast has killed him." Jacob was so sad that he sat and cried for his lost son for many days.

Meanwhile, Joseph was a servant to an important man in Egypt. Joseph was sad and lonely because he was away from his family. But, he had faith in God – he knew that he was never alone – God was always with him.

So, he continued to work hard. One day, he was accused of doing something he did not do and was put in prison. Even in these moments when he was treated unfairly, Joseph trusted in God. He made friends with two other prisoners. Together they encouraged each other to trust in God. Joseph helped them to understand their dreams.

One of the prisoners was set free from prison and returns to work in the court of Pharaoh. He remembered always that Joseph was kind to him. When Pharaoh – the most important man in Egypt – was frightened by a dream, the former prisoner asked Joseph to be set free from prison to help Pharaoh understand his dream.

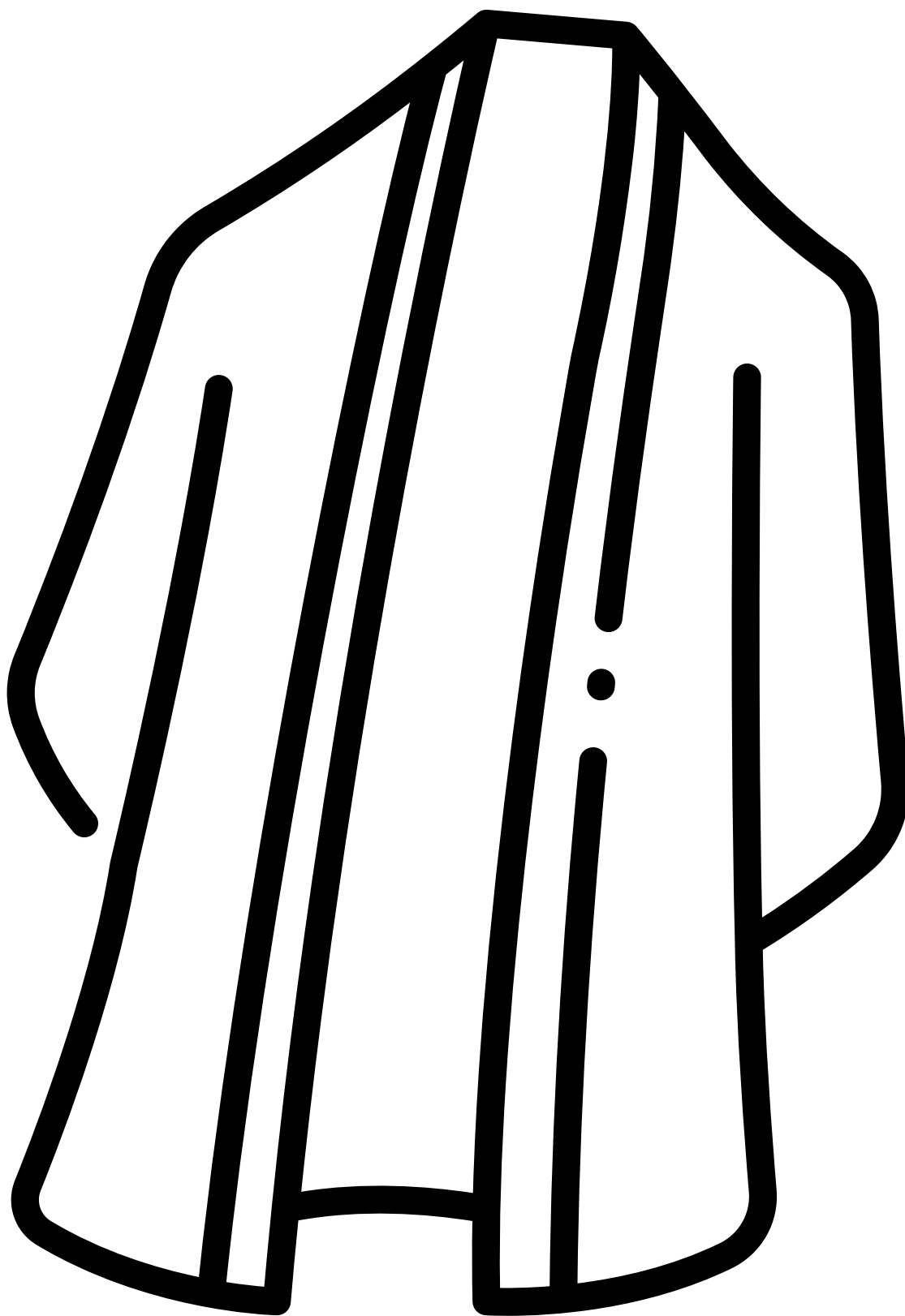
Joseph helped Pharaoh understand that a time was coming when the country would need food. Pharaoh was so grateful that he put Joseph in charge of making sure they saved enough food for the hard time that was coming. Joseph did such a good job, that they saved more food than they needed and shared with people from other countries.

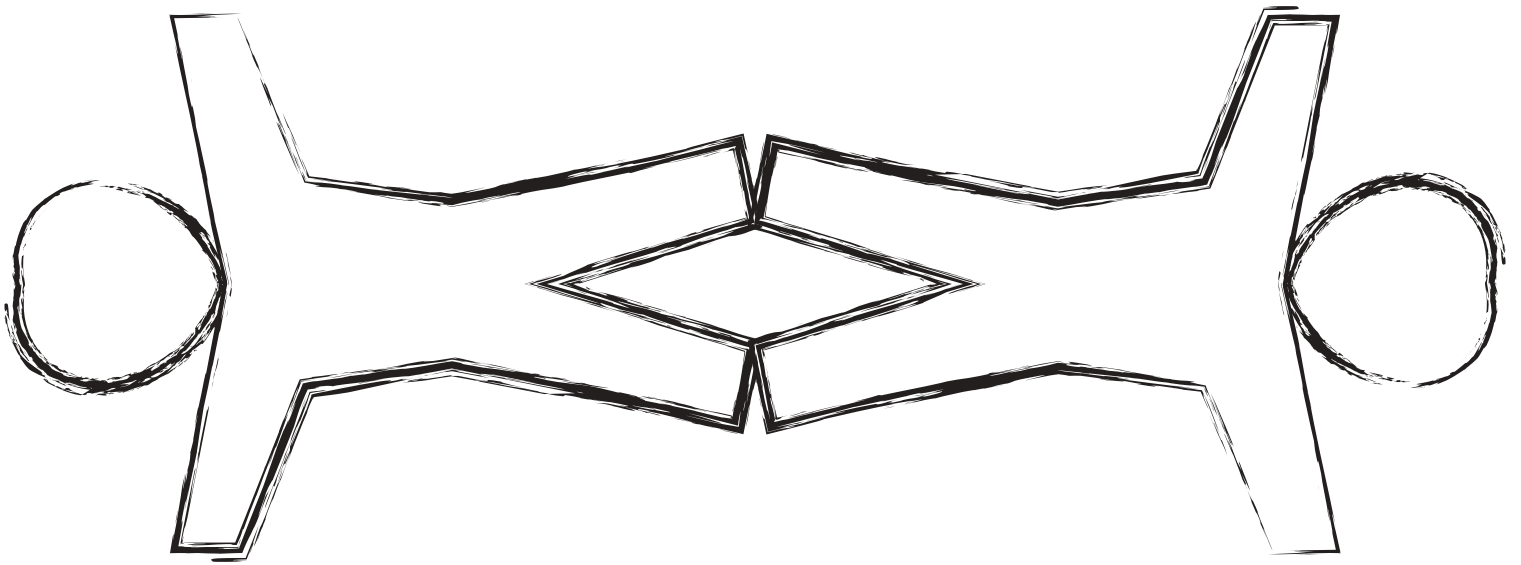
Back in Canaan, Jacob and his sons did not have enough to eat. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to beg for some food.

When Joseph's brothers got to Egypt, they bowed down before Joseph and said to him "we have come to buy food." Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him because it had been 10 years since they sold him to the merchants.

Joseph wanted to make sure his brothers were sorry for how they had treated him. He said to them "I will know if you are good men who love God and your family if you leave one of your brothers with me. You must also bring me your youngest brother, Benjamin." When the brothers got back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. All of Jacob's sons, including Benjamin, returned to Egypt. When Joseph saw all his family together, he cried. He told his brothers that he was Joseph who they had sold into slavery. They fell to their knees and asked for forgiveness. Joseph forgave them and said, "Do not be angry with yourselves for having sold me here. It was really God who had me come here so I could help save people from starving." The sons returned to Jacob to tell them that Joseph was still alive. Jacob and all his family returned to live in Egypt with Joseph.

# Joseph's Coat of Many Colors





Forgive others like St Martin de Porres!





### Session 3

#### Moses and Miriam- Families Treasure Life (Exodus 1-2)

##### Get Ready,

Moses is one of the most famous people of the Old Testament. He was born to an Israelite woman but raised by the pharaoh's daughter. He led his people through the Red Sea. He was God's messenger of the Ten Commandments. God had a plan for Moses' life. At the same time, none of this would have been possible without the loving actions taken by his family and the pharaoh's daughter at the time of his birth.

Moses' mother and his sister Miriam loved him so much that they were willing to risk their lives in order to save his. They understood the importance of valuing and protecting human life, especially within their own family. Pharaoh's daughter too, recognized the dignity of life as she rescued and loved Moses from her father's evil plan.

The gift of life is the first gift that God gives to us. Everything else flows from the fact that we are alive. Therefore, respecting the dignity and value of life is fundamental to us as human beings. God has a plan for every life. As Christians, we play a role in that plan by supporting life at all stages, from conception to natural death. The choices we make should demonstrate that we value life and treasure God's plan for every life. Our children learn from our actions so our choices and voices must affirm the dignity of human life.

Begin the session with the opening prayer and VBS song.



##### Conversation Corner - Start

- Talk with your child about how their life is a priceless treasure. Discuss how you felt the day they were born and that you can't imagine life without them. Your family and even the whole world would be different without them. Share some pictures with your child of when they were a newborn. Let them know what those moments meant to you and how you cherish their life, then and now.
- Let them know that God is also so happy that they were born. He has a special plan for their life. In fact, God loves every person and has a plan for them.
- Today we are going to hear a story about a mother and her special baby. She loved him so much! God had a plan for this baby too.

##### Conversation Corner - Treasure Life

- What did you think of that story? Can you imagine being a baby floating in a river in a basket? That sounds like it could be dangerous! But it shows how much Moses' mother loved him, and trusted in God. She knew God would keep Moses safe.
- More than anything, Moses' mother wanted to make sure he got to live. When we protect life, we make sure that every person has food and a home so they can live a long and healthy life and live the plan that God has for their life.
- Sometimes the people that care for our lives are not moms and dads. In this story, the pharaoh's daughter took care of Moses' life. She loved the baby just as if he were her own.

##### Conversation Corner - Wrap-Up

Protecting life means we care about all lives, not just those we are related to. What are some ways in which our family loves and protects one another? How can you be like Miriam and protect your younger brothers and sisters? If an only child, how can you protect other younger children in the neighborhood or at school?



### Caring for Baby Moses

- First, complete the Baby Moses Maze worksheet.
- Then, use a baby doll or stuffed animal to represent baby Moses.
- Ask your child to imagine that they were the one to find baby Moses.
- Identify items from around the house that they would need to care for him.
- Ask them to then role play how they would care for Moses.



### Tasty Treasures Snack

- Prepare your child's favorite fruit. Say a short prayer of thanks for the food.
- As they enjoy the treat, remind them that fruit is a symbol of life. Some fruit grows on trees, which offer shade and shelter. You can grow new fruit from the seeds.



### Baby Moses Basket Craft

- Take a brown paper bag (lunch bag size) and roll down the sides to resemble a basket. If you don't have a brown paper bag, you can use a small box for the basket.
- Cut green construction paper or regular blank paper colored green to look like grass.
- Glue, staple, or tape the grass along one side of the basket to look like the river reeds.
- Wrap three cotton balls in a strip of cloth, a tissue or tissue paper to look like a swaddled baby. Draw eyes and a mouth on baby Moses. Place him in the basket.
- Keep the basket in a place where all the family can see. Every time you do something that shows care for life, write it down on a slip of paper and place the slip into the basket. Just like Miriam watching over baby Moses, you are protecting life.



### Meet a Saint - St. Kateri Tekakwitha

- St. Kateri was born to a Mohawk Indian family.
- When she was young, her entire family died from smallpox. Kateri was the only one to live, but she was scarred and had poor eyesight.
- Kateri learned about Jesus from a Christian missionary and was baptized when she was 19.
- From then on, she gave her life to God. Because her tribe rejected God, she moved to live in a Christian community in Canada. There, she cared for the poor and the sick.
- Despite her personal tragedies, Kateri had a deep appreciation for life and believed in the presence of the God in all things. She knew God had a plan for her life.
- She also knew that God had a plan for every person, so she treasured life by caring for those who often had no one else to look after them.

### Treasure Chest

Go on a treasure hunt around your house. Find something that represents human life. Place this item in your treasure chest as a reminder that all life is important to God and needs our love and protection. Ask God to bless and protect the lives of all people.





## Bible Story.

This story comes a long time after Jacob, his sons, and their families moved to Egypt to be with Joseph. God called Jacob, Israel, so all the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were called Israelites.

Because so many years had passed, a new pharaoh had become the leader of Egypt. This pharaoh did not remember Joseph and how he had saved Egypt. He treated the Israelites as his slaves and made them work long hard hours. The Israelites told pharaoh that they needed to rest a little because the work was hard and they were getting sick. He only made them work longer hours. But he did start to worry that they might fight against him some day.

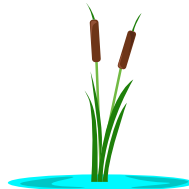
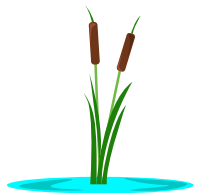
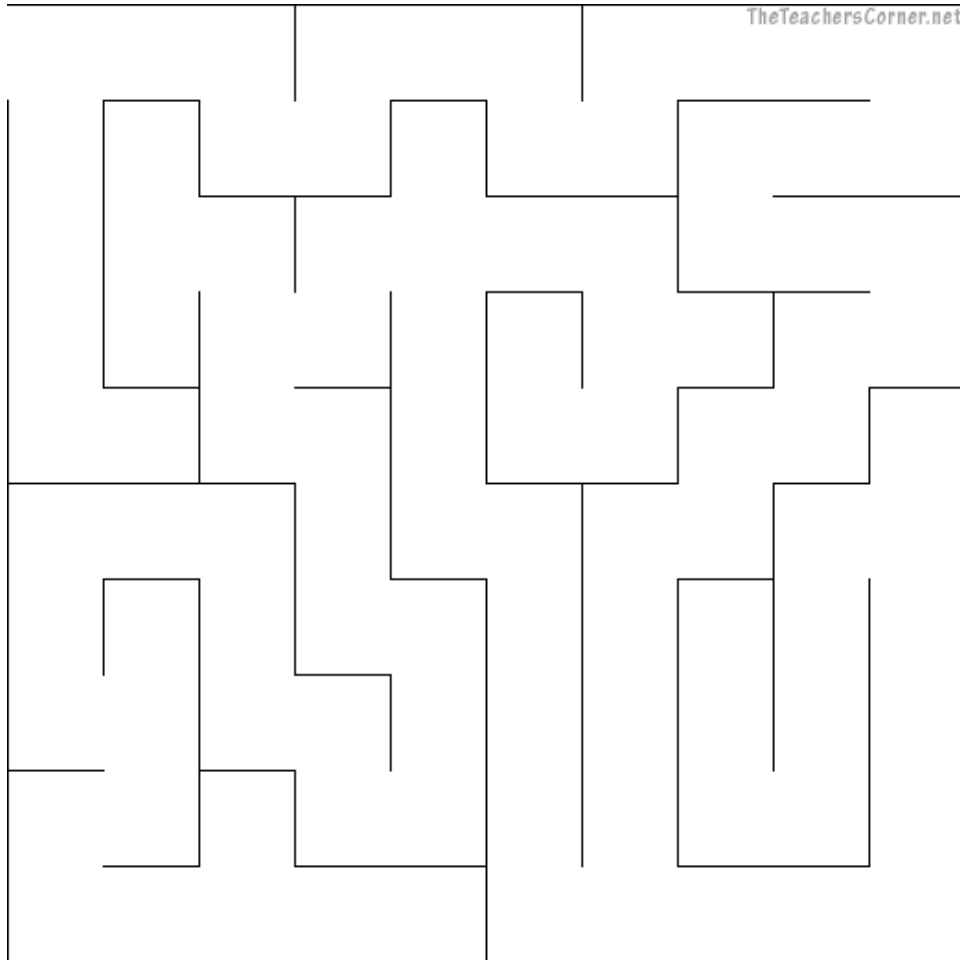
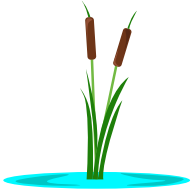
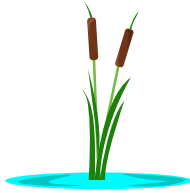
Even though pharaoh was mean to them, God continued to bless the Israelites. Their families grew and grew. This made the pharaoh so angry that he had his soldiers throw every newborn Israelite boy into the Nile River. One mother though, came up with a plan to save her new son – she hid him for three months. But as he grew, it was harder to keep him hidden, so she wove a special basket, placed her son in the basket, then put the basket in the reeds of the Nile River. To make sure her baby stayed safe, she had the baby's older sister, Miriam, watch over him as his basket floated down the river.

That very day, pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe. As she stepped into the river, she noticed the basket among the reeds. She called to her servant to bring the basket to her. When she opened it, she was surprised to see a baby! She knew the baby's mother must love this child very much, because she gave him up rather than letting him be harmed by the pharaoh's soldiers. She did not want to obey pharaoh's order either. She decided to take care of the child.

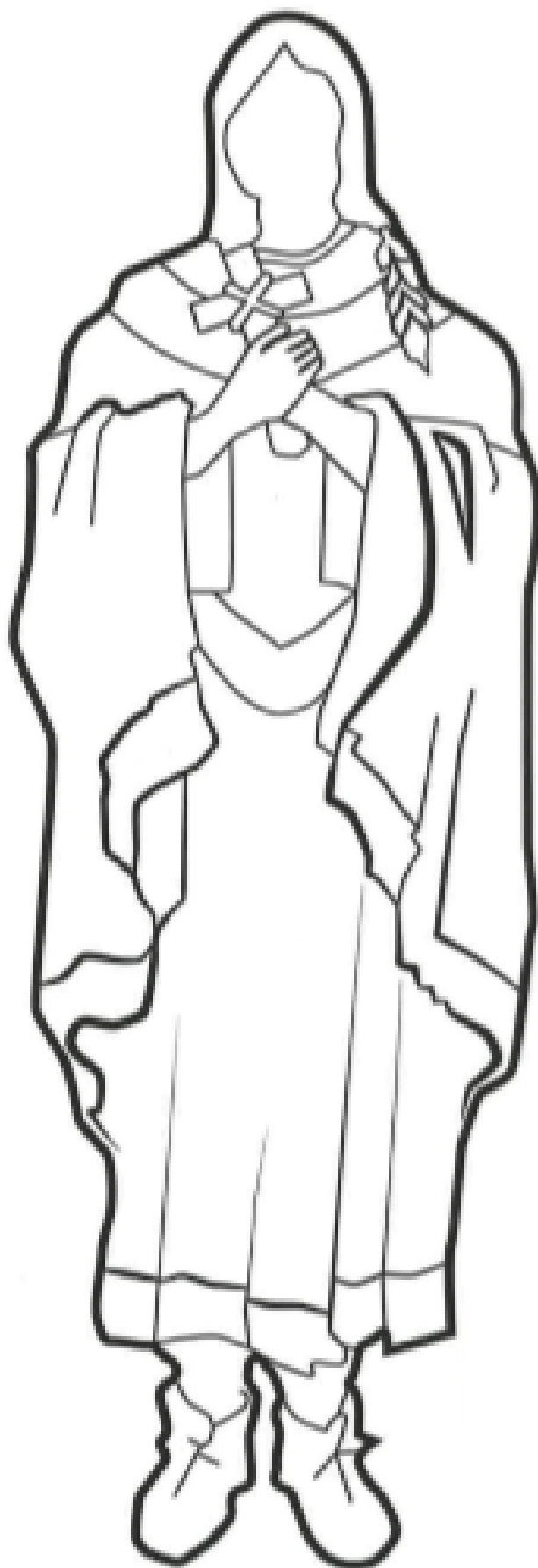
When Miriam saw pharaoh's daughter with the basket that held her baby brother, she decided to ask if she needed help with the baby. Miriam said that maybe an Israelite mother could help. Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and Miriam brought her own mother, the baby's mother, to help raise him! Pharaoh's daughter adopted this child as her own. She named him Moses which means, "I drew him out of the water." He grew up to be a strong and powerful man in Egypt.

# Baby Moses Maze

Help get Moses safely to Pharaoh's daughter.



Take care of others like St. Kateri Tekakwitha!





## Session 4 Ruth and Naomi – Families Take Care of Each Other (Ruth 1-4)

### Get Ready

Ruth and Naomi form a unique family bond that shows the great power of love and care in families. Out of love for Naomi, Ruth pledges to follow her wherever she might go saying, "Wherever you go I will go, wherever you live I will live. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God."

This is an amazing act of faith from Ruth. She not only will follow Naomi wherever she goes but also will worship Naomi's God (the God of the Jewish people), giving up the gods of her own people. This act of loyalty on the part of Ruth will eventually lead to the birth of Obed who will become the grandfather of King David. Many years later, Jesus will be born from this same family line. The story of Ruth demonstrates that God has a place for everyone in His plan of salvation.

Unlike some stories in the Old Testament, God is not highlighted as a main character in this story. Yet, He is present the whole time! God is at work in the lives of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. Each is listening in their own way to His voice as they are inspired to help and care for one another.

As we listen to this story, we are called to consider how we listen for the voice of God in our everyday lives, allowing Him to prompt our actions. In this, we too become agents in His saving plan.

This lesson also breaks open the importance of the qualities of faithfulness, loyalty, friendship, and kindness in our own families. These qualities are most often displayed in our everyday actions. Think of all the great things that God is accomplishing through us and our actions on a daily basis.

Begin the session with the opening prayer and VBS song.



### Conversation Corner – Start

- Talk with your child about how faithfulness, loyalty, friendship, and kindness are like different kinds of treasure (diamonds, gold, silver, pearls). These qualities enrich our family – they are treasures that make us stronger together. Share specific examples of how you experienced these qualities in your own family when you were a child their age.
- Each family has different ways they show care for each other. Tell your child you are going to share a Bible story about a special family and how they loved and cared for one another.

### Conversation Corner – Caring for Each Other

- It is really sad that Naomi lost both her husband and sons. She must have felt a little afraid, but she had faith in God and knew she was never really alone. What are some ways where you feel that God is with you?
- Naomi loved her daughter-in-laws, and was ready to sacrifice her own comfort so they could be with their families. What is a time when you gave up something for others?
- Ruth also was willing to sacrifice for Naomi. Love gives us the strength to do hard things for those we love. Name a time when you did something hard for your family.
- Boaz was kind to Ruth even though she was not his relative. He cared for Ruth because he cared for his cousin Naomi. What is one way you have been kind to someone who is not in your immediate family?

### Conversation Corner – Wrap-Up

Ask your child to think of their favorite possession. Perhaps it is a toy, blanket, or stuffed animal. Invite them to consider how they treat that favorite possession. What actions do they take to show that it is their favorite? How do they express their love for it? Remind them that it is even more important that we show our love for people especially in our families. What are some ways that we love and care for each other in this family? How do we show our family members that they are important to us?



### Pick Up the Fallen Grain

- Print out the grain kernels activity sheet.
- Cut out each kernel and hide them around the house.
- Have your child find each grain kernel and then arrange them into the words that Ruth said when she was going to follow Naomi.
- For younger children, place a number or letter on the kernel to help them place the words in order. Read the verse with them.
- Ask them, do you remember who said this? Just like they had to work hard to find the pieces, remind them of how hard Ruth had to work finding the grain. She truly cared for Naomi.



### Tasty Treasures Snack

- Prepare a popcorn snack mix for your child consisting of popcorn, dried fruit, nuts, and chocolate chips.
- Just like faithfulness, loyalty, friendship, and kindness enrich our families, let these four treats enrich our body.
- Make sure to thank God for the wonderful gifts that He has given you and your family.



### Basket of Grain Craft

Items required: Paper plate (not Styrofoam), glue or stapler, scissors, crayons and/or markers.

- Cut the paper plate in half.
- Have your child(ren) draw a basket pattern on the outside of each plate half and then color in the pattern.
- Staple or glue the two plate halves together to create a basket.
- Give your child(ren) about five of the paper grain kernels they had just found. They should write ways they can be loyal, faithful, and kind on the pieces of grain. Younger children can draw symbols on their pieces representing these qualities. Feel free to add color or additional artwork to the kernels.
- Children can then glue/staple their pieces of grain to the basket so that they are sticking about halfway out.



### Meet a Saint - St. Juan Diego

- Juan Diego lived in Guadalupe, Mexico in the 1500s. He loved and trusted in God very much even when many people in his country did not believe in God.
- He took care of his family, especially his uncle who was very sick.
- One day, on his way to Mass, the Virgin Mary appeared to him. She told him that she wanted to show her love for the people of Mexico. She said to tell the bishop to build a special church to show that love.
- Juan Diego told the bishop about his meeting with Mary but the bishop did not believe him. Juan Diego wanted to give up.
- Mary appeared to him again. She told him to pick flowers to bring to the bishop as a sign. Juan was faithful; he went out and did as he was told.
- He found flowers and brought them to the bishop carrying them inside his tilma (cloak). When he opened his tilma the flowers fell out before the bishop and a beautiful image of the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on his tilma where the flowers had been.
- The bishop immediately believed Juan and ordered for the shrine to be built to Mary.
- Juan Diego is a model of faithfulness and loyalty to God and family just like Ruth.

### Treasure Chest

Go on a treasure hunt around your house. Find something that represents your family. Place this item in your treasure chest as a reminder that we need to love and care for our families. Say a prayer of thanks to God for His faithfulness, and ask Him to help you to be kind and caring with your family.



## Bible Story

Long before Jesus was born, there was a woman named Naomi. Naomi had a hard life. She and her husband and their two sons had to leave their home in Canaan and settle in a foreign land, Moab, because they did not have enough food to eat. Soon after they arrived in Moab, Naomi's husband died and she was left with only her two sons.

The sons grew up and got married. One married a woman named Orpah and the other married a woman named Ruth. Sadly, after 10 years in Moab, both of Naomi's sons died. Now Naomi was left with only her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

Both Orpah and Ruth loved Naomi and took good care of her. Naomi also loved her daughters-in-law and wanted what was best for them. So she said to them, "Go back to your families and remarry, live a long and happy life." While Orpah was sad to leave, she decided to return to her family. Ruth, however, would not leave Naomi. She said that Naomi was her family now and she wanted to be with Naomi wherever she went. Ruth said to Naomi, "Wherever you go I will go, wherever you live I will live. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God." This was a very brave thing to say because Ruth's family worshipped different gods than Naomi.

So Ruth and Naomi returned to Naomi's home in the village of Bethlehem. The people of Bethlehem were excited to have Naomi come home and welcomed Ruth as if she were family. The people of the village shared their food with Naomi and Ruth, but then Ruth said, "I am strong, I can go to the fields and gather food for us." Naomi said, "go to the field of my cousin Boaz and ask if you can pick up the grain in his fields." Ruth went to the field of Boaz and asked if she could pick up the grain dropped by the workers. Each day she would pick up the left over wheat or barley that had fallen to the ground. Boaz heard about how hard Ruth was working to take care of Naomi and told his servants to let her pick as much grain as she wanted in the field. Ruth was very grateful to Boaz for his kindness.

When Ruth told Naomi about how generous Boaz had been, Naomi made a plan for them to meet again because she thought that Ruth and Boaz would be good for each other. Boaz admired Ruth's loyalty and kindness and asked her to marry him. Ruth, remembering Boaz's generosity, said yes. They got married and took Naomi into their home to care for her. As time went on, they had a baby boy. They named him Obed. He was the grandfather to the great king David.

Cut out the "kernels" of grain. These may need numbered for younger students so that they can arrange them in the proper order.

**PEOPLE**

**YOUR**

**AND**

**PEOPLE**

**YOUR**

**SHALL**

**GOD**

**BE**

**MY**

**MY**

**GOD**

Be faithful like St. Juan Diego!







## Session 5

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Families Help Others (Luke 10:29-37)

#### Get Ready

This familiar parable challenges us to open both our eyes, and our hearts, to the needs of our neighbor. Like the scholars of the law who questioned Jesus, “Who is my neighbor,” we need to consider how we understand the term neighbor. Do I look beyond my neighborhood and the people I recognize? Jesus makes it clear – our neighbors are everyone! We must be ready to accept that our neighbors may even be people we do not particularly like. Jesus teaches us to love our neighbor – this means we show compassion and care for anyone in need.

A second message this parable teaches is that helping someone in need will likely require that we put aside our own plans or agendas in order to help. Being a Good Samaritan will likely cause personal inconvenience because it requires that we give of our time and perhaps of our monetary goods to help others.

The parable reminds us that status does not matter. Title or position does not exempt us from being in need or from showing compassion, nor does it guarantee that we will help (as we see in the busy priest). Living with the heart of the Good Samaritan means that we act compassionately toward everyone.

The way we live is a witness to other people, most especially our child(ren). This calls us to consider if our lives reflect the compassion of making time to help others in the midst of our busy schedules. We need to acknowledge the times we turn away, cross to the other side of road. Being a Good Samaritan with the heart of Jesus means that we are willing to make sacrifices for others, at all times, regardless of the circumstance.

Begin with the Opening Prayer and VBS song.

#### Conversation Corner – Start.

- Ask your child to help you list the names of your neighbors, include neighbors you may not know by name but recognize on sight. Ask your child to name some of the people they see regularly. Again, do not limit the list to those they know by name, include the person who works at the grocery store, the person who cuts their hair, the mail carrier, etc. Tell them that Jesus says all these people are our neighbors – even when they don’t live near us or we don’t know their names.
- In the story we hear today, Jesus wants us to be kind to everyone. He tells us that we should treat everyone as our neighbor.

#### Conversation Corner – Loving my Neighbor

- When you are hurt or do not feel good, how do you want to be treated?
- How do you think the man who was hurt in the story felt when people passed by without helping him?
- The Samaritan man in the story was very kind to the injured man. Do you remember some of the ways he showed kindness?
- Sometimes people who are hungry, sometimes we help someone who is lonely or being bullied. There are so many ways we can be kind and helpful. Have you ever had a chance to help someone and did not help? How do you think it made the person feel?
- When was a time you were kind to someone? Did you go out of your way to be nice?
- How can our family help someone in need?
- Why is it important to be kind to everyone? Because Jesus loves everyone and he wants us to love and care for them too!



### Run to help

- With your child, hunt around the house for items that could help a person in need: a bandage, water, cold compress, a snack for a hungry person, etc. Let your child(ren) be creative and dream big on items to add to the pile.
- Place these items in a pile outside - or in a space where your child(ren) has room to run.
- Lay on the ground at least 20 feet away from the pile of items.
- Have your child(ren) run between you and the pile, bringing one item to help you on each trip. You can time your child to see how long it takes.
- Change rolls. Have your child(ren) lay down and you run to bring each item to them in their need.



### Helping Hands

- Place an outline of your child's hand or a handprint on the "I can Lend a Hand" coloring page. Use paint for a handprint or trace the hand of your child(ren) on colored paper, cut and glue on the coloring page.
- Invite your child to think about ways they can help others.
- Have them write (or help them to write) their idea on the bandages. Cut and glue the bandages on the page with the handprint.
- Hang this as a reminder to help others in need.



### Tasty Treasures Snack

#### Edible Band-aids

##### Sweet band-aids:

- Take one quarter of a graham cracker; put a 1-inch square of cream cheese, yogurt, or other spread in the middle of the cracker. Add a tiny bit of red jelly, or red candy (for blood).

##### Salty band-aids:

- Take one club cracker (or similar shape), put a 1 inch square of cream cheese, peanut butter or cheese in the middle. Add a tiny bit of red jelly, or ketchup (for blood).



### Meet a Saint - Mother Teresa

- As a religious sister, St. Teresa of Calcutta was sent to teach in a very poor part of India called Calcutta.
- She had to pass people who were hungry, sick, and living on the streets each day on her way to school.
- She prayed to God asking Him what she should do to help.
- Through prayer, she realized God wanted her to stop teaching in order to live among the people and help them.
- St. Teresa of Calcutta spent the rest of her life being a Good Samaritan by walking the streets in the poorest parts of her country looking for people to help.
- She would take them to the home where she lived to care for them.
- St. Teresa made it her job to be a Good Samaritan!
- Ask God to help you show His love to the people you meet each day.

### Treasure Chest

Go on a treasure hunt around your house. Find something that reminds you to help others and place it in your treasure chest.



## Bible Story.

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

A long, long time ago, when Jesus was teaching people about how to love God, a man asked Him, "What do I have to do to live in heaven forever?" Jesus said, "You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. You should also love your neighbor as yourself." One of the men who was listening said, "I understand that I am supposed to love God, but how do I know who my neighbor is?"

Jesus answered, "That is a good question." He then used a story to teach the people about what it means to love your neighbor. He said, "There was once a Jewish man walking from the town of Jerusalem to the town of Jericho. While he was walking, robbers came up to him. They beat him up, robbed him of his clothes and money, and then left the poor bleeding man alone on the road.

A few minutes later, a priest was going down the same road. He saw the injured man, but he thought, "I am too busy, I do not have time to help this man." He crossed to the other side of the road and passed by the beaten and bleeding man. He did not even stop to see if the injured man was still alive.

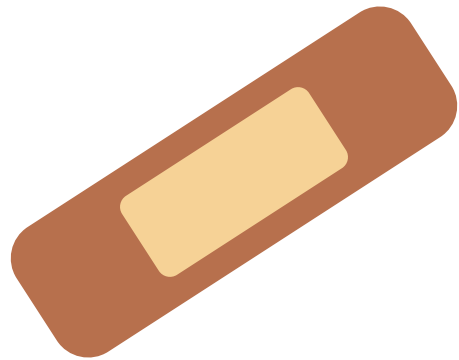
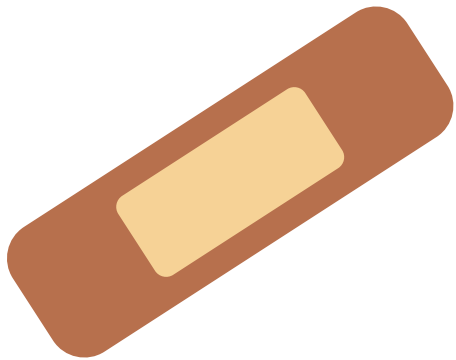
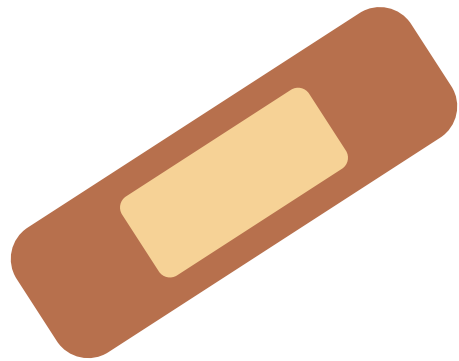
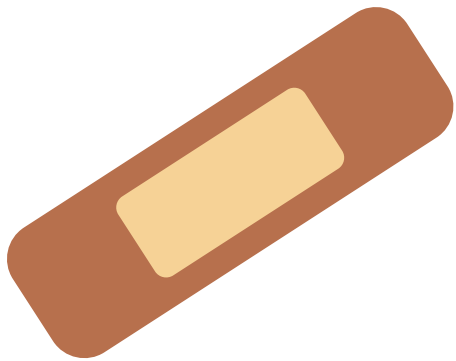
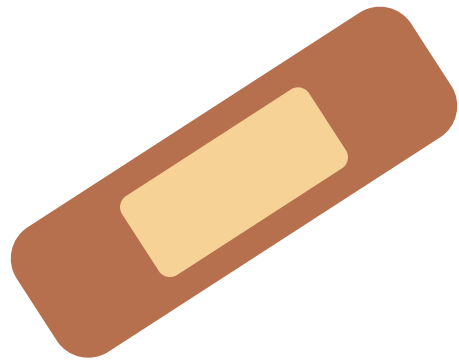
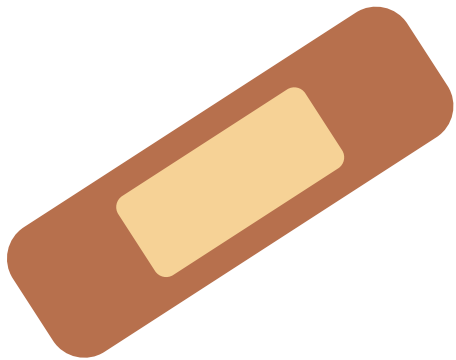
Then, another man came down the road. When he saw the injured man, he stopped to look. He said to himself, "I don't think I can help him, I'm not even sure he is alive." Though he could see the injured man needed help, he did not try to help him. He too, crossed to the other side of the road and passed by the beaten and bleeding man.

A third man came down the road. He was a Samaritan. When he saw the injured man, he rushed toward him to see if he could help. Even though Jews and Samaritans were enemies, the Samaritan felt very sorry for the injured man. He saw that the man was still alive, so he poured oil over his wounds and bandaged them up.

The Samaritan carefully lifted the injured man up onto his donkey and took him to an inn to take care of him. After taking care of the man for one day, he had to leave the injured man, to continue on his journey. The Samaritan wanted to make sure the injured man was still cared for though, so he took two silver coins from his own money and gave them to the innkeeper. He said to the innkeeper, "Take care of him while I am gone. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall pay you on my way back."

When Jesus finished this story, he asked the crowd, "Which of these three men was neighbor to the injured man?" The people answered, "The one who stopped to care for him and treated him with mercy." Jesus said, "You are right. Now, go and treat people with the same kindness."

I can lend a helping hand and love my neighbor.



Be a Good Samaritan like Mother Teresa!





## Session 6

### The Good Shepherd – Families Follow Jesus (John 10:1-16)

#### Get Ready

In this familiar Gospel, Jesus uses two metaphors to explain to the Pharisees, who feel threatened by Jesus' growing following, who He is and why He has come. We know this is an important teaching point for Jesus because he begins the teaching with "Amen, Amen." When Jesus begins a teaching with this phrase, it is a good reminder for us to pay careful attention.

While not a common image for us today, shepherds were familiar to the people of Jesus' time. Shepherds were hardworking men, who devoted themselves to the care of their flock. Being a shepherd was a 24-hour a day job. Shepherds had to lead their sheep to pastures where they could find food and water. Shepherds also protected their flock against predators – a good shepherd put himself between the sheep and danger. While sheep are not smart, they listen well. They recognize their shepherd's voice and only follow him.

Jesus also compares Himself to a gate in this Gospel. Jesus says that like a gate that we go through to get from one place to another, Jesus is the gate we must pass through to get to heaven. Jesus is our Good Shepherd and our gate to heaven. Jesus is our Good Shepherd because he laid down His life for us. As our gate, Jesus is our path to heaven. His life, passion, death and resurrection opens the doors to heaven for us. Parents are also shepherds and gates. As shepherds, we need to be familiar with the voice of Jesus. We must recognize and follow Him so that we can teach everyone in our family to do the same. As gates, we need to open the door for our children – and our families – to follow Jesus.

Begin the session with the Opening Prayer and VBS Song.



#### Conversation Corner – Start

- This is our last Bible session. We have learned a lot about Jesus!
- Think about how much He loves us, and wants us to be with Him always.
- Today we will hear a Bible story where Jesus calls Himself a shepherd.
- Do you know what a shepherd is? Shepherds take care of sheep because sheep cannot take care of themselves.

#### Conversation Corner – The Good Shepherd and the Gate

- Have we heard any other stories about shepherds? Yes, Joseph and his 11 brothers were all shepherds.
- Shepherds had a hard job. A good shepherd had to know the places where sheep could find enough food and water. They also protected the sheep from wild animals.
- Shepherds knew the names of each of their sheep and called them by name. When the sheep heard the shepherd calling their name, they followed.
- Sheep are not very smart, but they are smart enough to only follow the voice of the shepherd. They will not follow a voice they don't know. Sometimes we let people and things in our lives block the sound of the Jesus's voice. We follow the wrong path. Then Jesus, the Good Shepherd, searches for us and brings us back into His care.
- Remember how shepherds put themselves between the sheep and wild animals that want to harm them? Jesus did that for us! He came into the world so that He could save us from death. He chose to die on the cross for us because He loves every one of us and wants us to be with Him in heaven someday.
- He also called Himself a gate. That seems odd, doesn't it? A gate lets us get from one place to another. Jesus is a gate because when we go through Him we can get to heaven.

#### Conversation Corner – Wrap Up

Families are a little like shepherds and sheep. Parents take care of their children and keep them safe like shepherds do. Our family is a little flock, and we belong to Jesus' big flock. But Jesus is the best shepherd. That is why He called Himself the Good Shepherd.



### The Good Shepherd Says

- This activity is based on the game Simon Says.
- One adult takes the role of the Good Shepherd and tells the "sheep" what they must do. This is usually a physical instruction (example: jump on one foot, touch your nose, etc.
- The sheep should stand 10 feet away.
- The sheep should only follow the instruction when they recognize the shepherd's voice - if the shepherd begins the direction with the words, "the shepherd says."
- Sheep who correctly follow the direction of the shepherd make a step forward. Sheep who incorrectly follow (do the direction without the words "the shepherd says") take a step backward.
- The game is over when the sheep reaches the shepherd. If more than one child is playing the game, the game is over when the first sheep reaches the shepherd.
- After the game, remind your child(ren) that it is important to listen carefully for the voice of the Good Shepherd in their lives.



### Meet a Saint - Pope John Paul II

- St. John Paul II was Pope was a very good shepherd of the Church for 27 years.
- He made 104 visits around the world telling people about the Good News of God's love.
- He told us to look for good things and people in the world. He also taught us to follow Christ in our lives.
- St. John Paul II believed in the divine mercy of God. This means that even though we may sin, God still loves each of us very much and is always waiting to forgive us.
- Like the image of a gate, he told us to open the doors to Jesus. He said, "Do not be afraid! Open, wide the doors for Christ!"



### Tasty Treasures Snack

#### Popcorn Sheep

- Place one cup of popped popcorn in a small plastic bag, or wrap in cellophane, and seal it closed to create a ball shape.
- Print, cut and glue a sheep face on the bag.
- Say a simple prayer of thanks before enjoying your snack.



### Make a Good Shepherd Standing Guard

- Begin with an empty toilet paper tube.
- Find enough scraps of material, paper or tissue paper to make a cloak and headdress for the shepherd.
- Draw a face on the tube, near the top of the cylinder.
- Make the shepherd's cloak by wrapping a long strip (3 inch tall by 5 inch wide) material/paper around the body of the cylinder - be sure to start below the face - glue in place.
- Cut a circle of flexible material/paper for the shepherd's headdress.
- Place the circle over the top of the cylinder (near the face), bend the edges down, and secure in place by tying string, yarn, thread or ribbon around the circle.
- Shape a shepherd's crook, by bending one end of a pipe cleaner down so it looks like a candy cane - you may need to trim the bottom of the pipe cleaner to fit the shepherd's height.
- Tie a belt around the middle of the shepherd and tuck the crook inside the belt so it is at the shepherd's side.
- Keep this Good Shepherd by your bed at night so he can watch over you. Say a prayer each night asking Jesus the Good Shepherd to bless and keep you safe while you sleep.

### Treasure Chest:

Go on a treasure hunt around your house. Find something that reminds you of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Add this treasure to your treasure chest to remind you that Jesus is always leading you to heaven.





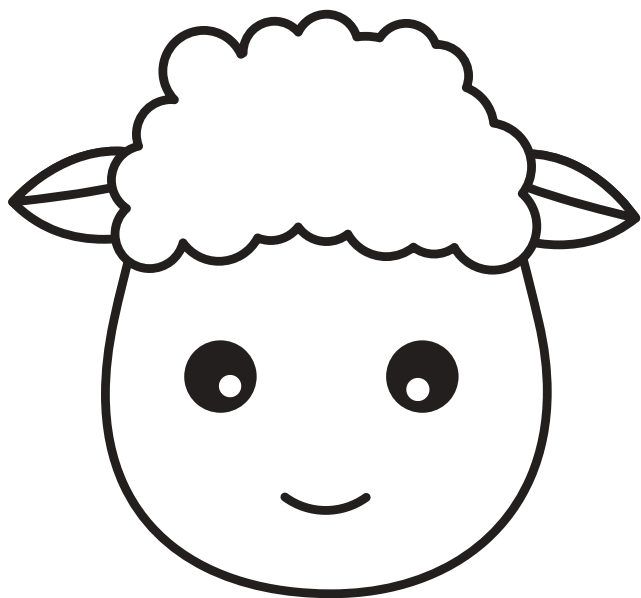
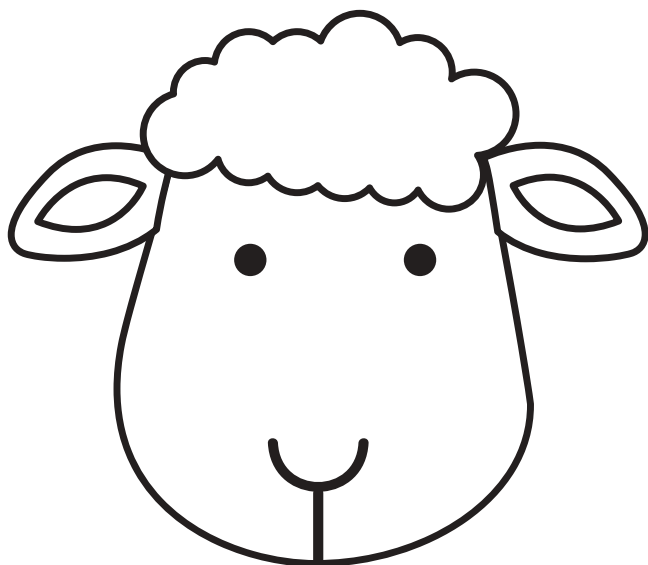
## Bible Story

### The Good Shepherd

Once when Jesus was teaching, some leaders from the community were angry with Him because He was inviting people to follow Him. Jesus then told them a story about sheep to explain "Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever does not enter the pasture through the gate but climbs over the wall is a thief and a robber." Jesus said, "The thief or robber wants to harm the sheep. But the person who comes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. He comes because he loves the sheep and wants to care for them. The sheep hear the voice of the shepherd and recognize him. The shepherd calls his own sheep and leads them out to find food to eat. He walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice, they know he cares for them. The sheep will not follow a stranger; they will run away from him, because they do not recognize the voice of strangers."

While Jesus was talking the other leaders shook their heads, they did not understand what he was trying to tell them. He was not just talking about sheep following their shepherds to safety, Jesus was telling them that He wants to lead people to heaven! So, Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep". All the leaders who came before me are like thieves and robbers who did not really care for the sheep. So the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate that leads to goodness. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. A thief comes only to steal and destroy the sheep; but I came to love them so that they might have a good life. I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd cares more about his sheep than anything else. He would sacrifice his own life to save the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters the sheep so they are no longer safe. This man does not really love the sheep, he cares more for the money he earns. I am not like that man, I am the good shepherd, I know my people and my people know me - just like God knows me and I know God. I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have sheep everywhere that I lead, they will hear my voice, and follow me. I will gather all the sheep together and there will be one flock that follows me the Good Shepherd.

Tasty Treasure Snack – Popcorn Sheep  
Cut out one of the faces below for your snack



Open Wide the Doors to Christ like St. John Paul II!

