



FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO FAITH FORMATION



CALLED TO LOVE: THE ADVENTURE OF LIFE IN CHRIST

TOPIC: God's Plan to Save Us!

The Chosen People - Immaculate Conception - God's Rescue Mission

REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
nos. 55, 422-23

SACRED SCRIPTURE

GEN 3:15;
LK 1:46-55;
1 JN 3:8b; REV 12

CREED

nos.

50-73,
120-41,
144-49,
385-
429,
456-60,
484-511,
595-623

LITURGY

nos.

1077-
90,
1122,
1127-29,
1213-28,
1263,
1362-72

LIFE

nos.

1707-09,
1846-51,
1987-
2005

PRAYER

nos.

2565-
2622,
2666,
2673-
82,
2779-
93,
2850-
54

GOAL(S):

- Families will begin creating a Timeline of the Family of God.
- Families will read Genesis 3:15 and review God's promise to send a Savior.
- Families will learn about the Immaculate Conception.
- Families will read the Scriptures that highlight the Family of God from Creation to Abraham.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We entrust our family to You and
ask for Your blessing and protection.
We love You Lord Jesus with all our
hearts and we ask that You help our
family become more like the Holy
Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and
patient with one another. Give us all
the grace we need to become saints
and Your faithful disciples.
Amen.

ICE BREAKER

Snowball Blessings Toss

- Family members write a blessing, positive quote from the Bible, word of encouragement, or younger children can draw a positive picture on a white piece of paper.
- Each person crumples up his/her own sheet to make a "snowball blessing."
- Then, ready ... aim ... FIRE! Watch the blessings fly across the room both figuratively and literally.
- After a minute or two, stop the chaos and have each person pick up one random "snowball."
- Families sit in a circle to open and read the notes out loud.
- Take them home so families can reference them when they need a joyful blessing!

Adapted from www.weareteachers.com

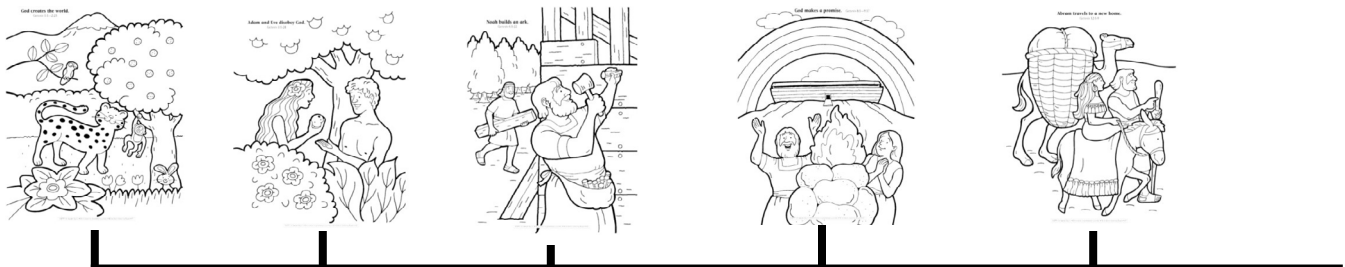


MATERIALS

- Bibles
- **Ice Breaker:** Snowball Blessings Toss
 - White sheets of paper, pencils, pens, crayons
- **Timeline of the Family of God Activity**
 - Posterboard or roll of paper
 - Scissors
 - Crayons, pencils, markers
 - Glue or tape

TO PREPARE

1. Print the following [free pages](#) from Ministry Spark. (Each family should receive one of each page on the list below. Consider reducing the size before printing so they all fit on the posterboard/roll of paper timeline.)
 - #1 God creates the world
 - #2 Adam and Eve disobey God
 - #3 Noah builds an Ark
 - #5 Abram travels to a new home
 - #6 Isaac is born
 - #9 Joseph forgives his brothers
 - #10 The people of Israel are slaves in Egypt
 - #11 God protects baby Moses
2. Prepare the posterboards/roll of paper with one or two horizontal parallel lines across that will represent time. Leave enough space above and below the lines where the Bible images will be pasted. (Each family should receive one posterboard/roll of paper.) Consider putting a Timeline of the Family of God title across the top with room for the families to write their names.
3. In this month's Lesson 4, the Timeline of the Family of God will be used in Week 1 & Week 3. Be sure to collect the timelines at the end of the session to be redistributed at the beginning of the Week 3 gathering.



Timeline of the Family of God

Encourage parents to read these Bible stories to their children!

CONTENT

Introduce the Topic:

We are going to review what the Old Testament teaches about God's promise to send a Savior to rescue us and bring us fully back into His Family!

Hook:

We will begin by making our own Timeline of the Family of God.

TEACH

Step 1: Read and follow the preparation instructions under the Materials section.

Step 2: Give each family a pre-lined posterboard/roll of paper, crayons, scissors, glue or tape.

Step 3: Ask each family to write their name on the posterboard.

Step 4:

Explain: The first story from the Bible that we learned about this year was God Created the Heavens and the Earth. So that is where we are going to begin our Timeline of the Family of God.

- Handout #1 God creates the world coloring sheet. (1 per family)
- Ask families to color and cut out the picture and glue it to the beginning of the timeline.

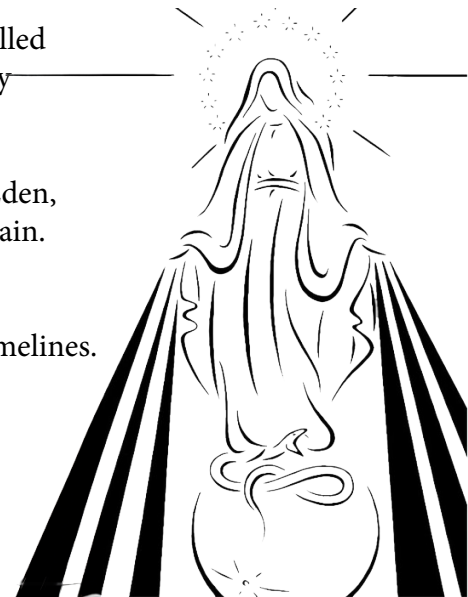
Step 5:

Ask: Last month we talked about the Fall of Adam and Eve and how they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. What are some things that you remember about that story and the lessons God was teaching Adam and Eve? (Answers will vary.)

Explain: We also said that before God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, He promised He would send us a Savior, so that we all could live as one with God again. Handout #2 Adam and Eve disobey God coloring sheet. (1 per family)

Ask families to color and cut out the picture and glue it on the next place on their timelines.

Step 6: Show the picture of a statue of Mary crushing the serpent's head.



Invite: Please open your bibles to **Genesis 3:15**.

Read (or ask someone to read) **Genesis 3:15** aloud.

Ask: When you look at the picture of the statue of Mary crushing the serpent's head and read Genesis 3:15, what are your thoughts about who God is promising would come to rescue us?

(Answers will vary)

Answers:

- Jesus is the offspring, or son of Mary, who will come and crush Satan.
- Mary will cooperate with God to bring Jesus to us by conceiving Him through the Holy Spirit and giving birth to Him.
- To bite at a heel is painful and a nuisance, but to crush a head inflicts death and defeat.

Ask: How did Jesus defeat Satan?

Answer: Jesus gave His life to pay the price of our turning away from God, the Original Sin of Adam and Eve that we have all inherited, as well as of all our other sins. Jesus came to rescue us from our slavery to sin, death, and the devil. He came to fight for us and to restore us back to relationship with His Father. Jesus made it possible for us to choose to be with the Trinity, our one true Family!

In order for Jesus, the divine Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, to give His life for us, He became man. With Mary's acceptance, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and Mary conceived Jesus in her womb. Through this overshadowing and conception, Mary was physically, spiritually and emotionally united to the baby Jesus within her, the baby who is God Himself.

We know that God is perfect Love and that sin is a turning away from love. Therefore, any person who has sin within his/her soul cannot be fully united to God. In a beautiful way, God prepared Mary to be a pure mother who had absolutely no sin -not even the wound of Original Sin with which we are all conceived- so that she could be perfectly united to the Son of God, Jesus, in her womb and throughout her life. This is the gift of Mary herself, being immaculately conceived.

Background on Mary's Immaculate Conception—see CCC, no. 491: “Through the centuries the Church has become ever more aware that Mary, ‘full of grace’ through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception. That is what the dogma of the Immaculate Conception confesses, as Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854: ‘The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin.’”

Watch: [The Immaculate Conception | How Do You Explain Immaculate Conception to Kids?](#) (2:36 min)



Explain: Back in the time of Jesus, God answered the prayers of St. Ann and St. Joachim, an older married couple who, according to tradition, were never able to have children. At the moment Mary was conceived, God supernaturally saved and preserved her from the wound of Original Sin. Mary was filled with grace and God's love! In her, God had created the perfect mother to bring Jesus into the world to save us!

CONTENT CONTINUED:

Background on Christ redeeming Mary—see CCC, no. 492: “The ‘splendor of an entirely unique holiness’ by which Mary is ‘enriched from the first instant of her conception’ comes wholly from Christ: she is ‘redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.’ The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person ‘in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places’ and chose her ‘in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.’”

Step 7:

Invite families to turn to **Genesis 4:1** in their bibles.

Explain: As we know, Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden and started a family.

Read: **Genesis 4:1** aloud.

Explain: Even though they sinned and disobeyed the Lord, not trusting in His goodness, God still helped Adam and Eve. Some have speculated that Eve may have thought that her son, Cain, was the promised Messiah who would rescue them from their exile. However, we know from the story of Cain and Abel that Cain was certainly not the promised Messiah. Rather, Cain, just like all of us, badly needed a Savior. God’s lessons of the beauty and strength of sacrificial love had not yet been learned by His children.

In fact, in Genesis we read about people sinning so much that God sent a great flood to wipe out all the people who chose to do evil and to “recreate” the world (anticipating our own new creation in the waters of baptism). To prevent all His children from being washed away, God saved one man and his family because they were the only ones left who still loved and obeyed Him.

Ask: Who was this man?

Answer: Noah

Step 8: Handout #3 Noah builds an Ark coloring sheet. (1 per family)

- Ask families to color and cut out the picture and glue it to the next place on their timelines.

Step 9:

Explain: Even after the great flood, people kept choosing to turn away from God and even invented false gods to worship instead of their loving Divine Father. Yet, God was very patient. Finally, after many generations had come and gone, God chose to speak to a man called Abram. Abram’s family would be special to God. God would call them His Chosen People.

Read: **Genesis 12:1-3**

Explain: God wanted a new start for Abram and his family, so He called him to go to a new land where they would live away from those who worshipped pagan gods. They would learn to worship only God. Over the lifetime of Abram and his wife Sarai, God would teach them how to hear His voice, how to love Him and to know that God’s love for them was omnipotent, meaning all powerful! It took their whole lives to learn these lessons, but in the end, Abram was given a new name by God. He was called Abraham, meaning the Father of Many. All of God’s children who follow Jesus are adopted sons and daughters of Abraham—that includes us! We are part of God’s family, for He will never forsake or leave us orphan! We are God the Father’s great treasure, His children, and He has done everything to rescue us!

CONTENT CONTINUED:

- Handout #5 Abram travels to a new home coloring sheet. (1 per family)
- Ask families to color and cut out the picture and glue it to the next place on their timelines.

Step 10: Collect the posterboards/rolls of paper. You will give them back to the families to complete at the Week 3 gathering.

MISSION ACTIVITY

First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

Second, Explain Activity

Your Family At-Home Mission is to:

- Get ready to share about your family's plan to celebrate the Birth of Christ on Christmas Day and during the whole Christmas Season at Week 3's gathering of families.
- Have a Family Movie Night!
- Watch the videos about the Immaculate Conception & Christmas.
- Ask families to bring in food or small gifts items for the homeless, elderly or another ministry such as Walking with Moms in Need.
- Gather around your home altar and pray a decade of the Rosary together, meditating on the Third Joyful Mystery, *The Birth of Our Lord*.

Last, Share Your Experience!

Show the families your own family's plan to celebrate the Birth of Christ on Christmas Day and during the whole Christmas Season.

6. REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

Advent Family Prayer

God of Love,
Your Son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of Your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for His coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.
In the Name of the Father,...

- Author Unknown



REMIND

Remind families about the next
meeting date and time.

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 422:

“But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” This is “the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”: God has visited his people. He has fulfilled the promise he made to Abraham and his descendants. He acted far beyond all expectation - he has sent his own “beloved Son.”

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), no. 164:

In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the center of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal. The kerygma is trinitarian. The fire of the Spirit is given in the form of tongues and leads us to believe in Jesus Christ who, by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father’s infinite mercy. On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” This first proclamation is called “first” not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment.

Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), no. 42:

Mary, Virgin and Mother, shows us what love is and whence it draws its origin and its constantly renewed power. To her we entrust the Church and her mission in the service of love:

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
you have given the world its true light,
Jesus, your Son – the Son of God.
You abandoned yourself completely
to God’s call
and thus became a wellspring
of the goodness which flows forth from him.
Show us Jesus. Lead us to him.
Teach us to know and love him,
so that we too can become
capable of true love
and be fountains of living water
in the midst of a thirsting world.

