

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 11

MEMORIZE

- For those with 1st-5th graders at Brook Hills, focus on the verses that they are memorizing in Children’s Ministry for this unit.
 - 1st Grade – John 10:11, 27-29
 - 2nd Grade – Romans 10:9-11
 - 3rd Grade – Revelation 21:3-5
 - 4th Grade – Colossians 1:13-14
 - 5th Grade – Philippians 2:4-8

READ

As our church reads through the Bible for the next two years, each day will include a chapter from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As a family, decide if you want to read one or both of these passages. The Faith Family Worship Guide will look ahead to the readings for the upcoming week.

Read: Exodus 34:4-10

Questions:

- What does it mean for God to be merciful? Gracious? Faithful? Just?
- How does Exodus 32-34 demonstrate these characteristics of God?
- How has God shown these characteristics to you? What are examples of His mercy towards you, His grace towards you, His faithfulness to you, and His justice in your own life?

Bottom Line: God is merciful, gracious, loving, faithful, and just.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children throughout the week (at the dinner table, in the car, during a family worship time, etc.).

Preschool

- Ready Exodus 34:4-10. Tell your preschooler that this passage makes it clear who God is. God is faithful. He always keeps His promises. He loves His people.
- What did the Hebrew people do?
- What did God do?
- What did God say about Himself in the scripture we just read?
- Does God know what’s best for His people?

Children

- Read (or have a child read) Exodus 34:4-10. Remind your children of the context of this passage (the Israelites had disobeyed God’s commandments and Moses was interceding for them again—asking God to forgive them and to renew His covenant with them).
- Re-read verse 6. Ask your child to list all of the words used to describe God in this verse (merciful, gracious, slow to anger [patient], loving, and faithful). Ask your child what they think each of these words means.
- Explain each of these words as necessary, but really focus on two: merciful and gracious. Explain that to be merciful means not giving us the punishment that we deserve, and grace means getting a gift that we do not deserve.
- How did God show mercy and grace to the Israelites? How does God show mercy and grace to us? Explain that through Jesus, God demonstrated His ultimate mercy and grace, by having Jesus pay the price for our sins (mercy) and giving us eternal life when we trust Him for salvation (grace).
- How does God show his love, patience, and faithfulness to us? Explain that even when we continue to disobey His commands, He forgives us and promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deut. 31:8, Psalm 94:14).
- Pray and thank God for being merciful, gracious, patient, loving, and faithful.

Students

- How does God describe Himself in Exodus 34:6-7?
- God describes Himself as forgiving, but also one who seeks justice. How do those characteristics work together?
- What is Moses' response to God in vs. 8?
- What is Moses' prayer for his people?
- These things take place because the Israelites had broken the law, but Moses interceded for them. What covenant does God make in vs. 10?

SING

This week's FFWG song is "Holy, Holy, Holy". Reginald Heber wrote the words to this familiar hymn in 1826. Later in 1861 the words were put to the Nicaea tune written by John B. Dykes. Its text speaks of God's holiness and greatness. There is none like Him. He is perfect in power, in love, and purity. As you continue in worship sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" and recall God's holy, infinite, and perfect character.

Visit our website for a link to this song: www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for March 17-23

Exodus 28-34 & John 7-13

Where We Are In The Story (Old Testament)

Background of Exodus: The title "exodus" comes from the Greek word meaning "going out" or "departure" and describes the major event that occurs in the book. Exodus opens where Genesis leaves off – the descendants of Abraham are living in Egypt instead of in the Promised Land. The events in Exodus occur approximately four hundred years after Jacob's family moved to Egypt, and as prophesied in Genesis 15, Abraham's descendants became slaves. While Genesis highlights God as Creator, Exodus focuses on God as the Deliverer of His people, for He keeps His promise to free His people and to bring them back to the land of promise.

Structure of Exodus:

- Exodus 1-18 focuses on the deliverance of the people Israel from Egypt and God's provision for His people.
- Exodus 18-24 explains God's covenant with Israel.
- Exodus 25-31 provides instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and explanation for the priestly role.
- Exodus 32-34 describes God's response to His people's idolatry.
- Exodus 35-40 highlights the nation's obedience in building the Tabernacle.

This Week in the Old Testament: In Exodus 28-29, God gives Moses instructions specifically about the priests' clothing and dedication. Because the priests were involved in the work of mediation between a sinful people and a holy God, God determined that Aaron and his descendants should have garments appropriate and symbolic of their work. Therefore, their breast piece had twelve jewels – one for each tribe of Israel, and the two onyx stones on the shoulder of their ephod would each be engraved with six of the tribes. They represented the whole nation of Israel when they entered the Tabernacle. As the priests performed sacrifices for the nation, they also needed to purify and to make sacrifices for themselves before they carried out their duties in the sanctuary. Exodus 29 details the sacrifices that were to take place in a ceremony as Aaron and his sons were set aside for the Lord's work in the Tabernacle.

The priests of Israel had four specific roles: teach the people about God and His Word, make intercession for the people, facilitate the offering of sacrifices, and take care of the holy things in the Tabernacle. In Exodus 19:5-6, God communicates that the entire nation of Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests," for they were to do for the world what the priests did for the people of Israel. Along those lines, 1 Peter 2:9 terms Christ-followers as a "royal priesthood," and as a royal priesthood, we are to carry out the role of priests for the world. For us, this includes: teaching people about God and His Word, making intercession for others, and introducing people to the work of Christ so they can turn from their sin and trust in Him as Savior and Lord.

Exodus 30:1-10 describes the Altar of Incense, which was the third piece of furniture in the Holy Place along with the Lampstand and the Table of the Bread of Presence. This altar was placed in front of the veil to the Holy of Holies, but it was *not* an altar where animal sacrifices were made. Instead, the priests were to burn incense on this altar twice a day (at morning and twilight). One of the priestly roles included making intercession for the people, and burning incense on this altar was one of the ways this was accomplished. The priest would take coals from the bronze altar in the courtyard (where animal sacrifices were made) and place it on the Altar of Incense, so the prayers would be made on the basis of the sacrifices. Then, the priest would sprinkle incense on the coals, so the prayers would have a pleasing aroma and be pleasing to God. Next, the priest would seize the horns on the altar and pray for the people. Here, in front of the throne (the Ark of the Covenant) – but separated by the veil – was the place of intercession. God designed the sanctuary to be a place where prayer would take place. Hebrews 7:24-25 informs us that Christ is our perfect and ultimate High Priest who makes intercession for us before the Father. Also, the Altar of Incense makes appearances in Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4 as it depicts the prayers of the saints before the throne of God.

Although the people had agreed to keep the words of the Lord (Ex. 24:3-7), the Israelites quickly turned from faith to doubt and from obedience to rebellion (Ex. 32). While Moses is still on Mt. Sinai, God informs him of what has occurred in the camp and expresses righteous anger about their sin, making plans to destroy the people and to start over through Moses. Moses intercedes for the people, but when he sees their sin for himself, he breaks the two stone tablets on which God had recorded the law, which symbolized how Israel had broken their covenant with God. Yet despite their sin, he continues to intercede for them, for Moses understood that it is Israel's relationship with God that made them distinct from any other nation. In his communication to God, Moses asks for a sign of God's presence, and Exodus 34 fulfills this request. Exodus 33:19 and 34:6-7 emphasizes the goodness of God as One who does not forsake His people, even when they are faithless.

Where We Are In The Story (New Testament)

Background of John: John 20:31 gives the thesis of this Gospel: “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” John stands distinct from Matthew, Mark, and Luke in his emphasis on eternal life and how it refers to both duration but also the quality of life that God designed us to have in Him. From John 1, this book establishes that Jesus *is* God in the flesh. He is fully God and fully human at the same time. Written by John who was one of Jesus' disciples, this Gospel does not follow Jesus' life chronologically. Instead, John 1-12 looks at the eight “I AM” statements of Jesus and at seven of His miracles in order to demonstrate by words and actions that Jesus is God, and it spends the remaining nine chapters on the night of Last Supper through Jesus' ascension.

This Week in the New Testament: John 7 records the people's discussion during the Feast of Booths about Jesus' identity. Some considered Him to be a prophet while others said that He was the Messiah (Jn. 7:40-41), although Jesus Himself plainly told them that He was “from God” (Jn. 7:28-29). After this debate, Jesus explicit states “I am,” which harks back to the name “Yahweh” (Jn. 8:24, 28, 58). Unless they trusted in Jesus, they would die in their sin (Jn. 8:24), but the Jews in this passage did not believe. Instead, they proclaimed that Jesus blasphemed the name of God, and they sought to stone Him (Jn. 8:59). In contrast the crowd in John 8, the blind man in John 9 moves from speaking of Christ as “the man called Jesus” (Jn. 9:11) to considering Him to be a prophet (Jn. 9:17) to stating that He was from God (Jn. 9:33) to worshipping Jesus as the Son of Man and as Lord (Jn. 9:35-38).

Although Jesus continued to teach about His identity in John 10, the people did not understand His words and were divided (Jn. 10:6, 19-21). They asked Jesus point-blank if He is the Messiah, but when He claimed to be the Son of God and to give eternal life, they did not believe Him, even though He explains that His miracles were meant to give evidence of His identity (Jn. 10:32). But once again, the people attempted to stone Him and arrest Him on the charge of blasphemy (Jn. 10:22-42).

In both John 9:3-4 and John 11:4, Jesus explains that both of the man's blindness and Lazarus' illness were meant to glorify the Son of God. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus demonstrates His authority to give unending life (see Jn. 11:25-26). As with the previous chapters in John, the people were split in their estimation of Jesus after this miracle (Jn. 11:45-57; 12:9-11). The escalation of the people's response to Jesus reaches a point where the situation becomes volatile for the religious leaders, and they begin to make plans about His death (Jn. 11:53). John 12:36-43 explains how the unbelief of the people fulfilled prophecies made by Isaiah.

The events of John 12-13 takes place during Passion Week. In John 12, the crowd accompanying Him during the Triumphal Entry had seen Him raise Lazarus from the dead, and they spread the word about Jesus' power (Jn. 12:17-18). The crowd and even some Greeks approached Jesus, and in response, Jesus prophesied about His impending death and resurrection (Jn. 12:20-36). John 13 provides the only account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Although Lord of the universe, He chooses to serve them, and He expresses that they are to follow His example in serving others because "a servant is not greater than his master" (Jn. 13:16). After announcing that one of the Twelve would betray Him and instructing Judas to "do quickly" what he was going to do (Jn. 13:27), Jesus gives His disciples the command to love one another (Jn. 13:34-35). Although not a new command for anyone of Jewish origins, Jesus qualifies the command by stating that His followers are to love others as He has loved them. The standard for love is the love of Christ, which emphasizes the humility, service, and self-sacrificial nature of love, and this love should be a distinctive of Christ-followers.

John 8 begins with a note that "the earliest manuscripts do not include John 7:53-8:11" because many respected scholars think that these verses were added centuries after John wrote this Gospel. Nothing in this passage threatens doctrine regarding the identity of Christ. Whether or not this was an actual event in Jesus' life that was circulated and later added to John's Gospel, the point of the story is true; however, we must be careful not to give this story the authority of Scripture.