

Faith Family Worship Guide – Week 26

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 – Matthew 22:37-39
 - 2nd Grade – Matthew 5:14-16
 - 3rd Grade – Proverbs 3:5-7
 - 4th Grade – Proverbs 4:10-15
 - 5th Grade – 1 John 4:9-12

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: Psalm 133

Questions:

- What does it mean to be “unified” with others?
- Why is it important for Christ-followers to be unified with each other?
- What types of actions promote unity and peace with your family, your friends, your classmates, and your church?
- What can you do this week to honor God in how you treat others?

Bottom Line: It pleases God when His people love, respect, and serve others.

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. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship him together.

Preschool

- What is a family?
- Who made families?
- Name the members of our family.
- Name something you like about having a brother or sister (or cousin or friend if you don’t have siblings).
- Name something you don’t like about having a brother or sister.
- What makes our family special? How do we work together to help one another?
- List ways we can show love to each other. When we show love to each other, we show God’s love to each other.
- List ways we can serve one another.
- Who loves you more than anyone? God!

Children

- Read Psalm 133 with your children.
- What is something that is really important to you? Something so precious you will do anything you can to protect it?
- These verses tell us about something that is precious. It’s not a physical possession, what is it?
- Unity! When you are unified with someone, you get along with them, you treat them with respect, you love them, and you care about the same things. Can you think of a place where you have seen unity in action?
- These verses tell us that unity is a really important thing for those who follow God. When we are unified as Christ-followers, we show the world Jesus.
- Think about all the people in your life. What is one way you will love, respect, and care for them this week?
- Let’s pray that God will help us show the world His great love in our unity with other Christians.

Students

- It seems kind of obvious, but we're all really different.
 - What differences can you identify among the various members of your family?
 - How do those differences make them unique?
 - What good things come from those differences?
- The different parts of our characters are complimentary to one another and we need those differences to help us grow.
- But at the same time, when people are different than us it can be frustrating and complicated.
 - You've probably thought at some point, "This would be so much easier if your brain worked like mine!"
 - Or maybe, "If you would just learn to like the same kind of food I do we could skip the arguing."
- We can see clearly in Psalm 133 living in unity with people is good and it's important to God.
- So knowing that, we have to pursue it.
- Think back to the differences you identified earlier.
 - You might have thought of some things that cause arguments, frustrations, and lead to division rather than unity.
 - How could you replace the view of those differences being bad and causing division with the view of those differences being good things?
- How can our differences lead to unity?

SING

This week's FFWG Song is "We Are the Body" written by Mandi Mapes. Through this song we are reminded of the mission that God has given us as the body of Christ. In order to be faithful to the mission at hand, we must be unified. Paul tells us in Colossians 3 to bear with one another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven us. He goes on to say that we should, "...let peace rule in [our] hearts to which indeed you were called in one body." As you continue in worship, sing, "We Are the Body."

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

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Readings for June 30-July 6

Joshua 2-8 and Psalm 123-139

Where We Are In The Story (Joshua)

Background of Joshua: While authorship of this book is unknown, the book's name derives from the name of its main character, Joshua, who was Moses' successor in leading the people of Israel. His name means "Yahweh delivers" or "Yahweh saves," which is an apt title of the book since it describes *God's* work in defeating the nations of the Promised Land and giving the land to His people. Joshua presents the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give their descendants the land of Canaan, and it describes the military conquests that brought this to pass. Written as a historical book for Israel, Joshua also emphasizes God's sovereignty, omnipotence, and faithfulness to His word, and Joshua 21:43-45 provides a fitting summary of God's character as One who keeps *all* of His promises.

Structure of Joshua:

- Joshua 1-5 describe Israel's preparations before taking the Promised Land.
- Joshua 6-12 depict the military conquests of the nation.
- Joshua 13-21 explain the distribution of the land among the tribes, highlighting the fulfillment of God's promises to His people.
- Joshua 22-24 record Joshua's final instructions and exhortations to the nation before his death.

This Week in Joshua: Joshua 2-6 focus on the conquest of Jericho. As in Numbers 13, spies were sent into the land, and the people faced a choice in how they would respond to the report of the spies. Would they repeat history and commit the same sin of rebellion and distrust as their ancestors, or would they trust God's promises? The spies experience protection by a prostitute named Rahab and promise to protect her and her household when they attack the city. Joshua 6:22-25 features the fulfillment of this promise, and Matthew 1:5 indicates that Rahab married into the Israelite nation

and became an ancestor of Christ. Rahab's declaration of faith in God in Joshua 2:8-13 bolstered the spies' confidence in the Lord's blessings on His people.

Joshua 3 tells of Israel's entrance to the Promised Land when they crossed the Jordan River on dry land, similar to how they crossed the Red Sea in the Exodus, and in chapter 4 after they have crossed the Jordan, Joshua builds a memorial of twelve stones at Gilgal to remind the people of God's power and provision that they might fear Him (vv. 21-24). Before sending the people to battle, God instructs the Israelites to keep the covenant by circumcising the male Israelites and to celebrate the Passover *in the land* (Josh. 5). Before they could conquer, they needed to obey the commands God had already given to them, especially since none of the males had been circumcised since the Exodus (Josh. 5:5). Circumcision then, much as baptism is for Christ-followers today, was an external sign that the Israelites were part of God's covenant community (see Gen. 17).

Joshua 5:10-12 represents a turning point in the nation. When celebrating the Passover in the land, they looked back to remember God's deliverance from Egypt and how He brought them to the Promised Land as He had promised their ancestors. It affirmed that the God who led them from Egypt would continue to lead them in the conquest of Canaan. This Passover celebration also marked the end of the heavenly supply of manna, a symbol of wilderness living for the nation. Now that they were in Canaan, they ate the fruit of the land.

Holiness links the contents of Joshua 5. Circumcision distinguished the Israelites as God's covenant people. In celebrating the Passover, they remembered God's deliverance of *His people*, and with Joshua's encounter with the captain of the Lord's army, it recalls the burning bush encounter of Exodus 3:1-6 when God tells Moses to take off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. The encounter reinforced God's selection of Joshua as Moses' successor, and it taught Joshua to recognize the Lord's presence and to trust Him, even when Joshua did not receive the answers to all of his questions (as in vv. 14-15). In the Old Testament, the Angel of the Lord refers to a preincarnate appearance of Christ, but with the figure in Joshua 5:13-15, it is unclear as to whether it is the Lord or an angel.

Joshua 7:1 starkly contrasts with Joshua 6:27. As God promises Israel, they will successfully take the land as long as they remain faithful to the covenant. They should have easily defeated Ai (Josh. 7:2-5), but instead their loss shed light on sin in the camp. The sin of one man – Achan – affected the entire nation. Why would Achan and his entire family be put to death because of this sin? The entire nation became defiled by the presence of the stolen items – items devoted to destruction – among them. God withheld His blessing from the nation until the sin was removed and the people were sanctified. This is why the whole community of Israel was involved in punishing Achan and his family (vv. 25-26). God had instructed the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites because of their sin (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:6-23), and when Achan disobeyed God's command concerning the plunder of Jericho, he became like the Canaanites in his actions. Once the nation punished the offender, God reinstated His blessing, giving Israel victory over Ai (Josh. 8). The end of Joshua 8 records Israel obeying God's commands from Deuteronomy 27 for the nation to stand on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, building an altar and making sacrifices to the Lord, and writing the words of the law.

Where We Are In The Story (Psalms)

Background & Structure of Psalms: God used many different writers to write Psalms: David, Moses, the sons of Korah, Asaph, etc. The book is arranged in five parts, and this arrangement occurred after the people of Israel returned to the land after the Babylonian exile. A doxology concludes each book or arrangement of psalms (Psalm 41:13 for Book 1, Psalm 72:18-19 for Book 2, Psalm 89:52 for Book 3, Psalm 106:48 for Book 4, and Psalm 150:6 for Book 5), and the entire book of Psalms climactically ends with a grand doxology of several psalms (Ps. 146-150).

- Book 1: Psalms 1-41
- Book 2: Psalms 42-72
- Book 3: Psalms 73-89
- Book 4: Psalms 90-106
- Book 5: Psalms 107-150

This Week in Psalms:

- **Psalm 123-Psalm 134** continue the Psalms of Ascent, which were sung by the Israelites as they traveled to Jerusalem for the three annual festivals (Passover, Pentecost, and the Day of Atonement with the Feast of

Tabernacles). So in reading these psalms, consider the context of pilgrims traveling with expectation and joy as they prepare to worship God at the sanctuary with the rest of the nation.

- A declarative praise psalm, **Psalm 135** calls those who serve the Lord to praise Him for His character, His superiority over all other gods, His role as Creator, and His deliverance of His people. It closes with a renewed call to praise in verses 19-21.
- Another declarative praise psalm, **Psalm 136** emphasizes God's steadfast love. To truly grasp the reason for praise, one must understand the definition of this attribute and how God's steadfast love has manifested itself in His relationship with His covenant people. Also translated "lovingkindness" or "loyal love," the word in Hebrew (*khesed*) expresses a faithful covenantal love. It is a love that is unconditional and does not depend on the recipient but on the giver. God will remain faithful, good, and loving, even if His people do not.
- Verse 1 indicates that the context for **Psalm 137** is shortly after the Babylonian captivity of Israel. In this psalm, the psalmist remembers life in exile (vv. 1-3), recalls the peoples' response to the taunts of their captors (vv. 4-6), and petitions the Lord to judge the oppressors of His people.
- **Psalm 138** divides into three sections. Verses 1-3 describe the psalmist praising God for His steadfast love, verses 4-6 pronounce that the kings of the earth will praise Him, and verses 7-8 expresses the psalmist's confidence in the Lord's protection and in the fulfillment of His plan.
- **Psalm 139** begins with David's recognition of God's omniscience (He's all-knowing) in verses 1-6, continues with an emphasis on God's omnipresence (He's everywhere) in verses 7-12, and contains a beautiful description of God's omnipotence (He's all-powerful) as Creator in verses 13-18. Verses 19-24 contain a petition for God to judge the wicked and the motivations of the psalmist in offering this prayer. Such abhorrence for evil and evil men comes after great reflection on the character of God.