

## Daily Summary Day 1: Genesis 1-2

The beginning of the Bible tells the story of the beginning of all things: earth, heavens, animals, and humanity. God declares that all his creation is good! God also made the world in a very orderly fashion. In the first three days he created the spaces, or realms, to bring form to the formlessness. On days four through six, God fills in the voids. Through his creative action, he solves the initial “problem” of the world being “formless” and “void.” If we were to make a chart, it would look quite organized:

Day	God brings Form	Day	God fills in the Voids
1	Time	4	Sun, Moon, and Stars
2	Space (Heavens and Sea)	5	Birds and Fish
3	Land	6	Animals and Man

The orderliness of creation reveals it was made with wisdom and according to a plan. What is the plan for his creation? What is it all leading up to? The answer to that is revealed by the “rest” on the seventh day. The creation story has a certain momentum to it leading up to a climax. But that big climactic moment comes in the form of “rest.” This reveals that God’s ultimate plan for his creature is ultimately *being* with him, *resting* with him. That is our ultimate goal. God does not make us to be useful to him somehow (we’re not!). He makes us to be with him.

### *Discussion:*

- Why is it important that we see the world and all that it is in it as deemed “good” by God? What does that say about how much he values all life?
- God tells man that he is giving him dominion over creation so that man has a kingly role over the earth. What does it say about God that he wanted to share his leadership with man and woman?
- God rested when he was done creating, setting the pattern for the Lord's Day or Sabbath. How does your family set aside time to make the Lord's Day special?

## ***Catechism References***

### **Day 1: Genesis 1-2**

#### **Summary of Creation**

The created world lays the foundation for us to know the truths about God that he reveals to us ([CCC 36](#)). It is fitting, then, that the beginning of God's story of salvation begins with the story of man's creation.

In the first lines of the creation story, we read about God's spirit who "hovers over the waters" (Gen 1). As the story of salvation unfolds, we will learn a great deal more about God's Spirit as he speaks through the prophets and teaches the apostles. We will learn that this Spirit is a divine Person, distinct from the Father and the Son ([CCC 243](#)). God's spirit is the origin of life for the whole created world ([CCC 703](#)).

The creation story reveals that God is all-powerful, that he is omnipotent ([CCC 268](#)). From his power alone ([CCC 290](#)), and of his own free will, he creates the world out of nothing. Creation is a gift freely given, an expression of God's goodness. From the beginning, God envisioned man's glory as a new creation in Christ ([CCC 280](#)).

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all the source of our creation. The Father creates by his Word and by his Wisdom ([CCC 292](#)). The beautiful orderliness of creation reveals the wisdom of God which we see by the oft-repeated phrase, "It is good!" Whereas many cultures and philosophies might believe that the physical world is bad and that only the spiritual is good, the Bible teaches that the created world is good ([CCC 299](#)). The created world teaches us about God, who made man with a mind that can perceive its order and intelligence and know some things about God through it.

God invites mankind into a partnership with him, becoming "fellow workers" in having dominion over the earth ([CCC 307](#)). Though man participates with God, we recognize that God is the Lord of history. He creates the world, sustains it, and guides it by his Providence ([CCC 314](#)).

#### **The Sabbath**

The Bible reveals that God created in six days of work and one day of rest ([CCC 337](#)). God did not need to rest because he was tired (certainly God never tires) but

his rest was an example, an invitation for man to rest. God's creation of man as the high point of his creation ([CCC 343](#)) followed by rest shows why God created man: to *rest* with God ([CCC 345, 347](#)). We rest with God by taking time on the sabbath to worship him, to be with him ([CCC 347](#)). This weekly rest reveals that the ultimate goal for man is to be with God forever in the eternal rest of Heaven.

### **The Image of God**

God created man in his own image ([CCC 355](#)). Man "images" God in himself as an individual, so that every person bears God's image, but humanity also bears God's image in the complete humanity as male and female ([CCC 369](#)). Man and woman together share equal dignity, and they are made for partnership as they help each other ([CCC 371](#)). They are made to be a communion of persons in their shared work of exercising dominion over the earth and filling the world with new life ([CCC 372, 373](#)).

### **God's Gifts to Mankind**

God created man as body and spirit. He formed them from the dust and then breathed his spirit into them ([CCC 362](#)). This makes man unique among all creatures! God gave man special graces so that his body and spirit worked in harmony. He also gave man help so that mankind would enjoy a special harmony with creation and each other. These two specific gifts of inner harmony and harmony with all around them are: original holiness and original justice ([CCC 376](#)).

In addition to the special help God gave man, God shared a friendship with man that other creatures did not enjoy. Man and woman partner with each other and with God in the garden. They share in his dominion over creation ([CCC 378, 383](#)).

### **Mankind Has Limits**

God's generosity invited man and woman to freely cooperate with God in friendship. Yet, they still needed to recognize their dependence on God and respect him as the source of all that is good. For this reason, limits were placed on man so that he could rightly see his relationship with God. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and God's command not to eat it symbolizes the limits that man needed to recognize ([CCC 396](#)).

Man's ability to keep the gifts that God had so generously offered was dependent on his submission to God. When man rejected these limits, he rejected the gifts as well ([CCC 400](#)). This rejection, as we will see in Genesis 3, is the cause of man's death. God made man mortal (capable of dying) but his plan was for them not to die. Death came as a result of man's choice to reject God's gifts by sinning ([CCC 1008](#)).

### **Creation and the Sacramental Life**

God uses many of the themes of creation in the work of salvation. Water is among the first created things we see in Scripture, and will feature prominently in God's saving work in the "new creation" of our salvation. God will use water as a source of giving us his divine life ([CCC 1218](#)).

Marriage is seen first in the Garden and becomes an image throughout salvation history of God communicating his love to the world ([CCC 1602](#)). Though they lost many blessings they had enjoyed before sin, the gift of marriage remains while they continue their work in filling the earth and watching over creation. The love of spouses is a reminder of God's unfailing love for the world ([CCC 1604,1605](#)). The perfect unity enjoyed by the first man and woman before sin was lost, and today, though the gift of marriage remains, human couples must battle with sin and its dire effects ([CCC 1607](#)). By their helping one another and making a gift of themselves through the raising of children (should they be so blessed), man and woman are greatly enriched in cooperating with God ([CCC 1652](#)).

### **The Moral Life**

The sabbath rest is a necessary part of Christian morality. The Lord's Day helps all people lead well-ordered lives of rest and work. It helps them build healthy patterns of worship, family, and social life ([CCC 2184](#)).

The Christian moral life at its heart is rooted in the vocation each person has to love and foster communion ([CCC 2331](#)). Every person is created in God's image. All the earth is created *good*, and mankind is entrusted with the vocation to cooperate with God in the care of the earth and its goods. Therefore, each person must be good caretakers, or stewards, of the earth and its goods for all mankind

([CCC 2402](#)). This care involves how we treat others and meet their material needs. It also demands that we care for the earth and treat it and all creatures in it with respect ([CCC 2417](#)).

The story of Genesis illustrates the good of work. God *worked*. His work and his invitation for us to cooperate in his work gives dignity to human work. Jesus *worked*. Jesus's labor—both as a carpenter and his work on the cross—sets an example of work as a source of dignity and sanctification ([CCC 2427](#)).

Artistic work also imitates the work of God. Human art is a pursuit of order and beauty. It is also a “superabundance”—it is unnecessary in the strict sense, but very *human*. God's creative work is unnecessary—he did not have to make us!-- but it is an expression of divine wisdom and generosity ([CCC 2501](#)). Human art should reflect truth, love, and beauty.

## **Daily Summary**

### **Day 2: Genesis 3-5**

Today we encounter the tragedy of sin. God gave the man and woman every good thing, but they did not trust in him. The underlying root of all sin is our unwillingness to trust God.

The serpent suggests that God was keeping something good from them. According to the serpent's side of the story, the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was only forbidden because God did not want Adam and Eve to be like him (Genesis 3:5).

What a lie! The world and everything in it (humans, trees, and serpents included) exist because God *gives*. He wisely orders and provides for his creation. He is the opposite of withholding.

This event, the Fall of man, the original sin, now is the crisis that God will resolve by the rest of salvation history. Genesis 3:15 reveals God's plan to undo these tragic consequences. In this verse we read about a woman whose offspring will crush the head of the serpent. Fast-forwarding a bit, we know Christ is the one who defeats sin and death. Mary, his mother, is the woman who has "enmity" or complete separation, from evil and its effects. But let's journey through the Old Testament to see God's wisdom in preparing us for that climactic victory.

In Genesis 4 and 5, we move out of the Garden to read about Cain and Abel and how sin continues on in the next generation, and the next, and the next. Sin is a persistent problem. If you feel like the Old Testament takes a long time to read, it is because humans are such habitual sinners!

#### *Discussion:*

- What was odd about Adam and Eve's reaction to God when God asked about what they had done? Who did each person say was responsible for what had happened?
- How did God attempt to warn Cain that he was losing his temper and that was going to lead to a bigger problem? Have you ever lost your temper which led you into even more trouble?
- How did God react to Cain? Was he merciful to him?

## ***Catechism References***

### **Day 2: Genesis 3-5**

God invites mankind to share friendship—a “vital bond” (*Gaudium et Spes, 1*). Yet this bond is a partnership, a willingness on man’s part to be in a friendship with God. Many things can cause this bond to be broken and rejected; evil in the world can lead us to question God’s goodness. We can remain ignorant of God’s love and our duties towards him. We can become inordinately attached to the goods of the world. Shame at our own sinfulness can cause us to avoid God’s friendship ([CCC 29](#)). Genesis 3 tells us about the tragic consequences of our breaking this bond with God by choosing to sin. Though this narrative of sin does use figurative language, we know with the certainty of faith that man’s fall from friendship with God is part of the history of man ([CCC 390](#)).

### **Angels**

In this reading we see the presence of angels made manifest to mankind. We first encounter Satan, a fallen angel, who tempts the man and woman to disobey God. Satan was created good, but rejected God, choosing to become evil ([CCC 391](#)). We call angels who rejected God demons. Angels do not make moral choices as man does. They are pure spirits and so do not learn and grow, nor do they need time as man does to contemplate their actions, repent, and ask forgiveness. When the angels who rejected God made their choice against him, they did so once and for all ([CCC 392](#)).

In stark contrast to the fallen angels, we also see angels working in collaboration with God. An angel guards the entry to paradise. This angel is an example of angels who cooperate with God and chose to serve him ([CCC 332](#)). Throughout Scripture, we will encounter many angels as they serve God and assist mankind.

### **Why Did Man Sin?**

Seduced by Satan’s lies, man failed to trust God. Despite having shown man that he provides for all their needs, the man and woman “let his trust in his Creator die in his heart” ([CCC 397](#)). We can see how all of our sins are rooted in our lack of trust in God. We choose what is evil because we believe there is something good in those choices that God does not want us to have.

God had been generous in every imaginable way, yet man did not offer God his gratitude and obedience, he preferred himself ([CCC 398](#)). Man wanted to be like God, but without God.

### **The Consequences of Sin**

Sin had dire consequences on Adam and Eve's happiness and well-being. They lost the gift of original holiness and feared God's presence ([CCC 399](#)). Their relationship with each other and the created world around them was also damaged. Their partnership was now fraught with tension and the tendencies towards domination rather than friendship and mutual love. Man could no longer work with ease, but must toil with thorns and thistles. Ultimately, man's own inner harmony will become destroyed by his own death ([CCC 400](#), [1008](#)).

We read that these consequences are passed on to their offspring. We immediately read of the murdering of Abel by his brother Cain. The rest of Scripture is one story after another of the problem of sin plaguing the life of man. Sin is entrenched in the human heart ([CCC 401](#)).

The disorder in which we find ourselves today is not part of man's nature, but is a result of sin ([CCC 1607](#)). Our human nature is not destroyed by sin, but is seriously wounded. We need God's help to be healed and restored to his original plan for us ([CCC 1608](#)).

### **God's Response to Sin**

No sooner had Adam and Eve sinned than God issued his response to man's predicament. In justice, God issued consequences to man's choice, but did not abandon him altogether ([CCC 1609](#)). Marriage, though damaged by sin, remains as a gift to permit man and woman each other's mutual help and that they might learn to selflessly love.

Most importantly, God responds with mercy! Rather than destroying humanity for their disobedience, God announces a mysterious promise in Genesis 3:15 about one who will come born of a woman who will crush the head of the serpent. This is called the *protoevangelium* or "first gospel." God promises a future remedy for the devil's domination over mankind ([CCC 410](#)). This promise will be fulfilled in the Blessed Virgin Mary, the woman whose offspring, Jesus, destroys sin and death. Before Mary, however, God will anticipate her arrival through the work of many



other holy women in Scripture who do God's will and prepare for the coming Messiah ([CCC 489](#)).

### **Man's Personal Responsibility**

We learn in this passage that each person must answer for his or her own actions. God asked Eve, "What have you done?" Adam likewise is responsible for his choice ([CCC 1736](#)). This teaches us that we too are the authors of and responsible for our actions.

The reality is that we sin. Despite his goodness to us, we too turn our hearts away from God and make choices that are contrary to his will. All sin is really our preferring ourselves to God, self-love over love of God ([CCC 1850](#)).

As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, all humans bear the burden of an inclination toward sin. This is known as "concupiscence." Concupiscence is an intense desire for something we determine to be good—usually something that our *bodies* desire. St. Paul will call this desire the inclination of the "flesh" ([CCC 2515](#)). We can easily give in to these desires because Adam and Eve rejected God's gift of original holiness, which ordered the desires of the flesh. Without this gift, we can fall prey to these desires.

The remedy for this tendency toward sin is God's grace. It was his grace, his gift of original holiness that ordered the relationship between our bodies and our spirit. Therefore, his grace offered in Christ will help heal the woundedness caused by sin and redirect the human heart toward God ([CCC 2541](#)).

### **Murder**

All sin is disobedience of God, and evil, but there is a scale of seriousness. We see in the story of Cain and Abel that murderous deeds—especially murder of the innocent—"cry to Heaven." Oppression of the poor, widows, orphans and any injustice towards people who are less fortunate are very serious ([CCC 1867](#)). Cain's murder of Abel, which first took the form of envy and anger and progressed to murder ([CCC 2259](#)) is gravely sinful because he directly and intentionally took the life of his brother ([CCC 2268](#)). Throughout Scripture, we will be warned against envy as a sin that can easily lead to further sin and destruction ([CCC 2538](#)).

### **Prayer**

The path for the relationship between God and man to be healed lies in prayer ([CCC 2568](#)). Man departed from God who called out, “Where are you?” Prayer is man responding to that call in love and choosing to walk with God once again ([CCC 2569](#)). Calling out to God “in heaven” we recognize our need to journey back to him from the place where sin has exiled us ([CCC 2795](#)). The saving work of Christ—who descended down to us—makes it possible to return to our Father through his saving work ([CCC 2795](#)).

Prayer is necessary so that we can listen to the Holy Spirit who helps us grow. Humanity is broken, susceptible to temptation, and too easily lured into sin. The Holy Spirit helps us discern the sources of these temptations and reveals their danger so that we might resist those things which only appear to be good for us ([CCC 2847](#)).

### **Catechesis on Psalm 2**

Psalm 2—though written a thousand years before his coming—is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Verse 2 speaks of the Lord’s “anointed,” a word that was used to describe priests, prophets, and kings who were set apart to accomplish God’s mission. In Hebrew, the word *messiah* means anointed; in Greek, *Christos* means anointed. Jesus accomplishes the mission of the Father as priest, prophet, and king ([CCC 436](#)).

Jesus also fulfills this Psalm as the true “son of God.” In the Old Testament, kings, angels, and the whole people of Israel are called “God’s son.” In this sense, when those in the New Testament called Jesus “Son of God,” it may be nothing more than an affirmation that he is the messiah, the anointed one ([CCC 441](#)). While his followers may not have initially fully understood the true sonship of Christ, it is revealed that Jesus’s anointing is unique over and above those of the Old Testament. He is anointed as messiah at his Incarnation, when he is “begotten” of the Holy Spirit ([CCC 745](#)).

Psalm 2 points to the vanity of seeing human history as anything other than a manifestation of God’s plan. Even when history seems troublesome to God’s people, God is in control. The historical events of Jesus’s time—Herod’s and Pilate’s leadership—were at all times under the guidance of God’s predestined plan. They persecuted Jesus, but God permitted this so that his plan might be accomplished ([CCC 600](#)). God’s lordship over history is demonstrated definitively in the Resurrection. His power is stronger than death ([CCC 653](#)). Even when it

seems death has won the victory in our lives, God hears our prayers and answers them by granting us a share in his victory. The death of Christ and his Resurrection reveal that we may endure suffering, but through obedience, God will save us ([CCC 2606](#)).

Finally, we can see in the Psalm as it references “this day” a pointing forward to the Lord’s prayer as we ask God for our daily bread. Each day God is working in us, begetting Christ in us, particularly in our reception of the bread of life in the Eucharist ([CCC 2836](#)).

## Daily Summary

### Day 3: Genesis 6–9:17; Psalm 3

The story of Noah reveals God's response to sin: he washes it away. Notice that God did not wipe out humanity and start over. Rather, he rescued a faithful family from a world that was drowning in sin. An important theme in this story is the faithfulness of Noah. Noah had to trust God by building the ark long before there was any sign of the Flood. Had he not persevered in his work, he too would have been destroyed.

God uses water to “re-create” and cleanse the world from sin. Many phrases and images from Genesis 6-8 echo Genesis 1 and 2. Can you see any similarities? Notice the language of creeping things, the emergence of the dry land, even the dove hovering over the waters like the Spirit in Genesis 1:1. Sadly, though, this new creation does not stay sin-free for long. Adam and Eve’s sin really wounded humanity. Only Jesus can provide the means to truly re-create the fallen human nature through his saving work. For those familiar with the story of Jesus’s baptism, did you notice an important connection between the Flood story and what happened when Jesus emerged from the waters (see Matthew 3:13–17)?

When Jesus comes, he takes up similar images we see in Noah’s story (the water, the dove). Unlike Noah’s story, Jesus cleanses humanity from sin *from within*. The waters of baptism wash away sin, not by destroying sinful people, but by filling those who desire to be saved with God’s own life. After baptism, each person really *is* a new creation because he or she is filled with the Holy Spirit. A baptized person is not just themselves anymore, they now have Christ living in them.

#### Discussion Questions

- God rescued Noah along with his family. They had to work together to live on the ark with all those animals for a long time. How do you think your family would act in this situation?
- What does it say to you about God's love for humanity that he did not just destroy everyone and start over from scratch? How does this show his mercy and patience?
- Talk to your parents about your baptism day. Do you know when it is? What does your family do, or what do you think your family can start doing, to make that anniversary special each year?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 3: Genesis 6–9:17; Psalm 3**

God’s dealings with Noah and the manner in which he made a covenant with Noah and his family reveals God’s plan to rescue humanity “part by part” ([CCC 56](#)). This covenant is everlasting and remains with Noah and all living beings ([CCC 71](#)).

The great Flood was God’s response to sin which had covered the world. After Adam and Eve, all humanity shared in the corruption of sin. God provides a means to rescue man, but even after Christ’s saving work, we must all battle against sin ([CCC 401](#)). We must struggle against the weakness of our flesh ([CCC 990](#)).

The permission given to Noah to eat the animals, resulting in their death, is a reminder that death is still present in the world. While permitted to help mankind ([CCC 2417](#)), it is not how things were originally intended. Killing of our fellow man is never permitted ([CCC 2260](#)).

Certain images in this passage point forward to what God will do in Christ. The presence of the dove over the waters of the flood anticipates the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovering over Christ at his baptism. At that time, the Holy Spirit comes down and remains with the baptized, who have been cleansed from sin by the water ([CCC 701](#)).

For these first chapters of Genesis, we have seen several instances of the importance of prayer. This is true for Noah and his family as well; Noah offered sacrifice to God after they were rescued from the Flood. The failure of Adam and Eve to rightly worship God and the failure of Cain to worship well stands in contrast to Abel’s right worship and Noah’s worship of God. This is a theme throughout the Bible where offering God right worship will determine man’s ability to live in his friendship ([CCC 2569](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 4: Genesis 9:18–11; Psalm 4**

The Great Flood cleansed humanity from most of the sinful people, but that did not totally solve the sin problem, did it? Noah made the mistake of drinking too much wine (tempted by the fruit of the tree, just like Adam!) and his son Ham sinned against him. Sin is an on-going problem and we really are not going to see it solved for good until Jesus comes and gives us his supernatural help. That is going to be the recurring theme in the Old Testament: we need God’s help to be holy.

Why are there so many lists of names in this chapter? These long lists of names are called *genealogies* and one reason they are important here is that they teach that sins have lasting effects for generations to come. Ham's descendants are basically all the “bad guys” in salvation history. They are going to be in regular conflict with Shem's descendants (pretty much the good guys) for the rest of the Old Testament. Sin doesn’t just affect the sinner, but leaves traces of itself for many years to come. Sin also leads to division and fighting rather than brotherhood and unity. While Ham's descendants will be a constant problem, we are going to see Shem's descendants as the heroes of the story. His most notable descendant is Abram, who will play an important role in the whole story of the Bible.

Discussion Questions:

- The genealogies show us how parents set the example for their children. What good qualities do you see in your parents that you want to imitate?
- After the Flood, the people of Babel were trying to build a tower to reach really high towards Heaven. Considering the last punishment involved very high floodwaters, why do you think they are trying to build a really high tower?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 4: Genesis 9:18–11; Psalm 4**

Noah's sons are a new beginning for humanity and form the foundation for the nations of salvation history that will unfold throughout the rest of Scripture. These nations will face division as the events of the Tower of Babel force them into their own language and groups ([CCC 56](#)). God caused these divisions to limit their ambition which resulted from their pride ([CCC 57](#)).



**Daily Summary**  
**Day 5: Genesis 12–14; Psalm 5**

Now we meet one of the most important people in the Old Testament: Abraham (though for right now he is just called Abram). We are going to read about him for the next couple of days which shows you how important he is. Notice that Adam and Eve don't get as many chapters of the Bible devoted to them as Abram gets! Like Noah, Abram trusts in God and does what God asks him to do with little hesitation. What's interesting about Abram is that he is not always perfect in his trust in God, but gradually grows to trust him more and more. Abram is a model of faith, prayer, and obedience.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think Abram felt listening to God's promise that he would be a father to many nations, even though he was very old and without children?
- Why do you think God waited until Sarai and Abram were really old to give them a child?
- Abram meets a mysterious priest named Melchizedek who seems to enter the story from out of nowhere. He is a priest, as well as the king of Salem (which will later be named "Jerusalem"). He offers bread and wine as a sacrifice. Who do you think this points forward to? Who is the ultimate priest and king who offers bread and wine in Jerusalem?

*Note to parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow's reading. You may want to look ahead at the note at the beginning of tomorrow's summary.*

***Catechism References***  
**Day 5: Genesis 12–14; Psalm 5**

In this passage we meet Noah’s descendants who are living according to the covenant ([CCC 58](#)). Abram is the most noteworthy of these descendants and becomes the father of God’s people by whom all the nations will be blessed ([CCC 59](#)). Abram’s faith—and the faith of his wife Sarai—is hailed in both the Old and New Testament ([CCC 145](#)).

God shows his power and care by miraculously giving Abraham (Abram) the gift of offspring and promising to sustain them throughout salvation history. This promise is fulfilled in Christ—Abraham’s descendant who is the source of blessing for the whole world ([CCC 706](#)). God’s interaction with Abraham is his “remote preparation” for the coming of Christ. The formation of God’s people Israel which we will encounter through the remainder of the Old Testament is the more immediate preparation ([CCC 762](#)).

God also prepares his people to understand the saving work Christ will perform through the deeds and figures of the Old Testament. We read about Melchizedek who offers bread and wine with Abraham ([CCC 1333](#)). This mysterious figure anticipates Christ’s own priesthood. Christ will offer bread and wine which becomes his Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

The priesthood of Melchizedek also reveals something of the common priesthood of all believers and the good of sacramentals (holy water, religious images, etc). While there is an ordained priesthood which pertains to the life of the sacraments and the Church, all people by virtue of their baptism are called to be a blessing and to bless ([CCC 1669](#)).

As we encounter Abraham, we see in him a model for prayer. Abraham is quick to listen to God’s words and obey through action. This is the sort of “attentiveness of heart” that is necessary for prayer ([CCC 2570](#)). The Blessed Virgin Mary will further model this type of prayerful obedience in her response to God. She specifically mentions God’s faithfulness to the promises he made to Abraham as being fulfilled in God’s actions in her ([CCC 2676](#); Cf. Luke 1:73).

## Daily Summary

### Day 6: Genesis 15–17; Psalm 6

*Note to Parents: This passage tells the story of God’s command for Abram to be circumcised. Our children asked what that meant. We said very straightforwardly: “Circumcision is a type of surgery that removes a part of the skin on the end of a boy’s penis.” Our kids got the answer, we moved on, and it wasn’t awkward.*

In this reading we see again Abram wrestling with exactly how God is going to fulfill these promises. Abram almost sounds as if he is complaining! God assures Abram that his promises will be kept through a covenant.

A covenant is a solemn promise that forges a relationship between man and God. In a word, it is saying “I pledge on my very life that I will uphold my end of the agreement.” So to be clear, God is swearing by himself that he will give Abram many descendants. Why does God seem so invested in human affairs? Out of “sheer gratuitous love” the *Catechism* teaches ([CCC, 218](#)).

Despite God's assurances, Abram has his doubts. He takes some bad advice from Sarai who doubts she will be able to have a baby. Sarai suggests Abraham enter into a sort of marriage with Hagar. You might notice that having more than one wife in the Bible never really goes well for people! Abram and Sarai pay the consequences of trying to do things their way instead of waiting on God.

Remember how Ham’s descendants end up being the “bad guys” in many of the Old Testament stories? The same will happen with Ishmael’s descendants. This is a respectful way the Biblical writers have of criticizing Abram's decision. Out of respect for him as an important leader, or patriarch, the biblical author does not outright say he was wrong to listen to Sarai and distrust God, but the consequences of his decision speak for themselves.

#### Discussion Questions

- Can you understand why Abram might have struggled in trusting God?
- How did God treat Hagar and her child? Despite Abram's decision to stray from God's ultimate plan, how does God's treatment of her show love and kindness for their difficult situation?
- Sometimes it is easier to take matters into our own hands and make mistakes instead of waiting on God, which can be hard! How does the complicated situation with Hagar show that it is better to be patient than try to rush God?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 6: Genesis 15–17; Psalm 6**

Abraham becomes a figure of hope in the Old Testament, a hope which is realized in the New ([CCC, 1819](#)). Abraham, “the father of a multitude of nations” is the person by which God will gather together the humanity which has been scattered by sin ([CCC, 59](#)).

**Psalm 6**

In this Psalm we encounter a reference to *Sheol* which is called the “abode of the dead.” All the dead in Jewish thought would dwell here awaiting the Redeemer. There was an understanding that those who died in righteousness, the holy souls, would go to “Abraham’s bosom.” When Jesus preached to the dead during his descent into hell, it was these holy souls that he delivered ([CCC 633](#)).

We see in this Psalm the lament of the sick person who begs God to heal him. In Israel, there was often a connection made between sickness and sin, hence we see the psalmist imploring God for mercy and deliverance from evil as he faces physical suffering ([CCC 1502](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 7: Genesis 18–19:29; Psalm 7**

Finally, there is a concrete timeline for Sarai and Abram's son! They can expect their bundle of joy within the year according to the promise of the three "mysterious visitors." We pivot from this story to a story that shows Abraham to be a model of prayer for all people: the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham continues to intercede for the people there with persistence and boldness. He speaks with God as a friend. When we speak with God, we too can ask him boldly for what we need, and he does not even mind if we are persistent. In fact, he wants us to be persistent! Jesus teaches this when he tells the stories of the persistent widow and the man who keeps asking his friend for bread. Do your best! Try to pester God! He wants you to speak to him often and with confidence!

Discussion Questions:

- What does Abraham's desire to save the city say about the sort of person he was?
- Lot's wife looks longingly over her shoulder, like she is going to miss living in Sodom and Gomorrah. Why do you think sometimes a sinful lifestyle looks fun and appealing? Why is it important to see sin's appeal as an illusion?
- What does God's willingness to save the city even if only 10 righteous people were there say about his mercy and kindness?

*Note to parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow's reading. You may want to look ahead at the note at the beginning of tomorrow's summary.*

*Catechism References*  
**Day 7: Genesis 18–19:29; Psalm 7**

Abraham's trust in God enabled him to receive the mysterious visitors in his tent, an event which bears with it an annunciation of his much-desired son—and an anticipation of the annunciation of Jesus Christ ([CCC, 2571](#)). The Blessed Virgin Mary embodies this perfect faith in God ([CCC, 148](#)). The visitors at Mamre profess the truth that will be lived out many times in salvation history that nothing is impossible with God ([CCC, 276](#)).

Sarah, too, prepares the world to receive the holiness of the Virgin Mary. She conceives despite her old age, a testament that God is working through her ([CCC, 489](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 8: Genesis 19:30–21; Psalm 8**

*(Parents should note the mature material where Lot's daughters make their father drunk to conceive a child with him. If you wish to avoid this story, begin reading at Genesis 20).*

The story of Abraham visiting Abimelech and telling him that Sarah is his sister should sound familiar. He did the same thing to the Pharaoh in Genesis 12:10. Like the previous story, Abraham ended up being blessed and receiving a great fortune as a result of his dealings with Abimelech. Abraham is blessed it seems in every situation he is in. This is a sign of God's favor.

Chapter 21 is the fulfillment of the promises God made to Sarah and Abraham. Isaac is conceived and born! Throughout the Old Testament, we are going to see many miraculous births. This shows that God, the author of life, is carefully guiding history to accomplish his plan. Not much is noted about Isaac's young childhood except a scene with Ishmael who "plays with Isaac" (Gen 21:9). This likely means that Ishmael was teasing him. Sarah insists that Ishmael is sent away. God in his kindness promises to still care for him. Ishmael becomes a great nation of his own, but not one that inherited the promise of the beloved son.

Discussion Questions:

- Abraham made a puzzling decision by not telling Abimelech that Sarah was his wife. Abimelech was cursed because of this, and then healed when Abraham prayed to God. What do you think Abimelech thought about Abraham's power and the power of Abraham's God?
- Why do you think Abimelech gave Abraham and Sarah sheep and oxen, land, and silver?
- What kind of reputation does Abraham have with the people of these foreign lands? Do you think people respect him?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 8: Genesis 19:30–21; Psalm 8**

We witness the presence of angels throughout salvation history as they serve God in accomplishing his plan. Already in Genesis we have seen angels close the earthly paradise, protect Lot, and now in this passage an angel saves Hagar and her child in their distress ([CCC, 332](#)).

In this passage, the conception of Isaac in Sarah's womb fulfills God's promise to her and prepares for an even more miraculous conception: that of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Sarah stands among the many women in the Old Testament in whom God works to show his faithfulness and power ([CCC, 489](#)).

**Catechesis on Psalm 8**

This Psalm describes how God's glory is manifest in all his works of creation. Yet God is even greater than his works ([CCC, 300](#)). God is the cause of all that exists, he is the first cause. Though he is transcendent, he is also present to every creature in their inmost being. He is mindful of man and cares for him.

This Psalm sings of how God's people should welcome the messiah. Jesus's victory as the king and the manifestation of his glory is not achieved by violence, but by humility ([CCC, 559](#)). All things have been put under his feet and he is given dominion, but Christ achieves this in such a way that his true subjects are the poor, they are his children ([CCC, 559](#)).

We also see in this Psalm the desire for God that is placed in each man's heart. God made each person, giving him existence from nothingness. Because he has been "crowned with glory and honor (v. 5), man is aware of God's majesty. Though sin has caused man to lose his likeness to God, he is still made in God's image and longs for the one who made him. In all religions, we see man searching for God ([CCC, 2566](#)). God reveals his holiness and makes his name known through revelation so that man can know him, even beyond what he can know of him through the glory of creation ([CCC, 2809](#))



## Daily Summary

### Day 9: Genesis 22–23; Psalm 9

Genesis 22 is one of the most pivotal chapters in salvation history. Here we see Abraham demonstrate his perfect faith and trust in God when he willingly sacrifices his beloved son Isaac. You might recall Abraham's faith was not always perfect, but by this point in his life, it had matured so that he unhesitatingly obeyed God. This scene can be troubling to many: is God really demanding human sacrifice? Why would God give Abraham a son only to ask him to kill him? Why would Abraham agree to this? The book of Hebrews in the New Testament answers this question. In Hebrews 11:17-19 we read:

*"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." <sup>19</sup> He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back."*

God wanted to test Abraham's faith. And Abraham passed the test! He demonstrated absolute and total faith in God. He was not worried about Isaac's life because he believed that God would raise his son from the dead.

Genesis 22 reminds us to keep track of three important promises that God makes to Abraham: 1) He would have many descendants 2) Abraham's descendants would be the means by which the whole world would be blessed 3) God would grant them victory over their enemies. It is important to keep this promise in mind because on many occasions God's people will sin... a lot! They will even deserve death because their sin will be so bad. But because of this covenant, God will show mercy on them. God made a promise to Abraham that allows him to be merciful while at the same time not violating his justice.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What is something you value above all else? What is your very favorite thing? Would you be willing to let it go if God asked you to?
- God knew that his people would sin and would need him to be merciful, so he made these extraordinary promises to Abraham. What are ways you can show people in your family mercy when they make mistakes?
- Isaac learned faith from his father Abraham. How do your parents teach you to have faith in God?

**Additional Information:**

Isaac too had faith. He was old enough to carry his own wood on his back and certainly would have been able to outrun his elderly father. If he were not willing to submit to Abraham on his own accord, he could have escaped. His willingness to be bound by his father as a willing sacrifice demonstrates his own faith and submission to God's will. This perfect sacrifice of Abraham, not even withholding his only beloved son is the model for what will happen in Christ--on this very same mountain! Mt. Moriah is in Jerusalem! It is here that Jesus, the beloved Son of God, willingly offers his life as a sacrifice in perfect obedience. God did not spare his own Son. Jesus perfectly accepts his Father's will and submits to carry his own wood of the cross. Jesus had total trust that his Father would raise him from the dead.

***Catechism References***  
**Day 9: Genesis 22–23; Psalm 9**

In this passage, Abraham has faith that is praised in the New Testament as a model for all believers ([CCC 145](#)). We also see him model the virtue of hope as he believed the promises God made to him and was blessed by God ([CCC, 1819](#)). Abraham demonstrates the depth of his faith in hope by responding to God's test to offer his only son, Isaac. This test served to purify him, demonstrating that he completely trusts the Father. He does trust God! He was willing to sacrifice his only son, because he believed in God's promises to him that he would make a great nation of his descendants. If Isaac did die, even at his own hand, he believed that God would bring him back to life ([CCC, 2572](#)). Abraham shares a special union with God the Father, who himself did not withhold his only begotten Son ([CCC, 2572](#)).

Once again, we witness the presence of an angel who serves the Lord and stops Abraham from completing the sacrifice of his son, Isaac. Angels are present throughout salvation history, serving the Lord and announcing important moments in God's divine plan ([CCC, 332](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 10: Genesis 24; Psalm 10**

In this story Isaac goes to take a wife from his kinsmen. He is not supposed to take a wife from the Canaanites, the people who are living in the Promised Land. He is supposed to marry someone from his own tribe. We meet Rebekah who becomes instrumental in shaping the future of Abraham's descendants. She is hospitable, and exercises kindness to Abraham's servant. She is also willing to be part of God's plan by leaving her own family and following Isaac's servant to go be his wife. Rebekah, along with Sarah, is called one of the "matriarchs."

Discussion Questions

- How does Abraham's servant place faith in God to guide him to the perfect wife for Isaac?
- The servant asked God that a perfect wife for Isaac would show kindness and hospitality. What are ways that you can serve others so God can work through you?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

## Daily Summary

### Day 11: Genesis 25–26; Psalm 11

In this reading, we see Isaac making a covenant with Abimelech. Let's once again revisit what a covenant is and why it was used so much in the ancient world. A covenant is a special agreement that you make with someone else. In order to guarantee that an agreement is kept, the two parties swear to God, bringing curses or blessings upon themselves. They will be cursed if they break their oath, and blessed if they keep it. Back then, there were no police to ensure people kept their word, so people would invoke a curse upon themselves by making a covenant. In the ancient world, covenants would be sworn between individuals and between nations.

When a person swears a covenant with God, they really have to keep their covenant. You cannot break a deal with God! The second commandment tells people not to take God's name in vain. This means, among other things, not to swear to God and then break your covenant.

In some cases, God swears by his own name and makes promises to humans. We see this in the covenant God swore with Noah, using the rainbow as a sign. The rainbow is like an archer's bow pointing upward. The arrow is aimed at God should *he* break the covenant. In the covenant with Abraham, God puts himself under a curse if he fails to keep his end of the relationship by preserving his offspring. God keeps his covenant, but we will see in the Bible that Abraham's descendants will not always keep their end of the covenant. Their infidelity triggers the curse, and the curse of breaking a covenant with God is death. This is one of the reasons Jesus dies on the cross. He bears the curse that man deserved for breaking their agreement to be faithful to God.

#### Discussion Questions

- Esau gives his birthright away to Jacob for a bowl of pottage; what does this say about his self-control? Have you ever been so hungry you would have done anything for food? Why does this say about the importance of learning to fast and choosing to go without food for a time?
- Does Esau seem like a person you really like? Does the Bible make Jacob come across as more likeable?
- God tells Rebekah that there will be division between her two sons and the older will serve the younger. How do you think Esau, the older brother, might feel about having to serve his younger brother? Do you ever struggle serving those younger than you?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 12: Genesis 27–28; Psalm 12**

The one who receives his father's blessing will be the head of the family when Isaac dies. Why would Rebekah tell her younger son Jacob to trick his father? We know Esau was a hunter and a man of the field. He was a tough man, a fighter. Jacob, on the other hand, was gentle. Rebekah wants to make sure that the head of the family is not a fighter. Rebekah arranges the situation so that Jacob will receive the birthright, the place as the head of the family. This means that the older son will have to serve the younger son. This is a very unusual situation, but something that becomes a common theme in the Bible!

Who was the first angel made? Lucifer, but his pride led him to reject God. Who was older, Cain or Abel? Cain. Yet he had to stand by and watch Abel's sacrifice be accepted by God. Moses and David, who we will read about later, are both younger brothers in their families. Why does this happen so often in the Bible? Because God does not like pride. The older son is in greater danger of succumbing to pride. He is bigger, usually more experienced, and usually stronger. In the Bible, God raises up the weak and brings down the strong.

Even in our own families, the older may not always be compassionate to the younger. Therefore, God finds a way to fix pride. The best thing is for everyone to seek humility and serve one another.

Discussion Questions:

- How did Jacob's trickery affect Esau? How does the way we treat our family members affect the peace in our family? How does service and humility remedy fighting in the family?
- How are your parents a model of service in the family? What would happen if parents did not serve those who were younger than they are?
- If you were Esau, do you think you would ever be able to forgive Jacob?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 12: Genesis 27–28; Psalm 12**

In Jacob's dream, God renews his promise that Jacob will be the father of many descendants. In the face of the enemy he has created in his brother, Esau, he needs the strength of God's promise to ensure God will help him ([CCC, 2573](#)). In a few days, we will read the passage where Jacob wrestles with God (or an angel), which purifies him as he prepares to face his brother.

## Daily Summary

### Day 13: Genesis 29–30:34; Psalm 13

In these chapters, we see Jacob seek out a wife from among his kinsmen (just like Isaac did). Jacob, however, gets a taste of his own medicine when the woman he wants to marry is switched for a woman he does not want to marry. Jacob switched himself for Esau to get the birthright, and the lovely Rachel gets switched for the less-than-lovely Leah. “Jacob” means “trickster.” In this story, Jacob got “Jacobed”!

In his love for Rachel, he works twice as long to finally be able to marry her too. Sadly, there is constant strife between Leah and Rachel and their children. Even among God’s chosen people, there is sin and strife. God is not working with perfect people, but he can still accomplish his will through them. If he can work in this family dynamic, and he can work through *any* family!

#### Discussion Questions

- Jacob, the trickster, gets tricked by Laban. Do you feel like he deserved it?
- Have you ever gotten a “taste of your own medicine” and been treated the way you treat others? How might this encourage you to treat others the way you want to be treated, as Jesus teaches?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 13: Genesis 29–30:34; Psalm 13**

Laban is referred to as Jacob’s kinsman. This word “kinsman” is sometimes translated as “brother.” We know that he is not a “brother” as in coming from the same father and mother, but he is a relative. In biblical language, “brother” can be used to denote this kind of relationship. Therefore, when we see the New Testament mentioning the “brothers” of Jesus, we have strong biblical evidence to conclude that these are close relations rather than brothers strictly speaking. Mary had no biological children other than Jesus ([CCC, 500](#)).

As we read about Rachel’s struggles to have children, we see in her and in Abraham who came before her their solidarity with the great suffering experienced by couples who have difficulty conceiving children ([CCC, 2374](#)) . Couples who struggle with infertility join the cries of Abraham and Rachel and are called to unite their suffering to the Lord’s cross, seeking his help to be spiritually fruitful in serving others ([CCC, 2379](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 14: Genesis 30:35–32:12; Psalm 14**

One thing we can say about Jacob is that he is cunning! Though Laban tricked him with regard to Leah, Jacob gets the last laugh by outsmarting him with Laban's flocks. Not that we are particularly sympathetic to Laban, but Jacob's way of dealing with people seems to lead him to be in constant strife. Remember Esau is already angry with him back in his homeland, and now Laban's servants force Jacob to leave because of Jacob taking all the sheep. With an angry Esau waiting for him, where can he go?

Before he can safely enter his homeland, he has to make amends with Esau. Jacob turns to God to deliver him from his enemies, and makes good use of the great fortune he has accumulated to help him. In Jacob, we can see the need for God's help to heal the wounds caused by sin.

Discussion Questions

- How does Jacob differ from his grandfather Abraham? Did Abraham make more enemies or more friends?
- Rachel seems pretty tricky herself when she hides the household gods under the camel's saddle. Do you think Laban is getting his "just desserts" for his treatment of Jacob?
- Why do you think Jacob reminds God of his promises to Abraham about making his descendants as numerous as the sands of the sea when he knows he is about to face a very angry Esau?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 15: Genesis 32:15–34; Psalm 15**

*(Parents should be aware of mature material in Chapter 34 relating to an attack on Dinah. The language is not graphic, using terms like “lay with” and “defiled” but may prompt questions from the attentive listener. The story ends with Jacob’s sons getting vengeance on Dinah’s attacker by tricking the whole tribe to be circumcised and killing them while they are too sore to fight back. Parents of younger children may choose to skip chapter 34 altogether.)*

We see great moral growth in Jacob along the way. Jacob seems to keenly understand that his family is special and works to receive the blessings that should come to a descendant of Abraham. He is enterprising, but also prayerful. In this passage, we see this iconic scene of Jacob wrestling with God (or an angel representing God) and insisting on receiving a blessing from him. This wrestling with God can be an example to us of our own spiritual growth and prayer life. It is not always easy, but we have to stay in it, wrestle with the challenges, and be bold in asking God for what we need. We see the tension between Jacob and Esau resolved as the brothers embrace and then peacefully go their separate ways.

**Discussion Questions**

- Does Esau’s actions to forgive Jacob so quickly surprise you? How would you have reacted if you were him?
- If you remember from yesterday’s readings, Jacob prayed to God to deliver him from Esau’s wrath; and today we find Esau surprisingly calm about the whole matter. What does this say about the power of prayer when you are dealing with a conflict?
- Jacob gave his brother a gift as a peace offering. This is a great example of trying to make restitution for wrongdoing. Do you do this in your family? When you hurt someone, in addition to apologizing, do you try to make it up to them?

Note to Parents: Tomorrow’s reading is pretty heavy on the genealogies. Depending on your family, you may wish to skip chapter 36.

***Catechism References***  
**Day 15: Genesis 32:15–34; Psalm 15**

Jacob wrestles with God, an image that represents the battle each person of faith must undergo in prayer. As Jacob persevered “all night” to wrestle with God, we too must persevere in prayer in order to receive God’s blessing ([CCC, 2573](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 16: Genesis 35–36; Psalm 16**

*(Note: Chapter 36 is quite heavy on the genealogies. Some families may choose to skip this chapter since very few children will remember much from the many names).*

God actively assists Jacob along the way, helping him navigate the challenges, even the self-imposed ones, he faces. Jacob is aware of God’s help as he reminds his family to purify themselves and worship God “who answered me in the day of distress” (Gen 35:3). From this point forward, Jacob is known as “Israel,” a name which will be the identity of Jacob’s descendants throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Israel refers to both an individual and a nation, but after Jacob/Israel’s death, “Israel” refers to the nation of Israel almost exclusively.

Discussion Questions

- Did you notice Jacob maturing along the way? How can God use our challenges and shortcomings to help us grow?
- God made several important promises to Abraham, and now makes an important promise to Jacob that kings shall come from his descendants. How does God’s saving actions make it easier for Jacob/Israel to trust in God?
- Why do you think we tell the stories about God performing miracles for our ancestors? How should these stories affect the way we trust God?

*Note to parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow’s reading. You may want to look ahead at the note at the beginning of tomorrow’s summary.*

*Catechism References*  
**Day 16: Genesis 35–36; Psalm 16**

**Catechesis on Psalm 16**

Psalm 16 is fulfilled in Christ who was not abandoned to Sheol. Jesus truly dies, but his flesh did not see corruption before he was raised from the dead ([CCC, 627](#))

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 17: Genesis 37–38; Psalm 17**

*(Parents should know there is some mature material in Genesis 38 with regard to Onan as well as Judah and his relationship with Tamar). With our children we skipped most of this chapter. We read up to Genesis 38:6 and then skipped down to verses 37-30).*

Most people with siblings can understand the frustration Joseph's brothers must have felt in this story. It really does seem like Joseph was gloating that his father loved him best. Added on top of it, the dream Joseph told to his brothers certainly did not paint him in the best light. Now, the brothers responded in an extreme way: they were jealous and so they wanted to kill him! Reuben thought better of the plan to kill him and decided to just put him in a pit and rescue him later, but Judah ended up thwarting Reuben's plan by selling him into slavery. They sell him for twenty pieces of silver which should remind us of Jesus who was sold for thirty pieces of silver. Judah takes Joseph's jacket and puts it in blood. Jesus is from the line of Judah; he really did die and shed blood.

Discussion Questions

- How would you have felt about Joseph if you were his older brothers?
- Do you think it was wise for Joseph to share his dream with his brothers in the way that he did?
- How did the pride of the older brothers lead them to harm Joseph? How might humility have helped the situation?

*Note to parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow's reading. You may want to look ahead at the note at the beginning of tomorrow's summary.*

***Catechism References***  
**Day 17: Genesis 37–38; Psalm 17**

The “seal” which Judah gives as a pledge is an ancient symbol of the personal authority of those bearing the seal. This imagery of the “seal” is present in the sacrament of Confirmation. As the confirmand is anointed, he or she is sealed with the Holy Spirit, indicating to whom the person belongs ([CCC, 1295](#)).



**Daily Summary**  
**Day 18: Genesis 39–40; Psalm 18:1–19**

*(Parents should note there is a slight reference to mature material. Potiphar's wife tries to convince Joseph to "lay with her." Our children did not ask what this meant, but it can be summarized by saying she wanted him to kiss him and act like his wife. Because she was married to someone else, this would have been wrong.)*

God will lift up the righteous! You can always count on the truth coming out. We do not know what the baker did to get in trouble, but we do know he was guilty and was punished for it. We know that the butler was innocent and was set free. We also see Joseph's integrity. Joseph does not just tell them what they want to hear. He tells them the truth about their dreams.

Psalm 18 says that God bowed the Heavens and came down. How does he do that? He brings Heaven down to earth. This is something God accomplishes in the liturgy. Every time we go to Mass, God parts the Heavens and brings them down to earth.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever had a really strange dream that you could not understand? How do you think Joseph was able to understand someone else's dream?
- God has a plan for Joseph's life that involves a lot of suffering. As we will see later, it also involves God bringing him blessing, but only because he endured the suffering faithfully. What can this teach us about the importance of trusting God even in difficult times?
- In the Psalm, we read about God rescuing us from our enemies, but even king David who wrote the psalm experienced God's help only after a period of suffering. Why do you think God sometimes allows us to suffer before coming to our help?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 19: Genesis 41; Psalm 18:20–42**

In this passage, we see how God uses the suffering of Joseph to accomplish his will. God lifts up the lowly, but not always right away. Sometimes the righteous suffer; sometimes it looks like they lost, but God always helps them. Joseph ends up being put in a pit by his brothers because of their jealousy, and also because of his dreams. In the pit, Joseph might have thought to himself, “I probably shouldn’t have handled that the way I did.” By the time he goes to Egypt, he has learned his lesson. Instead of interpreting his own dreams—especially telling them to people in a way that sounds like he is boasting—he told other people their dreams to help them, not to serve himself. Not only did he have powerful dreams, but he could interpret them. It was a miracle- God helped him know the dreams of other men and their meaning. No one could do this without God’s help. Do you know anyone who had dreams in the New Testament? Joseph, Mary’s husband!

Discussion Questions:

- Has there been anything in your family history that God solved, but only after a long time of waiting?
- The story of Joseph teaches us that God can use our suffering to help others. How does this become an important theme in the Bible?
- If you think of difficult situations you have had to face, how can you use that experience to help others?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 19: Genesis 41; Psalm 18:20–42**

Once again, we see the image of the “seal.” This time the seal belongs to Pharaoh and signifies his authority. In confirmation, God presses his seal on the confirmand indicating that he or she belongs to the Holy Spirit ([CCC, 1295](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 20: Genesis 42–43:34; Psalm 18**

In this passage, Joseph's earlier dream (the one which led his brothers to become jealous and sell him into slavery) is realized. Joseph was right! His brothers are now bowing before him. All of this took place because of God's providence. Joseph's dream, his being sent off to Egypt, and the famine that fell upon the land, were all under God's purview. When we face difficulties in life, it is important to remember that God never abandons us and can bring good from every situation.

Discussion Questions

- How do you think Joseph felt when he saw his brothers?
- Why do you think his brothers did not recognize him?
- Do you think Joseph's brothers were sufficiently "punished" for what they put Joseph through?

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 21: Genesis 44–45; Psalm 19**

One amazing thing you see here is that God is faithful to his promises. God let a lot of bad things happen to Joseph, but God lets evil happen so he can bring good from it. We never say “Oh if only this hadn’t happened, I’d be happier.” God permits things to happen, even difficult things, because he is planning on bringing good out of it. Even if it is not a good we can immediately see, we trust in God’s power to bring good out of our suffering.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Joseph seems to be playing games with his brothers and not just telling them who he is?
- Joseph’s brother Benjamin was found with the silver cup in his sack. Joseph acts like he wants to punish him. How does Judah respond? Judah offers to take the place of his brother Benjamin, and be punished for having the silver cup. How does this show that Judah has matured since his dealings with Joseph when they were boys? How does this anticipate Jesus’s sacrifice, who comes from the tribe of Judah?
- How does this scene of the brothers being reunited show how God can heal even really broken relationships? What does this say about the importance of forgiveness in families?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

***Catechism References***  
**Day 21: Genesis 44–45; Psalm 19**

Joseph's story demonstrates that God in his power and providence is able to bring good out of evil. Though never a justification for moral evil, God is able to bring good even out of that. This is demonstrated in part by Joseph's ability to help his family even though they intended evil for him. The truth of this is made clear perfectly in Jesus Christ who suffered the greatest moral evil, but through it was able to bring about the forgiveness of sin ([CCC, 312](#)).

Psalm 19 teaches about the beauty and order of God's creation. The world comes from God's wisdom and through the gift of our intellect, we are able to understand how God uses creation to tell us about himself. The created world is an expression of God's goodness. All that exists shares in the goodness of God because God, the source of all goodness, is its cause ([CCC, 299](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 22: Genesis 46-48:7; Psalm 20**

We are again reminded of God's consistent promise that he will make Jacob/Israel's descendants great, and this passage explains how this is becoming true. All those names we read in Chapter 46 show just how numerous Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's descendants have become. Yet, the careful reader should notice a subtle problem in the story of God's people: they are in Egypt, not the Promised Land. God has spent so much of the book of Genesis situating them in this land, and now they are not even in it!

The famine explains the practical need for them to leave the Promised Land, but as readers, we should not end the book of Genesis in a comfortable spot. Egypt is not their home. We can recognize they are numerous, it is true, but there is something in the story that needs fixing. They need to be home!

Discussion Questions:

- Imagine the scene where Jacob/Israel is being carried and surrounded by all his sons and their little ones. The son he thought was dead is now alive, and he is witnessing God's promises fulfilled. How do you think this affected his trust in God?
- Do you think Jacob/Israel would have been upset that he had to leave the land of his fathers to live in Egypt? Where did he want to be buried?
- Has your family ever had to move to go to a new place? What was that like? Was it unsettling or exciting? Did you long to go back to your old home?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 23: Genesis 48:8–50; Psalm 21**

This passage finishes the Book of Genesis. Congratulations! You have finished your first book of the Old Testament! In this book, we have covered a lot of ground. We started out with the story of creation. What are the important things we should remember about that? Everything God made is good, he made humanity in his image and likeness, and the climax of creation is being able to rest with God.

We read about Adam and Eve and how God provided for all their needs, but—against all reason—they still did not trust God. That is really the root of all sin and how the devil likes to tempt us even today. When we break the rules God has laid out, it is because we do not trust that God has our best interest in mind in giving us those rules in the first place.

Genesis shows us God’s mercy throughout its pages. Despite the sin of Adam and Eve, God does not break off his relationship with humanity. He redeems the human race, and he does it “part by part.” He initiates a relationship with a certain group of people and makes himself known. First, to Noah, then to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all their descendants. In the book of Genesis, God speaks of his plan to bless the whole world through Abraham’s descendants. The fact that your family right now is learning about God means God has kept his promise!

Genesis ends in Egypt. All the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel) have died, and now this great multitude of their descendants is living in a foreign land. As we enter the next book, Exodus, we are going to see the nation of Israel continue to grow. Now we will see how God will address the problem of their not being in the Promised Land.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Do you have a favorite story from the Book of Genesis?
- What are some ways that God showed that he can be trusted and he will keep his promises?
- What is one new thing you learned about God from the Book of Genesis?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 23: Genesis 48:8–50; Psalm 21**

The God who has established a relationship with Abraham’s descendants is the one true God. He created Heaven and Earth, the Lord of history, and all things are possible for him ([CCC, 269](#)). His power is such that he can even take evil circumstances and transform them to work for the good, as he did when Joseph’s brothers intended evil against him, but God used it for good ([CCC 312](#)). This truth is demonstrated *par excellence* as God transforms the worst evil committed—the execution of God’s own son—into blessing for the entire world ([CCC, 312](#)).

## Daily Summary

### Day 24: Exodus 1–3; Psalm 22:1–11

What does it mean that God remembered his people (Exodus 2:24)? “To remember” does not mean to recall after forgetting. God could never “forget.” To remember, in biblical terms, means to do things that are appropriate for the situation. “Remembrance” in Scripture is a very active word. In this case, God is going to *do* something about the promises he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We hear this language of *remembering* in the liturgy when the priest repeats Jesus’s words, “Do this in remembrance of me.” We do not just sit and think back to the past, but the Church *does something* as it “remembers” Christ’s death. The Church re-presents his death in the liturgy.

There should be some elements in the story of the Exodus that sound familiar to those who know a little something of the New Testament. The beginning of Exodus sounds like Jesus’s birth. In both cases, an evil king wants to kill the male children. Why would Pharaoh want to kill the babies? He was worried the Israelites would turn on them if they grew too numerous. The people were “fruitful and multiplied.” This phrase is from the story of Genesis, the command given to Adam and Eve. It was also given to the animals and to Noah after the first “re-creation.” The Exodus is like a new creation. God is going to bring humanity back from sin. Which sin in particular? While they are in physical bondage to the Egyptians, they were actually in spiritual bondage as well. They were worshipping the Egyptian gods and goddesses! God is going to remember his promises to Abraham, so that Israel can remember him.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Miriam was a pretty fantastic older sister, wasn’t she? She orchestrated Moses being reunited with his mother, *and getting paid wages for nursing him and caring for him*. How would you have reacted if one of your siblings had to be sent away in a basket just to survive?
- What do you think about the story of Moses killing the Egyptian taskmaster and then being yelled at by the Hebrews for it? Why do you think the Bible wants you to know that Moses wasn’t really liked by either side?
- Have you heard the first line of Psalm 22 before? Why do you think Jesus recited the beginning line on the cross?

(There are no *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references for these passages.)

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 25: Exodus 4–6:13; Psalm 22:12–31**

What did God tell Moses and Aaron to ask Pharaoh to do? He did not initially ask them to let Israel go forever. He merely asked for Pharaoh to let them go worship him for three days in the wilderness. This suggests that the biggest part of Israel's enslavement was not their physical enslavement. He *did* care about that, but even worse than their physical bondage was the fact that Israel had forgotten about God! This initial three days in the wilderness was to spiritually reconnect to his people through worshipping him, the one true God.

What kinds of sacrifices would the Israelites have killed in their worship of God? Cows, sheep, goats. Why would the Egyptians not like this? Because they worshipped those animals as gods! Israel had to choose which God they wanted to serve: The gods of the Egyptians or the one, true God. We'll see later in Exodus that they really struggled with this. They had become accustomed to the Egyptian religious practices and needed to "detox" from false worship.

Discussion Questions:

- The first part of Psalm 22 is very sad and reveals a person experiencing great suffering. How does this Psalm end? Why do you think that it is important that Jesus cites this Psalm as he is about to die?
- Was Moses eager to lead God's people out of Egypt? Have you ever felt like you were not going to be successful at something?
- How does Moses's unpopularity with the people, as well as his own personal reluctance to do this show God's power better than if he were really confident in himself and popular with his people?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 25: Exodus 4–6:13; Psalm 22:12–31**

We call God “Father” for many reasons. First, God is the creator of the world. He is our Father in the covenant he has established with his people through Abraham and his descendants. He calls his people Israel his “first-born son.” God refers to the king of Israel as his “son.” He establishes a special relationship with orphans, widows and the poor, relating to them as their “Father” ([CCC, 238](#)).

**Catechesis on the Psalm**

Psalm 22 points to Christ who recites the opening lines of the Psalm “My God, my God why have you forsaken me” on the cross. The words of this Psalm can be applied to Christ. Most notably, the reference to his heart being “poured out like wax” (Ps 22:14). As the Scripture was obscure before the passion of Christ, now it is “poured out” and opened to understand the meaning of God’s plan. It is in light of this whole plan which makes sense only in Christ that we find the importance of reading the Scripture as one unified whole ([CCC, 112](#)).

In this Psalm we also read of God’s compassion for the poor who receive special care and attention from God. Their meekness and humility are part of the “hidden mission” of the Holy Spirit who is preparing them for the coming of the Lord ([CCC, 716](#)).

## **Daily Summary**

### **Day 26: Exodus 6:14–8; Psalm 23**

In this story, we read about Pharaoh's heart being hardened. But who hardened Pharaoh's heart? In the story, both God and Pharaoh hardened Pharaoh's heart. Why did God harden his heart? God was going to bring about actions that Pharaoh would not respond well to. Of course, Pharaoh would not want all his slaves to leave, who would do all his work? But Pharaoh also hardened his own heart. Pharaoh still had a choice. God will use the bad situation of Pharaoh's hardness of heart to bring about not just a temporary exodus, but a permanent one.

Even though we have not gotten to this passage yet, you might be familiar with the story about God writing down the commandments. What did he write them down on? He writes them on stone. Why does God write the commandments on stone? He wants to show us that our hearts can be hard too! Pharaoh is not the only one with a hard-heart here. God's own people—including us—can have hard-hearts. God really wants to write his law on our hearts, hearts of flesh, hearts that are responsive to him.

What is going on with these plagues? Why did God send blood in the Nile? Why frogs? Every one of the plagues relates to one of the Egyptian gods. God is showing he is more powerful than any of the pagan gods who really are false gods. If the false gods over the flies, and the Nile, and the cattle really had any power, they would have been able to stop God from controlling them. Who is God judging by performing all these plagues? He is judging the gods, the demons who the Egyptians and some of the Israelites worshipped. Israel is enslaved, but they are not just enslaved to Pharaoh. Even worse than that, they are enslaved to demons by the way they have worshipped the false Egyptian gods.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Do you ever harden your hearts when your parents tell you to do something? Sometimes if we are in a bad mood or angry that something is not going our way, we oppose someone just because we are mad. We don't even want to think about what makes the most sense.
- What would you have said if you could talk to Pharaoh and try to persuade him to let God's people go?

- God demonstrates his power over the false gods of Egypt. Many of the Israelites had forgotten about the Lord and were actually worshipping these Egyptian gods. What do you think they thought about all of this?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 26: Exodus 6:14–8; Psalm 23**

Psalm 23 expresses the goodness of the Lord who anoints his sheep. This is fulfilled perfectly in the sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy Spirit anoints us, imprinting his seal upon us. The oil used is a sign of abundance and joy, strengthening, limbering its recipient, soothing, and healing ([CCC, 1293](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 27: Exodus 9-10; Psalm 24**

The story continues in a similar pattern as before. We continue to go back and forth between Moses and Pharaoh. God issues threats if Pharaoh does not comply with Moses's demands, and Pharaoh, unrelenting, continues to harden his heart. Recall, once again, that each of these plagues is a judgment against the gods that the Egyptians worshipped. God is not just performing parlor tricks. He is trying to convince everyone—especially Israel—that he is the one true God, and the other Egyptian gods are powerless before him.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you think Moses and Aaron felt during all this?
- Pharaoh did seem to repent in Exodus 9:27 and to agree to let God's people go, but as soon as the plague stopped, he changed his mind. Pharaoh is not sincere in his repentance; he just wanted the punishment to stop. Has that ever happened to you? Where you don't say you are sorry because you are really sorry, but because you don't want to be punished anymore?
- God seems very patient with Pharaoh, giving him many, many chances to change his mind. God could have struck Pharaoh dead! What does this say about God that he gave Pharaoh a chance to comply?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 27: Exodus 9-10; Psalm 24**

Psalm 24 praises the Lord, the King of Glory! He is the mighty one who made heaven and earth ([CCC, 269](#)). It is right to welcome him as our Messiah, acclaiming him and calling out, “Hosanna” which means “Save!” ([CCC, 559](#)). As God has revealed in Psalm 23, he is our shepherd, yet Psalm 24 reminds us that he is also our king and worthy of our adoration. This truly is the “first attitude” we should take as we stand before God. He is the Mighty One, and we approach his throne with humility and homage. This can be expressed in words of praise as we see in this psalm, but also in silence as we are speechless before his majesty ([CCC, 2628](#)).

## Daily Summary

### Day 28: Exodus 11-12; Psalm 25

In these chapters, God issues the final plague: the death of the firstborn son. This causes so much anguish in Egypt that the Egyptians insist that Israel leave. In the other plagues, God spared Israel from having the same bad things happen to them as happened to the Egyptians. God intends to spare Israel from this plague as well, but in order for them to be spared, they need to follow his exact instructions for worship. It is really important to note that God's salvation comes about through an act of liturgy.

Of course, this liturgy is a foretaste of what Jesus Christ will do in the New Testament. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" by John the Baptist. He is the new Passover lamb. The Passover lamb was slain and its sacrifice is what enabled Israel to leave slavery to Pharaoh. Jesus was killed to free humanity from slavery to sin. The Israelites leave Pharaoh to go to the Promised Land; we leave our sin behind so that we might be free to travel to the true Promised Land of Heaven.

The new Passover we celebrate in Christ is the Mass. It is the sacred meal that we must celebrate to *remember* what God has done for us, but also to participate in the meal so that we can receive its benefits. If you wanted your firstborn son to survive Passover night, you had to sacrifice the lamb and eat its flesh. If we want to be saved from sin and survive the curse of death, we have to eat the flesh of the Lamb of God. This is possible because Jesus has given us his flesh to eat in the holy Eucharist.

#### Discussion Questions:

- How does sin enslave us? Jesus teaches that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. What do you think he means by that?
- How is slavery to sin even worse than being enslaved to Pharaoh?
- Do you think the Israelites might have doubted that by eating a meal God could save them from Pharaoh? Do you think they would have expected God would have used swords to fight their enemies?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 28: Exodus 11-12; Psalm 25**

The Passover lamb of the Old Testament anticipates what Christ will do in the New. John the Baptist declares that Jesus is the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” As the true paschal lamb, Jesus will give his life for the redemption of his people ([CCC, 608](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 29: Exodus 13–15:21; Psalm 26**

This is one of the most well-known stories in the Old Testament: God miraculously parts the Red Sea so that the Israelites can pass through. The Israelites sing a song of praise to God for his deliverance.

This scene is understood in the New Testament and throughout the Church's life and liturgy as a preparation for what God will accomplish in baptism. St. Paul will say, "I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1–2). God delivers Israel from slavery through the waters of the Red Sea, and he delivers us from the slavery to sin through the waters of baptism.

As you read the Old Testament, try to keep something tucked away in your mind: Israel is going to get into serious trouble again, they will be taken out of the land, and the prophets are going to come and call for a "New Exodus." We are even going to hear the Psalms (Psalm 96, 98, and 149) instruct the people to sing a "new song." Moses sang a song for the first Exodus. When the people need a "new Exodus" they will need a "new song."

As you read the Bible you will find out how all the pieces connect together, but you will discover that the New Exodus is accomplished by the New Moses (Jesus) who institutes a New Passover (the Eucharist). We pass through to the New Promised Land (Heaven) and it takes place through the New Parting of the Red Sea (baptism) .

Discussion Questions:

- What do you think it was like to witness this incredible event of being able to walk through the Sea on dry land?
- Were you old enough to remember your baptism? Have you ever been to someone's baptism? Can you think of any symbols in the baptism that would remind you of this Exodus story? (*Hint: the candle is like the pillar of fire; water is used like at the Exodus; when the priest blesses the baptismal water, he talks about the Exodus story*)

- Pharaoh sent his men into the water to chase down the Israelites. What do you think they thought about the situation? Do you think they were scared?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 29: Exodus 13–15:21; Psalm 26**

The passage in Exodus alludes to Christ in several different ways. First, God speaks of the first-born sons who belong to the Lord. Jesus, the first-born, belongs to the Lord in the same way that all of the Hebrew first-borns out to have been consecrated to him. In addition, he belongs to the Lord in an entirely new sense. Jesus is “born before all ages,” the Son of the Father ([CCC, 529](#)).

This passage also anticipates the glory cloud which we will see surround Jesus on several occasions. We read in this passage about the “pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.” In his Ascension, Jesus enters into divine glory on a cloud, a manifestation of the divine presence ([CCC, 659](#)).

Moses instructed his people to “remember this day” when they were brought out of Egypt. Biblically, the word “remember” signifies more than mere recollection to the mind. Israel was to “remember” the Exodus liturgically by a regular celebration of the Passover. The Exodus, then, is to be made present each time it is celebrated to all the future generations ([CCC, 1363](#)).

The Exodus event marks such a glorious triumph, God’s people will sing of it in song as we see in the reading beginning in Exodus 15. To an even greater degree than was revealed to Abraham, God’s people are given special access to the Lord. He reveals his name, he rescues them, and sets them aside as his “own.” ([CCC, 2810](#))

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 30: Exodus 15:22–17:16; Psalm 27**

Now we begin the period of time when Israel is going to turn from their past experiences in Egypt and learn to follow God. In the book of Hosea (which we will read much later in the year), God speaks of this time in the wilderness as a sort of honeymoon period. What does this mean? Well, a honeymoon refers to the period of time right after people get married when the newly married couple really gets to know each other. Now they are spending more time together than before they were married, and they are experiencing the joy of their newly formed family.

So, God just performed this dramatic rescue for his people, and is going to lead them to the Promised Land where he will be their God, and they will be his people. But life with God means they have to turn away from all the terrible attachments to the foreign gods they had formed while in Egypt. This will not be easy for them. What we will discover on their journey to the Promised Land is that Israel is ungrateful, whiny, and disobedient. Before we judge them too harshly, we should think about how often we behave the same way towards God.

God will show that he will provide for their needs, but they also need to learn to listen to him. Just like any healthy relationship, love needs to go both ways.

Discussion Questions:

- What made it possible for the Israelites to defeat the Amalekites in Exodus 17? What did Moses have to do in order for them to have victory?
- Have you ever seen a man stand before a congregation of people and lift both hands in the air above them in prayer? This should remind you of the priest at Mass. Israel's victory came because of Moses's prayer. What does this say about the importance of prayer in every battle we must fight?
- The manna that God gave the Israelites, this miraculous bread, could not be collected and stored for later (except on the sabbath day so the Israelites could rest from the work of gathering food). They needed to trust God for bread on a daily basis. Can you think of an important prayer that teaches us to trust God to give us what we need every day?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 30: Exodus 15:22–17:16; Psalm 27**

In Exodus 15:26, we encounter God’s promise of blessing and health to those who diligently listen to him. In the Old Testament, there was a link between sin and illness. The man of the Old Testament called out to God for healing, and simultaneously implored God for forgiveness of sin ([CCC, 1502](#)).

This section of readings provides two excellent demonstrations of God’s providence and tender care for his people. First is the feeding with bread from heaven, and the second is the gift of water from the rock.

In the gift of manna, the Lord provides miraculous food and drink for his people who are hungry in the desert. This gift was provided daily. It could not be gathered and stored for later (except on before the sabbath so they did not have to work on the sabbath day gathering food). The “daily bread” will anticipate the Lord’s prayer and teaching of absolute trust in the Father ([CCC, 2836](#)), and the heavenly nature of the food anticipates the Eucharist, the Body of Christ, the true Bread sent from the Father ([CCC, 2837](#)).

In yet another significant appearance of water (we saw water at creation, the Flood, and the Exodus), God miraculously brings forth water from the rock. The presence of water in the Old Testament is often a prefiguring of the presence of the Holy Spirit. That God can bring forth water from a rock signifies the gratuitous nature of his grace ([CCC, 694](#)).

This gift, though, is given to a people who were not exercising trusting faith in the Lord. They were quarreling and bickering in the wilderness. They “tempted God,” putting his power to the test. Jesus, during his time in the wilderness, excels where Israel fails by not putting the Lord to the test ([CCC, 2119](#)).

The obstinacy of his people affords Moses a unique opportunity to imitate God in showing his steadfast love. God will clearly reveal to Moses later in Exodus that he is “slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” This is not just something said *about* God. The Lord’s deeds will demonstrate that truth to Moses and the Israelites. The gift of water in the desert comes from the intercession of Moses who, as the journey continues, will become an intercessor for his people ([CCC, 2577](#)).

## Catechesis on Psalm 27

Psalm 27:10 contrasts the attentive love of God with the shortcomings of human parents. Referring to God as “Father” reflects that he is the creator of all and shows loving care for his children. Children begin life with a human experience of their parents. Ideally this will introduce concepts of tenderness and care that ultimately find their source in God. Yet we remember that human parents are not perfect. Even though they may fail, God the Father is perfect. The Fatherhood of God is perfect ([CCC, 239](#)).

This Psalm also teaches something important about prayer. The Psalmist cries out “Turn not your face from me.” Prayer requires us to seek the face of God. He will come like a “thief in the night” and we must be vigilantly seeking him to prepare ourselves for the day of his coming ([CCC, 2730](#)).



**Daily Summary**  
**Day 31: Exodus 18–20:17; Psalm 28**

Now that the Israelites are out of slavery, we will see how their new way of life unfolds. We see Moses acting as a judge, giving advice to the people who are seeking to do God’s will. Demand for his wisdom becomes so high, Moses needs to appoint others to help him. At this point, there seems to be a general willingness for the people to be good. God wants to make them “a holy nation” and a “kingdom of priests” and God will help them in that task. The people, still in awe of God’s deliverance express a desire to do all that God has asked of them.

God makes it clear what he expects of them when he issues the Ten Commandments. Notice the justification for God expecting them to obey is not blind faith but because God has already done so many incredible things for them! “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt...” It is reasonable for God to expect them to reciprocate their end of the relationship, because God has demonstrated his kindness, care, and might.

Discussion Questions:

- God gave the Israelites rules because he loves them and wants them to be holy and avoid the things that lead to sin and slavery. How do your family’s rules help you live together happily and safely?
- Moses’s father-in-law Jethro gave Moses some practical wisdom: you can’t do everything on your own. How are families supposed to help each other out so the whole unit can function better?
- Can you list the Ten Commandments in order?

*Note to Parents: tomorrow we encounter some material dealing with mature subjects. You may want to look ahead at tomorrow’s summary before reading.*

***Catechism References***  
**Day 31: Exodus 18–20:17; Psalm 28**

God’s law is a gift, flowing from the wisdom of how he teaches his children. This is called God’s pedagogy and it relates to how he teaches his people and leads them towards Christ. The law cannot save humanity—only Christ can do this—but it prepares humanity to be aware of their sin and their need for God’s help ([CCC, 708](#)). The law is a sign of the covenant with God, yet it also holds Israel to a higher standard—a standard to which they often fall short of meeting ([CCC, 709](#)).

The people of Israel form a nation. This assembly is the prototype of the Church, who become an assembly of believers united in Christ ([CCC, 751](#)). This gathering of Abraham’s descendants into a people who know God and are in a covenant relationship with him is the remote preparation for the gathering of people in Christ in the New Covenant ([CCC, 762](#)). God first reveals his glory and his care through his saving deeds in Egypt. The Commandments flow first from God’s initiative, and represent man’s proper response to the Lord ([CCC, 2083, 2085, 2810](#)).

The Decalogue given to Israel in this passage means “ten words.” These words are from God as a gift to gather the people of Israel as his own. ([CCC, 2056, 2060](#)). God’s people promise to obey them as part of the terms of the covenant. God loves his people, wishes them to be holy, and keeps them from sin. Their obedience to the laws reflect their acceptance of God’s love and help ([CCC, 2061](#)). In the Christian life, the Ten Commandments aid the faithful in confessing their sins to a priest. The penitent makes a self-examination for sins committed exteriorly, and sins committed in secret ([CCC, 1456](#)).

The Ten Commandments can be summed up by the two great laws of Christ: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...and love your neighbor as yourself” ([CCC, 2083, 2196](#)). The first three commandments pertain to the love of God. The final seven pertain to the love of neighbor ([CCC, 2196](#)). Sins such as theft, adultery, and covetousness harm the love that is owed to each other. ([CCC, 2400, 2504](#)). Sins against the poor are especially grievous as they are committed against the Lord himself. ([CCC, 2463](#))

Venerating sacred images is not contrary to the commandments ([CCC, 2141](#)). The beauty of human art, sacred art in particular, allows human hands to express—although in a limited way—the infinite beauty of God and his works ([CCC, 2513](#)).

In the commandments, we see the importance of the sabbath as a way of imitating the Lord's rest on the seventh day of creation. It is the Lord himself who created the sabbath and made it holy ([CCC, 2169](#)).

Honoring one's parents is the first commandment which promises a reward. Those who honor their mother and father will be rewarded with long days in the land ([CCC, 2200](#)). The dignity of human parents is rooted in God's own fatherhood. This is the fundamental reason why children ought to respect their parents ([CCC, 2214](#)) .

## Daily Summary

### Day 32: Exodus 20:18–22; Psalm 29

*Parents should be aware that in Exodus 22:16, the passage refers to a man seducing a virgin, and in Exodus 22:19 the passage speaks of a man lying with a beast. Our children did not ask about the meaning of a man seducing a virgin. If they ask what a virgin is you can simply say an unmarried woman. We skipped the line (Exodus 22:16) about not lying with a beast—I just didn't feel like explaining if it were to come up!*

Why did God give all these laws? There is an important term that is helpful to learn here that teaches us about the laws that God gives: apodictic. Apodictic laws are “when this happens, do this.” An example from the reading is: “If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no blood guilt for him” (Exodus 22:2) What does that mean? A person who attacks a thief breaking in is not considered a murderer. “But if the sun has risen on him, then there is blood guilt.” If everyone sees him doing it, if it is in the daylight, and he didn't need to kill him, but did so because he was angry, then the person killing the thief is guilty of murder.

These laws are careful about specific circumstances. In the ancient world many laws were unclear or were biased against the poor. If you were a poor man and struck a rich man, you would die. But a rich man could strike a poor man. It was unjust! If you did anything bad to a rich man, you died. This is really unfair, but it is how many cultures in the ancient world worked. God's laws were truly different. No matter what the circumstances, and no matter the wealth or social standing of the person, the laws apply to all.

For example, you had to treat your slave well. If you hurt them, you had to let them go free. In the Bible, the laws of Israel were respecting the dignity of all people. These laws in Scripture reveal that they are truly from God. If the rulers of Israel could make up their own laws, rather than receive what they heard from Moses, then they might have just made up their own laws to treat themselves special. But the laws from God mean that the rulers can't just lord their authority over the poor. The laws show compassion.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Do you have rules in your family that make it clear what the consequences are in certain situations? How do these rules help the whole family function fairly?
- Why does God insist Israel is compassionate to the stranger? How is this related to Jesus's Golden Rule of treating others how you want to be treated?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 32: Exodus 20:18–22; Psalm 29**

In the Exodus reading, we encounter the oppression suffered by God’s people. Certain sins, like causing suffering to the poor, widow, orphan, or committing an injustice to the wage earner “cry to heaven” ([CCC, 1867](#)).

In the Psalm, we praise the glory of God’s *name*. God revealed his name for his people, a personal revelation of his mystery. This communicates the intimacy he desires with his people. Given the gift of this revelation, his holy name must be praised and glorified, but never abused ([CCC, 2143](#)).

## **Daily Summary**

### **Day 33: Exodus 23–24; Psalm 30**

In the OT, Mt. Sinai is like the Temple. The Temple is where Israel will worship God later on in the Bible. Only Moses can go to the top of Mt. Sinai just like only the high priest could go into the inner sanctuary of the Temple. Only the high priest was allowed to see God “face to face.” What this says about Moses is that he is like a high priest. Neither Mt. Sinai nor the earthly Temple are God’s true home. Heaven is God’s true home. When Jesus ascends into Heaven, he is ascending to God as the true high Priest.

This is an important reading because God makes a covenant with Israel here. Remember we learned about covenants before—they are solemn oaths sworn between people or nations to forge a relationship. How did God make a covenant with Israel? The people promised to obey the Lord and then Moses made an altar, killed the animals, took the blood and sprinkled it on the people. Why did he do that? In the Bible, when you make a covenant, you kill an animal as if to say “This is what will happen to me if I break the covenant.” Half the blood went on the people and the other half the blood was spilled on the altar. Why did they throw it on the altar? The altar represents God. Both God and the people have the blood on them. Swearing an oath can make two separate people or groups into a family. The blood represents that familial bond. When Israel agrees to the covenant, they are saying they would rather die than break that covenant, and if they do break it, they deserve to die! They give their life to God and if they try to take their life back and live on their own terms instead of the terms of the covenant, they will lose their life. The blood symbolizes their giving their life to God.

Who else talked about the blood of the covenant? Jesus at the Last Supper. Part of the reason Jesus died is because the Israelites broke the covenant they made in this reading—the consequence of breaking the covenant is death. Jesus dies in their place out of love.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 30 was sung by ancient Israel on a feast called the feast of First Fruits. In the year Jesus died, the feast of First Fruits fell on the Sunday after the crucifixion. This song was likely sung by the Jews on the very day Jesus rose from the dead. What words from Psalm 30 relate to the Resurrection?
- Do you know anyone in your life who swore an oath in order to form a new family?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 33: Exodus 23–24; Psalm 30**

God gives his people the gift of laws which will help them conduct themselves with justice to God and concern for the poor. This revelation aids humanity in living in the “image and likeness of God” ([CCC, 2085](#)). The law teaches them to keep the sabbath holy so that they might be refreshed in the Lord and permit the poor to be refreshed as well ([CCC, 2172](#)). God’s people swore to keep this law and obey the Lord’s precepts ([CCC, 2060](#)).

The covenant sworn between God and his people is sealed with the “blood of the covenant.” When the covenant is broken, it is Christ’s death that redeems God’s people and restores them. Jesus’s paschal sacrifice inaugurates the new covenant. It is his blood which is poured out for the salvation of many ([CCC, 613](#)).

To guide his people, the Lord manifests his presence in the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. These are “theophanies,” instances of God’s presence, typically associated with the Holy Spirit ([CCC, 697](#)). In addition to the pillar of fire, God promises to assist his people by sending an angel to guide them as they enter the Promised Land. Angels are present throughout the Scripture narrative serving the Lord and announcing his saving deeds ([CCC, 332](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 34: Exodus 25–26:30; Psalm 31:1–12**

In the next few chapters, we are going to read about God giving meticulous detail on how to build the Tent of Meeting, also called the Tabernacle (which means dwelling). This is where Israel will worship God. This is going to be a portable tabernacle—something they can take apart and put back together when they camp as they make their way to the Promised Land.

God dwelled among his people in the Garden of Eden! If you listen carefully, God gives the instructions for the Tabernacle to resemble that Garden. There will be a dark blue curtain which will represent the sky, there will be a candle with seven branches. This is like a tree! The lampstand, or menorah, in the Tabernacle represents the tree of life from the Garden of Eden.

We will see similar images of a garden when Solomon builds a permanent Temple later in the Old Testament. This shows that the purpose of worshipping God is to “rest” with him, to walk with him, like the Paradise Adam and Eve once enjoyed before sin.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Think about your parish Church. Are there any decorations there made to look like a garden? Any flowers or plants? Do you see candles? What does that say about what we are doing at Mass?
- Where have you heard the word “tabernacle” before? How does it relate to the tabernacle of the Old Testament?
- Psalm 31:5 says, “Into your hand I commit my spirit.” Where have you heard that before? This is the Psalm Jesus prays just before he dies. What in the Psalm speaks about his death? What in the Psalm points to his resurrection?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 34: Exodus 25–26:30; Psalm 31:1–12**

The instructions for the Ark of the Covenant are given. We see the description of the “mercy seat” which was placed on the ark between two angels. That God commanded Moses to construct statues of angels to be placed on the ark points forward to the incarnation ([CCC, 2130](#)).

The Ark of the Covenant will be placed in the Holy of Holies. The high priest will pray before the Ark once a year as he makes atonement for the sins of Israel ([CCC, 433](#)). The Ten Commandments will be placed in the Ark ([CCC, 2058](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 35: Exodus 26:31–28:30; Psalm 31:13–24**

The passage continues its description of how the parts of the Tabernacle are to be made. God also describes how sacred vestments for the priests are to be made. Many of these should seem familiar to us as Catholics: there are candles that are always burning, altars, gold vessels, and finely designed tapestries. These commands are given by God. This is how God desires the place where his presence will dwell to look. God's earthly dwelling is not supposed to look common. His priests are not supposed to be dressed like everyone else. Everything in the Tabernacle points to Heaven. This teaches his people that when they are worshipping God in the liturgy, they are entering into God's heavenly home. The priest himself, dressed in sacred vestments, is no mere man. He is like God, serving as a representative of God to the people, and representing the people before God. The priest serves the role of both God and man.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the Old Testament high priest, who represents God to the people, and the people to God, prepare us for Jesus the true high priest?
- Does the meticulous detail God gives for the liturgy and the vestments say something about how important those things are to God? Do you think it is still important today to have the Church decorated in a holy way and the priest wearing special vestments?

*(There are no references in the Catechism for these passages.)*

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 36: Exodus 28:31–29; Psalm 32**

In addition to clear instructions on the design of the Tabernacle, God also provides clear instructions about the vestments of the priests as well as precisely the way he wants the sacrifices to be offered. What sort of animals were to be used as sacrifices? Israel was allowed to sacrifice cattle, sheep, and goats. Interestingly, these are the kinds of animals that were worshipped in Egypt. These rules for worship are a form of therapy: each time Israel had to worship the one, true, God of Israel, they had to renounce the gods of Egypt by killing them. By killing a cow (instead of worshipping it like they would do in Egypt!) the people are demonstrating by their actions: this is not a god!

Discussion Questions:

- The final line of the passage says, “They shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God” (Exodus 29:46). God wants to dwell among the people—right in the midst of them. What does that say about his love for us?
- In animal sacrifice, Israel had to give up the very things they are attached to so their hearts were free to worship God. Do you have any unhealthy attachments to things? How can you practice giving them up so you are more free to love God? How does the season of Lent help us practice becoming detached from things?
- Have you ever watched the priest or deacons purify the chalices and ciboria after communion? Sometimes people feel like it takes a long time. How do these passages in Exodus explain why they take such care with these items used in the liturgy?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 36: Exodus 28:31–29; Psalm 32**

The priestly garments worn by the high priest were made with special care. The entire nation of Israel was chosen to be a “kingdom of priests” but the tribe of Levi was set aside in particular for service in the liturgy of the Old Testament ([CCC, 1539](#)). Priests were among the types of people who were anointed for service. Kings and prophets were anointed as well. The Hebrew word *messiah* means “anointed one”; the word in Greek is *christos*. These terms ultimately point forward to Jesus who is called “the Christ,” the anointed one. He fulfills the priestly, kingly, and prophetic roles in his mission to inaugurate the kingdom ([CCC, 436](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 37: Exodus 30–31:18; Psalm 33**

The altar of the Lord represented God himself and was to be hidden behind a veil. This was the innermost part of the sanctuary where only the high priest was able to enter. Along with the altar, the Ark of the Covenant was also placed in the sanctuary. It is here “in front of the mercy seat” where God would meet his people through the mediation of the high priest. Think about this: that the place where God meets his people is described as “his mercy seat.” What God wants us to know most about him is that he is merciful.

We also see a description given for the “bronze laver.” This is where the priests wash as they prepare to offer sacrifices. Can you think of a place, before you enter a sanctuary where you dip your hand in water? The holy water fonts represent our baptism, but they also echo the bronze laver of the Tent of Meeting!

A final note about this passage is the “census tax.” The amount of this tax was a “half-shekel.” You might be familiar with the story in the Gospels where people were questioning Jesus about whether or not his disciples pay the tax. Jesus tells Peter to catch a fish and in its mouth he will find a shekel. This will cover the tax for Peter and Jesus. Jesus perfectly obeys the law.

Discussion Questions:

- The half-shekel tax was the same for each person, whether they were rich or poor. In what ways have we already seen God instruct Israel to treat all people justly regardless of wealth? (Hint: We read about the *apodictic* laws earlier which discusses the punishment for striking a rich or poor man being equal).
- At Mass, the parishioners have an opportunity to give money to the Church. How does this connect with our reading? Why is it important for us to support our parish with our money?
- All the sacred items in the sanctuary were anointed with oil so they could be consecrated in the service of the Lord. We are anointed at our baptism and in the sacrament of Confirmation. We are consecrated. How should this affect how we live our lives?

***Catechism* References**  
**Day 37: Exodus 30–31:18; Psalm 33**

We are taught in this passage of the importance of the sabbath, which was a sign of the irrevocable covenant with the Lord and his creation, and was to be observed as a day of rest ([CCC, 2171](#)). In his own day of rest, God modeled the behavior he expected his people to follow so they might be refreshed each week ([CCC, 2172](#)).

God himself gives his people the Ten Commandments, written by his own finger. Though written on stone, he ultimately desires to write the law on human hearts through his Spirit ([CCC, 700](#)).

We see once again the use of oil to anoint those set aside specifically for liturgical service. Anointing is used throughout salvation history and signifies the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the rites of Baptism and Confirmation, the Christian is anointed as he/she is conformed to Christ who is anointed in a unique way. It is by the Spirit that Jesus is conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Spirit descends on the Lord at his baptism as he prepares for his public ministry. The Spirit goes out from him during his many saving deeds, and the Spirit raises Christ from the dead. Jesus gives the Spirit to “the saints” through the Church ([CCC, 695](#)).

In the Psalm 33:9, we are reminded that the world was created because the Lord “spoke.” Jesus is revealed as the “Word” who cooperates with the Father and the Spirit to create the world. Creation is the work of all three Persons of the Holy Trinity. ([CCC, 292, 703](#)).

## Daily Summary

### Day 38: Exodus 32–33; Psalm 34

After all that God had done for Israel, they rejected the covenant with him and went back to worshipping one of the gods they worshipped in Egypt. Under the guise of “We didn’t know where Moses went” they seemed to know quite readily how to make a Golden Calf which suggests they had done it before.

Notice how their lack of repentance echoes that of Adam and Eve: 1) the people are set on evil and they made him do it 2) Moses left them so he is partially to blame. Aaron also seems to suggest that he threw all the gold in the fire and *voilà!* Out came a calf! Likely story!

Of course, there is a penalty to pay because Israel broke the covenant. Not long before this scene they solemnly swore “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!” (Exodus 24:3). Remember how the blood in that covenant-making ceremony that was thrown on the altar and on the people signifies that death will come if they break the covenant. They broke it, so God tells Moses he is ready to wipe them all out and start fresh with Moses as the new leader. But look what Moses does: He reminds God of his covenant with Abraham. A covenant which seemed pretty *carte blanche*. God promised Abraham a multitude of descendants without any conditions attached. Though they deserved death, on account of Abraham, God stays his hand and shows them mercy, but is able to do it in such a way that he does not violate his own justice.

Do you think God *knew* Israel would commit egregious sin while he was swearing this very generous covenant with Abraham back in Genesis? Yes, of course he knew. God designed the covenant with Abraham with mercy in mind. He, indeed, is rich in mercy and slow to anger!

#### Discussion Questions:

- Notice that Aaron seems to have forgotten what really happened in the Exodus. He says *Moses* brought them out of the land of Egypt—but it was *God* who saved them. How does our sin and guilt lead us to forget God’s goodness?
- What do you think of Moses’s reaction to the whole ordeal?
- God tells Moses that he shall not look upon God’s face. Can you think of a time when Moses finally does get to look upon God’s face? (Hint: the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1–13. See supplemental chart.)

***Catechism References***  
**Day 38: Exodus 32–33; Psalm 34**

The sin of the Golden Calf reveals God’s mercy as well as Moses’s powerful role as an intercessor for his people ([CCC, 210](#)). Imploring the steadfast love of the Lord, Moses stands “in the breach” for his people. Though their transgression deserves death, he appeals for the Lord to show mercy ([CCC, 2577](#)). Throughout his life, Moses is a model of prayer, both for his intercession as well as his contemplation of God “face to face” ([CCC, 2576](#)).

Moses petitions God to see his face, much like Elijah will do in the book of 1 Kings. Like Moses, Elijah learns of God’s mercy, and bears witness to others about God’s word ([CCC, 2583](#)). Neither Moses nor Elijah will be able to see God’s glory as he is. Only until Christ comes will man be able to see the face of God and live. Moses and Elijah, therefore appear on the mountain of the Transfiguration to truly behold the face of God, our Lord Jesus.

God leads his people by manifesting himself as a pillar of light and cloud. Throughout the Old Testament, this combination of images serves as a “theophany,” a sign of God’s presence. In the New Testament, the Spirit will “overshadow” the Blessed Virgin Mary and a cloud will overshadow Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and the Apostles during the Transfiguration. When Jesus ascends to Heaven on a cloud and when he comes in his glory, he will be riding on a cloud ([CCC, 697](#)).

Psalm 34 teaches of the constant presence of the angels who accompany us and pray for us ([CCC, 336](#)). The poor man who cries to the Lord finds his strength and help in God. Their justice will come from God, not from men, as they look in a particular way for the coming of the messiah ([CCC, 716](#)).



**Daily Summary**  
**Day 39: Exodus 34–35:29; Psalm 35:1–14**

Moses in the *Catechism* is mentioned several times as a model for prayer. He offers prayers of petition and intercession for his people, his prayers helped the Israelites in the battle against the Amalekites, and he models contemplative prayer by the way he speaks with God “face to face” (Exodus 33:11). Moses rises early to speak with God on the mountain. As a result of his willingness to spend that time with God, he receives one of the most profound revelations in Scripture about the Lord: that is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

What did you notice about the people’s willingness to donate their gold, jewels, and fine things for the construction of the Tabernacle? Where did the people get all these nice things? Weren’t they poor slaves in Egypt? If we look back at the Exodus event, we read an interesting passage:

“The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked of the Egyptians jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they despoiled the Egyptians.

—Exodus 12:35–36

God actually helped the Israelites by giving them favor in the sight of the Egyptians. When they asked for gold, the Egyptians just handed it over! This sounds like some sort of Jedi-mind trick! But God did this so they would have these beautiful things for the Tabernacle. Amazingly, he did not demand that they give these things back, he asked them to do it of their free will. He gives us gifts, and then wants us to willingly give them back to him.

Discussion Questions:

- What can Moses’s example teach us about the importance for us to make time for daily prayer in order to know God? What is one way you can make regular morning prayer a part of your daily habit?
- How has God been generous with you? How can you offer that back to God?
- Does God seem only casually interested in how he is worshipped, or does he seem extremely invested in every detail? Why do you think that is?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 39: Exodus 34–35:29; Psalm 35:1–14**

God reveals his steadfast love and mercy, which becomes even more pronounced in light of Israel’s sin of the Golden Calf ([CCC, 210](#)). God utters his divine name “I Am.” This revelation of his faithfulness and steadfastness begins in the Old Testament and is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus Christ who he gave up for our sake ([CCC, 211](#)). All of God’s works reveal his mercy and faithfulness. Salvation history reveals that his very being is truth and love ([CCC, 214](#), [231](#)).

The revelation to Moses comes as he is receiving the Ten Commandments for a second time. We receive them in the Old Testament, but the fullness of their meaning is revealed in Christ Jesus ([CCC, 2056](#)). Moses receives the gift of God’s law, which he later put in the Ark of the Covenant ([CCC, 2058](#)) and, from the intimacy of this encounter with God, receives strength for his mission to lead God’s people ([CCC, 2577](#)).

In the Psalm we see examples of the author calling upon God to directly act in history. Expressing his trust, the psalmist recognizes that God is the Lord of all ([CCC, 304](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 40: Exodus 35:30–37; Psalm 35:15–28**

How did they build the tabernacle? God helped them. They had to build this elaborate thing. How did they know how to do it? Bezalel is filled with the Holy Spirit. How did they bring the gifts to Moses? They were very generous. They had too much! They probably felt bad for what happened with the Golden Calf.

God helps them know how to build the Tabernacle. Building the Tabernacle is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit gives to every person gifts. Some people have the gift of teaching. Some people have the gift of prophecy. Some have the gift of service. Some people have the gift of knowledge. Some people have the gift of miracles. In the New Testament, what is the true Temple? The Body of Christ, the Church, is the true Temple. We all have gifts to build up the Church. What gift did God give you?

How do we know which gifts we are given? The first thing you do is figure out what you are good at. Then, you ask your mom and dad. Then, you start asking priests. What are my gifts and how am I supposed to build the Church? We all have a mission, and if you don't do your mission, you'll be sad because you aren't living the way God made you to live.

Discussion Questions:

- What gifts do you think your family members have? What are they good at? What gifts do you think you have?
- What are gifts of the people you know from Church?
- God tells Moses that he shall not look upon God's face. Can you think of a time when Moses finally does get to look upon God's face? (Hint: the Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1–13)

*(There are no Catechism references for these passages.)*

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 41: Exodus 38–39; Psalm 36**

The altar for the burnt offering is bronze; it is not made of gold. Much of the metal work for the altar where animals are to be regularly sacrificed is made of bronze. Animal sacrifice is not especially associated with a gold offering, but a bronze one. Of course, gold is better than bronze and so for these sacrifices to be *less than* perfect, means there is room for a more perfect offering to take place. What is this more perfect offering?

Christ teaches us that the best offering—the gold standard if you will—is not an animal, but it is offering oneself to God. Animal sacrifices are a stepping stone for Israel to learn to make a sacrifice, but it is not the animals God wants. Certainly, it costs something to sacrifice one of your animals, and it certainly is work to separate out all the parts. The point is, though, that God is not interested in the animal for its own sake. He wants to get us to the point where we are offering ourselves as a sacrifice, that we are not just willing to give our livestock over to God, but our whole lives. Jesus holds nothing back as he gives us life to the Father. Jesus holds nothing back and he entrusts his whole self to God, as Psalm 36 says, “taking shelter in this shadow of [God’s] wings” (Psalm 36:7) and entrusting everything to him.

Discussion Questions:

- When you are in Church, what is one thing you can do to make your participation in the Mass like a *gold* offering instead of a *bronze* one? Maybe you give special attention to the way you dress. Maybe it is paying better attention to the readings and the homily. How can you offer *yourself* to God along with Christ during the Liturgy of the Eucharist? Can you spend more focused time in prayer after Holy Communion?
- Family life offers many opportunities to offer ourselves to God through our family members. If being kind to a sibling (even one who gets on your nerves!) is hard, how might offering that kindness as a gift to God make it easier for you to do it? How can you help your parents out as a way of doing something for God?
- What do you think of when you think about taking shelter in the shadow of God’s wings?

*(There are no Catechism references for these passages.)*

## **Daily Summary**

### **Day 42: Exodus 40; Psalm 37:1–17**

Why couldn't Moses enter the Tent of Meeting in verse 35? The cloud of God's glory prevented him from entering. It was not any regular cloud, it was a fiery cloud. God, despite having met with Moses many times on the mountain, did not want Moses to enter the Tent of Meeting while his cloud of glory filled it because God wanted to underscore how holy it was.

In this passage, we hear a phrase that should sound somewhat familiar to us, "And Moses finished the work." It sounds like "It was finished." We hear undertones of Genesis and Creation! It sounds like God who finished his work in Genesis 2:1. The Tabernacle is a lot like the creation of the world. God saw everything and saw that it was good. God blessed the earth and said "Be fruitful and multiply." We see the work of this new place where man can meet with God is finished. This should remind us that the Garden of Eden is understood as a place of prayer, it is the Holy of Holies. The idea is that Genesis 1 starts the story and Exodus 40 finishes the story. God is bringing about a new creation in Israel.

Who else announced that his work was finished? Jesus on the Cross. His death brings about the new creation when he offers himself as a sacrifice. The Tent of Meeting which Moses built is the place to offer sacrifices to God. Jesus's death is the sacrifice which is perfectly offered to the Father.

What should we say about this cloud? The cloud comes down and hovers over the Tabernacle. What else "hovers?" The Spirit "hovers" over the waters of creation. When Jesus went up to the mountain during the Transfiguration, a cloud hovers. The Holy Spirit also hovers over Jesus at his baptism and overshadows Mary at the Annunciation.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What was the most memorable story of the Book of Exodus?
- What do you think is going to happen as the Israelites continue their journey to the Promised Land? Do you think they have learned their lesson or do you think they will continue to disobey?
- How do some of the struggles of Israel to listen to God and trust him reflect some of the struggles in family life? How is God acting like a good parent in the way he deals with Israel in the Book of Exodus?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 42: Exodus 40; Psalm 37:1–17**

The glory of the Lord fills the ark by the overshadowing of cloud and light. These symbols are in the Old Testament, manifestations of the Holy Spirit. The cloud serves as a veil to the glory of the Lord, simultaneously revealing his presence. This same spirit will overshadow the Blessed Virgin Mary, and will be present during the Transfiguration ([CCC, 697](#)).

The Ark of the Covenant is an important vessel in the worship of Israel. The Ten Commandments will be placed in it ([CCC, 2058](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 43: Leviticus 1–3; Psalm 37:18–40**

So we are in Leviticus now! So far, the story has been moving forward in a very linear manner. In Leviticus, the story pauses for a bit while we read about the different laws that the priests had to follow. “Leviticus” is the laws for the priests, the Levites. Remember how the Levites became priests? They were the ones after the sin of the Golden Calf who went through and executed judgment on those who practiced the sin of idolatry.

Through the laws which might seem very tedious, God is instructing Israel about orderliness and worshipping God well. This, after all, is the heart of most of the problems we have seen! When they follow God’s instructions to the letter, they respect and obey his holiness and order. If they become sloppy and worship God in their own way, they are not submitting their hearts fully to God.

Discussion Questions:

- We hear a good deal about offering an animal without a blemish. Why do you think God wants the best animals from their flock, and not one that was injured or sick?
- When we pray to God and go to Mass, how can we offer our prayerfulness and attention “without blemish”? How should this affect the way we dress, behave, and listen at Mass?
- God is very concerned that his people follow his instructions. Why do you think he had very few instructions before the Golden Calf incident (really only Ten!) but lots and lots of meticulous laws after they failed to worship God well?

*(There are no Catechism references for these passages.)*

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 44: Leviticus 4–5; Psalm 38**

Why is the blood poured out on the ground? People in the ancient world believed if you drank the blood of animals you would get special powers. That is why God told them to kill the bull and pour out the blood so they would not practice these pagan ideas. Anytime the blood of an animal was shed, they would have to pour out the blood at the central sanctuary to offer it to God.

We read about turtledoves being offered. Do you remember a significant time in the New Testament when two turtledoves were offered? When Jesus was presented at the Temple. Mary and Joseph offered them because they could not afford a bull. Mary and Joseph were either not wealthy, or they made themselves poor by their generosity to others.

What does it mean to sin “unwittingly”—this means unintentionally. There are different kinds of sins. Some you commit intentionally, other sins you can commit unintentionally. You might touch someone and then you find out they are dead. Now you are unclean, but that was done “unwittingly.” You still have to sacrifice to be cleansed in order to restore order. Death is a disorder and having contact with the dead causes uncleanness.

Notice in Leviticus 5:5 that a sinner has to “confess the sin he has committed.” He has to go to a priest who will make atonement for him. The priest served as an intermediary to help the people be forgiven of their sins.

**Discussion Questions:**

- There are a lot of laws regarding what is clean and unclean, but the book of Leviticus reminds us that God is giving them a way to remedy their sin. How does this show God’s mercy?
- What similarities do you see between the role of the priest in Leviticus, and the role of the priest today in helping people deal with sin?
- Offering these sacrifices was very violent and messy. What do you think this process taught the people about the consequences of sin? Do you think it might have discouraged people from sinning?



***Catechism References***  
**Day 44: Leviticus 4–5; Psalm 38**

Psalm 38

David, the author of the Psalm, pleads to God to aid him in his distress. In the Old Testament, we see a mysterious link between illness and sin. The prayer for healing often accompanies his prayer for forgiveness ([CCC, 1502](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 45: Leviticus 6–7; Psalm 39**

In Leviticus 6:18 and 27, we read about the different offerings being able to transmit holiness. This is a very important passage for Catholics: it is, in a sense, a primordial sacrament. God is using material things, in this case, the flesh of an animal offered in sacrifice to make the priest holy. What God has done in the laws of the Leviticus prepares for what he will do through Christ in the Church and the priests of the Church.

Discussion Questions:

- How do the laws of Leviticus 6:1–7 help keep peace between neighbors and not let bad situations escalate?
- The Psalm speaks about “bridling the mouth.” What do you think that means and why is that important?
- Why do you think it is important that we know how fleeting our life is, like David prays in v. 4?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 45: Leviticus 6–7; Psalm 39**

As in Psalm 38 yesterday, David is imploring God for forgiveness and healing. He prays that faithfulness to God will restore him to life and health ([CCC, 1502](#)).

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 46: Leviticus 8–9; Psalm 40**

This section of Leviticus continues its focus on the laws for the anointing of priests. The Levites are standing at the door of the Tent of Meeting and all Israel is gathered around watching them be washed and clothed in priestly garments. All Israel would have seen this lengthy and elaborate ceremony to consecrate (or set aside) these priests for service to the Lord. They become mediators to the people. Do you remember what happened that caused the Levites to be the only priests in Israel? The Israelites worshipped the Golden Calf. The whole kingdom was supposed to be priests, but they did not worship God as they ought to have. Only the Levites who issued the punishment to the idolaters demonstrated the necessary zeal for God to receive the priesthood.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you think the Israelites that watched felt bad that they rejected God’s plan to be a “kingdom of priests?”
- Have you ever lost a privilege because of bad choices you made?
- The very end of the scene has a powerful description, that everyone fell on their face before the glory of God which filled the Tent of Meeting. What do you think it would have been like to be there?

***Catechism References***  
**Day 46: Leviticus 8–9; Psalm 40**

Aaron is anointed, a symbol of being set apart for a distinct service. In the Old Testament, several types of people are anointed at the beginning of their service: a priest, a king, and even sometimes a prophet. “Anointed” is the English translation of the *christos* in Greek, and *Messiah* in Hebrew. To call our Lord Jesus “Christ” signifies that he is the anointed one, *par excellence* as he is priest, prophet, and king ([CCC, 436](#)).

Aaron and the tribe of Levi are set aside to fulfill their priestly service in the liturgical life of Israel. The entire nation was called to be “a kingdom of priests” but Levites exercised this role to offer sacrifices on behalf of God’s people ([CCC, 1539](#)).

In Psalm 40, the psalmist announces that he will proclaim God’s wondrous deeds. He demonstrates faith in the Lord, he clings to him. Faith is assenting to everything which God has revealed and it is right to place faith in God alone. No creature is worthy of such trust ([CCC, 1539](#)).

The letter to the Hebrews cites Psalm 40 which states “Lo, I have come to do your will, O God.” Doing the will of the Father is the perfect form of worship and is exemplified first and foremost in the obedience of Jesus Christ ([CCC, 462](#)).

## **Daily Summary**

### **Day 47: Leviticus 10–12; Psalm 41**

What is the logic behind some animals being clean and some animals being unclean? Cows are clean because they chew their own cud. Why is something that chews its own cud (like a cow) clean? Animals that chew the cud eat it, digest it partially, and then continue chewing it again. The food is chewed really thoroughly. Animals that don't chew the cud, like pigs, just eat anything and don't chew it well. Pigs could also make people very sick if they are not properly prepared. God is concerned with favoring animals that are careful and ordered, because he wants Israel to prefer to do things carefully and in an orderly way.

As another example, crabs don't have fins or swim around in the waters. They travel on the bottom of the ocean in the dirt and eat all the junk on the bottom of the ocean floor. This is unclean. But fish that swim around with fins and move through water normally are ordered and right and therefore clean.

Even humans who have a sickness are considered unclean because that is not how people should be. They should be healthy. In all these things, God is placing the emphasis on things that conform to the way things ought to be. God is the God of life and order. Anything that is not orderly, or has close contact with death (like a vulture) is unclean.

God is trying to teach Israel to seek order in all aspects of their lives, especially the order of living righteously.

#### Discussion Questions:

- Psalm 41 ends the first “book” of the Psalms. There are 150 in total and are divided into 5 parts (like the five books of the Torah). The first book ends with this Psalm and all 41 Psalms are arranged to evoke the life of David. Psalm 42 will begin a new “book.” What in this Psalm indicates the end of David's life is drawing near?
- How does David summarize his life and relationship with God in this Psalm?

*(There are no Catechism references for these passages.)*

## Daily Summary

### Day 48: Leviticus 13; Psalm 42

The section of Leviticus deals with laws about physical wellness as it relates to being clean. This follows from the same logic that we saw with regard to certain animals being clean while others were unclean. Remember, things that were somehow “anomalous” or strange (like water creatures that don’t have fins—come on! If you live in the water, you should have a fin!) or animals that don’t have a parted hoof or chew their food very well.

Now we are dealing with health issues that represent an uncleanness because the human person should be healthy. We are looking at these issues not as *moral* uncleanness. God is not rejecting a person because they are sick. It is saying they are not “whole” or “healthy” and are not ready to present themselves before the Lord in the worship. In this case leprosy is the sort of disorder and abnormal skin condition that would make the Israelites have to wait a period of time before presenting themselves before God. Leprosy here can refer to any sort of dryness or rash on the skin. It does not necessarily mean the disease we often associate with limbs falling off!

Even just looking at where these laws turn up in the whole scheme of things shows that God may be teaching Israel that they need to offer God their absolute best. Why would this be so important? Because on many occasions, they have not offered God their best. They did not have such strict purity codes before the Golden Calf, but now their worship needs more discipline and even an element of penance. Much of Leviticus can rightly be seen as a way of teaching Israel how important it is to be as healthy and rightly ordered as possible as a correction against their disordered habits.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What might some of these rules suggest about taking care of our bodies and practicing good hygiene?
- Can you think of practical reasons why a person who has a rash or skin disease of unknown seriousness should stay away from other people?
- Psalm 42 uses the image of deer thirsting for water to teach us about thirsting for God. Can you think of a time when you have been extremely thirsty? How important is getting something to drink to you during that time? Do we ever desire to be with God as much as we desire that drink? If not, let’s pray to love God as much as that!

*(Note to Parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow’s readings)*

**Daily Summary**  
**Day 49: Leviticus 14–15:18; Psalm 43**

*(Note to Parents: Leviticus 15:16 onward deals with cleanliness laws pertaining to emissions of semen. If you do not wish to explain this to a younger audience, end your reading at Leviticus 15:15)*

This passage speaks about leprosy being in a house. This again reiterates the idea that in Leviticus, leprosy refers to any abnormal condition or flaking. If there is something abnormal or unusual in a house, the priest has to investigate and see if it spreads or if there is a way to mitigate the problem so it is safe.

I am sure you are following the pattern: whenever something is *abnormal*, it is considered unclean or at least needs to be investigated more carefully. God is a God of life, order, cleanliness, and wholeness. Anything that deviates from that is not fitting for the presence of God until it has been brought to order. We see it in Leviticus 15 as well. If your bodily fluids are not staying *inside your body*, there is a problem! I think most of us can resonate with the idea of someone else's bodily fluids making furniture unclean and wouldn't mind a good cleaning, right?

Discussion Questions:

- What are ways you can take the lessons from the chapter to become tidier in the way you keep your room? How about the way you help your parents keep the house tidy?
- What do you think of the way God always seems to allow smaller sacrifices for those who can't afford more? What does this say about God's compassion?
- In Psalm 43, we read about someone who is being treated unjustly by "deceitful" and "unjust" people. We often find ourselves treated unfairly in life, whether at school, or even a sibling in a bad mood might treat us unfairly. Instead of being unkind or vengeful, how can we use this Psalm to turn to God for help? Can you think of a person in the Bible who was treated unfairly and trusted in God to deliver him?

*(There are no Catechism references for these passages.)*



**Daily Summary**  
**Day 50: Leviticus 15:19–16; Psalm 44:1–16**

*Note to Parents: This reading begins with the purity laws regarding a woman during her monthly cycle. There are laws relating to when a man may be intimate with her. The language is discrete, but if you choose not to address this topic to children at this time, begin reading at Leviticus 16.*

How do you get clean? Offer a sacrifice. Why is someone pregnant unclean? After birth, there is a good deal of blood. Anything that is associated with loss of blood is considered to also be linked with the loss of life, and God is a God of life. Offering a sacrifice restores order. God wants to teach you the way you make yourself pure is to offer sacrifices. Blood cleanses the altar, it is a symbol of a person giving of him or herself to God.

In Psalm 44, we read about the Psalmist suffering in pain. Why does God allow us to experience pain and death? Why doesn't God just eradicate all pain, evil, and sickness? When did death first enter the world? What is the lesson God wants us to learn? Sin leads to death. You don't appreciate the seriousness of the situation if God doesn't let you experience death. He wants us to give ourselves totally to him, even in our pain, and even in the face of death. Jesus does this on the cross. He takes death, which is a bad thing, and turns it into a gift.

Discussion Questions:

- If God immediately took away the consequences of sin, do you think we would appreciate how serious it is to separate ourselves from God? Suffering is sometimes a consequence of our personal sin, but any and all suffering is certainly the result of the sin of Adam. Should we blame God for suffering in the world?
- Have you ever heard the term “scapegoat”? We usually use it when someone makes someone else take the blame for the wrongdoing of others. Where do you think that term originated?
- God sets a separate day, the Day of Atonement, in which an offering is made to cleanse all people from their sins. How does having this special feast day reveal God's mercy?

*(Note to Parents: There is some mature material in tomorrow's reading.)*

***Catechism References***  
**Day 50: Leviticus 15:19–16; Psalm 44:1–16**

In Leviticus 16, we read about the Day of Atonement. This feast was celebrated by the high priest standing before the Ark of the Covenant—something he did only once a year—to offer sacrifice for the sins of God’s people. Recall that on the cover for the Ark there were two cherubim who were on either side of the “mercy seat.” God is merciful and forgives Israel’s sin. We see God’s mercy demonstrated by Jesus, who sacrificed his own life to take away the sins of the world (CCC, [433](#), [613](#)).