

A woman in a blue floral shirt and light blue jeans stands in front of a brick wall painted with vertical stripes of blue, pink, green, and red. She is holding several balloons, including a large yellow one with a laughing emoji face and a smaller one with a heart. The background features a stylized sunburst graphic in shades of blue, yellow, and pink.

— river —

# 40 DAYS OF FAITH

LENT 2019: SURPRISED BY JESUS

**WEEK 4**

also on  
RiverNYC App

Dear River Families,

I hope you are as excited as I am about celebrating **Lent: 40 Days of Faith!** The 40 Days of Faith has always been a hallmark in our family life. It gives me and my husband a reason and room in our hectic life to be more intentional in growing our faith and deepening our connections with our children.

From my experience with **Riverkids**, storytelling has always been the children's favorite time. It is a special way for them to meet and interact with God. With this Family Guide, I would like to share this experience with you, our River parents. I invite you and your children to explore the stories in the book of Mark with wonder, curiosity and openness.

In this guide I am sharing some tips, some “wondering questions”, and prayers that are designed to help us enter deeper into the story. My hope in this season is that your family will be **“Surprised by Jesus”**. Jesus - who might be different from our expectations and assumptions, who speaks and shows us new ways to look at and approach our life situations, and shows us how to engage God, others, and the world around us.

Warmly,

**Amelia Cunard | Riverkids Director**

## TIPS

As storytellers, we are the **“tour guides”** -- leading the children through the stories and training them how to engage God in every moment. We want to leave an impression rather than information so that, as the children grow up, they can feel secure in finding their own answers to the questions that will come their way.



Read the stories with anticipation. Think of the process like opening a gift box.



We have included [pauses] in the stories, so your children can have time to process with their minds and with their feelings.



Pick any wondering question or have your children ask a question. Show them that their thoughts and their sharing are valued.

Do not feel like you have to give a quick answer to questions. It's okay to say, “I don't know.” This is an ongoing conversation - it takes time to grow.



You can begin the prayer by saying “Let's close our eyes...breathe deep...in and out...quiet our minds so we can hear from God”.

For any difficult questions or feelings, invite the children to pray or ask Jesus Himself.

**WEEK 4**

also on  
**RiverNYC App**

WEEK 4  
DAY 1



Transfiguration by Ivanka Demch

## Mark 9:2-13 (NIRV)

### Jesus's appearance is changed

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him. He led them up a high mountain. They were all alone. There in front of them his appearance was changed. His clothes became so white they shone. They were whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. Elijah and Moses appeared in front of Jesus and his disciples. The two of them were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Peter didn’t really know what to say, because they were so afraid.

Then a cloud appeared and covered them. A voice came from the cloud. It said, “This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to him!”

They looked around. Suddenly they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

They came down the mountain. On the way down, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen. He told them to wait until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves. But they asked each other what “rising from the dead” meant.

Then they asked Jesus, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah has to come first?”

Jesus replied, “That’s right. Elijah does come first. He makes all things new again. So why is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and not be accepted? I tell you, Elijah has come. They have done to him everything they wanted to do. They did it just as it is written about him.”

## **WONDERING QUESTIONS**

I wonder what the most surprising part of the story is for you?

I wonder what you would feel to see Jesus transform?

I wonder if this story reveals a new image of Jesus for you?

## **PRAYER**

Jesus, surprise me today. Open my eyes, my mind, and my heart.

Help me see things in new ways. Help me do things in new ways.

Surprise me with your presence, kindness, and wisdom today.



Healing of the lunatic boy by unknown

## Mark 9:14-29 (NIRV)

### Jesus heals a boy

When Jesus and those who were with him came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. When all the people saw Jesus, they were filled with wonder. And they ran to greet him.

“What are you arguing with them about?” Jesus asked.

A man in the crowd answered. “Teacher,” he said, “I brought you my son. He is controlled by an evil spirit. Because of this, my son can’t speak anymore. When the spirit takes hold of him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth. He grinds his teeth. And his body becomes stiff. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit. But they couldn’t do it.”

“You unbelieving people!” Jesus replied. “How long do I have to stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

So they brought him. As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit. He fell to the ground. He rolled around and foamed at the mouth.

Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"Since he was a child," he answered. "The spirit has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us. Please help us."

"If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for the one who believes."

Right away the boy's father cried out, "I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!"

Jesus saw that a crowd was running over to see what was happening. Then he ordered the evil spirit to leave the boy. "You spirit that makes him unable to hear and speak!" he said. "I command you, come out of him. Never enter him again."

The spirit screamed. It shook the boy wildly. Then it came out of him. The boy looked so lifeless that many people said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand. He lifted the boy to his feet, and the boy stood up.

Jesus went indoors. Then his disciples asked him in private, "Why couldn't we drive out the evil spirit?"

He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

## **WONDERING QUESTIONS**

I wonder if anything in the story surprises you? and why?

I wonder what you feel about this story?

I wonder if there is anything today that you want Jesus to help you with?

## **PRAYER**

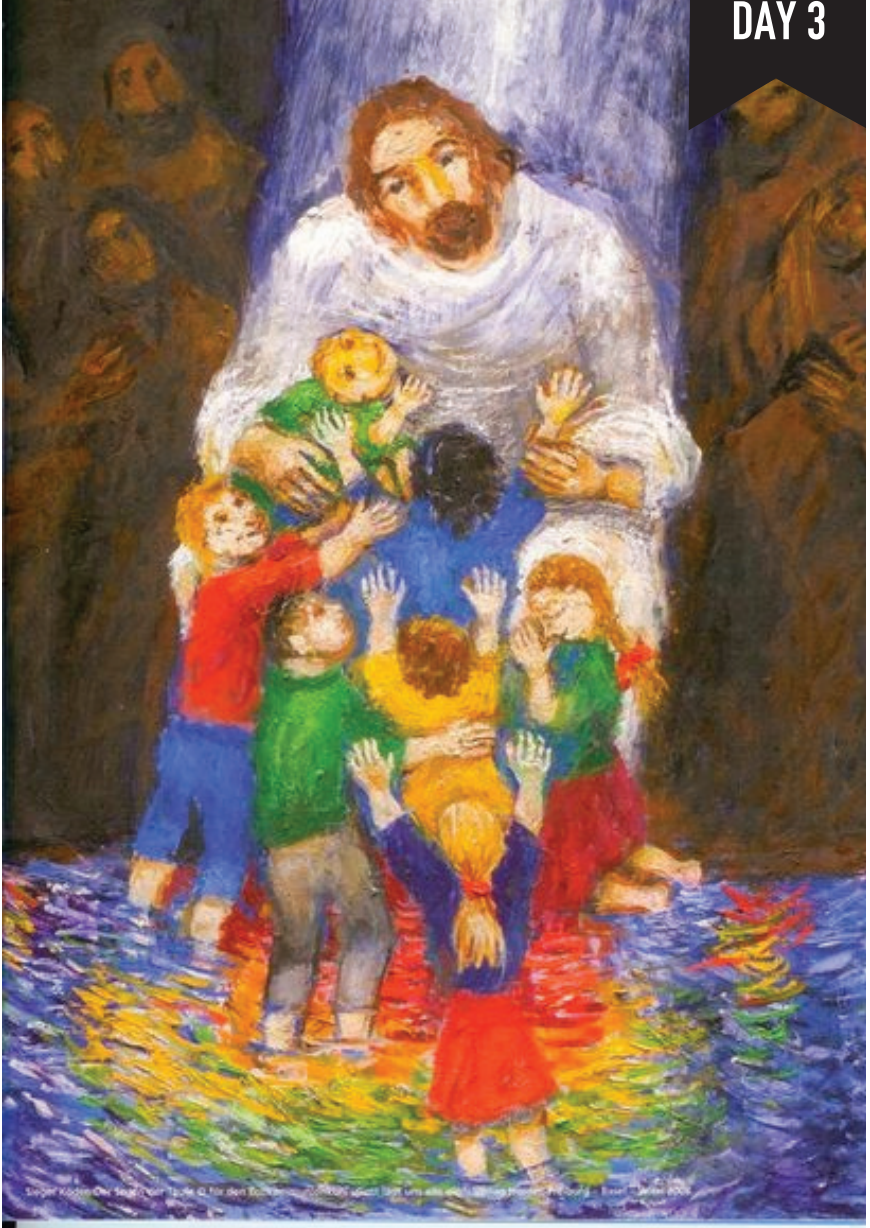
Jesus, surprise me today. Open my eyes, my mind, and my heart.

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Surprise me with your presence, kindness, and wisdom today.



**WEEK 4**  
**DAY 3**



Unknown artist

# Mark 9:33-37, Mark 10:13-16 (NIRV)

## The most important person, Jesus & the little children

Jesus and his disciples came to a house in Capernaum. There he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet. On the way, they had argued about which one of them was the most important person.

Jesus sat down and called for the 12 disciples to come to him. Then he said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last. They must be the servant of everyone.”

Jesus took a little child and had the child stand among them. Then he took the child in his arms. He said to them, “Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me also welcomes the one who sent me.”

...[pause]

People were bringing little children to Jesus. They wanted him to place his hands on them to bless them. But the disciples told them to stop. When Jesus saw this, he was angry. He said to his disciples, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. God’s kingdom belongs to people like them. What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive God’s kingdom like a little child will never enter it.” Then he took the children in his arms. He placed his hands on them to bless them.

### WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder what God’s kingdom is like?

I wonder what Jesus meant by “receiving God’s kingdom like a little child”?

I wonder if you feel welcomed by Jesus?

### PRAYER

Jesus, surprise me today. Open my eyes, my mind, and my heart.

Help me see things in new ways. Help me do things in new ways.

Surprise me with your presence, kindness, and wisdom today.

**WEEK 4**  
**DAY 4**



Waterlilies by Cesare Marchesini

## **Mark 10:17-27 (NIRV)**

### **Rich people and kingdom of God**

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him. He fell on his knees before Jesus. “Good teacher,” he said, “what must I do to receive eternal life?”

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good except God. You know what the commandments say. ‘Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not be a false witness. Do not cheat. Honor your father and mother.’” (Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20)

“Teacher,” he said, “I have obeyed all those commandments since I was a boy.”

Jesus looked at him and loved him. “You are missing one thing,” he said. “Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

The man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he was very rich.

Jesus looked around. He said to his disciples, “How hard it is for rich people to enter God’s kingdom!”

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter God’s kingdom! Is it hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? It is even harder for someone who is rich to enter God’s kingdom!”

The disciples were even more amazed. They said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

Jesus looked at them and said, “With people, this is impossible. But not with God. All things are possible with God.”

## **WONDERING QUESTIONS**

I wonder why the man called Jesus a teacher?

I wonder how you would feel about Jesus’ answers?

I wonder what Jesus meant when He said “All things are possible with God”?

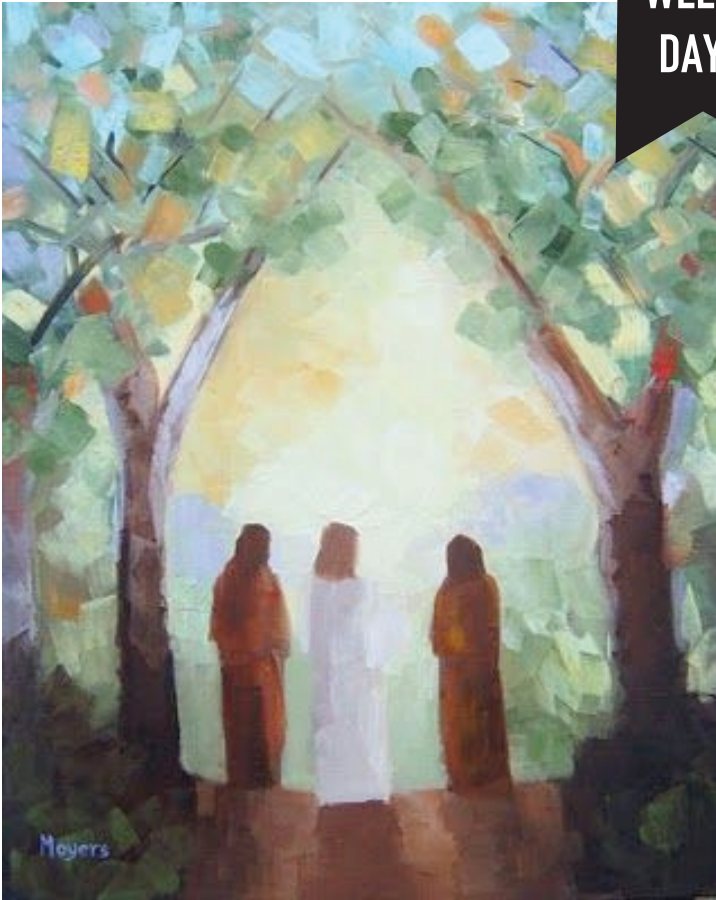
## **PRAYER**

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**WEEK 4**  
**DAY 5**



by Moeyers

## **Mark 10:35-45 (NIRV)**

### **James and John ask Jesus for a favor**

James and John came to Jesus. They were the sons of Zebedee. “Teacher,” they said, “we would like to ask you for a favor.”

“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right hand in your glorious kingdom. Let the other one sit at your left hand.”

“You don’t know what you’re asking for,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup of suffering I drink? Or can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?”

“We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink. And you will go through the baptism I go through. But it is not for me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those they are prepared for.”

The other ten disciples heard about it. They became angry at James and John. Jesus called them together. He said, “You know about those who are rulers of the Gentiles. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don’t be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. And anyone who wants to be first must be the slave of everyone. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free.”

## **WONDERING QUESTIONS**

I wonder what Jesus meant by “Anyone who wants to be important must be a servant”?

I wonder what you could do to serve others?

I wonder if there’s anything that Jesus has helped or served you with?

## **PRAYER**

Jesus, surprise me today. Open my eyes, my mind, and my heart.

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