



river

40 DAYS OF FAITH

LENT 2019: SURPRISED BY JESUS
Family Guide | geared towards families with young children



WEEK 5
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.



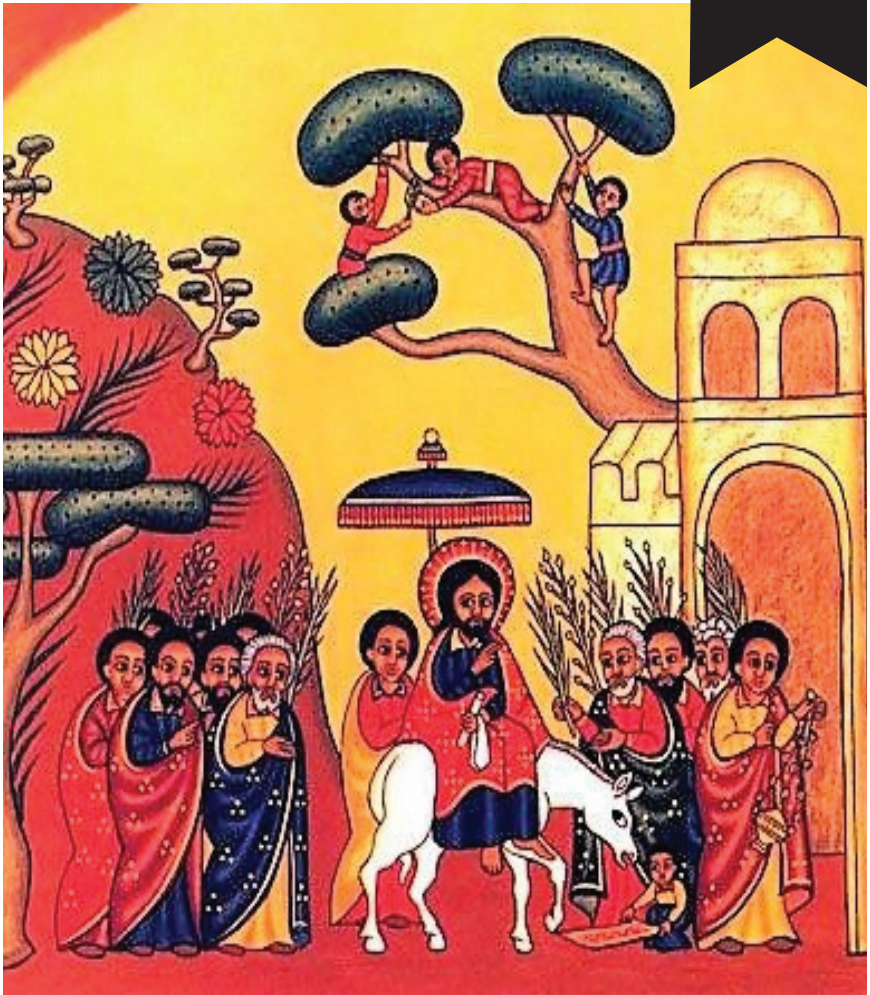
You can begin the prayer by saying “Let's close our eyes...breathe deep...in and out...quiet our minds so we can hear from God”.

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

WEEK 5

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WEEK 5
DAY 1



Ethiopian art: Jesus enters Jerusalem

Mark 11:1-11 (NIRV)

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as King

As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two of his disciples. He said to them, "Go to the village ahead of you. Just as you enter it, you will find a donkey's colt tied there. No one has ever ridden it. Untie it and bring it here. Someone may ask you, 'Why are you doing this?' If so, say, 'The Lord needs it. But he will send it back here soon.'"

So they left. They found a colt out in the street. It was tied at a doorway. They untied it. Some people standing there asked, "What are you doing? Why are you untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to. So the people let them go. They brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their coats over it. Then he sat on it. Many people spread their coats on the road. Others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those in front and those in back shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:25,26)

"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courtyard. He looked around at everything. But it was already late. So he went out to Bethany with the 12 disciples.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how the people understand who "The Lord" was?

I wonder what the people think and feel about Jesus?

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.



Roman Coin

Mark 11:27-33, Mark 12:13-17 (NIRV) **The authority of Jesus is questioned, Is It Right to Pay the Royal Tax to Caesar?**

Jesus and his disciples arrived again in Jerusalem. He was walking in the temple courtyard. Then the chief priests came to him. The teachers of the law and the elders came too. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "Who gave you authority to do this?"

Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Was John's baptism from heaven? Or did it come from human authority? Tell me!"

They talked to each other about it. They said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But what if we say, 'From human authority?'" They were afraid of the people. Everyone believed that John really was a prophet.

So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I am doing these things either.”

...[pause]

Later the religious leaders sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus. They wanted to trap him with his own words. They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of honor. You don’t let other people tell you what to do or say. You don’t care how important they are. But you teach the way of God truthfully. Is it right to pay the royal tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew what they were trying to do. So he asked, “Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a silver coin. Let me look at it.” They brought the coin. He asked them, “Whose picture is this? And whose words?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And give back to God what belongs to God.” They were amazed at him.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder what you think about Jesus’s responses?

I wonder why the religious leaders questioned and tested Jesus?

I wonder by what authority Jesus taught and did His work?

PRAYER

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WEEK 5
DAY 3



"The Kingdom of God" by Cody F. Miller

Mark 12:28-34 (NIRV)

The most important commandment.

One of the teachers of the law came and heard the Sadducees arguing. He noticed that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer. So he asked him, “Which is the most important of all the commandments?”

Jesus answered, “Here is the most important one. Moses said, ‘Israel, listen to me. The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind and with all your strength.’ (Deuteronomy 6:4,5) And here is the second one. ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ (Leviticus 19:18) There is no commandment more important than these.”

“You have spoken well, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one. There is no other God but him. To love God with all your heart and mind and strength is very important. So is loving your neighbor as you love yourself. These things are more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

Jesus saw that the man had answered wisely. He said to him, “You are not far from God’s kingdom.” From then on, no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how to love God with all our heart, our soul, our mind, and all our strength?

I wonder who are our neighbors?

I wonder what we can do to love our neighbors as ourselves?

PRAYER

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WEEK 5
DAY 4



Widow's mite by unknown artist

Mark 12:41-44 (NIRV)

The widow's offering

Jesus sat down across from the place where people put their temple offerings. He watched the crowd putting their money into the offering boxes. Many rich people threw large amounts into them. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins. They were worth only a few pennies.

Jesus asked his disciples to come to him. He said, "What I'm about to tell you is true. That poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others. They all gave a lot because they are rich. But she gave even though she is poor. She put in everything she had. That was all she had to live on."

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder if you understood what Jesus said?

I wonder what made the widow put in everything she had?

I wonder how you feel about giving away some of your treasures?

PRAYER

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WEEK 5
DAY 5



arch in Jerusalem, near Migdal David in the old city

Mark 13:1-11 (NIRV)

When the temple will be destroyed and the signs of the end.

(*Today we are covering a different story from the adult's reading and response. We are continuing the passage from the previous day)

Jesus was leaving the temple. One of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What huge stones! What wonderful buildings!"

“Do you see these huge buildings?” Jesus asked. “Not one stone here will be left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down.”

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the temple. Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him a question in private. “Tell us,” they said. “When will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to come true?”

Jesus said to them, “Keep watch! Be careful that no one fools you. Many will come in my name. They will claim, ‘I am he.’ They will fool many people. You will hear about wars. You will also hear people talking about future wars. Don’t be alarmed. These things must happen. But the end still isn’t here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry. All these things are the beginning of birth pains.

“Watch out! You will be handed over to the local courts. You will be whipped in the synagogues. You will stand in front of governors and kings because of me. In that way you will be witnesses to them. The good news has to be preached to all nations before the end comes. You will be arrested and brought to trial. But don’t worry ahead of time about what you will say. Just say what God brings to your mind at the time. It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

WONDERING QUESTIONS

I wonder how you feel about this story?

I wonder what the good news is?

I wonder how you feel about being guided by God and the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER

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