



kids

| 4TH-5TH

EZEKIEL + MARK

A BIBLE READING WORKBOOK

WEEKS 5-8

HEARING FROM GOD TOGETHER THROUGH SCRIPTURE

This guide will take you through 12 weeks of Bible reading. There are five readings each week.

Each week, four of the five readings will be from the book of Mark, which tells the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. One of the readings will be from the Old Testament book of Ezekiel. At the end of each reading, there will be a question or activity to help you think about what you read. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you use your imagination and thinking skills to understand what you read and how it makes you feel.

Because this is good practice for hearing from God while reading the Bible, we think it would be great if you finished the whole thing! Sometimes when you read, you might feel curious or excited or even sad or scared; sometimes, you might be bored. All of that's ok - you're building your "Listening to God" muscles. Talk to other kids or grown-ups about what you're thinking as we go - the whole church is in on this together!

READING THE BOOK OF MARK

The book of Mark is one of four biographies of Jesus found in the New Testament. As you read, think about what kind of person Jesus is. What did he do, what made him sad, what made him angry, who did he spend time with? Use your imagination as much as you can to think about what being with Jesus would be like. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you know Jesus.

READING THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The book of Ezekiel is weird. God's people, called Israel, have been taken captive after being disobedient to God and worshipping idols. God chooses Ezekiel to speak to his people. He shows Ezekiel visions and asks him to do some strange things to remind his people that their sin makes God unhappy and will be punished. As you read, think about why God is spending so much time and energy trying to get Israel's attention. What is he trying to tell them?

READING EZEKIEL 10:1-22

For those wanting to read the entire book of Ezekiel, read chapters 21-23

Then I looked and saw the sky above the heads of the living creatures. I saw something like a sapphire gem. It looked like a throne. The Lord said to the man dressed in linen, “Go in between the wheels under the living creatures. And fill your hands with coals of fire from between the living creatures. Scatter the coals over the city.”

As I watched, the man with linen clothes went in. Now the living creatures were standing on the south side of the Temple when the man went in. And the cloud from the Lord filled the inner courtyard. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the living creatures. And it stood over the door of the Temple. The Temple was filled with the cloud. And the courtyard was full of the brightness from the glory of the Lord. The sound of the wings of the living creatures was heard all the way to the outer courtyard. It was like the voice of God All-Powerful when he speaks.

The Lord commanded the man dressed in linen, “Take fire from between the wheels, from between the living creatures.” Then the man went in and stood by a wheel. One living creature put out his hand to the fire that was among them. The living creature took some of the fire. And he put it in the hands of the man dressed in linen. The man took the fire and went out.

Something that looked like a man’s hand appeared under the wings of the living creatures. I saw the four wheels by the living creatures. One wheel was by each living creature. The wheels looked like shining chrysolite. All four wheels looked alike. Each looked like a wheel crossways inside another wheel. When the wheels moved, they went in any of the directions that the four living creatures faced. The wheels did not turn about. The living creatures did not turn their bodies as they went. But they followed wherever their faces pointed. All their bodies, their backs, hands, wings and the wheels were full of eyes all over. Now each of the four living creatures had a wheel. I heard the wheels being called “whirling wheels.” Each living creature had four faces. The first face was the face of a creature with wings. The second face was the face of a man. The third was the face of a lion. And the fourth was the face of an eagle.

The living creatures flew up. They were the same living creatures I had seen by the Kebar River. And when the living creatures moved, the wheels moved by their sides. The living creatures lifted their wings to fly up from the ground. And the wheels did not leave their sides. When the living creatures stopped, the wheels stopped. When the creatures went up, the wheels went up also. This was because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

Then the glory of the Lord left the door of the Temple and stood over the living creatures. The living creatures spread their wings. And they flew up from the ground while I watched. As they went up, the wheels stayed by their sides. They stood where the east gate of the Temple of the Lord opened. The glory of the God of Israel was over them.

These are the living creatures I had seen under the God of Israel. This was by the Kebar River. I knew they were called cherubim. Each one had four faces. Each one had four wings. Things that looked like a man’s hands were under their wings. Their faces looked the same as the ones I had seen by the Kebar River. They each went straight ahead.

REFLECTION

This time, Ezekiel sees a vision of the temple in Jerusalem. If you remember, this is where he used to live and where he would have started working as a priest before he was taken captive by the Babylonians. He sees God's presence leave the Temple. The amazing part is that Ezekiel has also seen God's presence come to him by the river. God is with him wherever he goes!

Can you draw some of the places that God goes with you?

READING MARK 6:14-29

King Herod heard about Jesus, because Jesus was now well known. Some people said, "He is John the Baptist. He is risen from death. That is the reason he can work these miracles."

Others said, "He is Elijah."

Other people said, "Jesus is a prophet. He is like the prophets who lived long ago."

Herod heard all these things about Jesus. He said, "I killed John by cutting off his head. Now he has been raised from death!"

Here's what had happened: Herod himself had ordered his soldiers to arrest John, and John was put in prison. Herod did this to please his wife, Herodias. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. But then Herod married her. John told Herod that it was not lawful for him to be married to his brother's wife. So Herodias hated John and wanted to kill him. But she could not because of Herod. Herod was afraid to kill John because he knew John was a good and holy man. So Herod protected John. Also, Herod enjoyed listening to John preach. But John's preaching always bothered him.

Then the perfect time came for Herodias to cause John's death. It happened on Herod's birthday. Herod gave a dinner party for the most important government leaders, the commanders of his army, and the most important people in Galilee. The daughter of Herodias came to the party and danced. When she danced, Herod and the people eating with him were very pleased.

So King Herod said to the girl, "I will give you anything you want." He promised her, "Anything you ask for I will give to you. I will even give you half of my kingdom."

The girl went to her mother and asked, "What should I ask the king to give me?"

Her mother answered, "Ask for the head of John the Baptist."

REFLECTION

Did you notice what Mark wrote about Herod listening to John preach? He wrote, "Herod enjoyed listening to John preach. But John's preaching always bothered him." John preached that people should repent - turn and follow God. Why might that bother Herod? Why would he like it?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 6:30-44

The apostles that Jesus had sent out to preach returned. They gathered around him and told him about all the things they had done and taught. Crowds of people were coming and going. Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. He said to them, "Come with me. We will go to a quiet place to be alone. There we will get some rest."

So they went in a boat alone to a place where there were no people. But many people saw them leave and recognized them. So people from all the towns ran to the place where Jesus was going. They got there before Jesus arrived. When he landed, he saw a great crowd waiting. Jesus felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them many things.

It was now late in the day. Jesus' followers came to him and said, "No one lives in this place. And it is already very late. Send the people away. They need to go to the farms and towns around here to buy some food to eat."

But Jesus answered, "You give them food to eat."

They said to him, "We can't buy enough bread to feed all these people! We would all have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!"

Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have now? Go and see."

When they found out, they came to him and said, "We have five loaves and two fish."

Then Jesus said to the followers, "Tell all the people to sit in groups on the green grass." So all the people sat in groups. They sat in groups of 50 or groups of 100. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the bread. He divided the bread and gave it to his followers for them to give to the people. Then he divided the two fish among them all. All the people ate and were satisfied. The followers filled 12 baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were not eaten. There were about 5,000 men there who ate.

REFLECTION

Right at the beginning of this passage, Jesus and his disciples take a break together. They go to a quiet place to be alone and rest. Do you like quiet places? How do you like to rest? You can try right now - find a quiet place to be alone, and try asking the Holy Spirit to rest with you.

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING EZEKIEL 29:1-16

For those wanting to read all of Ezekiel, read chapters 24-28

It was the tenth year, in the tenth month of our captivity. It was on the twelfth day of the month. The Lord spoke his word to me. He said: "Human being, look toward the king of Egypt. And prophesy against him and all Egypt. Say: "This is what the Lord God says:

I am against you, king of Egypt.

You are like a great crocodile that lies in the Nile River.

You say, "The Nile is mine.

I made it for myself."

But I will put hooks in your jaws.

I will make the fish of the Nile stick to your sides.

I will pull you up out of your rivers,

with all the fish sticking to your sides.

I will leave you in the desert.

I will leave you and all the fish from your rivers.

You will fall on the open field.

You will not be picked up or buried.

I have given you to the wild animals.

And I have given you to the birds of the sky for food.

Then all the people who live in Egypt will know that I am the Lord.

"Israel tried to lean on you for help. But you were like a crutch made out of a weak stalk of grass. When their hands grabbed you, you splintered and tore open their shoulders. When they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs twist.

"So this is what the Lord God says: I will cause an enemy to attack you. He will kill your men and animals. Then Egypt will become an empty desert. They will know that I am the Lord.

"This is because you said, "The Nile River is mine. And I have made it." So, I am against you. I am against your rivers. I will destroy the land of Egypt. It will be empty desert from Migdol in the north to Aswan in the south. It will be empty all the way to the southern border of Cush. No man or animal will walk through it. No one will live in Egypt for 40 years. I will make the land of Egypt the emptiest country of all. And her cities will be the emptiest of all ruined cities for 40 years. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. And I will spread them among the countries.

"This is what the Lord God says: After 40 years I will gather Egypt from the nations where they have been scattered. I will bring back the Egyptian captives.

I will make the Egyptians return to southern Egypt. They will return to the land that they came from. They will become a weak kingdom there. It will be the weakest kingdom. It will never again rule other nations. I will make it so weak it will never again rule over the nations. The Israelites will never again depend on Egypt. Egypt's punishment will remind the Israelites of their sin. They turned to Egypt for help and not to God. Then they will know that I am the Lord God."

REFLECTION

One of the sins of Israel was that they had been relying on Egypt's help instead of trusting God. But the people of Egypt also thought they didn't need God, so when Israel asked them for help, it was bad for everybody. Do you ever get bad help or advice from friends that doesn't sound like what God would want? Write about how you can figure out if the help you're getting is what God would want.

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 7:24-37

Jesus left that place and went to the area around Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. But Jesus could not stay hidden. A woman heard that he was there. Her little daughter had an evil spirit in her. So the woman quickly came to Jesus and fell at his feet. She was not Jewish. She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, in Syria. She begged Jesus to force the demon out of her daughter.

Jesus told the woman: "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. First let the children eat all they want."

She answered, "That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don't eat."

Then Jesus said, "That is a very good answer. You may go. The demon has left your daughter."

The woman went home and found her daughter lying in bed. The demon was gone.

Then Jesus left the area around Tyre. He went through Sidon to Lake Galilee, to the area of the Ten Towns. While he was there, some people brought a man to him. This man was deaf and could not talk. The people begged Jesus to put his hand on the man to heal him.

Jesus led the man away from the crowd, to be alone with him. Jesus put his fingers in the man's ears. Then Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue. Jesus looked up to heaven and took a deep breath. He said to the man, "Ephphatha!" (This means, "Be opened.") When Jesus did this, the man was able to hear. He was also able to use his tongue, and he spoke clearly.

Jesus commanded the people not to tell anyone about what happened. But the more he commanded them, the more they told about it. They were really amazed. They said, "Jesus does everything well. He makes the deaf hear! And those who can't talk—Jesus makes them able to speak."

REFLECTION

The woman who asked Jesus to heal her daughter was not Jewish, like Jesus was. Many people thought that meant she should be asking Jesus for healing at all - but Jesus still healed her daughter. Are there any people you stay away from just because they're different from you? What can you learn from Jesus here?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 7:24-37

Jesus and his followers came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch the man. So Jesus took the blind man's hand and led him out of the village. Then he spit on the man's eyes. He put his hands on the blind man and asked, "Can you see now?"

The man looked up and said, "Yes, I see people, but they look like trees walking around."

Again Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then the man opened his eyes wide. His eyes were healed, and he was able to see everything clearly. Jesus told him to go home, saying, "Don't go into the town."

Jesus and his followers went to the towns around Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling, Jesus asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

They answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And others say that you are one of the prophets."

Then Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

Jesus ordered his followers, "Don't tell anyone who I am."

Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He taught that the Son of Man would not be accepted by the Jewish elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He taught that the Son of Man must be killed and then rise from death after three days. Jesus told them plainly what would happen. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to criticize him. But Jesus turned and looked at his followers. Then he criticized Peter and said, "Go away from me, Satan! You don't care about the things of God. You care only about things men think are important."

Then Jesus called the crowd to him, along with his followers. He said, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must say 'no' to the things he wants. He must be willing to die on a cross, and he must follow me. Whoever wants to save his life will give up true life. But whoever gives up his life for me and for the Good News will have true life forever. It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he loses his soul. A person could never pay enough to buy back his soul. The people who live now are living in a sinful and evil time. If anyone is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I will be ashamed of him. I will be ashamed of him when I come with the glory of my Father and the holy angels."

REFLECTION

Here, Mark writes about another time where Jesus had to remind his disciples to care about what God cares about more than what men care about. Think about your life...what would God say are the most important things you think and do? Is that the same as what you parents think and do? Your friends?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING EZEKIEL 30:1-19

For those wanting to read all of Ezekiel, read chapters 29-33

The Lord spoke his word to me. He said, “Human being, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Lord God says:

Cry and say,
 “The terrible day is coming.”
 The day is near.
 The Lord’s day of judging is near.
 It is a cloudy day.
 It is a time when the nations will be judged.
 An enemy will attack Egypt.
 And Cush will tremble with fear.
 When the killing begins in Egypt,
 her wealth will be taken away.
 Egypt’s foundations will be torn down.

Cush, Put, Lydia, Arabia, Libya and my people will die. All these who made an agreement with Egypt will fall dead in war.

“This is what the Lord God says:

Those who fight on Egypt’s side will fall.
 The power she is proud of will go down.
 The people in Egypt will fall dead in war
 from Migdol in the north to Aswan in the south,
 says the Lord God.
 They will be
 the emptiest land.
 Egypt’s cities will be
 like other cities that lie in ruin.
 Then they will know that I am the Lord.
 This will happen when I set fire to Egypt
 and when all those nations on her side are crushed.

“At that time I will send messengers in ships. They will frighten Cush which now feels safe. The people of Cush will tremble with fear when Egypt is punished. And that time is sure to come.

“This is what the Lord God says:

I will destroy great numbers of people in Egypt.
 I will do it through Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar and his army
 are the cruelest army of any nation.
 They will be brought in to destroy the land.
 They will pull out their swords against Egypt.
 They will fill the land with those they kill.
 I will make the streams of the Nile River become dry land.
 Then I will sell the dry land to evil people.
 I will destroy the land and everything in it.
 I will do it through the power of strangers.

I, the Lord, have spoken.

Egypt’s Idols Are Destroyed

“This is what the Lord God says:
 I will destroy the idols.
 And I will take away the statues of false gods from the city of Memphis.
 There will no longer be a leader in Egypt.
 And I will spread fear through the land of Egypt.
 I will make southern Egypt empty.
 I will start a fire in Zoan.
 I will punish Thebes.
 And I will pour out my anger against Pelusium,
 the strong place of Egypt.
 I will destroy great numbers of people in Thebes.
 I will set fire to Egypt.
 Pelusium will be in great pain.
 The walls of Thebes will be broken open.
 And Memphis will have troubles every day.
 The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis
 will fall dead in war.
 And the people will be taken away as captives.
 In Tahpanhes the day will be dark
 when I break Egypt’s power.
 A cloud will cover Egypt.
 And her villages will be captured and taken away.
 So I will punish Egypt.

And they will know I am the Lord.”

READING MARK 9:1-13

Then Jesus said to the people, "I tell you the truth. Some of you standing here will see the kingdom of God come with power before you die."

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. While these followers watched, Jesus was changed. His clothes became shining white, whiter than any person could make them. Then two men appeared, talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.

Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Peter did not know what to say, because he and the others were so frightened.

Then a cloud came and covered them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, "This is my Son, and I love him. Obey him!"

Then Peter, James, and John looked around, but they saw only Jesus there alone with them.

As Jesus and his followers were walking back down the mountain, he commanded them, "Don't tell anyone about the things you saw on the mountain. Wait till the Son of Man rises from death. Then you may tell."

So the followers obeyed Jesus and said nothing about what they had seen. But they discussed what Jesus meant about rising from death.

They asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah must come first. Elijah makes all things the way they should be. But why does the Scripture say that the Son of Man will suffer much and that people will treat him as if he were nothing? I tell you that Elijah has already come. And people did to him whatever they wanted to do. The Scriptures said this would happen to him."

REFLECTION

Moses and Elijah lived a long time before Jesus did. But, like Jesus, they pointed people to God. Even in this passage, the voice that Peter, James, and John hear says, "Listen to him." It seems like God uses people to connect other people to Himself. Have you ever done this - helped someone connect to God? How? Has anyone done it for you?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 9:14-29

Then Jesus, Peter, James, and John went to the other followers. They saw a great crowd around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. But when the crowd saw Jesus, they were surprised and ran to welcome him.

Jesus asked, "What are you arguing about with the teachers of the law?"

A man answered, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit from the devil in him. This spirit stops him from talking. The spirit attacks him and throws him on the ground. My son foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes very stiff. I asked your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they couldn't."

Jesus answered, "You people don't believe! How long must I stay with you? How long must I go on being patient with you? Bring the boy to me!"

So the followers brought him to Jesus. As soon as the evil spirit saw Jesus, it attacked the boy. He fell down and rolled on the ground, foaming from his mouth.

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

The father answered, "Since he was very young. The spirit often throws him into a fire or into water to kill him. If you can do anything for him, please have pity on us and help us."

Jesus said to the father, "You said, 'If you can!' All things are possible for him who believes."

Immediately the father cried out, "I do believe! Help me to believe more!"

Jesus saw that a crowd was running there to see what was happening. So he spoke to the evil spirit, saying, "You deaf and dumb spirit—I command you to come out of this boy and never enter him again!"

The evil spirit screamed and caused the boy to fall on the ground again. Then the spirit came out. The boy looked as if he were dead. And many people said, "He is dead!" But Jesus took hold of the boy's hand and helped him to stand up.

Jesus went into the house. His followers were alone with him there. They said, "Why couldn't we force that evil spirit out?"

Jesus answered, "That kind of spirit can only be forced out by prayer."

REFLECTION

It looks like it took some work to heal this little boy. The boy's father went to the disciples for help, but they couldn't heal the little boy. So then, they went to Jesus. Jesus made the demon leave the boy alone - but did you catch what he said: "That kind of spirit can only be forced out by prayer." Why do you think Jesus was able to do what the disciples weren't?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 9:38 - 10:12

Then John said, "Teacher, we saw a man using your name to force demons out of a person. We told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group."

Jesus said, "Don't stop him. Anyone who uses my name to do powerful things will not say evil things about me. He who is not against us is with us. I tell you the truth. If anyone helps you by giving you a drink of water because you belong to the Christ, then he will truly get his reward.

"If one of these little children believes in me, and someone causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for him. It would be better for him to have a large stone tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and go to hell. In that place the fire never goes out. [In hell the worm does not die; the fire is never stopped.] If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [In hell the worm does not die; the fire is never stopped.] If your eye causes you to sin, take it out. It is better for you to have only one eye but have life forever. That is much better than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. In hell the worm does not die; the fire is never stopped. Every person will be salted with fire.

"Salt is good. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then you cannot make it salty again. So, be full of goodness. And have peace with each other."

Then Jesus left that place. He went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River. Again, crowds came to him. And Jesus taught them as he always did.

Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick him. They asked, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?"

Jesus answered, "What did Moses command you to do?"

They said, "Moses allowed a man to write out divorce papers and send her away."

Jesus said, "Moses wrote that command for you because you refused to accept God's teaching. But when God made the world, 'he made them male and female.' 'So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife. And the two people will become one body.' So the people are not two, but one. God has joined the two people together. So no one should separate them."

Later, the followers and Jesus were in the house. They asked Jesus again about the question of divorce. He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries

another woman is guilty of adultery against her. And the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery."

REFLECTION

Right at the beginning of this passage, the disciples tell Jesus that other people are starting to fight demons in Jesus' name. The phrase "in Jesus' name" means that they would tell demons to go away because it's what Jesus would want (kind of like when you tell your brother or sister to do something because mom said so). The disciples thought that they were the only ones who could do this. What did Jesus tell them? Why do you think he said that?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING EZEKIEL 33:10-20

For those wanting to read all of Ezekiel, read chapters 34-37

“So you, human being, say to Israel: ‘You have said: Surely our law-breaking and sins are hurting us. They will kill us. What can we do so we will live?’ Say to them: ‘The Lord God says: As surely as I live, this is true. I do not want a wicked person to die. I want him to stop doing evil and live. Turn back! Turn back from your wicked ways! You don’t want to die, people of Israel.’

“And you, human being, say to your people: ‘The goodness of a good person will not save him when he sins. The evil of the wicked person will not cause him to be punished if he turns from it. A good person will not be able to live by the good he did earlier if he sins.’ I might tell the good person, “You will surely live.” But he might think he has done enough good and then do evil. Then none of the good things he did will be remembered. He will die because of the evil he has done. Or, I might say to the wicked person, “You will surely die.” But he might turn from his sin and do what is right and honest. He returns what somebody gave him as a promise to repay a loan. He pays back what he stole. He lives by the rules that give life. He does not sin. Then that one will surely live. He will not die. He will not be punished for any of his sins. He now does what is right and fair. He will surely live.

“But your people say: ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ But it is their own way that is not fair. The good person might turn from his goodness and do evil. Then he will die for his evil. But the wicked person might stop doing evil and do what is right and fair. Then he will live. You still say: ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ Israel, I will judge each of you by his own ways.”

REFLECTION

God judges people for good reasons - because He’s holy, because he wants people to enjoy life with him, because he wants them to stop hurting other people. Have you ever felt guilty about doing something wrong? Did you talk to God about it? How did you feel after you talked to God?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 10:13-31

Some people brought their small children to Jesus so he could touch them. But his followers told the people to stop bringing their children to him. When Jesus saw this, he was displeased. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it." Then Jesus took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and blessed them.

Jesus started to leave, but a man ran to him and fell on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that never ends?"

Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commands: 'You must not murder anyone. You must not be guilty of adultery. You must not steal. You must not tell lies about your neighbor in court. You must not cheat. Honor your father and mother.'"

The man said, "Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy."

Jesus looked straight at the man and loved him. Jesus said, "There is still one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me."

He was very sad to hear Jesus say this, and he left. The man was sad because he was very rich.

Then Jesus looked at his followers and said, "How hard it will be for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

The followers were amazed at what Jesus said. But he said again, "My children, it is very hard[b] to enter the kingdom of God! And it will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!"

The followers were even more amazed and said to each other, "Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked straight at them and said, "For people this is impossible. But for God all things are possible."

Peter said to Jesus, "We left everything to follow you!"

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Everyone who has left his home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or fields for me and for the Good News will get a hundred

times more than he left. Here in this world he will have more homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields. And with those things, he will also suffer for his belief. But in the age that is coming he will have life forever. Many who are first now will be last in the future. And those who are last now will be first in the future."

REFLECTION

Do you think it was an easy choice for Peter and the disciples to leave their homes and families and follow Jesus? It seems like Jesus is telling them that giving up good things like homes and families to follow him was the right decision. Why do you think that is? Do you ever feel like you have to give something up to follow Jesus?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

READING MARK 10:32-45

Jesus and the people with him were on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the way. The followers were amazed, but those who followed behind them were afraid. Jesus took the 12 apostles aside and talked with them alone. He told them what would happen in Jerusalem. He said, "We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be given to the leading priests and teachers of the law. They will say that he must die. They will give him to the non-Jewish people, who will laugh at him and spit on him. They will beat him with whips and kill him. But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again."

Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to ask you to do something for us."

Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

They answered, "You will have glory in your kingdom. Let one of us sit at your right, and let one of us sit at your left."

Jesus said, "You don't understand what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I must drink? And can you be baptized with the same kind of baptism that I must have?"

They answered, "Yes, we can!"

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the same cup that I will drink. And you will be baptized with the same baptism that I must have. But I cannot choose who will sit at my right or my left. These places are for those for whom they are prepared."

The ten followers heard this. They began to be angry with James and John.

Jesus called all the followers together. He said, "The non-Jewish people have men they call rulers. You know that those rulers love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. But it should not be that way among you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. If one of you wants to become the most important, then he must serve all of you like a slave. In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people."

REFLECTION

Sometimes, it feels good to be important - to be a team captain or a group leader. Do you notice how Jesus says leaders should act? Are there any people you can serve right now? What can you do?

Horizontal lines for reflection writing.

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