

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Isaiah 11:1-10
 Romans 15:4-9
Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Vincent came downstairs this Sunday morning still sporting the black eye he received yesterday. He had gone out sledding on the newly packed snow and had accidentally slid into a tree. The trunk smacked him right in the face. His left eye was swollen and purple colored, but thankfully he was not hurt too bad.

"Poor Vincent!" Mary Clare said to her brother laughingly. "Maybe you will have to borrow some of my cover-up make-up!"

"Funny, Mary Clare!" Vincent laughed back. "I knew I should have followed the same sled path that Lucy did. Then I would not have found that tree!"

Dad came in followed by the other members of the family. "Let's read our Gospel reading for today. Today we are going to hear what John the Baptist did in preparing a way for Jesus."

When everyone was gathered, Dad began to read the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 3. Everyone in the family paid close attention.

Dad put the Bible down on the floor by his feet. "Do any of you kids have any questions about the reading?"

"What does 'preparing the path' really mean, Dad?" little Hillary asked.

"Yeah," Vincent added. "Is that like 'preparing' supper, or 'preparing' a puppet show, or something like that?"

"Well, let me see how to explain this ... " Dad said. Before you could say John the Baptist, Dad was sitting on the floor, looking as though he was in the Gold Medal bobsled competition at the Olympics. "Pretend that I am Vincent," he said to his bewildered family. "I am sliding



along the snow ... knowing this is the right way to go ... when suddenly, I decide to get off the path and do my own thing ... " Dad leaned way over, pretending he was steering down the slopes.

He went on. "I go off the course that Lucy had paved for me, and then what happens? BOOM! Right into a tree!"

The family chuckled at Dad's example. "That is what John the Baptist did for Jesus. He prepared or 'carved out' the path. He went ahead of Jesus. And if Vincent would have followed the path that Lucy went ahead and made, he would not have gotten that black eye."

"Right," said Mom. "You see, John the Baptist went before Jesus telling people to change their hearts and turn away from sin. John told them that the way to be saved was to be baptized and to reform their lives. It was John's job to carve out the roads and soften the hearts so that people would be ready to hear Jesus."

Vincent had some other analogies. "So, it is kind of like leaving a bread crumb path for birds to find, or laying down a runway for a plane to land on," Vincent offered.

"That's right, Vincent! John helped people *find* Jesus and *come in for a landing*, I guess," Dad laughed. "But now, it is time to make a straight path to church."

"Prepare the way for the Paulines!" Vincent announced loudly as the family scrambled off.