

# Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: Acts 1:1-11

Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

The newly planted spring flowers glistened in the window box as the Pauline children headed downstairs this Sunday morning. It was a glorious day! But as they clambered down the stairs, something unusual struck their eyes. It was the sight of Dad all dressed up in a long, white gown and a beard. Written on the sleeves of the gown were words that Dad was trying to keep folded in and hidden.

"Something's up ..." said Vincent, half bewildered and half amused.

"When things like this happen, it usually has something to do with the Sunday Scripture reading ..." Mary Clare whispered to her brothers and sisters. "I wonder what he's up to this Sunday?!"

"Good morning Children!" Dad exclaimed. "Do you notice anything, let's say... different ... about me this morning?"

"No, Dad, you look the same to me!" Vincent laughed, always one to show a certain amount of silliness. "And by the way, nice outfit!"

"Well," Dad laughed in response as he cast a knowing glance at Vincent, "I am dressed in this long, white gown to help us understand our Scripture reading for this morning. It is Jesus' great commissioning of His disciples. As soon as we are all ready and seated, Mom and I will present our dramatic re-telling of the Gospel."

"Yeah! This sounds like fun!" little Hillary exclaimed, as she sat herself squarely in the front of a platform Mom and Dad had set up.

"Okay, now," Dad started. "Your mom will read the beginning lines of our Gospel reading from Matthew 28. I will then say all the words that Jesus spoke. When we get to the last line, I will give you a little nod, and I want all of you to stand up close by me. Does everyone understand their part?"

"Sure do, Dad," Vincent said. "But I have one question, though. Why is there a box in our living room all draped over with brown material? What's it for?"

"Good question, Vincent!" his dad replied. "This nicely-draped brown box is representing our mountain this morning. Our Gospel reading takes place on a mountain."

"Why is that special, Dad?" Lucy asked.

"Well, Lucy," Dad answered, "In Matthew's Gospel accounts, Matthew points out many important events that occur on a mountain top. Some of those events are the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration, and the crucifixion of Jesus. By showing us that this meeting of Jesus and His disciples takes place on a mountain top, Matthew tells us that it is something of extreme importance. That's why Mom and I chose to include it this morning, so that you would understand how significant and life changing it is."

"Let's get started then!" Hillary said with excitement.

Mom took the Bible and turned to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 28. Dad took his place on top of the "mountain" platform, still keeping his arms and the secret writing close to him and unseen.

Mom began, *"The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, ... "* (Matthew 28:16-18a)

Now Dad moved forward and said, *"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

" (Matthew 28:18) With that statement, he swooped open his right arm, revealing what was written on the sleeve of the white gown he was wearing. It had written on it the word, "AUTHORITY."

There Dad stood with one open arm and then continued with the words of Jesus, *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20a)

With that statement, he swept open his left arm, revealing the word, "MISSION." Dad stood there like Jesus, both arms open wide and bold. The words, "AUTHORITY" and "MISSION" were proudly proclaimed for all the children to see.

Then Dad nodded. As instructed, the Pauline children gathered close around him. As they stood right in front of him, Dad continued with the last line of the Gospel passage, *"And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:20b)

Then Dad, as Jesus, did something very touching with each of his children. With his "MISSION" arm and his "AUTHORITY" arm, he stepped down to their level and gave them all a huge hug. The kids, now representing the disciples, and indeed all of us, were wrapped up in the love, the warmth, and the commissioning of Jesus. Jesus empowered them through His resurrected authority to do their *mission* here on earth. This is the mission of the Body of Christ to evangelize and proclaim the Good News. And the big hug of love drove home the



truth that "*I am with you always, until the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:20b)

The children stood there, silent for a moment. The big "bear hug" of a feeling was still with them.

Mary Clare was the first to speak. "That was really something, Mom and Dad. I don't think I will ever hear that passage again without thinking of the two arms of Christ enfolding me with His mission and His authority."

"It's true, Mary Clare," Dad said. "Jesus entrusted the disciples with the mission and power to explain with authority what He had taught them. And it is the mission of the Church to continue the work of Christ."

"Speaking of church," Mom added, "the time is moving quickly. Let's all get ready and head off to Mass."

Vincent laughed, looking over to his dad, still in the white gown, "I still have to get dressed for Mass, but I think it would be great for Dad to go as he is! He could be a walking, talking commentary on today's Gospel for everyone this morning!"

"As delightful as that would be, Vincent," Dad said as he hugged his son, "I think my navy suit would be better!"

And, with great *authority* and *mission*, they went off to get ready!