

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



FAMILIES RECLAIMING SUNDAY

Read aloud: Exodus 22:20-26
1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10
Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

"Everyone in the living room!" Dad called out on this bright Sunday morning. "It's time for our Gospel reading!"

Within seconds, the 12 feet belonging to Vincent, Mary Clare, Lucy, Hillary, Mom, and even Baby Ben shook the living room floor.

"Don't sit down!" Dad instructed. "I want everyone to stand in a straight line for today's reading!"

"Huh?" they all wondered; but in true obedience to their father, they did as they were told.

"Today, I'm going to try something different. It is something that will have eternal consequences!" Dad said. "We are all going to memorize a part of the reading. You'll be able to sit down only after you can do it."

This sounded fun for the kids. They eagerly lined up against the living room wall, filled with anticipation.

Dad began. "First, I am going to read to you our Gospel for this morning. It is taken from Matthew, Chapter 22. Everyone listen closely!"

All eyes were on Dad as he read, "*Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? He said to them, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments."*" (Matthew 22:36-40)

Dad closed the Bible. "Now," he instructed his family, "I think it's extremely important to put part of this Gospel to memory! I want each of you to be able to say, without help from anyone else, this life-giving response of Jesus. It goes like this: 'You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37, 39)

"That's easy, Dad!" Vincent volunteered as he stepped out of line first, "We learned this quote in Vacation Bible school!"

"Okay, Vincent, start us off," Dad said.

Vincent smiled and repeated, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

"Excellent, Vincent!" Dad cheered. "Who wants to go next?"

"I will!" Mary Clare shouted. "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." "Another winner!" Dad nodded. He could tell how fun it was for the kids to memorize Scripture.

Left standing against the wall were Lucy, Hillary, Mom, and Baby Ben. "Who's next?" Dad asked them.

"Me!" Lucy screeched. "You shall love the Lord, your God, with ... hmm ... oh, yeah! ... all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and ... hmm ... " then she blurted, "your neighbor as yourself!"

"Wonderful, Lucy!" Dad exclaimed. He knew she had really memorized it and took it to heart rather than merely repeating what she heard her brother and sister say.

Hillary took a step up. At 4 years old, she was a bit quieter than the rest. "Daddy, I might get mixed up," she sighed.

"Oh, no, Hillary, we'll help you if you get stuck," Dad assured her.

Hillary took a deep breath. "You shall love God with all your heart ... your soul ... and your mind, and love your neighbor ... as yourself."

Hillary looked up and smiled.



"Hillary! Good job!" Dad gushed as he swept her up into his arms. "I knew you could do it!" She was still laughing as Dad put her down and turned to his wife. "Okay, Therese, you're next!"

Mom took a step up and, just like a school scholar, recited, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself!"

The only one left at the wall was 18-month-old Baby Ben. Ben was just getting started putting words together but looked excited about joining in.

"Ben, do you want to try?" Dad asked his son, not knowing what to expect.

Ben leaped away from the wall and jumped up and down as he said, "Love! ... Love! ... Love!"

The family broke out in joyous laughter, and they circled around Ben.

"You know, Ben," Dad said to the toddler, "You got it right, too! When you say *LOVE*, you've said it all!"

*Do as the Pauline family did, and memorize
this important Scripture passage.*

*Try to learn it now, and then test yourself
later today and tomorrow to see how well you remember it.*