

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: Numbers 21:4-9
 Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel: John 3:13-17

It WAS Sunday morning, wasn't it? The peaceful bliss of a few extra minutes of sleep was harshly interrupted by a loud drumming noise. It was literally a DRUMMING noise. Vincent was up extra early to tap a few tunes on his new drum set he got for his birthday. TAP -TAP-TAP; TAP-TAP-TAP; BA-DA-DUM! It shook the walls!

"Vincent!" Dad patiently, yet firmly, asked him, "Isn't it a bit early for you to be drumming?"

"Well, Dad, as I see it ... " Vincent reasoned with a slightly sneaky grin, "You want to encourage my musical talent, AND ... the earlier the family gets up, the more time we'll have to get ready for Mass!"

How could you argue with reasoning like that, Dad wondered to himself.

So, now that the entire family (plus a few neighbors) were awake, Dad gathered the clan together for the reading of the Gospel they would hear today at Mass. As he opened his Bible, Mr. Pauline announced, "Kids, today is a very special feast day! It is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which is often referred to as the Triumph of the Cross!"

"Uh ... Dad? ... " Vincent appealed, "I think you got it wrong! You said the TRIUMPH of the cross. Don't you mean the TRIAL of the cross?"

Dad looked at his son. What a wonderful question! If Vincent mostly thought of the cross as how Jesus died, maybe the younger ones thought that way too! This was a great teachable moment! He decided to take a little survey.

"Hillary," he asked his 4-year-old, "when I say the word CROSS, what do you think of?"

"Well, Daddy ... " she said, "I think of that!" Hillary pointed to the crucifix that hung large in the living room. "There's the cross, and there's Jesus on it."

"What do you think of, Lucy?" he now asked his 8-year-old.

"Well, I think of making the Sign of the Cross a bunch of times at Mass."

"And what do you think of, Mary Clare?" he turned to his teenage daughter.

"I think of the burden of Jesus carrying the cross, the sadness of how mean the people were to have done this, and the nails and crown of thorns."

"You all seem to see the cross as something sad," Dad stated, as he opened his Bible to today's Scripture passage. "Well, after our Gospel this morning, I hope you will begin to see the cross as something necessary and good!"

The entire Pauline family listened with extra attention as Dad read John Chapter 3, Verses 13 through 17. It included the often-quoted passage, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."* (John 3:16) "You see, Kids," Dad explained, "God SO LOVED the world that He sent Jesus to save the world. Before Jesus came, the cost of sin was death. But Jesus came as the suffering servant. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and the sins of the whole world."

"That's right," Mom added. "We now have the hope of eternal life in heaven because of what Jesus did on the cross. Jesus is our Redeemer!"

"That's what we say when we go to the Stations of the Cross!" Mary Clare exclaimed. "Don't we say, *'We adore You, O Christ, and we praise You, because by Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world!'* "

"So it's like this ..." Vincent reasoned. "It's like this giant map of the United States!"

"Huh?" everyone sputtered.

"Yeah," Vincent explained. "It's like going from New York to Los Angeles!"

"This has got to be good!" Dad laughed, waiting for his son's reasons.



"Well," Vincent started, "New York is sometimes called *THE BIG APPLE*. The apple is what started man sinning in the Garden of Eden! So now, we were left to travel on the highway of life, trying to get to Los Angeles, the Spanish name for *THE CITY OF ANGELS*, like heaven!"

Vincent was really getting into this! He stood up and kept going. "But, we start traveling and wind up going nowhere, until we come to a *CROSSROAD*! Get it ... *CROSS*!" he said, drawing it out for effect. "The *crossroad* in God's map of salvation was Jesus on the cross! We had to travel *THROUGH* the cross to get to *THE CITY OF ANGELS*!"

Dad and Mom stood there astonished. How could you argue with reasons like that?

"And that's what's *GOOD* about the cross!" Vincent added, as he picked up his drumsticks. "Jesus drummed out sin and death!"

Vincent perked up as he walked over to his new drum set and sat down. "C---R---O---S---S !" he tapped out over and over and over again. "C---R---O---S---S! Christ, the Redeemer, the only Son, saved us! Christ, the Redeemer, the only Son, saved us! TAP-da, da-TAP-da, da-TAP-TAP-TAP, TAP-da!"

"God bless that drum set," Mrs. Pauline whispered to her husband, looking at Vincent beating away his Gospel message. "Only God knew it would be used both for *HIS* good, and *OUR* sanctity!"

Ba-da-dum! Ching!