

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 55:1-11

1 John 5:1-9

Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

A cold, yet sunny morning welcomed the Pauline children downstairs for breakfast. Or maybe it was the smell of hot oatmeal mixed with buttermilk, bananas, raisins, and prunes that got their attention. Mom was already cooking up Great-Grandma Gruber's special breakfast concoction for the family. She had loved it as a child and tried to keep the tradition alive in her own family.

"Why such old-style cooking? What is wrong with good American processed cereal?" Vincent whispered doggedly to Lucy.

Dad, who was standing close by, overheard Vincent. "Well, Vincent," Dad whispered back, "this recipe is just one of those older things that moms and dads are proud of and want to celebrate with you modern-day folk!"

"Celebrate?" Vincent laughed back, with a determined attitude, "Let's party then!" And he stuffed a big scoop into his forced smile.

After a short, but hearty breakfast, Dad opened his Bible for the Sabbath Scripture reading for this morning. Today was the Baptism of the Lord. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John.

"Isn't this a beautiful reading?" Mom began. "It dances with visual images."

Dad agreed. "Even though the reading is short, it has so much to say about God, Jesus, His mission, and the Church. I don't know where to start explaining it all!"

"Let's start at the beginning of the reading, then!" Mary Clare offered. She was so logical for a 16-year-old!



"All-righty then!" Dad began. "Let's look at the first section of the reading. Who can tell me what is being told?"

"I can!" Vincent squealed. "It starts with the part about John the Baptist. I think, in the literary world, they call it 'setting the stage.' "

"Quite impressive, Vincent!" Dad exclaimed. "You are right! The first part of the reading takes us back to the Second Sunday of Advent, to John as the 'voice of one crying out in the desert.' (*Mark 1:3.*) John told us then that he baptized with water, but the One who would come after him would baptize with the power of the Holy Spirit." (See *Mark 1:8.*)

"And, as long as we are looking back at prophetic readings," Mom added, "let's take a look at the first reading we heard during this past Advent season." Everyone scrambled through their Bibles as Mom called out the reading from Isaiah, Chapter 63, Verse 19. It said, "*Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down ...* " "Now what does it say in the second part of our reading today, in Verse 10?"

Again, pages flew as the family quickly found the passage. Vincent read it for the family. "It says here, '*On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him.*' (*Mark 1:10*) That is really neat! It all goes together!"

"Awesome, isn't it!" Dad laughed. "It is God's perfect plan! The reading here is the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry, and God, Himself, anoints Him as the Messiah, the True One Who will reunite heaven and earth!"

"Then, as long as we are referring to other past readings, we have yet another reference," Mom stated. "The last line of today's reading says, '*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*' (*Mark 1:11b*) That is a direct reference to the second Psalm which says, '*You are my son; today I am your father,*' (*Psalms 2:7b*) and also to Isaiah, Chapter 42, Verse 1, which says, '*Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.*' "

"It seems like everything ties back to something!" Vincent declared. "That is so neat!"

"So," Dad said with a glimmer in his eye directed toward Vincent, "it seems that parents can find many reasons to celebrate. Even things that tie into the past!"

Vincent knew he was cornered. "Sure, Dad," Vincent conceded, "Great-Grandma Gruber's breakfast was probably concocted just to bring me to this realization. Things can tie back to the past pretty well!"

Then, to Lucy, he whispered quietly, "Do you think Mary made anything like that for Jesus?"