

GENERATIONS OF FAITH



Jesus of History, Christ of Faith

Four Gospels, Four Portraits of Jesus

“One day when Jesus was praying alone, the disciples came to him. ‘Who do the crowds say I am?’ he asked them. ‘Some say that you are John the Baptist,’ they answered. ‘Others say that you are Elijah, while others say that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.’ ‘What about you?’ he asked them. ‘Who do you say I am?’” (Luke 9:18-21) For two thousand years people have sought to answer Jesus’ question, including the Evangelists - those first century Christians who finally put pen to paper between 35 and 70 years *after* Jesus died to write the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. At their core, the Gospels are post-resurrection testimonies of faith – faith in Jesus Christ. As Gerard Sloyan writes, “They were an attempt from four different viewpoints to help people share in the life of the one whom the early Church believed in as ‘the

Christ.’ The four whose Gospels survive were convinced that Jesus still lived, not just in memory but in fact.” In the four Gospels you’ll discover four portraits of the one Jesus. As Ed Shuster writes, “Jesus is portrayed primarily as a healer by Mark, a teacher by Matthew, a compassionate friend of the downtrodden and outcasts by Luke, and the majestic Son of God by John. He is all of these and more, of course, but each writer elects to shine the spotlight on a particular feature.” The word “Gospel” means “Good News.” So the Gospel according to Matthew means “the Good News as Matthew shared it.” As different as each Gospel portrait of Jesus is, all four Gospels seek to share the same Good News: God our Father loves us so very much that he sent his Son Jesus to live with us. In turn, Jesus made it possible for us to live with God forever.

Pray it forward:

Grow your relationship with Jesus through Journaling

“Prayer is nothing more than an intimate conversation between friends.” –Theresa of Avila

There are many ways to pray. “Personalizing Scripture” is a prayer technique that invites you into conversation with Jesus using Scripture as a starting point. Here’s how it works:

1. Start by asking the Holy Spirit to guide you through this prayer experience.
2. Select a passage from Scripture . It could be a longer passage such as Matthew 6:25-34 or a short passage such as Luke 9: 21.
3. Write out the passage line by line in a journal.
4. At the end of each line, insert your own name. Example: “Who do you say that I am, _____?”
5. As you write out each line, imagine that Jesus is speaking to you. Meditate on the words as they are spoken to you. What is Jesus saying to you?
6. After you write out each line, compose a response to Jesus. Be as honest as possible. It may be positive or negative, trusting or doubting. Jesus wants you to be real.
7. Repeat this process through the end of the passage – Jesus’ words your honest replies. Allow the conversation to continue as God’s spirit leads you until you are done.

“Journaling is meditative writing. When we place pen on paper, spirit and body cooperate to release our true selves.”
–from **Suggestions for Ignatian Prayer**

Seasons of Faith: What is Ordinary Time?

Liturgical Color: Green

When and for how long? The season of Ordinary time occurs twice in our church year for a total of 33 or 34 weeks: the end of the Christmas season until the beginning of the Lent season; and the end of the Easter season until the beginning of the Advent season.

A season of celebration; a reason for hope: During the season of Ordinary Time, we’re called to live out all that Jesus taught us. And we’re reminded that God loves us and is with us always. What better grounds for celebration and for hope? Hope is one of the greatest gifts we can share.

Try this activity at home: Look up Bible verses about hope: Psalm 33:22; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 15:13; 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Peter 1:3. Working in pairs or groups? Talk about what these words say about God and about us. On your own? Consider collecting your thoughts on paper. Doing this activity with kids? Emphasize the importance of having hope in God in our lives and sharing hope with other people. **Bonus:** Create a “week of hope” challenge: come up with a list of concrete ways your household can share hope with others and check one thing off your list every day for a week. When you complete your challenge, celebrate!

–Adapted from *70 Church Year Lesson Starters for Kids*, by Pat Mathson

Catholicism 101:

The Development of the Gospels

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are the inspired Word of God, but they did not fall from the sky in their present form. In 1964, the Pontifical Biblical Commission issued a document entitled, "Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels." In it, they explain how the Gospels developed over an extended period through three stages:

Stage One: Jesus of Nazareth and His Disciples:

Jesus, speaking and acting as a first-century Jewish teacher, shared his message with his disciples as they traveled throughout Palestine with him. During the time that Jesus lived and worked, he had a profound effect on his followers.

Stage Two: The Disciples and the Early Communities of Faith:

After Jesus' death and Resurrection – and in the light of these events – Jesus' followers recognized him as the Messiah, the Christ, the One who had been promised. But rather than immediately recording their experiences of Jesus in writing, the disciples set out on a missionary campaign to share the Good News throughout the Roman Empire.

Stage Three: The Early Communities of Faith and the Evangelists:

After 35 to 75 years of this intensive missionary activity, the Gospels as we know them were finally compiled by the Evangelists. The Evangelists most likely served as editors more than authors: collecting stories about Jesus, sayings of Jesus, prayers, etc., that had gradually developed over the years in their faith communities. Each Evangelist organized this material into Gospels ("Good News") that addressed the specific needs of the community for whom that particular Evangelist wrote.

-Adapted in part from Thomas Zanig, *Jesus of History, Christ of Faith*

-*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 75-76, 126

We recommend...

The Good Book!

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." –Saint Jerome

The best way to learn about Jesus is to spend time reading the Gospels. We recommend these study bibles from St. Mary's Press:

The Catholic Family Connections

Bible: Whether you are a family of 1 or a family of 10, *The Catholic Family Connections Bible* is an excellent resource to help your household study, pray and live the bible. Features include:

- Over 700 articles to help you pray, study and live the Bible, and understand key Catholic doctrine
- Helpful introductions to each section and book of the Bible
- Special study aids and color inserts to help you navigate the Bible and better understand the texts in their historical and cultural context
- Easy-to-use glossary of Scripture-related terms

The Catholic Children's Bible: Until now, children had two choices in Bibles: one that was created for adults and one that was simply a collection of stories written for children. *The Catholic Children's Bible* is the first-ever complete children's Bible that not only inspires, but also empowers children to read, live, understand, and love the Word of God. Features include:

- 125 feature story spreads highlighting key Bible passages
- "Understand it!" sections enable children to comprehend central themes by using child-friendly backgrounds and commentary
- "Live it!" instructions encourage children to apply the meaning of each story to their lives through engaging activities and prayers
- "Tell it!" frames help children to retain and comprehend the passage by having them retell the story in their own words.
- Unique navigational features designed specifically for early readers help children to easily locate passages and stories
- Intentional design elements help make this a Bible children can read on their own

Living the lectionary

October 1, 2017

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Adults: When have your actions not measured up to your promises? What was the outcome?

Kids: Why is it important to follow through on your promises to others?

October 8, 2017

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

Adults: What would your reaction be if you found that someone you thought you could trust was taking money from you without your knowledge? How would you handle the situation?

Kids: What would you do if you found out that a friend had not been loyal to you?

October 15, 2017

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Adults: What will you do this week to show God that you understand the relationship between faith and works?

Kids: What three things can you do this week to show that you are a follower of Jesus?

October 22, 2017

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-21

Adults: How much responsibility do you feel the government should take for meeting the needs of the less fortunate in our society? How willing are you to contribute?

Kids: Who needs your help in your neighborhood or community? What could you and your family do to help?

October 29, 2017

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

Adults: In a practical sense, what is one thing that would change your life if you loved your neighbor as yourself?

Kids: Why is it hard sometimes to love your neighbor? How can you do a better job of following Jesus' Commandment?

From RCL Benzinger
<http://rclblectionary.com>