



For the Week of May 13, 2012

Good Questions, Straight Answers:  
caught

Life Notes for Families

## Introductions

We hope you're having a great time learning about Jesus together as a family. Whether you have lots of family members or just a few spending time together, we pray you're having fun and noticing the difference that living with Jesus - *together* - can make. We all have our own relationships with God, but we also share a relationship with those we love. Thanks for helping grow this important relationship!

## John 7:53-8:11

Then each went to his own home. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and then spoke to Jesus.

Teachers of the Law and Pharisees: *"Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"*

They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and spoke to them.

Jesus: *"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and questioned her.

Jesus: *"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

Woman: *"No one, sir."*

Jesus: *"Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."*

## a special reading of the Word

Yes, this week's passage can be a bit difficult...there will be some things you'll have to explain...like adultery...and sometimes those things are difficult to talk about. But your children will understand to the level of their ability - mostly, they'll learn a lot from a discussion on judging others and forgiveness.

To begin, if the ages of your children will allow, spend time in a special way of reading God's Word. It's a meditative way to hear from God and might be a great opportunity to help your family hear from the Holy Spirit together. Don't worry if it's kind of awkward - that's fine. It's a new experience together.

Have everyone sit down in a comfy place. You might light a candle if you'd like or have some music playing in the background. Ask your children what they might like and then create an atmosphere your family considers worshipful.

Now, choose a reader for the first time through the passage.

First Reading: Read John 7:53-8:11 out loud and listen, as if God were telling the story to you. Imagine the setting. Jesus was there. It is his story to tell. Create the scene in your mind as the story is told. When you're done, close your eyes and respond out loud (if possible) with the first response that comes to your mind.

See if anyone has any questions and then be still for a few minutes. Just let everyone think, process, listen together.

Second Reading: Choose a different person to read the passage a second time. This time, pray first and then invite everyone to pray silently as the story is being read. We're asking God for the grace to allow his word to change our hearts and our lives. This is God's true message, so we want to try and understand what he's really saying to us right now. Be in a constant state of inviting God to change you as you read this passage a second time.

Invite everyone to share what they believe God was saying to them during the reading of the passage. Note any awareness that arises as you read.

Third Reading: Choose a different person to read the passage a third time. This time, read the passage out loud and ask everyone to note any particular word or phrase that God seems to be underlining. Imagine God right there with a highlighter, choosing a special word or phrase just for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to give clarity - a fresh, personal understanding of the meaning of this passage for each person.

Invite everyone to share their word or phrase.

Now ask everyone to think about his or her own life.

*What is one thing you can do/pray/change/think differently to live what you have heard God say to you?*

Now ask everyone to think as a family.

*What is one thing you can do/pray/change/think differently as a family to live what you have heard?*

This week, use this passage to speak openly with your family about bullying, about judgment, about shame, about how much it hurts when we're the ones that others are angry with or making fun of or simply not loving well. This can take the story of the woman and put the message to any level. Ask your children if they have felt shamed or judged, if they've seen others at school or in the neighborhood feeling shamed or judged, if they've participated in shaming or judging. All week, at a meal that is shared, ask your children what they've noticed that day about judgment or about shaming. You'll begin to put the thought in their minds and they'll begin to be sensitive to their behaviors and the behaviors of others.

Supplemental stories/passages, depending on the ages of your children.

Read Genesis 3 together, noting how Adam and Eve tried to hide from God when they felt their shame. Talk about how we don't need to hide from God - or from each other. We can come to each other when we've done things wrong and receive forgiveness and help in our wrongs.

Read Romans 14 together and have a discussion about how so many things we judge are personal decisions or preferences, not "rights" and "wrongs." Talk about 14:4 - that we all answer to God as our Father, not to other people. And God is right here helping us take next steps in our life of faith - every moment of the day.

Read Matthew 7:1-5 together and discuss how important it is not to judge others.

Read John 16:5-16 and talk about the important role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Mostly, let this week be a time of open conversation about loving God, loving ourselves, loving others...about forgiveness...about not judging others...about not hurting those who are struggling...about being open with our sin and failures so that we step into light instead of hide...

Thank you for following Jesus together.