

Session 3: HISTORY OF SALVATION

The Word of the Lord

God did not abandon man and woman, whom he made in his image and likeness, into the power of sin and death. Over the course of history God, little by little, revealed himself to us in order to save us and to invite us into the communion of the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This glorious history of the God who keeps his promises is given to us in the Bible.



Nicolas Froment, The Burning Bush, 1476. Cathedrale Saint Sauveur, Aix-en-Provence.

Prayer

*Almighty and loving Father,
Sustain us ever more with your word
And help us to find in it the source of life.
Amen.*

The Father promises the sending of his Son and Holy Spirit

Scripture

Moses was looking after the flock...He looked: there was the bush blazing, but the bush was not being burnt up. Moses said, 'I must go across and see this strange sight, and why the bush is not being burnt up.' When the Lord saw him going across to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am,' he answered. 'Come no nearer,' he said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I am the God of your ancestors,' he said, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

(Exodus 3:1-6)



1. Professing the Faith

Activity 1

Look closely at the picture as the Scripture passage is read out loud.

- Identify the parts of the incident being mentioned.
- Identify the four people in the picture and describe what they are each doing and the relationship between them.

Even though humanity is marked by original sin, God has never for a moment abandoned us. We may reject him, and we often do, but he never rejects us. From the beginning, his will is to save us from sin and death and to lead us to the fullness of life with him. This is called **salvation**. We can see his plan of salvation unfolding bit by bit throughout history when we read the **Old Testament**.

In the ancient world, people worshipped a great number of different gods and idols. About 2000 years before Christ, God called a man, **Abraham** and invited him to leave his country in order to make him 'the father of a multitude of nations'. Abraham put his trust in God and obeyed. Through Abraham, God reveals himself to us as the One God, the only true God, and shows us that we must believe in him and put our trust in him in order to be saved. Abraham is our father in faith. **Moses** was chosen by God to free the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, about 1600 years before Christ. Through this event, God prepared us to receive the true Saviour, his Son, who frees us from the slavery of sin. Through Moses, God revealed his name to us: I AM. He is the One Who Is. **Israel** is the nation whose ancestor is Abraham and whom Moses led into the Promised Land. Over a period of 1500 years, God prepared Israel to receive salvation from sin and death through a Saviour, the Messiah. Throughout Israel's history, God called certain persons, the prophets, to speak in his name and teach the people to know and love him. In spite of their unfaithfulness, God never abandoned his people or withdrew his promise of salvation. God chose Israel to make himself known, and he showed us how to live well through the Ten Commandments, given to Moses.



3. Living the Faith

The Ten Commandments keep us securely on the way to happiness.

I am the Lord your God: You shall not have strange gods before me.

You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Honour your father and your mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.

You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.



2. Celebrating the Mass

The Liturgy of the Word: The word of God from the Bible is read with reverence during Mass. *God is the author of Scripture* and he has inspired the human authors of the sacred books in the Bible; it is God himself who speaks to us personally. As we listen to the word of God, we deepen our knowledge of him and of the unfailing love he has for us. In his word, God discloses to us:

- who he is
- who we are
- his plan of love for us

On Sundays, **the First Reading** is usually taken from the **Old Testament** which, in the Bible, is the collection of books written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit *before* the coming of Christ. The Old Testament recounts how God reveals himself to and through people such as Abraham, Moses, David and Isaiah. It also tells us how God *prepares* the people of Israel to receive the Saviour who would free us from the slavery of sin and death.

The Psalm is sung or read after the First Reading. The book of Psalms is in the **Old Testament**. Psalms are ancient prayers of praise, of sorrow for sins, of thanksgiving, of pleas for help, and of rejoicing in God. Jesus prayed the Psalms, and they refer to him, even though they were written long before he came.

On Sundays and solemn feast days, There is a **Second Reading** taken from the **New Testament**, but not from one of the four Gospels. **The New Testament** is the collection of books written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit *after* the coming of Christ. The New Testament includes the Four Gospels (of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John). The Gospels are the accounts of the life of Jesus. The New Testament also includes the Acts of the Apostles, which is the account of the beginning of the Church; a few letters from the Apostles (St Paul, St James, St Peter, St John and St Jude) and the book of Revelation.

Activity 2

In a Missal:

- find the First Reading, Psalm and Second Reading for next Sunday.
- Then try to find them in a Bible or prayerfully discover how they could relate to each other.

Activity 3

Read the Ten Commandments.

- Take each Commandment and reverse it. For example: You *shall* kill.
- Think of the consequences for life and for happiness. What do you find?

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, to protect what is good, and to lead us to what is good. God helps us to discern good from evil. By keeping the commandments we remain in God's friendship. The commandments are not random rules and regulations. They show us the way to life and happiness. Everyone can understand and try to follow them, at all times and in all places, because they come from the One who has made us all and knows what is best for us: life, happiness, holiness.





4. Praying with the Church

Think and Pray

God has revealed his love for you in your personal history in so many ways: he gives you existence and places good things and people in your life.

- How is your personal history, like the history of salvation, a story of loss, of hope and of salvation?
- The Holy Spirit is always at work in your life. Ask him to help you discern the many ways in which God draws near to you. Ask him to help you to respond when he calls.
- How will you pass on what you have received so that those whom you love may receive God's salvation?

Read and Pray

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord;

and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

And these words which I command to you today shall be upon your heart;

and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,

and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

Prayer

Pray the Our Father, paying special attention to the words 'Thy Kingdom come' and 'Deliver us from evil.' With these words, we pray that God may come and save us.

Eternal and loving Father,

You increase your Church by continuing to call all people to salvation.

Listen to our prayers and always watch over those you cleanse in Baptism.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Anchoring your Family in the Faith

Read regularly to your children from a Children's Bible.

Each week, choose one of the Ten Commandments and explain it in ways your children can understand.

Read and pray Psalm 23 together as a family.

Write out a line from the Sunday psalm and put it in a prominent place in the home as a focus for the coming week.

For further reading and prayer

Bible: Genesis 12:1-9; Genesis 22:1-19; Exodus 2-3; Exodus 14:5-31; 1 Samuel 3; 1 Samuel 16-17

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: 442-445; 447-449; 453; 455-461; 466; 470; 487-493; 506; 508; 523-524; 528-530; 531.