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# **OCIA Precatechumenate Lesson Plans 21-30**



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# The Saving Love of God

## Moses and Aaron in Egypt

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 145:8-9, 13b-16**

God is creator of all that is, and attentively watches over and provides for all of creation.

God is self-giving love, and He created man in His image and likeness to also love and care for those in need.

God created the entire world in harmony and without conflict. Man has free will and the capacity to act out of love to help those around him.

Because man has free will, he also has the capacity to use this freedom to serve himself at the expense of others. This is called sin.

Suffering was never a part of God's plan and the Lord seeks to save those who are in bondage due to their own sins and the sins of others.

### **God's Cares for His Children**

Continue reading the account of the Israelites in Egypt and God calling Moses to help in His plan of salvation.

#### **Exodus 4:27-5:14; 5:22-6:9; 7:8-8:32**

God created man for relationship with God and with his fellow man. God desires for man to take part in His plan of blessing for his fellow man.

The king of Egypt chose to act out of selfish ambition, and opposed God's loving plan for the Israelite people and forced them into a life of bitter slavery.

God revealed Himself to Moses and Aaron and invited them into particular friendship and to help in bring about His saving plan for the Israelite people. God does not need man in order to accomplish His works, but rather chooses to involve us for our own good.

God reveals Himself as patient, merciful, redeeming, and all-powerful. He reveals He is the one and true God.



God acts out of His mercy as He shows attentive love to the Israelite people by rescuing them from bondage.

God acts out of His patience and mercy as He continues inviting the king of Egypt to participate in His plan of blessing. In his freedom, the king of Egypt chooses his own selfish ambition rather than obedience to God's loving plan and commits the sin pride. The more Pharaoh acts in pride, the more his heart is hardened at God's invitation for redemption.

Eventually the king of Egypt resists God's warnings and consequences, leading to his own death in the Red Sea. The children of Israel are freed by God's saving hand.

## **God Saves Through Jesus Christ**

Mankind is made in the image of God and is called to love in the way that God loves.

Man is capable of great good. Man also struggles against his tendency toward selfishness and the desire to make power, possessions, and pleasure his ultimate goods, instead of using them in service to the good.

In this, man greatly offends God who is all loving and all just. Sin separates man from God and man needs a redeemer in order to reconcile Him with the perfect love, justice, and holiness of God.

Instead of condemning man, God took on flesh and came in the person of Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.

Jesus comes to lead man out of his state of sin, which holds him in bondage, similar to how Moses was called to lead the Israelites out the bondage of the king of Egypt.

Read the account of Jesus coming to His people and healing them and inviting them into relationship with Him.

### **Matthew 4:23-5:12**

Jesus comes to His people to enter into their suffering and commune with them. Jesus offers a personal relationship to every person and promises to always be present in their struggles.

Jesus came to defeat the Devil and obliterate the consequences of sin through His life, death, Resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus offers a new life of beatitude (of happiness!) to all those who follow Him and obey His commands.



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Would you like to follow Jesus and give Him your sins by entering into relationship with the Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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# The Saving Love of God

## The Exodus of Israel – The Crossing of the Red Sea

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

**Psalm 145:8-9, 13b-16**

God is creator of all that is, and attentively watches over and provides for all of creation.

God is self-giving love, and He created man in His image and likeness to also love and care for those in need.

God created the entire world in harmony and without conflict. Man has free will and the capacity to act out of love to help those around him. Man also has the freedom to serve himself at the expense of others. This is called sin.

Suffering was never a part of God's plan and the Lord seeks to save those who are in bondage due to their own sins and the sins of others.

### **God's Cares for the Poor**

Continue reading the account of how God saved the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt.

**Exodus 9:1-7, 11:1-10; 12:29-32; 14:5-31**

God created man for relationship with God and with his fellow man. God desires for man to take part in His plan of blessing for his fellow man.

The king of Egypt chose to act out of selfish ambition, and opposed God's loving plan for the Israelite people.

God reveals Himself as patient, merciful, redeeming, and all-powerful. He reveals He is the one and true God.

God acts out of His mercy in His attentive love to the Israelite people as He rescues them from bondage. God always comes to the aid of those who are poor and the most vulnerable. God acts out of His patience and mercy as He continues inviting the king of Egypt to participate in His plan of blessing.



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The king of Egypt chooses his own selfish ambition rather than obedience to God's loving plan and commits the sin of pride.

The Lord always invites Pharaoh into His plan of blessing and reveals the calamity that will befall the land of Egypt if he chooses to act out of his own will instead of God's gracious will.

Pharaoh's sin of pride affected both himself and the people around him. The Lord came to the aid of those who suffered at the hand of Pharaoh and led the people of Israel to liberty.

At the time when the Israelites were most vulnerable at the approaching Egyptian army, the Lord came to them in their helplessness and fought for them. God completely obliterated Israel's tyrannical enemy and brought them to a new land in which He promised to care for them as a loving Father.

## **God Saves Through Jesus Christ**

Mankind is made in the image of God and is called to love in the way that God loves.

Man is capable of great good. Man also struggles against his tendency toward selfishness and the desire to make power, possessions, and pleasure his ultimate goods, instead of using them in service to the good.

In his sin, man greatly offends God who is all loving and all just.

Instead of condemning man, God took on flesh and came in the person of Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.

Jesus comes to lead man out of his state of sin, which holds him in bondage, similar to how Moses was called to lead the Israelites out the bondage of the king of Egypt.

Return to the account of the baptism of Jesus and read the following passage.

### **Mark 1:1-11**

In the Jordan River, John was baptizing people who wanted to leave their life of sin (repent) and follow God's plan of holiness for their lives.

The wages of sin are death, as man harms himself and his fellow man. As he sins, man separates Himself from the love and care of God who is all-loving, all-holy, and all-just.

God provided a point of communion and salvation through the lamb's blood at the Passover. He does so also in the blood of Jesus Christ, who gave His life on the cross to atone for man's sins and reconcile man to God.



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Jesus, God Incarnate, entered into man's baptism of repentance in order to intimately unite Himself to our struggles, take our sins upon Himself and forgive us, and offer man God's help through sending the Holy Spirit.

Jesus revealed that God desires to adopt each fallen person as His own beloved son or daughter and wash them clean of their sins. This happens when a person believes in Jesus Christ, receives the gift of Baptism, and lives in communion with the Church.

Would you like to make an act of faith in Jesus Christ and ask for Baptism from the Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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# God's Loving Providence

## Manna in the Desert

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 145:8-9**

God is creator of all that is and has a loving plan of blessing He desires for all that He has made.

God created man in His own image and likeness, meaning that man is able to know, to love, and to be merciful.

God created the world so that creatures depend on each other. God designed man so he can live in communion. Man, who is created in the image of God, is meant to help his fellow man as he grows and reaches maturity.

God created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this gift of freedom to help those around him and care for the common good, or he can use his freedom for selfish ambition. This misuse of freedom is called sin.

God desires to heal man and to lavish His blessings on His children. In the midst of evil, God comes to all those who call on Him as a Provident Father and healer.

### **God's Attentive Providence**

Read the account of how God cares for the newly liberated Israelites as they leave Egypt and enter into a place of encounter with God in the desert.

#### **Exodus 15:22-16:15, 31-35**

God desires to rescue man from situations of suffering and evil, and to lead man into relationship with Himself.

To enter into relationship with God it requires faith and trust in His goodness. This trust is difficult for man after our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell into temptation and used their freedom for their own self-gratification and in an effort to attain personal power.





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Throughout mankind's history, God reveals Himself through speaking to man in a way he can understand. God also works mighty deeds that reveal His goodness and desire for each of His children to thrive.

As the Israelites were led into the desert after being liberated from bondage in Egypt, they grew distressed and questioned if God would provide for them in a place of desolation.

The Lord lovingly reminds each of His children that even when things look most destitute – He has a plan for our good, so long as we trust in Him.

## **Following God's Law is a Relationship with Jesus Christ**

God most fully provides for the needs of man in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God who took on flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary.

Jesus provides man with relationship, with atonement for man's sins, and gives man the gift of the Holy Spirit when any person follows Him and abides with Him through communion with His Church.

Read the account of Jesus miraculously feeding five thousand men and their families in the wilderness.

### **Matt 14:13-21**

In man's state of sin, he is spiritually hungry and in need of God's help.

Jesus heals, teaches, and miraculously feeds the crowd of 5,000 people to show them God's loving concern for their bodily welfare. Jesus also refers to Himself throughout the Gospels as the "Bread of Life," showing that having a relationship with Him satisfies what our souls are hungering for.

Jesus gave His life on the cross to atone for man's sin, for the times man uses his freedom at the expense of others or withholds good from others he ought to give.

Just as the crowd accepted the gift of healing and miraculous food, each person needs to accept the love and forgiveness of Jesus that He offers us. In this we enter into the relationship He desires for us by living in communion with the Church.

Jesus remains with us in the form of Bread in the Most Holy Eucharist. This is why Catholics genuflect when they enter a Church, kneel at the Mass during the Consecration, and bow before receiving Holy Communion.



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Would you like to make an act of faith in Jesus Christ and receive His help to grow in relationship with God?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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# Abundant Life in Jesus Christ

## The Good News of the Ten Commandments

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Jeremiah 29:11**

God is creator of all that is and has a loving plan of blessing for all that He has made.

God is self-giving love, and He created man in His image and likeness to also love and care for other people how are dependent on him and for those in need.

God created man with a desire for happiness. This desire for happiness is fulfilled in a personal relationship with God and in service to others.

Man has free will and the capacity to act out of love and help those around him. Man also has the freedom to rebel against God and serve himself, even at the expense of others. When man abuses his freedom in this way, it is called sin.

Evil was never a part of God's plan and the Lord seeks to save those who suffer and are in bondage due to their own sins and the sins of others.

### **God's Gift of Happiness**

Read the account of how God brings the newly liberated Israelites to a place of encounter with Him. God reveals Himself as a loving Father who desires to bless His Chosen People and care for them.

#### **Exodus 19:1-9, 20:1-20**

God desires to bless all of His followers and invites each person to accept His offer of relationship, but always respects man's freedom and never imposes Himself on his or her free will.

At Mount Sinai, God reveals Himself as holy, as perfectly loving, and perfectly just. God also reveals His plan for man share in this Divine Life by giving man a way of living.

The Ten Commandments are the good news of God's gift of creation. The Commandments show man how he is made and the dignity of life for which he is intended.



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God's law is meant to bring peace and tranquility to man's life which is now affected by sin after the choices of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve fell into temptation and chose to seek power, pleasure, possessions, and prestige as their ultimate goods instead of at the service of the good.

### **Living in Relationship with Jesus Christ Means Following God's Law.**

Mankind is made in the image of God and is called to love in the way that God loves.

Man is capable of great good. Man also struggles against his tendency toward selfishness and each person fights against the desire to make power, possessions, and pleasure his ultimate goods, instead of using them in service to the good.

In his sin, man greatly offends God who is all loving and all just.

Instead of condemning man, God took on flesh and came in the person of Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.

Jesus Christ died on the cross to atone for mans' sins and to offer us a way of love, forgiveness, and new life in the Resurrection.

Jesus comes to give man abundant life by offering him healing and the gift of Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in man and changes man's heart to love the things that God loves.

Read this account of Jesus bringing healing to a man who was born blind.

#### **John 9:1-11, 35-41**

Sin causes a sort of spiritual blindness in man. In this state man is helpless to help himself as he seeks to do the good he knows he ought to do.

Man experiences confusion about the good, a twisting of his desires, and a weakness in his flesh to doing the good he knows he ought to do.

In an effort to heal man, God revealed Himself as the way and the truth and the life in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is fully God and full man and came to reconcile us to God. Jesus Christ has experienced all of our human condition without the stain of sin.

While He lived on Earth, Jesus lived a life of perfect virtue, of mercy, of love, and of healing.



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Now from heaven, Jesus is present to us universally through the Church and the Sacraments. The Sacraments are concrete encounters with God's work of grace that has the power to heal us. These encounters are as real as this account of the man being healed from his blindness.

Jesus touches each person who receives a Sacrament through His ordained ministers in the following ways:

- In Baptism as He cleanses us from sin and gives us the Holy Spirit
- In Confirmation as He strengthens and matures the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- In the Eucharist as He intimately unites Himself to us
- In Reconciliation as He forgives us
- In Anointing of the Sick as He heals us spiritually and physically
- In Matrimony as He reveals His love for us and sanctifies us

Would you like to make an act of faith in Jesus Christ and receive new life in the Holy Spirit through communion with His Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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# God's Promise of Happiness

## The Crossing of the Jordan

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 145:14-18**

God is creator of all that is and lovingly cares for all of His creation.

God created man in His own image and likeness, meaning that man is able to know, to love, and be merciful.

God desires to reveal Himself to each of His children and live in loving relationship with him or her.

God created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this capacity to help those around him and to care for the common good, or he can use his freedom for selfish ambition.

Man lives in God's blessing, but also in the midst of the consequences of his own sin and the sins of others.

God desires to bring man to a place of ultimate happiness and invites each of His children to encounter His loving plan for their lives and to free them from the effects of evil.

### **God Invites All to New Life**

Read the account of how God brings His children from the desert into the Promised Land.

#### **Joshua 1:1-2, 6-9; 3:7-17**

God gave the Israelites the gift of the Ten Commandments to reveal to them how they were made and how they can live a life of peace and happiness.

God intends to bless not only the children of Israel, but all the nations of the earth through His covenant with the Israelites.



The Israelites were the poorest of nations and completely dependent on God's love and provision.

God promised the children of Israel a particular land, so that they may worship Him and invite all surrounding nations to participate and live in communion with God.

God leads Israel into the Promised Land by miraculously granting them passage through the Jordan River, recalling how He saved them from slavery from the King of Egypt by miraculously parting the Red Sea.

## **Jesus Christ offers Abundant Life through the Gift of Baptism**

God's ultimate intention for man is to completely rid him of his struggles with sin and sufferings due to sin, and to bring man to live with Him forever in Heaven.

No matter how hard man tries to do the good he knows he ought to do, man is not capable of carrying it out without the help of God.

God sent His only Son, Jesus, to be born of the Virgin Mary and lead mankind into intimate friendship with God. This friendship with God is the happiness every heart longs for.

Read the account of Jesus coming to mankind at the Jordan River and how He offers Himself to reconcile man to God.

### **Mark 1:1-11**

John the Baptist tries to stop Jesus from receiving the baptism of sins, because he knows that Jesus is the Son of God who is free from sin the source of all holiness.

Jesus instead reveals to John that it is God's intention to meet man in His state of sinfulness and to provide the help that man needs in order to be freed from His sinful condition.

God reveals to all the divinity of Jesus Christ and pours out the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that each person may be reconciled with God when he or she is baptized.

In Baptism, God wants to adopt each person as a beloved son or daughter.

Baptism is the gateway into Christian life. God has a loving plan for each person who is baptized to live in communion with Him by belonging to His Church.



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Would you like to give your life to Jesus Christ and journey towards Baptism?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*





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# God's Gift of Freedom

## The Battle of Jericho

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 145:14-18**

God is creator of all that is and lovingly cares for all of His creation.

God created man in His own image and likeness, meaning that man has the capacity to know things, to love, and to be merciful.

God desires to reveal Himself to each of His children and to live in loving relationship with him or her as a loving Father.

God created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this capacity to help those around him and care for the common good, or he can use his freedom for pride and selfish ambition.

Man lives in God's blessing, but also in the midst of the consequences of his own sin and the sins of others.

God desires to bring man to a place of ultimate happiness and invites each of His children to receive His loving plan for their lives and to be free from the effects of evil.

### **God Preserves Those Who Call Upon His Name**

Read the account of how God brings His children to a place of freedom as they face the large city of Jericho that seeks their demise.

#### **Joshua 5:13-6:25**

The Israelites were camped before the mighty city of Jericho and were at risk of annihilation.

As God sent His angel to Joshua, Joshua asks whether this appearing soldier is for Israel, or for Israel's adversaries. The angel answers "no," in that God does not show favoritism but seeks to liberate the oppressed.



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God directs Joshua and the Israelite army to bear the symbol of the Lord's presence, the Ark of the Covenant, and to simply process around the city's stronghold. God goes before the Israelites and it is Him who will have victory over those who choose sin at the expense of others.

Finally, it is at the shout of the people of Israel who, in faith, believe in their victory in the Lord. The walls of the city fall, and Israel is able eliminate their threat.

God was conscious of the small act of faith and love of Rahab, as she chose to cooperate with the God of Israel and assist the spies as they hid from danger when they scouted the city.

## **Jesus Christ Brings God's Kingdom of Life and Happiness**

God's ultimate intention for man is to completely rid him of his struggles with sin and bring man to live with Him forever in heaven.

No matter how good man tries to do the good he senses he ought to do, man is not capable of carrying it out without the help of God.

God sent His only Son, Jesus, to be born of the Virgin Mary and lead mankind into intimate friendship with God. This is happiness and it is the desire of every human heart.

Read the account of Jesus talking about His mission of healing and Salvation, and of His healing of the two blind men in Jericho.

### **Matt 20:25-34**

Jesus reveals that God's plan is for the mighty to serve the lowly.

When man fell into sin, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world by taking upon Himself the sins of man and giving them new life through God's help.

Jesus shows God's desire is always to heal and not to condemn, as He healed the blind men in Jericho who asked for pity.

Man in his freedom has the capacity to choose to accept God's healing, or to reject God's influence in his life. God always respects man's freedom.

God hates sin but loves the sinner. God loved sinners so much that He entered into their state, suffered at their hands, paid the price for their sins, and invited them into loving communion with God and with their fellow believers.



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Jesus Christ invites each person to follow Him and receive the gift of new life. We enter into this new life by faith.

Faith is lived out by:

1. Repenting of our sins
2. Receiving God's gift of grace (supernatural help)
3. Receiving Baptism where our sins are washed away, we become adopted children of God, and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
4. Remaining in Communion with the Church

Would you like to receive God's gift of healing and journey towards new life in Jesus Christ?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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## God's Unconditional Love

### Samson Liberates God's People

#### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

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**Jeremiah 1:5, 29:11**

God is creator of all that is and lovingly cares for His creation.

God created man in His own image and likeness, meaning that man is able to know, to love, and to be merciful.

Each person possesses a gift of freedom which he or she can use to participate in God's plan of love for all.

Each person is also capable of abusing his or her freedom to seek power, pleasure, possessions and prestige at the expense of the good and of others. God calls this *sin*.

God desires to live in loving relationship with each of His children and to reveal Himself personally to each of His sons and daughters. God desires to heal His children from their own sinful tendencies and from the effects of sin in their lives.

God wants to show His children the way to happiness by revealing His law, and to offer them new life in relationship with Him.

#### **God Invites All to New Life**

Read the account of how God forgives His people and how He uses His servant Samson to rescue them from the consequences of their sin.

**Judges 13:1-7, 24; 15:9-20, 16:18-31**

The people of Israel grew comfortable in their state of prosperity in the Promised Land and forsook the ways of God, who lovingly brought them into the land in order to live in communion with Him.



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God never forces Himself on any of His children and gives all the option of distancing themselves from His loving providence. God never abandons His children in their plight, but always sends help and invites them to return to communion with Him.

In this account of Israel's period of Judges, God rose up the mighty man Samson to overcome those who were oppressing the nation of Israel. God's intent was to invite the Israelites to once again follow the ways of the Lord.

Samson was consecrated to the Lord for the sake of serving others. God has a special plan of love for each of His children for their own happiness, and to also to bring God's love and help to those around them.

God gave Samson the gift of strength to overcome the Philistines who rejected God's ways and frequently exploited the Children of Israel.

Samson himself fell from God's law and lost his strength, and was eventually captured by the Philistines.

Samson humbled himself before the Lord and finally gave his life to free his people from the oppression of the Philistines.

## **Jesus Christ Liberates Man from Bondage to Sin**

God saw the plight of His children as they experienced the consequences of their sins. God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to enter into man's condition of suffering and give His life for our Salvation. Jesus rose from the dead and offers new life and intimate friendship with God to all who desire to follow Him.

**Luke 23:24-25, 32-38, 44-49**

The religious leaders put Jesus to death because He challenged their false view of religiosity. Jesus was obedient to the Father's plan and offered His life to save all of mankind by paying the price of their sins and offering forgiveness.

Jesus rose from the dead and wants to give all those who follow Him the gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell within their hearts. The Holy Spirit gives us grace (God's supernatural help) to live in communion with God.



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We enter into this new life in Christ by:

1. Repenting of our sins
2. Receiving God's gift of grace
3. Receiving Baptism in which our sins are washed away, we become adopted children of God, and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
4. Remaining in Communion with the Church

Would you like to receive God's gift of salvation and journey towards communion with His Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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## God's Redeeming Love

### Ruth and Boaz

#### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 139:1-3**

God is creator of all that is and lovingly cares for all of His creation. God created out of love, similar to how a couple falls in love and wants to start a family.

God desires to reveal Himself to each of His children and to live in loving relationship with him or her.

God created man in His own image and likeness, meaning that man is able to know, to love, and to be merciful.

God also created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this capacity to help those around him and care for the common good, or he can use his freedom for selfish pursuits of power, pleasure, possession, and prestige at the expense of the good.

God has a particular plan for the lives of His sons and daughters and wants to bless them with happiness. Man has the capacity to either participate in this plan, or to move away from God and follow his own personal will.

#### **God Invites His Children to Relationship**

Read the account of how Ruth chose to serve the God of Israel and then encountered the redeeming love of God's people.

#### **Ruth 1:1-2:12, 4:9-17**

Ruth had encountered the goodness of God through her marriage with an Israelite man and desired to follow God, even if it meant enduring poverty.

God provided for Ruth through the man Boaz, who saw her love for God and for her family and gave of his own means to help her.



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When it came time for Ruth to look for a husband, she cooperated with God's will and went to Boaz to fulfill the Israelite social role of 'redeemer,' since her former husband had died.

Boaz took on the caring of Naomi's estate in response to the loss of her husband, and also entered into marriage with Ruth. Boaz and loved Ruth and God blessed them with children.

## **Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of Mankind**

God created the world with goodness and beauty and intended for man to participate in His care for creation.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, fell into temptation and chose to follow their own will instead of trust God and live in obedience to Him. This was the first occasion of sin in the world.

Sin greatly offends God since it is destructive to both the person who sins and those around the one who sins, but God is compassionate and merciful. No matter how messy one's life can become, God still desires to live in relationship with him or her and help restore them to His intended plan of happiness for their life.

God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to take on flesh and enter into man's human experience in order to invite him or her into personal relationship and redeem them from their sins.

Through His life, death, Resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit, Jesus offers each of His followers new life.

**Read this account of the angels announcing the birth of Jesus Christ.**

### **Luke 2:1-20**

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, took on flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus came to man in order to enter into intimate friendship and show him the way he ought to live, to atone for his sins, and to offer him the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus first came as a baby in a poor stable, so that He could unite Himself to our weakness. No matter how a person suffers, he or she can look at Jesus Christ and be assured that He is with them.





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Would you like to receive God's redemption and enter into relationship with Jesus Christ?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you. Amen.*



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## God's Loving Call

### Samuel in the Temple

#### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Jeremiah 29:11**

God is creator of all that is and lovingly cares for each of His creatures.

God desires to reveal Himself to each of His children and has a special call intended for his or her life.

Man is created in God's own image and likeness, meaning that man is able to know, to love, and to be merciful.

God also created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this capacity to live in relationship with God who is all-loving, or he can use his freedom for selfish ambition, even at the expense of others.

Man always finds himself in need of God. Each person has the gift of his mind and heart where God speaks to man and directs him or her toward the good. God has given us the gift of His Word and His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to help us form our minds and hearts to live according to the good for which God intends and to hear the Lord speak to us.

No matter how much each person strives, he or she always falls short of the good they ought to do and can even find him or herself hurting others. This is called sin.

Jesus Christ reveals the goodness of God and offers us new life in relationship with God through His own life, death, Resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit.

#### **God Calls in a Personal Way**

Read the account of how God gently enters into the life of Samuel and invites him to participate in His plan to remove some religious leaders who were taking advantage of the people they were supposed to be serving.

#### **I Samuel 3:1-21**



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The boy Samuel had the privilege of serving in God's temple with the permission of his mother, Hannah. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord as an act of trust, after the Lord had miraculously provided for her in her poverty and in her struggle to conceive a child.

God is all-powerful (omnipotent) and all-loving. God comes to each of His children with gentleness and with personal invitation to participate in His plan for their good and the good of those around them.

God gave Samuel a message that the religious leaders who were stealing from the people at the temple had removed themselves from God's blessing. God always brings such messages to call people back to repentance and back to relationship with Him.

Samuel was obedient to God and served the people of Israel generously. God therefore blessed Samuel and made him a prophet who walked closely with the Lord and gave him the privilege of proclaiming God's word to the people.

## **Jesus Christ Came to Reveal God and His Love for Mankind**

God created the world with goodness and beauty and intended for man to participate in His care for creation.

Adam and Eve, our first parents, fell into temptation and chose to follow their own will instead of trust God and live in obedience to Him. This was the first occurrence of sin in the world.

Sin greatly offends God since it is destructive to both the individual who sins and to those around the person who sins. Even though man often fails, God is compassionate and full of mercy.

God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to take on flesh and enter into man's experience in order to redeem him from his sin. Jesus Christ wants a personal relationship with each individual person and desires to accompany him or her back to God's intended plan of happiness for their life.

Jesus Christ offers us the gift of the Holy Spirit that allows us to live according to the way God intends and to be in communion with all followers of Jesus Christ.

**Read this account of Jesus healing the man who was paralyzed and then calling the tax collector Matthew to follow Him.**

**Matt 9:1-13**



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In His earthly ministry, Jesus revealed God's love and desire for relationship with mankind in His ministry of forgiveness and healing.

The only thing that can stand in the way of God's love for us is *us*. Pride is an obstacle that claims self-sufficiency and that there is no need for a Savior.

Just like the man who was paralyzed and like Matthew and his friends, Jesus wants to enter into our lives and invite us to follow Him in His path to holiness. Jesus offers us the help of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Would you like to answer Jesus' call to follow Him and journey towards communion with the Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*



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# The Lord Sees into the Heart

## The Anointing of David

### **The Church's Good News: The Infinite Love of God**

God created all things out of love and to share in relationship with Him and with each other. God's love is personal, proven, merciful, and offered.

#### **Psalm 145:13-18**

God is creator of all that is and intimately knows each of His creatures.

God lovingly provides for all of creation and desires to reveal Himself to each of His children. God has a special call in mind for each person's life.

Man is created in God's own image and likeness, meaning that he is able to know, to love, and to be merciful.

God also created man with the gift of freedom and the capacity to make choices. Man can use this capacity to live in relationship with God who is all-loving, or he can use his freedom for selfish ambition, even at the expense of others.

Man always finds himself in need of God. Each person has the gift of his mind and heart where God speaks to man and directs him or her toward the good. God has given us the gift of His Word and His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to help us form our minds and hearts to live according to the good for which God intends and to hear the Lord speak to us.

### **God Speaks to the Heart**

Read the account of how God had in mind to raise up a gentle, wise, and loving king for the people of Israel.

#### **I Samuel 16:1-13**

Saul, the first king of Israel, began his reign in humble service. As the Lord blessed him, Saul began to grow in pride and began to exert his own will to dominate for self-glory.

Saul removed himself from the Lord's blessing with hardness of heart and obstinate persistence, despite Samuel's warning.

The Lord sent Samuel to anoint the next king, one who would serve with both might and selflessness, in order to protect God's chosen people.



As Samuel saw Jesse's sons, many looked to be good and mighty kings from their appearance, but the Lord had chosen the young man David who was pure in heart.

God chose David, a shepherd, who was sensitive to the needs and cares of weakness, and also mighty in his ability to defend his flock from the threat of predators. David had a deep prayer life and sought to glorify God's mercy instead of seeking to grow in personal prestige.

David wrote many of the Psalms, the prayers of the Bible, and often speaks about his joy in obeying God's commandments. David loved God and his neighbor with heroic virtue.

#### God's Law, The Ten Commandments

1. *I am the Lord your God: You shall not have strange Gods before me.*
2. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*
3. *Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.*
4. *Honor your father and mother.*
5. *You shall not kill.*
6. *You shall not commit adultery.*
7. *You shall not steal.*
8. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
9. *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.*
10. *You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.*

## **Jesus Christ Ushers in the Kingdom of God**

Disobedience to the commandments greatly offends God since it is destructive to both the individual who sins and to those around the person who sins. Despite man's many failures, God is compassionate and full of mercy and never abandons His children.

God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary who was a descendant of David. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. Jesus took on flesh in order to enter into man's experience and to redeem him from his sin.

Jesus Christ gives each person a model of holiness to follow. Jesus also gives us the gift of redemption from our sin by His death on the cross and His rising from the dead. When Jesus ascended into Heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within each of His followers so that we can live in imitation of His loving and holy life.



**Read this account of Jesus speaking about the gift of Salvation.**

**Matt 19:16-26**

Jesus Christ, through His mighty deeds of healing and preaching revealed He is indeed the Son of God.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus proclaimed that God's reign was at hand and that each person who accepts the way of Christ can live in communion with God.

The young man in this account desired salvation and rightly asked Jesus how to obtain it. All who want to live in relationship with God obey God's commandments as a way to live out their friendship with the Lord.

It was God's plan from the beginning to offer each person complete freedom from his or her sin through Jesus Christ. This involves the work of the Holy Spirit who comes into a person's heart at Baptism and provides help to them to love God more than earthly possessions, power, prestige, and pleasure.

Salvation cannot be earned or obtained, no matter how much effort a person exerts. Only God can bring about this Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the Church.

Persons are saved and experience new life in Christ by:

1. Repenting of their sins
2. Receiving God's gift of grace (supernatural help)
3. Receiving Baptism where their sins are washed away, they become adopted children of God, and they receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
4. Remaining in Communion with the Church through obedience to the commandments and precepts

Would you like to answer Jesus' call to follow Him and journey towards communion with the Catholic Church?

*Lord Jesus, I confess that I have done wrong and failed to do right.*

*I ask you to be my savior, my guide, and my friend.*

*I invite your Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind and transform my heart.*

*I ask for your help to be obedient to You and live in communion with your Church.*

*I here and now answer your call to follow you.*

*Amen.*