

Who is this man?

JESUS' IDENTITY AND MISSION



Lent Series Weekly Devotional

for Adults and Families

Introduction

40 Days with Jesus at the Centre – We want to Follow Jesus and help others Follow Jesus. Following Jesus means spending time with Jesus, following Jesus' example in our actions, and allowing our hearts and minds to be transformed to be more like Jesus.

Devotional Structure

Read & Study: Encounter Scripture

Write & Talk: Talk through this with others or take time to journal your thoughts

Creativity & Imagination: Find yourself in the story and connect it with your own creativity

Pray & Surrender: Have a conversation with God and allow God to transform you through what you have encountered in this story

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Week One

21 February
Jesus the Beloved Son
Begin with Matthew 3:13-17

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- What are the characteristics that you see in Jesus? Write down the adjectives that come to mind when you think about Jesus.
- What are some things you think God would say about your identity? Write down the different adjectives or characteristics that come to mind.
- Talk with somebody about these two lists you've made. Are there characteristics you see in Jesus that you want to see in yourself?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine yourself on the riverbank watching this unfold or if you were John baptising Jesus. What emotions or thoughts come to mind as you imagine yourself in this story?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories remind you of your identity? Take some time to engage with those reminders. How do those connect with your identity as a beloved child of God?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God for Jesus – name a specific characteristic of Jesus and praise God for that example.
- Ask God to help you to know Jesus more and more each day.
- Pray for those who are discouraged, that they may know their identity as God's beloved children.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- How do you think John felt baptising Jesus?
- Pretend you are watching this baptism happen, how do you think you would feel?

Draw & Do:

- Draw a dove (it can be really simple) and color it.
- Hang the dove up to remember Jesus' baptism.

Prayer:

- Thank God for sending Jesus for us all.
- Ask God to help you feel secure in knowing Jesus' love for you.
- Pray for those who feel lonely and for them to know Jesus' love.

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Week Two

28 February
Jesus is Joyfully Generous
John 2:1-11

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time when you experienced joyful generosity.
- Talk with somebody about your experiences of generosity. Are there acts of generosity you've been inspired to embrace because of this conversation?
- Write and remember times you've specifically experienced the generosity of God through blessings or circumstances you've had in the past.

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Picture yourself at a wedding party. What are people doing? How do you imagine Jesus' face?
- Imagine yourself at the wedding and tasting such great wine – how do you react to your friends? How do you react to Jesus?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories feel like generous gifts that bring you joy? Embrace those reminders and remember joy.

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God for Jesus' generosity – name a specific memory and praise God for how you've experienced joyful generosity.
- Ask God to help you remember joy when things are hard.
- Pray for opportunities to extend joyful generosity to those around you.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- How can you be generous to others like Jesus did to the people at the wedding?

Draw & Do:

- Grab two clear glasses. Fill one with warm/hot water (not boiling but hot from the tap). In the other glass put a couple drops of red food coloring.
- Pour the warm water into the glass with the food coloring and watch it turn to wine.

Prayer:

- Thank God for all the amazing generous things He created on this earth for us (like animals, birds, plants, and people).

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Week Three

7 March

Jesus Welcomes All

Matthew 9:9-13

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time when you felt like an outsider. Was there someone who welcomed you in? How would you want things to have been different?
- Talk with somebody about how you've experienced welcome. What emotions did you feel when you were welcomed in? Does that inspire you to welcome people in a new way?
- Write and remember times you've encountered someone very different than you. Did you welcome them or exclude them? What would you want to do differently in the future?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine being Matthew in this story – the one that the Pharisees look at with disdain when they say “tax collectors and sinners.” How do you imagine Jesus looking at you after they say that?
- Imagine a dinner party with Jesus – do you expect it to be boring or exciting?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories remind you of feeling known and invited into something good? Allow those reminders to inspire you to welcome others with hospitality and share those reminders with others.

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God for Jesus' hospitality – name a specific time where you felt loved and welcomed, especially in a time when you least expected it.
- Ask God to help you have a heart that is quick to welcome others, especially those who are very different than you.
- Pray for opportunities to share God's hospitality and welcome to someone outside your comfort zone.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- Tax collectors were not seen as “nice” people in this time. How did Jesus love them when others didn't?
- Can you think of anyone you know that people tend to stay away from or are unkind? How could you show love and kindness to them?

Draw & Do:

- Draw and cut out some heart shapes. This could be on different coloured paper or you can colour in each heart.
- On the heart shapes write or draw pictures of different ways you can show love to others.
- Pick one heart to show love that way this week.

Prayer:

- Thank God for loving us with no conditions, every minute of the day and night.
- Ask God to show you how you could show love to someone this week.
- Pray for those who feel unloved and that God would put people in their life to show them God's love..

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Week Four

14 March

Jesus is the Unhurried Healer

Mark 5:21-43

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time when you were unexpectedly interrupted. Do you view interruptions as problems or opportunities?
- Talk with somebody about how you react to the interruptions of life. Do those kinds of things bring stress to you or feel like exciting opportunities?
- Write and remember times you've interrupted someone. Did they respond to you in the same Jesus responded to this woman? How would you want that situation to be more like this story?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine being either the disciples or the woman in this story. Are you surprised by how Jesus responds?
- Imagine this scene happening at rush hour on the Jubilee line (in non-Covid times). Imagine being the woman seeking Jesus out on the busy, packed platform. How would you want Jesus to respond to you? How do you think those around you would respond?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories remind you of interruptions that turned into adventures or unexpected blessings?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God that Jesus welcomes our interruptions – name a specific time where you felt deeply loved by God.
- Ask God to give you the eyes to see opportunities in the midst of interruptions.
- Pray for the wisdom to slow down and the patience to be interruptible by God and others.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- How does Jesus care for people in these verses?
- How has Jesus helped you with a need you have had?

Draw & Do:

- Grab some plasters and markers. On the outside packaging of the plaster, draw some animals, flowers or whatever you think would make someone happy on them.
- Put them back in the plaster box so the next time someone gets hurt, they will smile when they see your creations.

Prayer:

- Thank God for how Jesus is our example on how we should love people.
- Ask God to show you someone who needs extra love today.
- Pray for the people in your city/town who feel lonely and unseen. Pray God brings them comfort.

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Week Five

21 March
Jesus is Merciful
John 8:1-11

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time when you were caught in the consequences of something you've done wrong. Were you met with mercy and compassion or condemnation and shame?
- Talk with somebody about an experience of mercy, whether that's mercy you've experienced or mercy you've seen from others. How does it feel to experience such compassion?
- Write and remember times you've shown mercy to someone. Why did you respond with mercy instead of giving someone what they "deserved"? If nothing comes to mind, why do you think that is?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine being the Pharisees. What do you imagine Jesus wrote on the ground? How do your emotions or thoughts change through the story?
- Imagine being the woman. What do you imagine the weeks after this encounter were like for her? Do you think she took Jesus seriously when He said "Go and sin no more"?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories remind you of radical mercy? How do those things inspire you to live mercifully?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God that Jesus sees us and shows us mercy and compassion. Praise God for the specific ways you have received forgiveness, compassion, and mercy.
- Ask God for opportunities to show mercy to those around you with wisdom and compassion.
- Pray for God to continue to transform you and help you to no longer desire to sin or go against the Way of Jesus.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- Can you think of a time you made a mistake and someone forgave you?
- How did you feel once they forgave you?

Draw & Do:

- Place your hand on a piece of paper and trace it. Now have fun and make faces on the fingertips, maybe add hair or a hat, anything to make your traced fingers look like people.
- In each finger write a word that helps you remember what forgiveness is all about.

Prayer:

- Thank God that He brought Jesus to earth to forgive all of the ways we make mistakes as humans.
- Ask God to show you anyone you might need to say sorry to this week. Pray for those who feel like their mistakes are too big for God to forgive.
- Pray for God's love to be poured into them.

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Week Six

28 March

Jesus is Our Praying Example

Mark 14:32-42

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time when you were really distressed about something. Did you reach out to your friends so that they could be there for you?
- Talk with somebody about an experience where you had to surrender something you wanted. Have you ever prayed the way Jesus does, to surrender to God's way over your own way?
- Write and remember times you've experienced disappointment from people you expected to support you. How does it feel to know Jesus experienced the same circumstance?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine being Peter and feeling so tired but still wanting to support your friend. Do you think Peter understood exactly what was happening in that moment?
- Imagine Jesus' words to Peter being spoken, not with shame, but with sorrow. How do you think Peter felt when Jesus came to him the third time?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories remind you of times of surrendering something in order to seek the benefit of others, especially in difficult circumstances? How do these things help you remember to pursue God's will above your own?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God that Jesus understands what it means to be human, experiencing sorrow just like we do.
- Ask God for the courage and desire for God's ways above our own ways.
- Pray that God would give you opportunities to support and care for those who are facing distress and sorrow.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- In these verses we see Jesus go to God and pray when he was feeling sad. What is prayer?
- How, where and when can you talk to God?

Draw & Do:

- What would you talk to God about today? Make a list or draw pictures about those things.
- Cut up each item on the list and write your name on the back. Divide these papers between your household and pray for each other this week.

Prayer:

- Thank God for listening to us all of the time and that we don't have to come to God perfect or with just the right words.
- Ask God to help you feel comfortable going to him in prayer and to talk to God.
- Pray for the people in your house and ask God to help them with anything they might be struggling with right now.

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Week Seven

2 April

Good Friday / Jesus Lovingly Lays Down His Life
Isaiah 53 and Matthew 27:27-56

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write about the emotions and thoughts that come to you as you read through Isaiah 53. Does this change how you picture Jesus in your mind?
- Talk with somebody about what it means to sacrifice for the ones you love. Do you find it easy or difficult to sacrifice for those you care for? What about sacrificing for your enemies?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story in Matthew 27.
- The crucifixion was incredibly brutal – how would you have felt if you were present? Do you find yourself mourning Jesus' death or with questions like the Roman soldiers, unsure of who Jesus really is?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories can help you reflect on the reality of death? How do these things paint a more vibrant picture of the reality that Jesus died for you?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God that Jesus understands what it means to be human, experiencing sorrow just like we do.
- Ask God for the courage and desire for God's ways above our own ways.
- Pray that God would give you opportunities to support and care for those who are facing distress and sorrow.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- Jesus was perfect and never sinned, yet he was punished horribly. God loves us all so much that he took away our sins forever through Jesus' death. How does that make you feel?
- If these verses make you sad, don't worry the story isn't over!

Draw & Do:

- Grab these supplies: a pence (if you can find one that is "dirty" it will work best), a cup, 1 teaspoon of salt, ¼ cup of vinegar
- Combine the vinegar and salt in the cup. Drop the pence into the cup and let it sit for about five minutes.
- Pull the pence out of the cup. What do you notice? Is it much cleaner than before you placed it in the cup? The penny has been transformed and cleaned! This is just like Jesus washing away our sins on the cross.

Prayer:

- Thank God for Jesus and the washing away of all of our sins.
- Ask God to help you remember Jesus' amazing love.
- Pray for others who don't know God's love to be open to knowing Jesus and his amazing love.

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Week Eight

4 April

Easter Sunday / Resurrection

John 20:1-8

ADULT

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time where you experienced unexpected joy. How does that experience of joy remind you of the type of joy we see in the story of Jesus' resurrection?
- Talk with somebody about the Hope of Easter. How does Jesus raising from the dead change everything?

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine yourself as Peter or Mary – what emotions or thoughts would you have experienced in finding the empty tomb?
- What kind of tangible reminders of the joy of resurrection can you create to remind yourself of Easter throughout the year?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories can help you reflect on the joy of new life and resurrection?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God for the resurrection of Jesus. Praise God that death is defeated and we get to live as new creations in Jesus!
- Ask God to fill you with joy as powerful as Jesus' resurrection.
- Pray that God would give you opportunities to share the joy and hope of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection story.

FAMILY

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different translations or versions of these verses (eg. NIV, the Message, Good News Bible)
- Which version do you like the best and why?
- What stands out to you in the verses?

Write & Talk:

- How do you think Mary felt when Jesus revealed who he was to her?
- How do you feel thinking of Jesus being alive?

Draw & Do:

- It's time to celebrate! Jesus has risen!
- Celebrate with making this treat of Easter egg nests
- Recipe:
https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/eastereggnests_93841

Prayer:

- Thank God for Jesus and what it means that he is alive!
- Ask God for joy today, even in the simple things.
- Pray for those who aren't feeling joyful, to bring joy into their lives.

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Week Nine

11 April

King Jesus / Living Under the Resurrected King

Acts 1:1-11

Read & Study:

- Read a couple different versions of this story of Jesus (ESV, NET, The Message, NIVUK, and NLT are examples)
- What stands out to you in the story?

Write & Talk:

- Write and remember a time where you experienced a change in your life. How does that experience of change affect everything after that moment?
- Talk with somebody about how your life has been changed by following Jesus. How has your life been a reflection of Jesus' death and resurrection, moving from an old creation to a new creation?
- Write and remember what God has done in your life to transform you.

Creativity & Imagination:

- Read the story again but imagine being a part of the story. Imagine yourself as one of the disciples. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit change your life?
- Imagine what it means for Jesus to be King. How does Jesus' authority (Jesus literally has power over death!) affect the way you live your life? Do you live as though you are under the authority of a King?
- What songs, pieces of art, films, or memories can help you reflect on what it means to call God's Kingdom your home and identity? How do these reminders give you courage to live differently than those who do not follow Jesus?

Prayer & Surrender:

- Thank God for the power of King Jesus and that God is faithful in God's promise to give us the Holy Spirit.
- Ask God to help you live as though you are a citizen of God's Kingdom above any other kingdom of this world.
- Pray that God would give you boldness and opportunities to joyfully proclaim the goodness of following Jesus as King.