

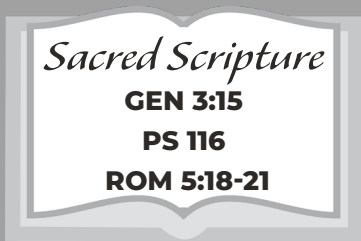
FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

THE FALL AND THE PROMISE

TOPIC: The Fall of Man and the Promise of Redemption

REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
NOS. 410-11



CREED	LITURGY	LIFE	PRAYER
nos.	nos.	nos.	nos.
385-421	1263-64, 1393-95, 1425-49	1846-51	2850-54

GOAL(S):

- Introduce families to the term “Original Sin”
- Families will reflect on the meaning of sacrificial love and how they live it out in their lives
- Families will make their Family Advent Plans

MATERIALS

- Bibles
- sticky notes and pens or pencils

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We entrust our family to You and ask for Your blessing and protection. We love You Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask that You help our family become more like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and patient with one another. Give us all the grace we need to become saints and Your faithful disciples.
Amen.

ICE BREAKER

Who is it?

1. Each family designates one member to be the “leader.” (If families have only two or three members, consider combining them with a family of a similar size.)
2. Each family member is given sticky notes and a pen; family members are instructed to write down 3 facts about themselves, without writing down their names on the paper.
3. The leader collects the notes and gets the ball rolling by choosing one of the notes (not their own), and reading out the facts.
4. The group then tries to figure out who the person is. The first one to guess correctly (as long as it isn’t their own) gets to choose the next note. Adapted from © 2018 Claudia Mitchell



TEACH

1. Hook/Question

At our last gathering, we talked about how God created Adam, Eve and the Garden of Eden.

What were the names of the two trees that were in the center of the garden?

Answer: (1) Tree of Life (2) Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil



2. Introduce Topic

Temptation and the Fall.



CONTENT

Watch: *The Gospel Project for Kids: Sin Entered the World*
(3 min)



Tip!

(When reading from the Bible, always ask the families to open their bibles and read along.)

Ask: How did the serpent “trick” Eve into eating the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Answer: The serpent, who represents Satan, suggested to Eve that who she was, who God had created her to be, was not good enough and that she would be on the same level as God, almost a god herself, if she ate the forbidden fruit. He convinced Eve that God was lying to her and did not want what was best for her and Adam. This made both Adam and Eve doubt God’s love for them, so they decided to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was the first, or what we call, the **Original Sin** (which would be handed on to us).



The Envy of the Devil

Why did the serpent (the devil) want Adam and Eve to disobey God? Because of envy! See Wisdom 2:24. Based on the Book of Wisdom, it is not envy of God but of humans. Some Church Fathers commented that when Satan, created as an angel of light, learned about God's highest creation, he rebelled against God. The devil was envious because men and women are created in the image and likeness of God, destined to share God's divinity (2 Peter 1:4) and live with Him forever.

Ask: After they had eaten the forbidden fruit, did Adam and Eve become like gods as they had hoped?

Answer: No, they actually lost many of the gifts that God had given to them, such as knowledge, understanding, innocence and holiness. They became less intelligent and wise, since through their sin and disobedience, they had moved further away from God. That was exactly what the serpent had wanted.

God sees all things as they truly are, and when we are further away from God, we cannot see things as He does. We need God's life – God's grace – to see how He sees, to know what is true, what is real. When we sin, we move away from God and His grace.

Ask: Did God love Adam and Eve? How do we know this from what we have learned from the Book of Genesis so far?

Answer: Yes (*answers about how we know will vary*). God did not create Adam and Eve to then leave them alone. Rather, we know He gave them a beautiful home and He loved to be close to them there. That is why God was "walking in the garden in the cool of the day"...

Read: Genesis 3:8-9

Ask: Why does God, who knows everything, call out, "Adam, where are you?"

Answer: God knows where Adam and Eve are hiding in the garden, but He wants them to think about where they are spiritually. God feels the distance that sin has caused, and His heart aches.

Ask: Have you ever felt bad either before or after you have done something that you know is wrong? If so, that feeling is God's heart calling out to us asking us to think about where we are spiritually. What does He want us to do when that happens?

Answer: To pray to God and ask Him for strength to turn away from sin, or if we have already sinned, to tell God the truth and admit that we did sin, go to confession, and return to God's loving embrace!

Read: Genesis 3:14-15



Explain: When God says, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel”, it sounds as if the woman God is talking about is Eve. He is, but not only about this Eve. He is also speaking about the New Eve—Mary, our spiritual mother.

We are the children of Adam and Eve, and because of that we have inherited their Original Sin. So, we do not have the gifts that they first had in the garden. But not to worry, because God has a plan.

In Genesis 3:15, referring to the offspring of the woman, the Lord says, “he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Often in Catholic Churches we find statues of the Virgin Mary standing on top of the world with a serpent under her heel. Those statues are teaching about God’s promise to save us from sin in Genesis 3:15. The Church from early times has called this verse the first announcement of the Gospel (the *protoevangelion* in Greek or *protoevangelium* in Latin – first Gospel).

Ask: Who is Mary’s offspring, the One that defeats Satan through His Sacrifice?

Answer: Jesus! Jesus’ sacrifice of love, as He laid down his life in payment for our sins, is the way that Satan would be ultimately defeated.

Explain: Genesis 3:15 is God’s promise that even though sin has entered the world, God will send us a Savior.



The Power of the Rosary

The Rosary can be considered a chain that binds Satan, because as we pray it and meditate on the life and saving work of Jesus, we grow closer to God and are strengthened by His grace. The Lord God has given Mary many graces to pour out onto us. If we ask her for this grace, we will find that she is our mother and that Mary is always generous with her children.

Read: Genesis 3:16-21

Ask: Is there anything in these verses that show that God still loved Adam and Eve?

Answer: God clothed them.

Explain: God still loved Adam and Eve and would care for them, but it was now clear that they did not know how to truly love. They needed to learn about true, sacrificial love. When Adam and Eve sinned, they received what looked like “punishments”. Yet these “punishments” are important ways that God will teach Adam and Eve how to truly love.

Eve's pains in childbirth would be a sacrifice that she would suffer for the love of her children. Adam's struggle to till the soil and work for his family's food, shelter and safety, would be his way of sacrificing to provide for them. Through all of this they would learn true, sacrificial love.

Read: Genesis 3:22-24

Ask: Why does God make Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden and then place an angel with a sword to make sure they could never return?

Explain: God is not being mean or cruel to them; rather He does not want Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Life because if they do, they will forever remain in a state of sin, separated from God, never able to be close to Him again. Clearly, He cannot trust them not to be tempted to eat from it. Therefore, for their own protection, He has placed the mighty cherubim to guard the Tree of Life.

God the Father knew that He would send His Son, Jesus, to be the way for people to be close to Him again. It would take Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven for all mankind to once again be able to choose to live fully with God.

FAMILY CONVERSATION

Review Guidelines for Family Conversations:

- a. Respectfully listen to each family member as he/she is sharing his/her reflection
- b. Avoid interrupting or even correcting what another is saying (we're looking to listen, not critique).
- c. When each family member has had an opportunity to share, signal by raising your hand.
- d. Please continue to sit quietly while we wait for the other families to finish.

Questions:

What sacrifices does your family make for one another out of love?

Do mom and dad work outside and inside the home?

What acts of kindness or sacrifices do your family members do for one another?

How do you show one another love?

- a) First model by answering the questions and sharing from your life experiences
- b) Small group family sharing
- c) Allow for Large Group sharing (as time allows)

MISSION

First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

Second, Explain Activity

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- i. Read the USCCB explanations about the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy (links provided in week 2's hand-out).
- ii. Decide which Works of Mercy your family will do this Advent and make a Family Advent Plan.
- iii. Reach out to a grandparent(s) or senior adult(s) in your family/ community and ask them about their favorite memories of when they were growing up. Ask: What sacrifices did your family make for one another out of love? When you had your own children, what acts of kindness or sacrifices did your family members do for one another? How do you show love to family or friends now?
- iv. Be prepared to share about your Family Advent Plan and your Senior Sharing at the next gathering.

Last, Model for the Families

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Use the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy to model for the families by sharing your own Family Advent Plan, explaining that Works of Mercy first begin at home within our family. Works of Mercy give us opportunities to love one another with God's sacrificial love, and then to share that love by serving our neighbors. Tell families not to feel as if they have to do all of the Works of Mercy, because that's not practical. Some works they may already do, like praying for the living and the dead. That's great! Encourage them to keep doing those works and pick one or two more that will fit naturally into their family life to do for Advent. Next, tell the families about your Senior Sharing experience, explaining who the senior adult that you interviewed was, and what he/she shared about their favorite memories of when they were growing up.

REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

God our Father, loving and merciful, bring together and keep all of our families in the perfect unity of love and mutual support. Instill in each of us the spirit of understanding and affection for each other. Keep quarrels and bitterness far from us, and for our occasional failures please grant us your forgiveness and peace.

Strengthen the mutual love and affection of parents so that they may set a good example. Instill in our children self-respect and an awareness of Your love that they may respect and love others and grow in mature independence.

May the mutual affection and respect of our families be a sign of Christian life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Adapted from [My Catholic Life!](#)

SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 390:

The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms a primeval event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. Revelation gives us the certainty of faith that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents.

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (1964), no. 2:

The eternal Father, by a free and hidden plan of His own wisdom and goodness, created the whole world. His plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life. Fallen in Adam, God the Father did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” All the elect, before time began, the Father “foreknew and predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren.” He planned to assemble in the holy Church all those who would believe in Christ.

Pope St. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (1979), no. 8:

The Redeemer of the world! In him has been revealed in a new and more wonderful way the fundamental truth concerning creation to which the Book of Genesis gives witness when it repeats several times: “God saw that it was good.” The good has its source in Wisdom and Love. In Jesus Christ the visible world which God created for man--the world that, when sin entered, “was subjected to futility”--recovers again its original link with the divine source of Wisdom and Love. Indeed, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” As this link was broken in the man Adam, so in the Man Christ it was reforged.