

WEEK 1: DAYS 1-7

Opening Prayer

Father in heaven, we give you glory, and we love you. Thank you for sharing your Word with us; for giving us a clear vision of how you created this world and how we allowed sin to enter into it. Thank you for not abandoning us in our woundedness but always following us into the darkness so that you can be our light. Father, we give you thanks and praise. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Reflection with Scripture

- ☐ 1. Have you ever read the entire Bible? Do you read Scripture daily, or is this a new experience for you? What are some reasons you want to commit to listening to *The Bible in a Year*—what is your “why”?
- ☐ 2. Pope Benedict XVI writes that “God’s way of loving becomes the measure of human love.”¹ Whether or not we are called to marriage, we were created in love, to love. Do we measure how we love others—our spouse, friends, neighbors, fellow parishioners, strangers, and those in need—by the way God loves us?
- ☐ 3. Fr. Mike explains that before the Fall, God’s plan was for man to labor like him, to have leisure like him, and to love like him. In reflecting on your current routine, how are you fulfilling each of these three objectives? Are you lacking in one of these areas? What can you do to better live out each of these?

1. Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (December 25, 2005), 11, vatican.va.

- ❑ 4. After the Fall, Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God” (Genesis 3:8). What are some ways God seeks us in our day-to-day lives? Why might we be afraid to fully reveal ourselves to him? How can we better walk with him, with all our heart, mind, and soul exposed to his love?
 - ❑ 5. Psalm 136:1 reminds us that “his mercy endures for ever,” and Christ calls the merciful blessed. What are some ways we can extend mercy to others? The book of Job begins with extreme pain and loss, yet “in all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong” (Job 1:22). What is my first reaction to pain and loss?
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Weekly Challenge

If you don't know your Baptism date, contact the parish where you were baptized and ask for that information. Or ask a family member who may know the date. Write the date on the calendar, and when that day comes, celebrate it! Some ideas are attending Mass that day, asking for a special blessing from your parish priest, praying a Rosary, or having a special meal.

Group Activity

The floodwaters in Noah's story prefigure the waters of our Baptism and our new creation in Christ. Ask group members if they know the date they were baptized and look up what saint's feast day that lands on. Brainstorm ways to celebrate the day. On index cards, have each person in the group write one word or phrase that they associate with Baptism (for example, “new life,” “forgiveness,” “grace”). Afterward, invite each group member to share their word and why they chose it.

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Note of Hope

We are created in God's image and likeness. In him we move and live and have our being. He created us in love, for love, to love. He is our Divine Bridegroom and friend—he is our Savior. He knows every beat of our heart, every hair on our head, every heartache, every joy, every worry, every pain, every dream, every goal. We have no need to run and hide from the One who knows us so intimately, our Creator. This week, let us ask God to reveal where we resist “walking with him.” Let us remember that he is Mercy and Love. He is trustworthy, gentle, and kind.

SCRIPTURE VERSE TO REMEMBER

*“I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.”*

PSALM 104:33

Prayer Intentions

Response (R): *God the Father, King of Creation, King of my Heart, have mercy on us!*

For all marriages, that spouses may measure their love by God's way of loving: **R.**

That our passions, hobbies, and activities may all reflect God's creativity and light: **R.**

That we may always trust in God's goodness and promises: **R.**

That we may always make God's name known: **R.**

That in extending mercy we may receive his mercy: **R.**

When our pain and loss lead to bitterness and discouragement: **R.**

When we are tempted to hide ourselves from his ever-seeking love: **R.**

SAINT OF THE WEEK

Let us pray: Lord, thank you for the graces and blessings prepared for us this year in your Word. May we walk in the garden with you and allow you to tend and till our hearts.

St. André Bessette, through the intercession of your heavenly friend, St. Joseph, pray for us and all in need, especially those who are sick, marginalized, and in need of healing.

Feast Day: January 6

Catechism Connection

These paragraphs in the *Catechism* may be helpful for reflection on the Scripture read this week in *The Bible in a Year*: CCC 54–55, 293, 357, 362, 1426, 2176

Highlights from the *Catechism*:

- “God ... provides men with constant evidence of himself in created realities” (CCC 54).
- “The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual ... Man, whole and entire, is ... *willed* by God” (CCC 362).

Closing Prayer

Father in heaven, thank you so much for bringing us here. Thank you for speaking your Word to us. Thank you for revealing your heart to us as you do whenever we hear or read your Word. Lord, you enlighten our minds and enlighten our eyes. You give fire to our hearts and show us how to love. Help us to trust you this day and every day. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.