

WEEK 42 — THE MIDDLE OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Date: about AD 27-28

The Story: God works through Jesus to heal the sick, drive out demons, confront religious corruption, encourage the weak and the lowly, teach people how to live in God's kingdom, and bring hope to people who seek God. Some people follow Jesus faithfully; crowds surround him and a core of devoted disciples travels with him. Others look at him with skepticism, challenging the new teachings he brings. Who is Jesus, really? Is he genuine or a gifted imposter? If he really is from God, will the people listen to him and respond?

* Kids' readings may not align with the daily full readings. Parents, see the content ratings on the back page.

OCTOBER 16 MATTHEW 11-12

Today's reading deals largely with the question of faith: Who is Jesus? And if he is from God, will the people put their faith in him? John the Baptist wonders if Jesus is indeed the Messiah/Christ. Towns that have witnessed Jesus' miracles have nevertheless refused to repent. Jesus fulfills prophecy. Pharisees accuse Jesus of driving out demons only by the power of Beelzebul (a name for the devil). Pharisees and other religious teachers request a sign to prove Jesus' authority—but will he give them one?

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Matthew 11-12

Kids' Reading*: Matthew 13:24-58

OCTOBER 17 MATTHEW 13 • MARK 2

Today's reading from Matthew features a series of parables, most of which begin with the phrase, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." Jesus is teaching his followers about how things work under the rule of God: not everyone is faithful to God, God knows who his faithful people are, his kingdom starts small but grows to be great, and there will be both judgment for those who do not belong to the kingdom and glory for those who do. Moving to Mark's gospel, we revisit one of Jesus' early miracles and some of his early teachings.

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Matthew 13 • Mark 2

Kids' Reading*: Mark 4

OCTOBER 18 MARK 3-5

Today's reading sticks with Mark, again covering miracles and teachings of Jesus that we've read earlier. Notice Mark's fast-paced account of Jesus' ministry: his book is action-packed, focusing primarily on all that Jesus did. Mark 4:3-32 is a rare exception, as Mark shares some of Jesus' parables. Even here, though, they come quickly, one after another. Mark's quick pace emphasizes the power of Jesus' presence and ministry and the amazement of those who encounter him.

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Mark 3 • Mark 4:35 to 5:43

Kids' Reading*: Mark 5

OCTOBER 19 LUKE 6-7

Today's reading brings us back to the Gospel of Luke, who shares several stories of Jesus that are now familiar to us from Matthew and Mark. Even Luke 6:17-49 sounds familiar—but a little different, too. It's Jesus' Sermon on the Level Place (see 6:17), which is much like his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), but with minor changes; Jesus likely offered similar teachings everywhere he went, with slight changes to address

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different needs and audiences. Luke 7:11-17 and 7:36-50 are unique to Luke, reminding us that Jesus did and said far more than any one of our four Gospels records (see John 21:25).

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Luke 6:17-49 • Luke 7:11-50

Kids' Reading*: Luke 6

OCTOBER 20 LUKE 8-9

Today's reading begins with stories repeated from Matthew and Mark, then moves into some new material in Luke 9:7-56. This section brings us into the middle of Jesus' two-to-three-year ministry. He feeds over five thousand people miraculously, begins to foretell his future suffering, and experiences a glorious encounter with two great, long-gone prophets of Israel. Who is Jesus? In these events, his disciples begin to get a clearer picture of his identity—and a sobering sense of what evil people will do to him.

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Luke 8:40 to 9:62

Kids' Reading*: Luke 7:11-50

OCTOBER 21 LUKE 10-11

Today's reading combines elements both new and familiar, beginning with Jesus sending out 72 disciples, much as he sent out the Twelve in Matthew 10. His teaching to this group is similar. The famous parable of the good Samaritan is here; so is our first encounter with sisters Mary and Martha (watch for them later, in John 11). We hear Jesus' model prayer again, but with new teaching afterward. And notice Jesus' frustrations with the false religiosity of the Pharisees (Luke 11:37-54); Jesus will bring up these issues again shortly before his crucifixion.

Date: about AD 27

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Luke 10:1 to 11:13 • Luke 11:37-54

Kids' Reading*: Luke 9:10-42

OCTOBER 22 LUKE 12 • MATTHEW 14

Today's reading opens with new teachings (and some old) from Jesus in Luke 12. Notice his teaching about materialism and helping the poor (12:13-34); a godly view of wealth is very important in Luke's writings (including the book of Acts). In Matthew 14, we back up a little to hear the full story of the death of John the Baptist, and we revisit the stories of Jesus feeding the five thousand and walking on water (notice who else walks on water in Matthew's account).

Date: about AD 27-28

In a hurry? 10-minute reading: Luke 12 • Matthew 14

Kids' Reading*: Matthew 14

Parents' Guide

PG preview for young children

Mt 11:21-24 (T)

Mt 12:14 (V), 29 (V), 39-45 (T)

Mt 13:43 (V)

Mt 14:3-5 (V)

Mk 5:2-7 (T, V)

Mk 5:13 (T), 23-29 (T), 35 (T), 39 (T)

Lk 6:29 (V), 49 (T)

Lk 7:2 (T), 12-15 (T)

Lk 8:27-33 (T), 42-44 (T), 49-53 (T)

Lk 9:9 (V), 22 (V), 23-27 (T), 39 (T), 42 (T), 54 (V), 59-60 (T)

Lk 10:30 (V)

Lk 11:22 (V), 24-27 (T), 39 (T), 44 (T), 47-51 (T, V)

Lk 12:4-5 (T, V), 10 (T), 39 (V)

PG-13 preview for under age 13

Mt 14:8-12 (V)

R shocking, graphic, or disturbing none

C = Circumcision
N = Nudity
S = Sexuality
T = Dark/Sensitive Themes
V = Violence