



Family + Faith Session

Leader's Guide

KERYGMA

Overview of the Topic

Kerygma is the proclamation of the Gospel message of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The kerygma refers to the central teaching of our faith, that God loves us unconditionally and that love will never change or be taken back. As we come to learn who God is and how loved we are we want to share that Good News with others with joy and hope.

The Bible tells of God's love through the events of Salvation History. This love was first communicated through the beautiful gift of creation. When God created human beings, he called them "very good." Adam and Eve's chose disobedience and sin came into the world. This Original Sin brought suffering and death to human life, however, God's ultimate design gave humanity free will. We have the freedom to make choices for good to love God and others.

God's love was irrevocably communicated through Jesus, who became Incarnate as our Savior. To help us understand the unconditional love God the Father has for us, God sent his Son, Jesus, who died for us to save us from our sin. Jesus taught sin can be forgiven. Through the sacrifice of the cross Jesus atoned for our sins and made God's relationship with humanity right again.

Because of God's love and Jesus' sacrifice we know we can always be forgiven, and death is not the end of life. Through Jesus we can rise again to new life. We are offered the possibility to live with God forever in Heaven. Redemption is possible because of God's mercy.

The kerygma is the core message of God's love that redeemed and saved us through Jesus Christ. As Christians, in Baptism, we are transformed and given new life in Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we have the strength for discipleship. Jesus came to save us, and the kerygma is the message we proclaim about him. We believe God loves us, Jesus saved us through his Resurrection and the Risen Christ is with us in this life and eternal life in Heaven.

Overview of the Session

This plan offers options to do with families depending on your time, resources, and purpose of your family session(s).

The session begins inviting families to share an opening prayer.

Families will participate in an icebreaker so the members of the family can ponder God's love for them as well as for their extended family.

There is a suggested activity recalling Jesus' baptism. Families will read Scripture, Matthew 3:13-17, and discuss what it means for God to be well pleased with us. Families will have an activity to consider how each member of the family is pleasing to God and to imagine what God would say if writing to them.

Families will be invited to review the events of salvation history through an activity that guides them to read suggested Scripture passages to review characters and events that reveal God's love and saving grace in the Bible.

A guided discussion then allows the families to consider mercy and forgiveness in their life.

Finally, families can each develop their understanding of kerygma by creating an "elevator speech" that is a short, succinct and clear expression and imagine explaining the kerygma to another person.

An optional activity is provided to create a woven heart for their family to remind them of the kerygma and God's great love for them.

The session can conclude by reflecting on the activities they did to help them remember God's unconditional love and to consider how sacramentals in their home can be an ongoing reminder of God's love.

Hospitality / Fellowship

Invite families to take seats at tables and enjoy simple refreshments. This is a good time to invite families to share a table with another family and enjoy getting to know one another during this fellowship time.

INVITE: Kerygma

Welcome

Say: *[Personalize your "Welcome" using these or similar words]* We are so happy you're here. Today we will talk about God's love for us and how he gave us his Son for our salvation. There is a word in our faith that refers to the heart of the gospel message. It is called the kerygma. This refers to God's relationship with us, through creation, the fall of sin coming into the world through Adam and Eve's disobedience and God's salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Today we will do several activities together to help us think about God's great love for each of us and especially for your family. We encourage you to participate with an open heart to know in a deeper way God's love for each person in your family.

Opening Prayer

Invite families to begin this session praying the Apostles' Creed. You can have the prayer on a handout or on a PowerPoint slide so every person in the family can read or recite it together.

Say: *[using these or similar words]* We are going to begin this session praying the Apostle's Creed together. This prayer is considered a summary of the faith passed down from the apostles. As we pray it together, think of the many gifts God has given us because of love of us. Let us pray.

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

Icebreaker

Say: *[using these or similar words]* I invite the eldest person in the family to take the cross paper in your hand. Tell one thing that helps you know that God loves you. Then pass the cross to the next eldest person, inviting them to answer the question, and so on to the youngest person. **(about 3 minutes)**

Now set the cross on the table where several can write on it, and begin listing all the people in your family who God loves. This can include your extended family. It's

okay if the names are sideways, with several people writing at the same time. **(about 3-4 minutes)**

LIVING OUR FAITH

God loves you.

Invite families to open their bibles and read Matthew 3:13-17 or give them a handout with this Scripture citation on it.

Say: *[using these or similar words]* When Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan, God spoke from Heaven and said, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” When you were baptized, you were welcomed into God’s family and God’s love.

If God were to say about you, “This is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased,” what do you suppose he meant? He loves you unconditionally like a parent loves a child. What things about you might God say pleases him? Each person, take one of the “I am well pleased” papers and list your qualities, characteristics and loving acts – the things about you that please God. Avoid naming your talents, like being good at singing or playing soccer. Talk about who you are and how you treat other people and or use the gifts God gives you to love and care for others. **(4-5 minutes)**

I’ll bet you discovered there are a lot of things about you that please God.

Next, we invite one person from each family to come and get a piece of paper and an envelope for your family. Work as a family to write a letter to your family, from God, telling the things about your family that please him. Seal your letter in the envelope and address it to your family. Put it in the basket here. **(6-8 minutes)**

You can then either have them take it home or save it and mail it to them at a later date.

DISCOVER

Encountering God in His Word

What did Jesus do for us?

Say: *[using these or similar words]* Jesus taught us about how much God loves us. Many people were happy to listen to Jesus and understand his way of love, but some people were afraid of the new ideas he was teaching. They were afraid he would try to take over, so they forced him to carry a cross up a hill, and they nailed Jesus to the cross. He died that day. We call it Good Friday. Jesus showed us how much God loves us. He was willing to suffer and die. It was the only way we could understand how much God really loves us. Jesus died for everyone to save us from our sin.

The good news is that, after three days, Jesus rose from the dead! We call that Easter. We celebrate that he is the risen Christ who saved us from our sins!

Kerygma Unfolding Activity/Salvation History:

Let us “unfold” the events of Salvation History that help us understand the kerygma. Take the 8 ½ X 14” paper and fold it backwards on the first column line. Then fold forward, back, and forward on the next three lines, forming an accordion fold.

Let’s start with the first panel – Adam and Eve. There’s a key vocabulary word to discover and fill in as we study the story of God’s creation of people.

Let’s open our Bibles to Genesis 1 – that’s the very first book of your Bible. An adult, please read verse 27, and then 29–31 to your family. **(2 minutes)**

Next, read the rest of that first panel to your family, taking time for each person to answer the questions in turn. **(4 minutes)**

There are four more panels, each important to the big picture. Spend some time with your family reading the headings, figuring out the vocabulary word to fill in, reading the Scripture passage, and reading and discussing the reflection after each. Let’s take some time on this now. **(5 – 30 minutes, depending on schedule)**

It’s okay if you didn’t get through all of them right now, but we invite you to take this home and continue unfolding the story of Salvation History in the weeks ahead.

How does that change my life?

Say: *[using these or similar words]* Jesus taught us how to love God. He was loving and kind, and from him we can learn how to be loving in our lives. But sometimes we choose to act in ways that are not loving and kind. Our words or actions might hurt someone’s feelings or injure their body. But God keeps on loving us. When we are sorry for what we said or did, we receive God’s mercy and forgiveness.

**Lead this discussion or put it on a screen for all to see, or hand the discussion questions to families on paper.*

Mercy can be defined as undeserved love and forgiveness. When have you experienced this? How did you respond?

It is impossible to live in relationships without sometimes having conflicts and/or disappointing and hurting each other, as a family discuss:

Is it OK to talk about these hurts in your family?

How do you start these kinds of conversations?

What is a helpful way to respond when someone starts a conversation like that with you? **(5 minutes)**

How do I live because of the kerygma?

Say: *[using these or similar words]* We learned a great deal today about how God created us, loves us, and sent his son to redeem us for our sins. We call this the “kerygma.”

As a family, write a short paragraph – 2-3 sentences, a sort of “elevator speech,” if you will, explaining the kerygma to someone unfamiliar with the word. Just mention key points about how God created and loves us and how he showed his love through Jesus Christ who saved us through his death and Resurrection. Can you capture the main points in a short speech? **(5 minutes)**

Find one other family; take turns sharing your speech. **(4-5 minutes)**

Woven Heart Pockets:

Say: *[using these or similar words]* We learned today that God created us and loves us. We know that sin separates us from Him, but God always forgives us and shows mercy when we are sorry for what we did or said. We know that he sent his son, who died to save us from our sins. How do I live because of the kerygma?

Let’s do a project about that. You have two colored paper pieces. Fold each one in half and cut on the outside curved line. Keep them folded in half and cut on the lines so the slits go nearly the whole length of the long oval shape. Open them back up again and turn the papers so the letters and numbers are face down.

So, how do I live because of the kerygma? For one thing, I know I’m loveable. We each are.

Invite each person to write one or two things on the strips that make them so loveable. Family members, chime in and tell them, because you know! **(3-4 minutes)**

Next, we’ll ask two people to fold the ovals in half again and work on weaving them into a heart-shaped pocket – *the directions are on the table –while the others take the paper hearts and write ways they show God’s love to others or ways they will show God’s love to others. Tuck one paper heart from each person into the heart pocket.

**There is a video in the PowerPoint slideshow showing how to weave the hearts. This may be helpful for the directors to know, or you can show it to the participants.*

Hang this on your refrigerator or place it on your dining table to remind you of the kerygma, God’s great love for you, and the salvation of Jesus Christ, as you make loving choices during your week – at home, at school, and at work. **(8 minutes)**

Wrap-up

Say: *[these or similar words]* We hope this session gave you an opportunity to remember God's love for humanity, starting with creation and how God ultimately saved us by sending his Son to teach us how to love others and to save us from our sins. Through today's activities and discussion, we hope you gained more understanding and meaning to the kerygma and that leads you to develop and strengthen a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

During the weeks ahead, refer back to your folded Salvation History, elevator speech, paper hearts... as you grow closer to Jesus. Take time to pray and share with God what is in your heart.

We hope the things we have talked about today will help your family grow closer to Jesus and understand that you are wrapped in God's unconditional love. When we choose to ignore him and sin, he forgives us and lovingly welcomes us back to him.

Extend the reflection

Say: *[using these or similar words]* You might have things in your home to remind you how to live and remind you of Jesus Christ and his love for you. Here's a brief checklist: Bible, cross, crucifix, Holy water, Rosary, statue, Holy cards, Baptism candle... of course there are others. Which of these do you have in your home? Do they hold a place of honor? Are there items you might like to add to your home that you don't have already? Talk about this with your family. Can you add other ideas to our list? **(2 minutes)**

These items, called sacramentals, remind us about God and inspire us to lead holy lives. Did you mention other things we can add to our list? *Invite them to share.*

Perhaps you will gather more of these to your home in the coming weeks.

Closing Prayer

Conclude the session praying the Glory Be (Doxology)

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning
is now, and ever shall be
world without end.
Amen.