God’s Big Story: Upside-Down Kingdom

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| scripture focus |
| Matthew 5-7 |

big picture

Mark 1:22 and Matthew 7:28-29 say that Jesus taught with real authority – quite unlike the teachers of the law – and that people were amazed when they heard him. Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 gives us a glimpse of just how radical and amazing his teachings were. Jesus starts off by describing the new, upside-down kingdom he’s inaugurating – a world in which the happy, blessed people are actually those who are poor, who mourn, who don’t have power, who are mistreated – because they are close to God’s heart, and will be abundantly filled. He calls us to address God as our Father, to use simple words when we pray, to ask in expectation of receiving, to let go of all our worries and trust that God will take care of us. And Jesus calls us to really hard things, as well – to love our enemies, to pray for those who mistreat us. He closes his sermon with one final astounding claim – that his words and his teachings are strong and robust. They have authority, and we can trust them enough to build our lives on them. We’re invited to claim Jesus’ words for our own, to live them out in our actions, to follow Jesus’ invitation into his new kingdom of love and life and fullness.

|  | storybooks | bible readings |
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| read aloud | *Jesus Storybook Bible:* “How to Pray”, “The Singer”, p.222-235  *Favorite Parables:* “The House on the Rock”, p.84-109 | Matthew 5:1-16, 43-48; 6:5-14, 24-34; 7:7-12, 24-29  Luke 12:22-32 |
| discuss/ ask | What do you think is the strangest or most surprising thing that Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount? What do you think is the best or most wonderful thing he said? What is the hardest for you to follow? Why?  If God knows what we need even before we ask, then why do we pray?  What do you worry about? How do you feel when you worry? Is there anything good that comes from worry? Why do you think we do it?  Have you ever been able to let go of your worry and trust God to take care of you? What happened?  Why do you think that hearing and following Jesus’ teachings is like building your house on a rock? Can you think of a time in which following Jesus and Jesus’ teachings helped you and kept you standing firm? | |
| do together | Jesus says that since God takes such good care of the flowers and the birds, then we can be sure that God will take good care of us, since we are even more valuable to God. Take some time together to feed birds or to take care of flowers. If you don’t have a birdfeeder, you can spread peanut butter on a pinecone or toilet paper roll, roll it in birdseed, and hang it outside. Enjoy observing together and talk about how God cares for creation and for us. | |