



CATHOLIC DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR FAMILIES OF YOUTH

DISCOVER THE SAVIOR  
WHEN HE WAS A CHILD.

the YOUNG MESSIAH

IN THEATERS MARCH 11



# The Young Messiah



## Catholic Discussion Guide for Families of Youth

This guide is designed to help families of youth experience and reflect upon the movie, The Young Messiah. Together, you will prepare to watch the movie by considering your life experience and key Scriptures that are featured. After watching the movie, you can reflect on key themes developed in the story and will be invited to continue your exploration of Scripture.

### PREPARATION SESSION

#### GETTING READY

- You will be reflecting on Scriptures as part of their preparation to watch the movie. It would be helpful to have one copy of the Bible for each person, preferably of the same translation.
- Provide a copy of this guide for each person.
- Access resources for The Young Messiah at this site: <http://youngmessiahresources.com>

#### GETTING STARTED

Today we will be watching the movie The Young Messiah. This is a story rooted in Scripture and based on history that imagines a year in the boyhood of Jesus. Let's take a few minutes to remember our own childhood as a way to get ready. Below are some questions that will help us remember some things about ourselves from when we were younger. –Try and remember back to when you were five to ten years old. As a family, we can help each other and add ideas. What were your favorite activities?

- What words do you think people used to describe you when you were a child?
- What are some things about what you were like as a child that are still true about you now?
- What is different now about what you understand about yourself then when you were a child?

Allow several minutes for sharing.

Now that you have shared on these questions, consider the life of Jesus as a child of seven.

- What do think his favorite activities were?
- What words do you think people used to describe Jesus when he was seven?

- What are some things about Jesus at seven that were also true about his as an adult?
- What do you think was different about Jesus at seven than he was as an adult?

Allow several minutes for sharing.

Let's review a few important things to remember.

- Jesus was fully God and fully human.<sup>1</sup> We can't know or fully understand how these two natures existed together. But we hear in the Gospel of Luke that "...Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man." Many who have studied this would say that as a human baby and child, Jesus may have noticed that he was different from others, but over time as he grew up, he also grew in his understanding of his identity as the Son of God.<sup>2</sup>
- Imagine what it must have been like being Mary and Joseph and parenting the young Jesus. This must have presented some challenges for Jesus and for his parents.
- We know from history and from Scriptures that among these challenges would have been concerns for Jesus' safety. The area that we now call Israel and Palestine was occupied by the Roman Empire who used ruthless soldiers and a local puppet government to create order and to squash enemies. Anyone who threatened the current government status would have been persecuted and would likely have been killed.
- We need to remember the amazing and almost incomprehensible love God has for us. God chose to become human through his Son Jesus so that we would be saved and that we would know how to be faithful to God. It is also comforting to know that Jesus was fully human, which means that he experienced everything that we experience except for sin. We can imagine that like us, Jesus was sometimes physically sick, felt rejection and sadness, and experienced the pain of loss. Because he was fully human, we know that we can turn to Jesus with everything in our lives, because he knows us and loves us.

Let's look at some of the Scriptures that will be referred to in the movie. Divide these Scripture stories among your family members.

- The Annunciation – Luke 1:26-38
- The Nativity and Epiphany – Matthew 2:1-12
- The Flight into Egypt – Matthew 2:13-15
- The Killing of the Innocents – Matthew 2:16-18
- The Return from Egypt – Matthew 2:19-2

Read the Scriptures and discuss what you notice. Prepare to share with each other about the reading. Summarize the reading and answer these questions: What is happening in the story? and What does this tell us about who Jesus is?

- The Annunciation—Mary receives a message from an angel who tells her that she will give birth to a baby. The baby will be the Son of God.
- The Epiphany—Jesus is born in a manger. Three wise men traveled from the East to honor him. King Herod, the puppet king of the Roman Empire, was threatened by this baby and asked the wise men to return and tell him where the baby is. They receive a message in a dream not to go back to Herod.



- The Flight into Egypt—Joseph receives a warning in a dream that Herod is seeking to kill Jesus. Joseph, Mary and Jesus escape to Egypt.
- The Killing of the Innocents—Herod is angry when he realizes that he was tricked by the wise men. He orders his men to kill all of the children under the age of two in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas.
- The Return from Egypt—Joseph receives another dream in which an angel tells him to return home.

What do you notice about these stories? Let's take a few minutes to share with each other. Allow several minutes for sharing.

Consider these ideas:

- Notice the importance of dreams and of listening to the messengers of God.
- Notice the different ways that people respond to God's messengers and to Jesus:
- Mary and Joseph trust God and listen to him.
- The wise men honor and adore Jesus. They also trust the message of their dream.
- Herod fears Jesus and wants to kill him.

## ENDING WITH PRAYER

We know that this movie comes from the imagination of the author. She provides us with this story to help us think about what Jesus might have been like at age seven. More importantly, we have the opportunity to look at the choices people make in this story, especially in response to meeting Jesus. We also have the chance to ask ourselves, who Jesus was at seven, but for the sake of our faith, who is Jesus to us now?

Let us join in prayer: In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit

*Loving and all-knowing God,*

*You have been with us for our whole lives.*

*You want us to know you, to know that we are loved, and to follow your ways.*

*Thank you for giving us Jesus.*

*Help us to open our eyes and see him in new ways so that we can grow as his disciples.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*

## REFLECTING ON THE YOUNG MESSIAH

### GETTING READY

- Provide a copy of this guide for each person.
- Provide index cards and pens or pencils, one per person.
- Prepare a simple prayer space using a small table, a cloth, a Bible, and a candle.
- Ask one of your family members to proclaim Luke 7:1-10.
- To prepare yourselves for the discussion about the centurion, consider viewing this video:
- Lisa Hendey—Jesus and the Centurion: The Decision
- Have a computer and monitor ready to view the film scene.
- You will need internet access to view or download the video segment of the film that is available at this location: *The Decision* - <https://vimeo.com/147394678>

### GETTING STARTED

Now that we have viewed the film, let's talk about what we saw:

- What did you notice in the story?
- What surprised you?
- What feelings did you experience in watching the film?
- What do you think are the important parts of the story?
- What does this story tell us about being someone who meets Jesus and wants to follow him?

This story reminds us of an important truth that we know by faith: those who meet and know Jesus are changed by the experience. What are some examples from the story in this film?

Allow several minutes for sharing.

Consider: Cleopas, Jesus' uncle who experienced being healed in the Jordan river; the women attacked on the road who was invited to join the family in traveling to Nazareth; the blind Rabbi who taught Jesus about the killing of the innocents and then was cured of his blindness; and the centurion who chooses to free Jesus.

Let's look closer at the centurion. In this story, the centurion first meets Jesus as he travels from Egypt to Nazareth. Jesus is on the road when men attack Roman soldiers. In this first meeting, the centurion prevents a soldier from harming Jesus. The centurion is then charged by Herod to find and kill the child Jesus. He meets Jesus in the temple. Let's view this scene again.

Play the scene from *The Decision* at <https://vimeo.com/147394678>.



Let's talk together about the centurion.

- What do you think the centurion was feeling when he met Jesus in the temple?
- What was his reaction to the miracle of the return of sight to the blind rabbi?
- Why do you think the centurion chose not to kill Jesus?

Allow several minutes for sharing.

- The centurion had killed children before, but after meeting Jesus, he chose to free him. How would you describe the change in the centurion?
- The centurion met Jesus, became aware of who he really was in the miracle of the return of sight to the blind rabbi. He felt that Jesus read him and knew his heart. This led him to change and to choose life over death.
- This story happens frequently in the Gospels. People meet Jesus, grow to know who he really is and feel that he knows them. This can lead to awareness of our sin and our need to change to become more faithful.<sup>3</sup>
- We meet Jesus in many ways. We meet him in prayer, in other people, in the sacraments, especially Eucharist. We meet him in Scripture, in the act of doing service or helping others. We meet him in the community of faith. This can lead us to change our hearts and change our lives so that we can follow him more closely.

Let's reflect privately on these two questions, recording our ideas on an index card.

- What are the places or occasions that I meet Christ?
- How am I feeling called to change and grow at this time?

Allow a few minutes for reflection.

You may share your responses but only share what you are comfortable sharing.

## **ENDING WITH PRAYER**

Read Luke 7:1-10, The Healing of the Centurion's Servant.

- The Young Messiah is a story rooted in Scripture and history. The author imagined Jesus as a child of seven. We can imagine that the centurion in the author's story could be the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant. Notice the faith of the centurion; he was a man who knew Jesus' power to heal. The centurion was also humble; he did not feel worthy to have Jesus come to his home.
- In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we pray prior to receiving Eucharist, using the words from this Scripture. We make this prayer because, like the centurion, we humbly acknowledge God's power. We know that he can heal us; he can help us change and grow! Take a moment of silence to recall the ways that you meet Christ and the ways that you need to change.

Allow one or two minutes for quiet reflection.

Let' pray this prayer together:

*"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."*<sup>4</sup>

## CONTINUING THE REFLECTION

### SCRIPTURE STUDY

Many of the scenes that the author imagined in this story point to the actions of Jesus described in Scriptures when he is older. As a family, you may wish to follow-up on these reflections by reading and studying these Scriptures:

- Jesus Lost in the Temple, Luke 2:41-52
- The Baptism in the Jordan, Matthew 3:1-17
- The Raising of Lazarus, John 11:1-46
- The Healing of the Blind Man, John 9:1-41

### SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS

Invite family members to post their reflection to the Scripture passages suggested in this guide using hashtag #theyoungmessiah. They could also connect their post to throw back Thursday by including a picture of themselves when they were between five and ten years old, including hashtag #tbt.

<sup>1</sup> See the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #464 and 467.

<sup>2</sup> See the Catechism of the Catholic Church, #470 and 472.

<sup>3</sup> See the story of the call of Simon Peter, Luke 5:1-11, or the Woman at the Well, John 4:1-42.

<sup>4</sup> The Roman Missal, English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011. #132, page 669.



Content Contributions Made by: Tom East and The Center for Ministry Development



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# the YOUNG MESSIAH

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"Captivating, inspiring and deeply moving."  
—Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Boston

"Succeeds beautifully in imagining the mystery."  
—Steve McEveety, CEO, Mpower Pictures, Producer of "The Passion of the Christ"

"It's a remarkable movie that is tightly paced, excellently scripted and well-filmed."  
—Bob Waliszewski, Focus on the Family

"Moving, inspiring, and hope-filled. For everyone who believes that Love wins. A MUST SEE!"  
—Rev. Gabriel Salguero, President, National Latino Evangelical Coalition

"I'm telling you, you've never seen it done this way before....You will want to take your friends--the conversations will be incredible! It is SO SO AWESOME!!!"  
—Christine Caine, President, A21

## ABOUT THE FILM

Remaining true to the character of Jesus revealed in the Bible, The Young Messiah is an inspirational story for the whole family about the childhood of the Savior. When the mystery of Jesus's divinity begins to unfold in His childhood, He turns to His parents for guidance. But Mary and Joseph, in an effort to protect their child, are afraid to reveal all they know. How do you explain the ways of the world to the Creator of the world? How do you teach the Teacher? How do you help the Savior who came to save you? Follow the young Messiah as He and His family take the dangerous journey from Egypt to Nazareth and on to Jerusalem, where His true identity and profound destiny are fulfilled.

For more info text the letters "TYM" to 313131

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