

# FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families



## WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

Group
Real. Bold. Love.

FAITHWEAVER NOW®

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FAITHWEAVER NOW

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's




**Relational**
Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

**Experiential**
What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

**Applicable**
The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

**Learner-based**
Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

Group

**group.com/sunday-school**

**FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Parent Handbook, Winter**
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# The future of Sunday school + family ministry is NOW.

No doubt about it, the world is changing. Families used to go to church every week. Kids used to have longer attention spans. Teachers used to have more time to prepare. And didn't our budgets used to be bigger?

Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date. But there's one thing that's never changed: the need to grow families closer to Jesus.

That's why we created FaithWeaver NOW®, and it's different from anything you've ever seen before!

### It combines Sunday school with family ministry.

Sure, you've seen Sunday school aimed at families. But FaithWeaver NOW actually hits the target by having everyone in the family learning about the same Scripture each week.

### It's simpler and easier.

Sometimes change is a wonderful thing. Gone are the days when you needed to spend hours preparing your lessons and hunting for supplies. FaithWeaver NOW will have you and your team ready to go in a snap.

### It's made for NOW.

Life is complicated and full of distractions. FaithWeaver NOW keeps faith on track through even the most frenzied lifestyles.

### What makes FaithWeaver NOW the perfect curriculum for TODAY's church?

- Families learn the same Bible passage in age-appropriate ways.
- Kids don't just hear the Word. They experience it.
- Simple and easy lessons fit even the busiest lives.
- Kids see God in their everyday world.
- The Scope & Sequence goes through the Bible every three years.
- You can customize it however you like, with both print and digital versions.



Create a vibrant family ministry that's new…that's wow…that's NOW. FaithWeaver NOW gives you a fresh strategy for being more successful than ever in bringing families closer to Jesus.

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
Group Publishing, Inc.

Welcome to the

# FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbook!

First of all, thank you for everything you do as parents. The fact that you're reading this shows how much you care about your kids. You want to be a good parent. A Christ-like parent. It's the toughest and most important job in the world, and with **FaithWeaver NOW Parent** we're going to help you do it even better.

You'll learn together with—and from—other parents who wrestle with the same issues you do. Together, you'll work through those issues as parents and give each other brand-new insights into how to weave faith into your family's life. You'll have fun learning together. You'll discover things you never knew about your children, about each other, and about God. You'll laugh together. You'll probably cry together, too. But most importantly, you'll discover how to weave faith into your families and help your kids walk with God for a lifetime.

Because it's FaithWeaver NOW, you and your kids will explore the same Scripture each week. And while your kids are digging deeper into God's Word and discovering how it applies to them, you'll look at those same passages, seeing how they apply to the particular issues you face with your kids and learning how to have confident conversations with your kids about those issues. As you talk more with your kids about their relationship with God, you'll connect with them in ways you never imagined.

Here's what you'll find in your FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbook—including how to use each piece to get the most out of each week:

### BIBLE BACKGROUND

This is a more in-depth look at the week's Bible passage. Use it to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word.

### WEAVING FAITH INTO FAMILIES

This brief devotion will help you think through how this week's lesson applies to your family and how to pray for them this week.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These are the questions you'll go through as a group, including the specific passages you'll look at. Use this page to follow along during the lesson.

### NOTES

Use this space to write your prayers, thoughts, discoveries, and great ideas from other parents.

### INSIGHT FOR PARENTS

Each week, you get a hands-on idea to take what you've learned and share with your kids.

### FAITH TALK STARTER

These quick tips will help you have confident conversations about faith with your kids. Use one, or use them all.

### PRAYER STARTER

You've learned a lot today, and you can't wait to share it with your kids. But you know you need God's help. Use this prayer-starter to talk to God. There's a little extra room to write out your prayers, if you'd like.

So again, welcome to the world of **FaithWeaver NOW Parent!** May God bless your journey together—as parents and as faithweavers!

# John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus Mark 1:1-8



▶Bible Point
We prepare our hearts for Jesus.

Key Verse
"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

## Jesus Brings Good News

Mark saw Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection as the beginning of the gospel. The word *gospel*, derived from the Old English *godspel*, means "good news."

## Prophets Foretold About Jesus

As Mark began his Gospel, he launched into a quotation from the Old Testament. By connecting what he was saying about Jesus with the words of the prophets, Mark built validity for his own message in the minds of his Jewish readers.

Some question why Mark said the quotation is from Isaiah when in reality the first part is from Malachi 3:1. Mark is mentioning together two quotations on the same topic, and crediting both to Isaiah would have been acceptable for Mark's audience.

By using the quotation from Isaiah in Mark 1:3, Mark emphasized the kingly nature of Jesus. In those days, a servant often traveled ahead of a king to alert people that the king was coming.

## John the Baptist Comes Before Jesus

The last half of this passage shows that John the Baptist did what was prophesied in the Old Testament: He came to prepare the way—more specifically, the people—for Jesus' coming. As people repented in response to John's preaching and confessed their sins, their hearts were prepared to accept their coming King.

John the Baptist's choice of clothing was not accidental: He likely was identifying himself with the prophet Elijah, who dressed the same way (2 Kings 1:8). His was the clothing of

the poor, and his food was also that of the very poor. John was humbling himself, knowing how great the coming Jesus would be. In those days, it was the job of the lowest servant to untie a visitor's sandals and wash his feet. John let people know that as eloquent and persuasive as his preaching might be, he was the lowest of the low in comparison with the glory of the coming Savior, Jesus.



## WEAVING FAITH INTO FAMILIES

There's always so much to do before Christmas. But Jesus cares more about our hearts than about gifts and decorations. We can prepare our hearts by turning from actions and attitudes that are unworthy of those who call Jesus friend and Lord. What do you need to turn from? Pray about that as you prepare to welcome Jesus by living a life worthy of him.

**You can write your prayer here.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1 GETTING STARTED

**QUESTION 1**
In this experience, how did it help to have someone prepare the way for you?

**QUESTION 2**
What's one way that your parents helped prepare you for life?

**QUESTION 3**
What's one thing your kids are anticipating this week? How can you help prepare them for it?

### 2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

**Read:** Mark 1:1-8

**QUESTION 4**
As you created and shared this experience, what did you learn about what it means to "prepare the way for the Lord"?

**QUESTION 5**
Tell about a time you made your heart ready for Jesus, and describe the difference it made.

**QUESTION 6**
What's the top thing you're doing with your kids to prepare their hearts for Jesus?

### 3 WEAVING FAITH INTO FAMILIES

**Read:** Psalm 51:10

**QUESTION 7**
What was it like to "turn" in repentance toward Jesus? What could this look like in the way you live?

**QUESTION 8**
How does turning away from real sin affect your life?

**QUESTION 9**
What's one thing you can do this week to help your kids turn away from sin and toward God?

## Insight for Parents

One at a time, ask your kids to stand and close their eyes. For 30 seconds, direct each child to follow you around the room by listening to your voice. Then switch roles, allowing your children to lead you around the room with your eyes closed. After everyone has done this, talk about what it means to make our hearts ready for Jesus and how we can prepare the way for friends to meet Jesus. Pray together, taking time to admit sins and asking for God's help.

## Faith Talk Starter

**Tell about a time a special guest came to your home.** Maybe it was the first time you invited your in-laws to see your new house, or perhaps you had your pastor over for dinner. Talk with your children about how you prepared for your special guest. Share things you might do again or things you would do differently the next time you invite a guest into your home. Ask your kids to recall how they help get ready for guests. With your children, think about how you would get ready if you knew Jesus was your special guest. Talk about how getting ready for Jesus to visit your home is similar to or different from getting your heart ready for Jesus.

## Prayer Starter

What sins do you regularly notice in your kids? Ask God to grant you patience as you try to help them learn to turn to God and away from sin.

**Notes** Write your prayers, ideas, and other thoughts here.

FAITHWEAVER NOW®
Weaving faith into today's families

# WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

The FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbook weaves transformative experiences into every lesson and includes activities that help parents make the Bible unforgettable for their families.

## *This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:*

| | BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE | KEY VERSE | BIBLE POINT |
|---|---|---|---|
| WEEK 1 | John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus (Mark 1:1-8) | "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). | We prepare our hearts for Jesus. |
| WEEK 2 | God Dwells With Us (John 1:1-14) | "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). | Jesus is God. |
| WEEK 3 | Jesus Is Born (Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20) | "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). | Jesus was born for us. |
| WEEK 4 | Faithful People Thank God for Jesus (Luke 2:22-40) | "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name" (Psalm 100:4). | We thank God for Jesus. |
| WEEK 5 | Wise Men Find Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12) | "For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations" (Psalm 100:5). | Jesus deserves our worship. |
| WEEK 6 | John Baptizes Jesus (Mark 1:4-11) | "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). | God sent Jesus. |
| WEEK 7 | Jesus Surprises Nathanael (John 1:43-51) | "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me" (Psalm 139:1). | Jesus knows all about us. |
| WEEK 8 | Disciples Follow Jesus (Mark 1:14-20) | " 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men' " (Mark 1:17). | Follow Jesus. |
| WEEK 9 | Jesus Demonstrates His Authority (Mark 1:21-28) | "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). | Jesus is all-powerful. |
| WEEK 10 | Jesus Heals, Prays, and Preaches (Mark 1:29-39) | "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). | Jesus cares for us. |
| WEEK 11 | Jesus Calms a Storm (Mark 4:35-41) | "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). | We turn to Jesus when we're afraid. |
| WEEK 12 | Four Friends Help a Paralyzed Man (Mark 2:1-12) | "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). | Jesus forgives us. |
| WEEK 13 | Jesus Heals the Blind Man (Mark 10:46-52) | "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy" (Titus 3:5). | We have faith in Jesus. |

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