

FAITHWEAVER NOW®

Weaving faith into today's families



WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL

PARENT LEADER GUIDE

Group
Real. Bold. Love.

FAITHWEAVER NOW

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Group resources really work!

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.

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group.com/sunday-school

FaithWeaver NOW® Bible Curriculum, Parent Leader Guide, Winter
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* Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend shifting lessons as needed so Lesson 3 lines up with Christmas.

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Even the Sunday school Bible curriculum you used just a couple of years ago is already out of date.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.

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

LESSON	WHAT PARENTS DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	**Go Before** *(about 15 min.)* Take turns leading and following a partner, and then discuss what it means to "prepare the way."		
2 Bible Exploration	**Prepare the Way** *(about 25 min.)* Illustrate John the Baptist based on the description in Mark 1:1-8.	Bibles, paper, markers	
3 Weaving Faith Into Families	**Turn** *(about 20 min.)* Mentally walk through a typical day, turning away from sin and toward God.	Bible, music player and music (optional)	
4 Lasting Impressions	**Daily Challenge** *(about 5 min.)* Discuss how to apply God's Word.		
	Weaving Faith at Home *(about 2 min.)* Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text *within the lesson is spoken text.*



▶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).

Weaving Faith Into Families

Parents will prepare their hearts for Jesus and commit to help their kids do the same.

Every activity incorporates the FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbook—make sure each parent has one!

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus

Mark 1:1-8

BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

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.

The Jesus Connection

At Christmas, we anticipate the birth of Jesus. His birth, death, and resurrection make our lives in heaven possible. There is always 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 distract us from Jesus. What do you need to turn from? You can write your prayer here.

1 GETTING STARTED

Go Before

What You'll Do

As parents arrive, greet them warmly.

Say: **Find a partner, and share how your week went with your kids.** Give everyone a minute to discuss.

Ask:

- **What does it mean to "prepare the way" for someone?** Take responses from a few parents.

Say: **Let's take turns preparing the way for one another. With your partner, stand face to face and choose who will be Partner A and who will be Partner B. A's, you'll close your eyes and follow as your partner leads you on a walk around the room. B's, you'll walk in front of your partner and, without touching, keep him or her moving for 60 seconds before trading roles. Go!**

Call time after a minute, and have partners switch. After another minute, have pairs join with another pair to discuss Questions 1 through 3 from their FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbooks.

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?

Allow time, and then ask people to share highlights from their discussions with the whole group.

Say: **Our parents prepared us for our adult lives, and we're working to prepare our kids to live lives that please Jesus. Today we're going to look at how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus and discover how ▶ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR JESUS.**

Prepare the Way Supplies

Bibles
paper
markers

2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Prepare the Way

What You'll Do

Have parents stay in their groups of four. Hand out a Bible, a piece of paper, and markers to each group.

Say: **Choose someone from your group to read aloud Mark 1:1-8. Then, using the paper and markers, work together to illustrate the verses. Include anything you think would help your kids understand how John prepared the way for Jesus. You have 12 minutes to work, and then you'll present your illustration to the rest of us.**

After 12 minutes, ask people from each group to explain their illustrations.

Say: **In your groups, discuss Questions 4 through 6 from your handbooks. You'll have eight minutes for this.**

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?

After eight minutes, ask volunteers to share highlights of their group discussion.

Say: **John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by announcing his arrival, baptizing people, and urging them to repent of their sins and seek forgiveness. Preparing our hearts for Jesus includes welcoming him into our daily lives and repenting, or turning away from, our sins. We need Jesus to help us fully turn from sin. As important as it is to prepare our kids for earthly life, it's even more important to prepare them to have a loving, lasting relationship with Jesus. Let's take a closer look now at some practical ways that ▶ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR JESUS.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO FAMILIES

Turn

What You'll Do

Ask someone to read aloud the Key Verse, Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Say: **Today we've looked at what it means to prepare the way for someone and how Mark shows John the Baptist doing that for Jesus. Today's Key Verse gives us a clue about what John the Baptist preached in the wilderness. Let's take a moment to look at what it means to turn away from sin and toward a "pure heart." Stand up and close your eyes. Take a mental walk through your typical day. Thinking of what you just heard from Psalm 51:10, consider situations that might be obstacles to your relationship with Jesus, like office gossip or inappropriately expressed anger at your kids. See yourself turning from that sin and turning to Jesus; physically turn your body each time. You have five minutes for this activity.**

You might play some quiet praise music while parents do this activity.

After five minutes, say: **Form groups of three, and discuss Questions 7 through 9 from your handbooks. You'll have 10 minutes for this.**

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?

Allow time, and then ask a representative from each trio to share insights with the whole group.

Say: **Our Key Verse, Psalm 51:10, was written by King David, who turned back to God after committing some life-altering sins. That's just like what John said to do. We can follow David's example by turning away from sin in our daily lives and asking God to give us pure hearts. Each day, ▶ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR JESUS to remove our desires for sin—and we can help our kids do the same thing.**

Turn
Supplies

Bible
music player and music (optional)

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenge

What You'll Do

Say: **Today we learned that ▶ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR JESUS. Your Daily Challenge this week is to use the "turning" experience from our last activity with your kids. Take a few minutes to talk to a partner about what this challenge might look like in daily life. Be as specific as you can about how you'll help your kids turn from sin and turn to Jesus.** Allow time.

Say: **Let's stand in a circle and close in prayer, using Psalm 51:10.**

After participants form a circle, say: **Imagine you're holding in your hand what you'll do differently this week; then hold that hand to your heart. I'll start by praying the first phrase of Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a pure heart, O God..." and then we'll take turns praying around the circle. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, just say "pass."**

When all who wish to have prayed, close by saying: **Create in us pure hearts as parents, O God, and help us create pure hearts in our kids. Amen.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Say: **Your kids should have a take-home page from this week's lesson to show you. It has their Daily Challenges for this week and ideas for weaving faith at home as a family. Please help your kids follow through with their Daily Challenges. Finally, please use your FaithWeaver NOW Parent Handbook as a resource to grow your own faith in God and for ideas to help your kids grow in theirs.**

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Thank parents for coming, and wish them well in weaving faith into their families.

FAITHWEAVER NOW®
Weaving faith into today's families

WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL PARENT LEADER GUIDE

FaithWeaver NOW is for today's Sunday school teachers. It's developed by real Sunday school teachers, examined by real ministry leaders, and tested and approved by thousands of churches so you get great lessons that work with today's families.

This quarter you'll explore these Bible passages:

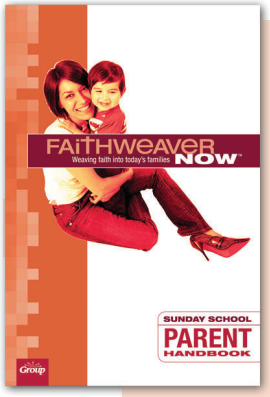
	BIBLE CONTENT/SCRIPTURE	KEY VERSE	BIBLE POINT
WEEK 1	John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus (Mark 1:1-8)	"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).	We prepare our hearts for Jesus.
WEEK 2	God Dwells With Us (John 1:1-14)	"The Word became flesh and made 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. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways" (Psalm 139:1-3).	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. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).	We have faith in Jesus.

PLUS...

Access all these FREE FaithWeaver NOW digital resources at group.com/digital:

- **FREE digital copies of Leader Guides** in PDF format so you can easily download, print, and email any lesson. Sharing lessons with busy volunteers couldn't be easier! *See inside for activation code.*
- **A FREE downloadable Director Manual** to help you structure your program for maximum effectiveness.
- **FREE weekly FamilyConnect pages** you can print out or email to parents to help families grow together in faith throughout the week.

Don't forget...



Parent Handbook*
Provides parents with weekly Bible background, lesson information, areas for notes, at-home activities, and devotions.

***You'll need one per parent. Sold separately.**

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