

God promised to send a Savior.

WE GATHER

✝ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

👥 With your group brainstorm stories from books or television shows that are about broken friendships. What are the various outcomes of these stories?

What caused these outcomes?

WE BELIEVE

We learn from the Old Testament that original sin separated human beings from God. Thus, even though they would try to do the things God asked, human beings would continue to sin. It would be very hard for them to have a close friendship with God again. Yet God would never stop loving people and forgiving them.

Humanity could not undo the effects of original sin. To fully restore the friendship with God that was broken by the first humans' disobedience, humanity needed God's help. So God promised to send a Savior. God's people waited for the one who would bring humanity back to the perfect state of holiness in which God had created them. God's people believed that when the Savior came, he would completely restore their friendship with God.

Some of the most meaningful writings in the Old Testament are from the Book of Isaiah. As a prophet, Isaiah spoke to the people on God's behalf and reminded them of the way God wanted them to live. In his writings Isaiah told



of someone who would come to free humanity from sin and restore their friendship with God. Isaiah described this person as the *suffering servant*.

“Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.”
(Isaiah 53:11)

Christians believe that the suffering servant referred to by Isaiah is God's own Son. In the fullness of time God the Father sent his only Son to restore our relationship with him. Through Mary's obedience and acceptance of God's will, the Son of God became man. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became one of us. He is truly divine and truly human, and he fulfilled all that God promised. Jesus was obedient to his Father. For our sake Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to save all people from sin and to bring us the hope of new life. As Saint Paul wrote, “For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The New Testament contains four separate books about Jesus. We call these the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The word *gospel* means “good news.” The **gospel** is the good news about God at work in Jesus Christ.

In the gospels we read of Jesus' work to bring hope to the poor and suffering, freedom to those who are persecuted, and healing to those who are sick. From the gospels we learn that through his life, death, and Resurrection, Jesus Christ makes it possible for all humanity to again share in God's life.



gospel the good news about God at work in Jesus Christ

As Catholics...

Because of Jesus Christ all people can once again share in God's life and friendship. We call this share in God's life and friendship *grace*, and we receive grace through the sacraments. A sacrament is an effective sign given to us by Jesus through which we share in God's life.

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance and Reconciliation, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Jesus instituted, or began, the sacraments so that his saving work would continue for all time. The sacraments truly bring about, or effect, what they represent. For example, in Baptism we not only celebrate new life, we actually receive new life in Christ. In Reconciliation we not only celebrate that our God is forgiving, we actually receive God's forgiveness.

The sacraments are the most important celebrations in the Church. The sacraments join Catholics all over the world with Christ and with one another.

How are the sacraments an important part of your life and the life of your family?

WE RESPOND

How does the way you live show that you share in God's life and friendship?

Father in heaven, thank you for keeping your promise and sending your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.