

# JESUS LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Nativity from Matthew, Luke and John

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# NATIVITY FAMILY BIBLE READING PLAN

Jesus' birth is told at the beginning of Matthew's gospel, Luke's gospel and in a poetic form, in John's gospel. In all three accounts, the theme of light and Jesus being the **Light of the World**, shines through the pages.

We will be enjoying these stories together on Sunday mornings during Advent and would like to invite you to read along with your children at home, from children's Bibles or an accessible adult Bible like the Good News Bible. Here is a plan of how you can journey with us at home.

## Week 1 The birth of John (Witness to the Light)

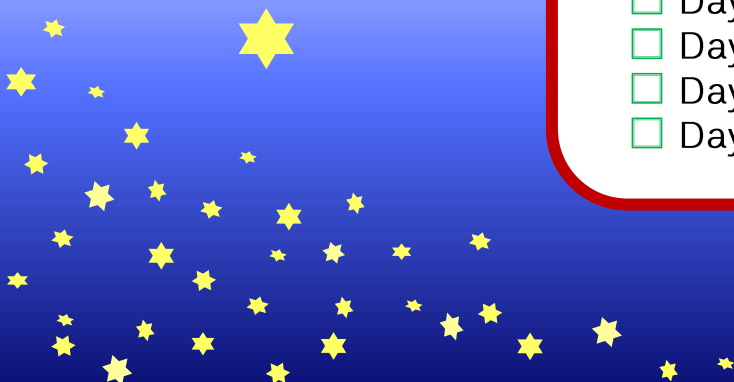
- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 | Luke 1v5-25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 | Luke 1v26-38 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 | Luke 1v39-56 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 | Luke 1v57-80 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 | John 1v6-9   |

## Week 2 The birth of Jesus (Light from Heaven)

- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 | Isaiah 9v2-7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 | Luke 2v1-7   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 | Luke 2v8-21  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 | John 1v1-5   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 | John 1v14    |

## Week 3 Light to the nations (Light of the world)

- |                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1 | Luke 2v21-32    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 | Matthew 1v18-25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 | Matthew 2v1-8   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 | Matthew 2v9-12  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 | John 1v10-13    |



The light

shines in

the darkness

and the darkness

has never

put it out.

John 1v5

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# SESSION 1: WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

Big idea: John came to witness to the light

John the baptist was born to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, the light of the world.

5-9 years

# SESSION 1: WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

WELCOME

INTRO - BIBLE TIMELINE

Do you like surprise presents? God gave a very special surprise present to a couple called Zechariah and Elizabeth.

BIBLE STORY - LUKE 1 Act it out, then read Luke 1v76-80

DISCUSSION

GAME - Surprise!

ACTIVITY - make straight the way

PRAYER - John came to prepare people's hearts to receive God's light, Jesus. Pray that God would make our hearts ready to receive more of His truth.

MEMORY VERSE

We are going to learn this Bible verse.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. John 1v5

CRAFT - JOHN, WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

Use yellow and gold pieces of paper with glue, glitter and pens to colour in the worksheet

EXPLORE THE STORY



# INTRODUCTION

Use the Bible timeline to help the children see where they are in the overall story of the Bible.

The Bible is a collection of books that together tell the story of how God created the world and made human beings to be His children and know His love. Very early in the story, however, people turned away from God's good plan and chose to run from God. God is like a loving father, who keeps searching for His children and rescuing them so they can come home to Him. The whole Bible points to God sending His Son Jesus to come and rescue us.

Find Abraham on the timeline. *What did God promise to Abraham's family?*

Find the time just before Jesus came. *What were the Israelites, Abraham's family waiting for?*

# DISCUSSION: WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

Who announced John's birth?

Did his parents expect to have him or was it a surprise?

What special job did God send John to do?

5+ years

## GAME: SURPRISE!

Zechariah and Elizabeth had all but given up having a baby, but God surprised them with a baby boy in their old age. This game involves a surprise person and 1 person guessing who it is.

*You will need: 1 blanket/sheet and 1 blindfold*

1. Sit the group in a circle
2. Choose 1 child to be blindfolded and turn with their face to the corner of the room
3. Choose another person to be covered by a blanket/sheet and lie/sit in the middle of the circle
4. The blindfolded person can turn to face the group and come nearer so they can hear everyone, or give them a chair to sit on, but they must not remove the blindfold
5. The blindfolded person asks questions about the person in the middle to try to work out who it is. After a maximum of 5 questions, they have a maximum of three guesses to try and identify the person in the middle.
6. They then remove the blindfold and the middle person can then shout surprise and throw off the blanket.

# ACTIVITY: MAKE THE WAY STRAIGHT

About 700 years before John or Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah received this prophecy about John. He said that John would be like "A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."" Isaiah 40v3

Jesus is the light of the world and light travels in straight lines. John's job was to help the people turn back to God, so that they were ready to receive Jesus.

*You will need: A torch/torches, blocks (e.g. jenga/duplo/megablox/giant jenga), small figures (e.g. duplo/happyland people)*

- If you have a large group, get the children to work in groups of 4 or 5.
- Put the blocks in a jumbled up pile. Stand a figure on one side of the blocks and have the torch pointing towards the figure at ground level on the other side of the blocks. ***Can the light reach the figure?*** (You might want to briefly turn the lights off to test it) No, it is blocked by the jumble of blocks.
- Sort the blocks into straight lines so that the light can reach from the torch to the person. Turn the light off briefly to test it. ***Can the light reach the person now?*** Yes, because it has a straight path.

In John and Jesus' day, people were in a muddle. They had forgotten what God was like, what God truly cared about and what God had promised them. John's job was going to be to help make the path straight for Jesus, by reminding people what was truly right and wrong in God's eyes and to bring people back to wanting to follow God's ways. It was a very important job!

# PRAYER

John came just before Jesus arrived, to tell people to get ready for the arrival of King Jesus, the Light of the World.

John came to prepare people's hearts to receive God's light, Jesus. We can ask God to make us ready to receive God's light too. Pray that God would make our hearts ready to receive more of His truth. Pray also for your friends and family, that God would prepare their hearts to receive His light.

HIS NAME  
IS JOHN



WITNESS  
TO THE  
LIGHT

"Now you, child, will be called  
a prophet of the Most High God.  
You will go first before the Lord  
to prepare the people for his coming.  
You will make his people know that they will be saved.  
They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.  
With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will shine upon us.  
God will help those who live in darkness, in the fear of death.  
He will guide us into the path that goes toward peace."

Luke 1v76-79



5-9 years

## EXPLORE THE STORY

*You will need: sculpting toy like playdough /plasticine and/or construction toy like duplo/lego*

*Set out playdough in one tray and duplo on another spread out enough in the room so that the kids can have space to think and build.*

*Ask the children to choose either the duplo or playdough to create a scene from the story. For example, they might want to make a temple, a baby, a light.*

As they are building, talk to them about the story. You might want to ask some of these questions:

1. What special job did John have?
2. Who announced John's birth?

# SESSION 2

## HEAVENLY LIGHT

Big idea: God's light arrived in Jesus

God came in the form of a human baby. He announced his arrival with angels that shone with the brightness of Heaven. At Jesus' birth, Heaven's light shone on the earth so that our eyes might see who God truly is.

5-9 years

# SESSION 2: HEAVENLY LIGHT

## INTRO

Recap the story of John's birth and the special job that John had. He was preparing people for the light that was coming into the world

## MEMORY VERSE

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. John 1v5

BIBLE STORY – Luke 2v1-20, Act it out

GAME – Herding sheep

DISCUSSION AND PRAYER – Heaven's light

CRAFT – Stain glass decorations

EXPLORE THE STORY



5-9 years

# GAME: HERDING SHEEP

*Equipment: Balloons in 4 colours, 4 pieces of card that match the colours of the balloons, 4 chairs, tape, paper plates*

1. Tape the 4 pieces of card to the 4 chairs and put them in the four corners of the room so that there is, for example, a yellow corner, a green corner, a blue corner and a red corner (or whatever coloured balloons you have)
2. Give each child a paper plate.
3. Release balloons into the middle of the room. These are the sheep.
4. Divide the group in half so that half are around the perimeter. They will make wind by flapping their plates to blow the balloons around the middle of the room.
5. The other half will be the shepherds. They will attempt to flap their plates to blow the balloons towards the 4 corners of the room, sorting them into their colours.
6. Switch over roles and play again.

How easy was it to herd the sheep sheep?

Shepherds worked very hard, were often sweaty and dirty and were not usually invited to palaces. How wonderful that the King of Kings, the God of Heaven was born in a poor person's home and shepherds were able to come and see the newborn baby!

# HEAVEN'S LIGHT

At Jesus' birth, angels come from Heaven and appear to shepherds. **What do you think made them shine? Where had they come from?**

They shone with Heaven's light. When God on His throne in Heaven is described in the Bible, it always involves shining light coming from the throne and all around the throne. The angels shone with the light of Heaven's throne room on the hillside in Judea.

**Who did the angels say Jesus is?**

**Why do you think God sent so many angels at Jesus' birth?**

Light represents many things in the Bible. Can you think of any? E.g. presence of God, wisdom, truth, power, Spirit, glory.

Jesus brought the glory of God, the shining wonder of who God is, to earth and the angels were excited to tell people about it.

**What kind of people did the angels appear to? Humble shepherds.**

To receive God's light and truth, you don't need to be old or wise or clever or strong or have fancy clothes and lots of money, you just need to be humble enough to open your heart to God and let Him show you who He is. Jesus said that if anyone has seen Him, they have seen the Father. That is one of the reasons He came, to show us who God is, so that we might know Him.

**PRAYER:** Father God, thank you that you love me. I want to know You and know Your son Jesus. Holy Spirit, please shine Heaven's light in my heart, so that I know You better and better everyday. In the name of Jesus, amen.

# CRAFT: STAINED GLASS DECORATIONS

We used packs of ready-made craft packs, but to make your own:

- Cut out a silhouette window of a star or Bethlehem scene from black card
- Use pieces tissue paper and glue to collage over one side of the window
- Punch a hole in the top of the card
- Use ribbon or thread to make a hanging loop at the top to attach it to be able to attach it to a Christmas tree



5-9 years

# EXPLORE THE STORY

*You will need: sculpting toy like playdough /plasticine and/or construction toy like duplo/lego*

*Set out playdough in one tray and duplo on another spread out enough in the room so that the kids can have space to think and build.*

*Ask the children to choose either the duplo or playdough to create a scene from the story. For example, they might want to make a hill, sheep, angels, shepherds, a manger*

As they are building, talk to them about the story. You might want to ask some of these questions:

1. Who appeared to announce Jesus' birth?
2. Who did God appear to?

# SESSION 3 LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Big idea: Other nations came seeking the light of God.

The wisemen came from distant nations and in the temple, Simeon prophesied that Jesus would bring God's light to all the nations of the world.

5-9 years

# SESSION 3: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

## INTRO

Recap the stories of John and Jesus' birth and Heaven's light shining through to the shepherds.

BIBLE STORY – Matthew 1v18-2v12 Act out the story

DISCUSSION – Light of the world

GAME – Blind man's buff

PRAYER – Pray for the world, for places that need light and peace. See suggested activity.

## MEMORY VERSE

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. John 1v5

CRAFT – Star

EXPLORE THE STORY



# DISCUSSION: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

How far do you think the wise men from the East travelled in order to come and worship Jesus?

Who did they recognise Jesus to be?

How is Jesus good news for the whole world?

5-9 years

# GAME: BLIND MAN'S BUFF

*Equipment:*

*1 blindfold*

Isaiah prophesied about the coming of Jesus that “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.” Isaiah 9v2

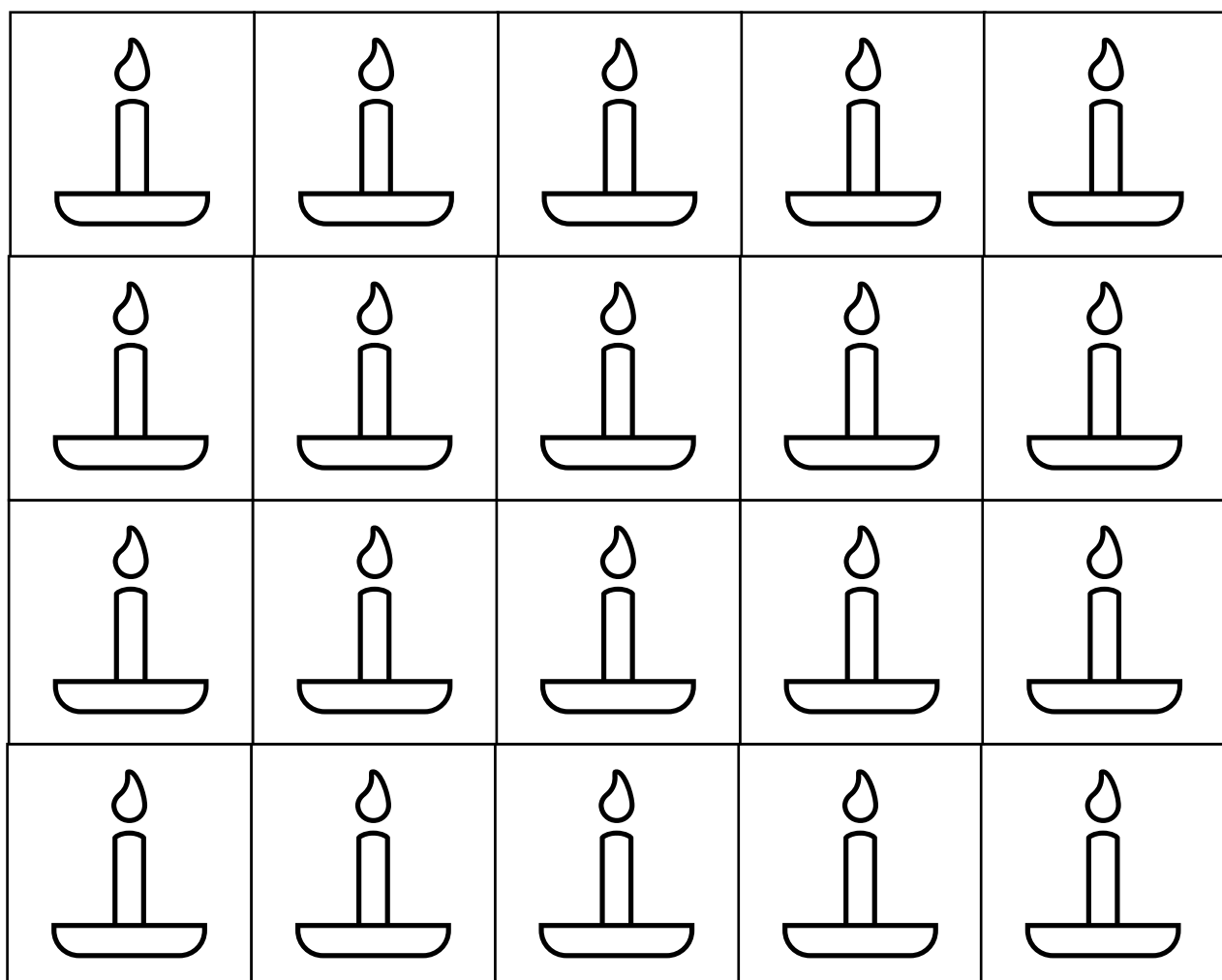
In this game, one of you is going to “walk in darkness”, i.e. wear a blindfold!

1. Choose a child to wear the blindfold
2. Everyone else has to try not to be caught by the child with the blindfold
3. When someone is caught or after a suitable length of time, they switch over

# PRAYER

You will need: a map of the world, candles cut out of paper or teal light LED candles

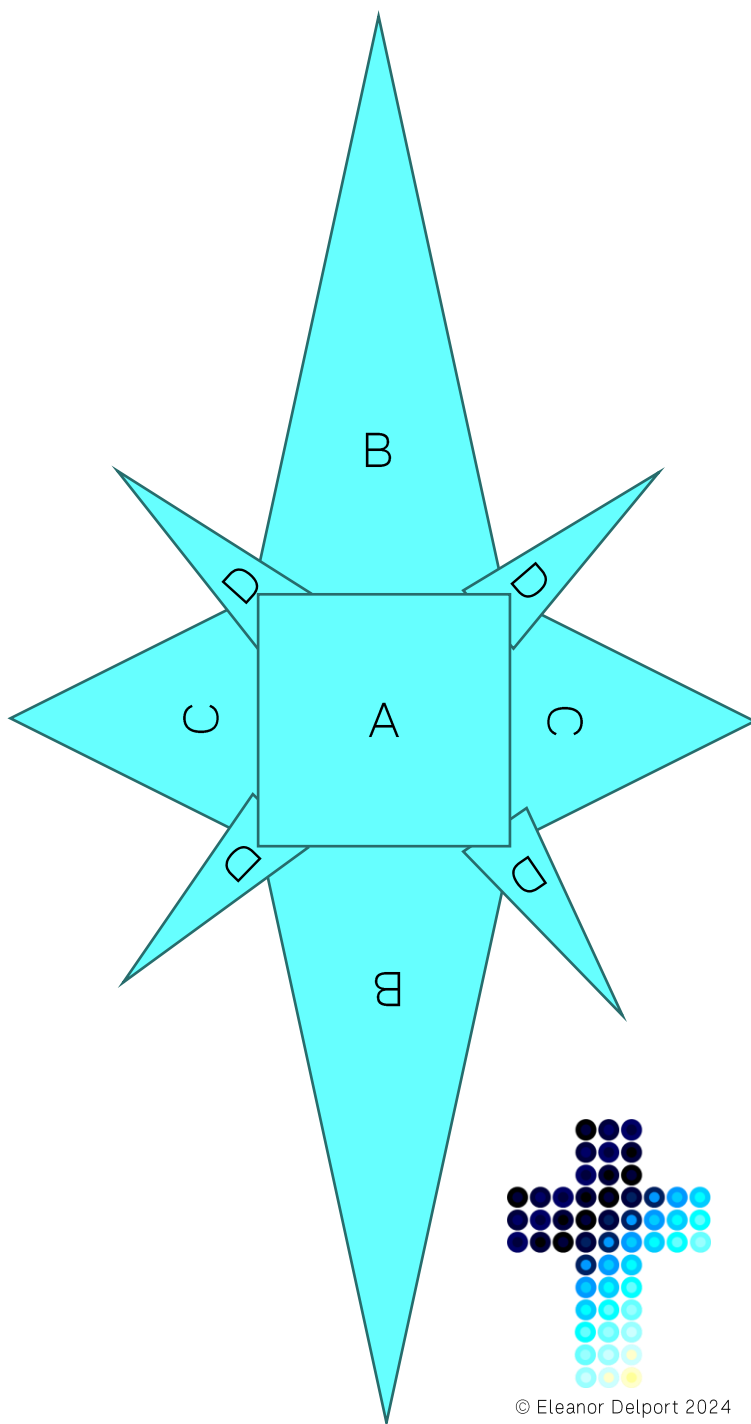
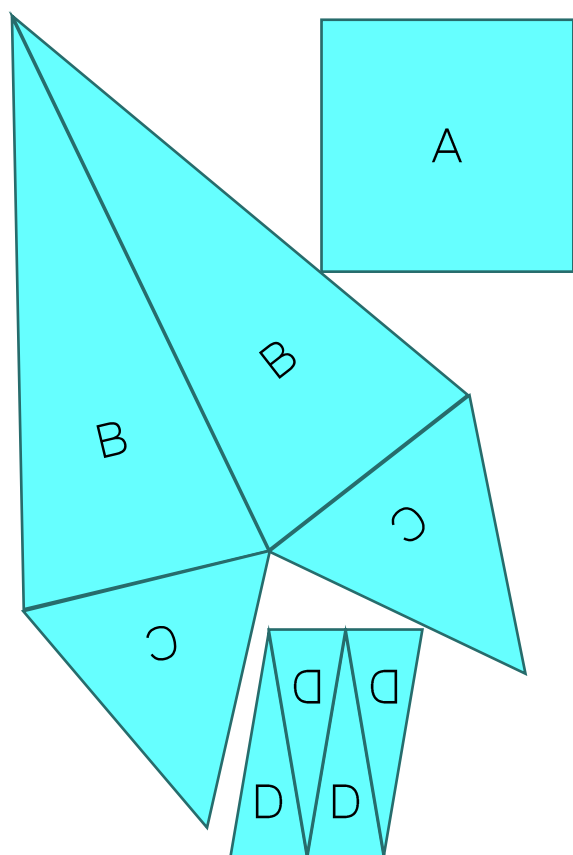
Ask the children where in the world do people think especially need Jesus' light this Christmas. Pray for those places and place a candle on the world map as you pray.



# CRAFT STAR

You will need: worksheets printed, scissors, tape or glue, pens, decorations

Cut around all the shapes on the worksheet and stick together as follows using the square as the centrepiece



The light shines in the  
darkness and the  
darkness has never put  
it out. John 1v5



5-9 years

## EXPLORE THE STORY

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*Set out playdough in one tray and duplo on another spread out enough in the room so that the kids can have space to think and build.*

*Ask the children to choose either the duplo or playdough to create a scene from the story. For example, they might want to make a palace, temple, camels, stars, etc.*

As they are building, talk to them about the story. You might want to ask some of these questions:

1. Who does God want to shine His light and truth on?
2. What areas of the world can you think of that particularly need God's light?



# Choosing to TRUST IN JESUS

## Creation

God made us and loves us. When He created us, He hoped that we would experience His love and love Him back.

01



02



## Rebellion

We all have done bad things and gone against God. When we do bad things, which the Bible calls sin, it separates us from knowing God and leads to death.

## Rescue

But God loves His children so much, that He sent His only Son Jesus to die on a cross and pay the price for our sin. After 3 days Jesus rose from the dead, defeating the power of death. Now whoever puts their trust in Jesus can come back into God's family and have life forever with Him. We can know God on the earth now and, after we die, we will be with Him in Heaven.

03



04



## New Life

Then all our sin is washed away, God gives us a new heart and we become children of God!

## Baptism

We are baptised in water to show that we have chosen to follow Jesus. Our old life has been washed away and God has given us new life with Jesus.



05

06



## Holy Spirit

Father God promises to give us His Holy Spirit to help us understand God's love and to have power to follow Jesus. We ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with His power.

## Growth

The Holy Spirit teaches us to understand God's truth in the Bible. As we experience God's love, our attitudes and behaviours begin to change to become more like Jesus. He also gives us gifts which strengthen Jesus' family, the church, and help us to live lives that show others how to come into God's family too.



07

08



## New Creation

After Jesus rose from the dead, He was given a new body. He went up to Heaven to take up His throne as the conquering King of Kings. God promised that one day, Jesus will come back and we will receive a new body too! All the bad things will be washed away. God will make everything new.

Father God,

I'm sorry for the bad things I have done. Thank you for sending Your Son Jesus to rescue me. Please forgive me and give me a new heart.

**AMEN.**