



# upon this ROCK

2016-17 Chapel Talks for Lutheran Schools

by Rev. Bob Riggert



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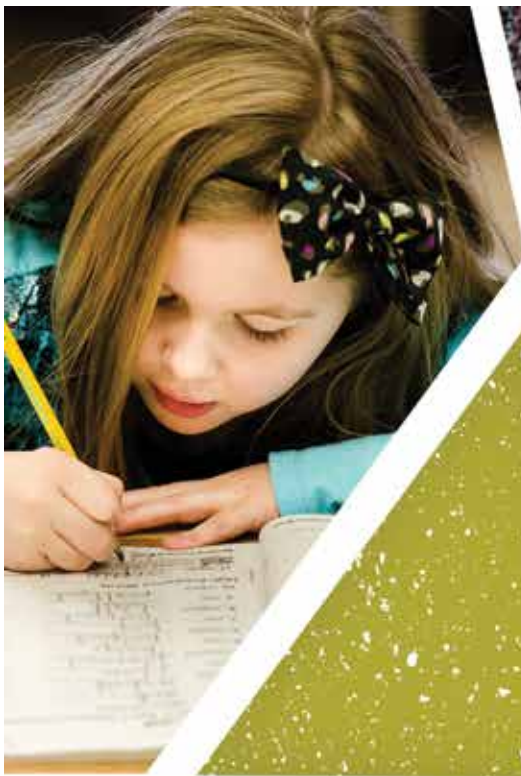
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# An Introduction to “UPON THIS ROCK” CHAPEL TALKS

*“Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.” Is. 26:4*

## ABOUT THE THEME

Some Lutheran schools are built on the black soil of the Midwest; some on the red soil of the South; some on the swampy land of the Gulf coast; some on limestone, granite or other stones or mountainous and rocky terrain. Various land surfaces around the world provide the foundation for a Lutheran school. Wherever they are found or whatever the land foundation, Lutheran schools of all sizes, all age-level ranges, and all cultural combinations are built on The Rock.

Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt. 16:16), announces The Rock on which the Church is built. This confession is the foundation for every activity in a Lutheran school. This confession is the focus of weekly worship for Lutheran schools during the 2016-2017 school year.

All earthly foundations are vulnerable and changing. Even the most solid rocks erode over time. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that the Lord is the “everlasting rock.” Lutheran schools are built on an unchanging, unalterable, eternal foundation. Lutheran schools are built on the rock of salvation.

Lutheran schools are an integral part of the ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The theme of the 2016 LCMS convention is carried to every Lutheran school, and the theme becomes personal and meaningful to every student.

May God bless our worship together!

## USING CHAPEL TALKS


The appointed readings, which students hear each Sunday in the Divine Service, continue to bring the Good News throughout the week into the home and school. The lessons of Series C begin the school year and continue through the remaining Sundays of the Pentecost season. The readings of Series A begin with the Advent season and continue through the school year. Typically, one of the lessons each week becomes the focus for school worship. Several special services will focus on a “rock” reference other than the weekly lesson.

The appointed lessons from 1 Peter encourage a series based on the words inspired by Peter, the rock. Similarly, the readings from 1 Corinthians will inspire a series of talks based on the proclamation of the apostle Paul, who wrote, “The Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

These chapel talks provide an outline for the message at the weekly Lutheran school worship service. The message is offered in the context of one of the Divine Services in *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*, the services of *All God’s People Sing (AGPS)* or another liturgical format. It is important for children to identify with and participate in a worship routine.

A rock theme is identified each week. The resource includes Rock Collecting, a lesson visual; Rock Explorations, an introduction to the lesson of the day; Standing on The Rock, the main points of the lesson; and Relying on The Rock, a prayer to conclude the lesson. The weekly chapel talk is designed to be an outline for the pastor or other leaders. Additional exploration of the texts will reveal additional truths and applications to share with the children. The outline has been developed to be age-appropriate for elementary school assemblies. For groups that are younger or older, the message may have to be adapted or expanded to fit the abilities and attention span of those in attendance. Chapel leaders are encouraged to use their familiarity with the ministry setting and their own creative gifts to build lives on The Rock.

— LCMS School Ministry





# "Christ Is Our Rock"

By Jeffrey E. Burkart

Based on Is. 26:4 – "Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock."

1. Christ is our rock, the firm cornerstone;  
Our faith is built on Jesus alone!  
In Him we find our refuge of grace;  
Held in the stronghold of His embrace. *Refrain*

*Ps. 46:1; Acts 4:10-11 & Eph. 2:19-22*

*Refrain:* Upon the Rock of Salvation we stand;  
Jesus will bring us to His Father's land!  
Faithfully rest on Jesus, God's Son,  
Who, for the world, salvation has won!

*Is. 26:4 & Matt. 11:28-30*

2. Rooted in Jesus we'll ever be  
One with the Father eternally.  
Christ, on the cross, redeemed us from sin;  
Killed so that we might new life begin. *Refrain*

*Col. 2:6-7*

3. The stone was rolled away from the tomb;  
Sin, death, and sorrow have no more room.  
When Christ arose upon Easter day  
All Satan's pow'r was taken away. *Refrain*

*Luke 24:1-9 & Heb. 2:14-15*

4. Jesus, the Living Stone, ever reigns;  
The Risen One has broken our chains!  
No longer captives, we have been freed  
To love and serve all people in need. *Refrain*

*Ps. 118:22; Is. 28:16; Rom. 6:5-11;  
1 Cor. 3:11 & 1 Peter 2:4-7*

5. Tell of His power, sing of His might!  
Christ leads us out of darkness to light  
Calling each daughter and ev'ry son  
To teach all nations what He has done!

*Is. 9:2; Matt. 28:16-20 & Rev. 7:11-12*

*Δ All stand in honor of the Trinity.*

6. Praise to the Father, and to the Son,  
And to the Spirit; God Three-in-One.  
With all the saints and angels we bring  
Glory and honor as we now sing: *Refrain*

*Rev. 5:13 & 7:9-14*

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# Lutheran Schools and the Everlasting **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Is. 26:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Matt. 16:13-18

**Text:** Is. 26:4

**Song:** Theme Hymn: "Christ Is Our Rock"

*LSB* #645: "Built on the Rock"; *AGPS* #207: "Seek Ye First"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Items of or information about the school's history (anniversary books, pictures, etc.)

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

We're beginning the \_\_\_\_\_ year of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran School.

In what ways has your school changed since last school year? (Note some of the obvious and not so obvious changes: new students, new staff, etc. Perhaps there are some physical changes in the school facility: remodeled classrooms, painted classrooms, etc. What hasn't changed since last school year?

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

I brought some items that tell us about our school's history. (Share items.) There have been many changes since our school started in \_\_\_\_\_. Your church and many people who have been part of our school's history have wanted children to have a school where they can learn about our Savior, Jesus. What hasn't changed about your school? Your school has always been built on The Rock that is Jesus. We're going to hear that theme often this year as our worship times will focus on the theme, "Upon this Rock."

The prophet Isaiah lived more than 600 years before the birth of Christ. It was a time of many changes in the life of God's Old Testament people. Sadly, many people had changed their focus from the One True God to the idols of their neighbors. There were more changes that were coming as God's judgment for their sin would lead them into captivity.

God's promise to His people through Isaiah was, "The Lord God is an everlasting Rock." The Rock of their salvation was Jesus. After the Fall, God promised that He would send His Son to save His people. His promise never changed. His plan never changed. Because Jesus came to be our Savior, we will stand on the Rock that is Jesus forever. He is the everlasting Rock.

School buildings change, teachers change, technology changes. Jesus never changes and He will be our Rock this school year.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for blessing us with this school and another school year. Guide us as we stand upon The Rock that is You. Bless us as we dedicate this school year to You. Amen.

# The ROCK of Mt. Zion

**Scripture:** Is. 66:18-23; Heb. 12:4-29; Luke 13:22-20

**Text:** Heb. 12:22-24

**Song:** LSB #817, AGPS #90: "Earth and All Stars"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Pictures of famous mountains: Mount Everest, Pikes Peak, Mount Hood, Mount McKinley (Denali); depending on the geographic area, identify a local mountain.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Can you identify any of these mountains? Have you ever been to the mountains? What amazes you about mountains?

Can you think of any mountains mentioned in the Bible (Mount Sinai, Mount Ararat, Mount of Transfiguration)?

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Today's Bible reading from Hebrews 12, tells us about another mountain: Mount Zion. Many years before Jesus was born, King David captured a mountainous area from the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5:6-10). It was called the city of Jerusalem and also called Mount Zion. David not only lived on Mount Zion, but he also dedicated the mountain as the place to worship God. It was important to have a place of worship to focus the people's attention on the True God rather than the idols of their neighbors.

David's son Solomon built a temple on Mount Zion. Mount Zion became the place where God's people came to worship and offer their sacrifices. Jesus was born from the family of King David. During His life on earth Jesus came to Jerusalem often. He came to Jerusalem to worship with His family. He came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday. He died on Mount Zion on Good Friday. Jesus became the perfect and final sacrifice in Jerusalem.

Do we have to go to Jerusalem and to Mount Zion to worship? Do we need to offer sacrifices for our sins? Through His Word and in our Baptism, Jesus comes to us in this place. Our church is our Mount Zion. Every day we hear the Good News that Jesus has sacrificed Himself as payment for our sins, and we are blessed to worship and serve Him here on our Mount Zion.

The Bible also calls heaven Mount Zion. Believing in Jesus as our Savior, we will stand with Him forever upon the Rock of Mount Zion.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the beauty of the mountains of this earth. Thank You especially for the beauty of gathering with You on Mount Zion every time we worship you. Bless us as we anticipate being with You on Mount Zion forever. Amen.



# Sacrifices on a **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Prov. 25:2-10; Heb. 13:1-17; Luke 14:1-14

**Text:** Heb. 13:10-15

**Song:** *LSB* #431: "Not All the Blood of Beasts"; *AGPS* #109: "God Loves Me Dearly"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

The altar of the sanctuary or worship setting.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Let's explore our worship altar today. What do you notice about our altar? (What is it made of? Where is it located in the sanctuary, etc.) What is our altar used for? (Holy Communion is served from it; Pastor prays at it, etc.)

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

The Old Testament mentions altars often. When God rescued Noah and his family from the Flood, Noah built an altar (Gen. 8:20). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses all built altars to worship God. The most important feature of Solomon's temple was the altar.

Most of the time, the altars were made from rocks. More important than the surface of the altar was what happened on the altar. In the Old Testament, the people worshiped God by offering sacrifices on the altar. The worshipers would bring their animals to the altar where they would be killed and then burned as sacrifices to God. The sacrifices were a means of showing God that they were repenting from their sins. God would accept the sacrifices as an offering for their sins.

Do we still sin? Obviously! Do we bring animals to church to have the pastor sacrifice them on our altar? Obviously not! Our Bible reading for today from Hebrews 13, says, "Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (v. 12). Jesus was not sacrificed on an altar of rock. Jesus was sacrificed on the cross. Because Jesus was the perfect and final sacrifice, we don't bring our sacrifices for our sins. We believe that Jesus is the sacrifice for us. Our sins are forgiven.

The Bible reading says that we "offer up a sacrifice of praise to God" (v. 15). As we begin each day at our classroom altars and come into church before this altar, we praise God for the sacrifice of Jesus. As we bring our offerings to our chapel services each week, we are offering a sacrifice of praise. As we sing hymns together, we are offering a sacrifice of praise. Our sacrifice of praise goes from our chapel worship to our classroom, playground, and everything we do together in our school.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, how blessed we are to gather at our altar, remembering Your sacrifice for us. We offer today our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the gift of Your grace. Amen.

# ROCK *Salt*

**Scripture:** Deut. 30:15-20; Philimon 1-21; Luke 14:25-35

**Text:** Luke 14:34

**Song:** *LSB* #842: "Son of God, Eternal Savior"; *AGPS* #150: "Kids of the Kingdom"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Salt products: salt shaker, box of salt, bag of salt used to melt ice, box of rock salt, small packets of restaurant salt, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

I have a variety of salt containers and salt products with me today. What do we use salt for? (To season food; as a cooking and baking ingredient; to melt ice on sidewalks and streets; to make homemade ice cream; etc.)

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Today's Bible reading says, "Salt is good." Although sometimes doctors may say that too much salt is not good for us, some salt is good. Salt brings taste to our food. Salt was often used to preserve foods in pioneer days. Salt is a gift from God to bless us in many ways.

People in the Bible used salt. Like us, they used salt to add to the taste of their food. They also used salt to preserve food. Salt keeps food from spoiling. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that Christian should be like salt (Matt. 5:13). Jesus teaches a similar lesson in today's Gospel reading. We are not to lose our "saltiness."

There is nothing that is "salty" or good-tasting about us on our own. We have no taste at all, or worse, we taste bad. Our sin might be compared to a bad taste or a bad preservative that makes things worse instead of better.

Just like salt is taken from a salt mine or other source and purified to make it safe and useful to us, Jesus takes us and purifies us. Jesus has purified us in our Baptism. He forgives our sins and makes us useful to Himself and to others again.

We have a "salty" Lutheran school. We add good flavor to our church, to our families, to the community in which God places us, and to the world in which He sends us. Our weekly chapel offerings are one way to sprinkle salt in the name of Jesus.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Dear Jesus, thank You for purifying me. Use me to bring praise to You and to add salt to the lives of others. Amen.

# Precious ROCKS

**Scripture:** Ezek. 34:11-24; 1 Tim. 1:5-17; Luke 15:1-10

**Text:** Luke 15

**Song:** LSB #527: "O Savior, Precious Savior"; AGSP #217: "Someone Special"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Diamond ring or other "precious" rock jewelry (birthstone).

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

I'd like to show you a rock that is very precious to me. (Diamond I gave my wife, birthstone from my parents, etc.)

What do you think I'd do if I lost this precious rock? (I'd panic, I'd go looking for it, I'd offer a reward to the person who found it, etc.)

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

In today's Bible reading, Jesus tells some stories (parables) about individuals who lost something precious. Jesus tells about a shepherd who lost a precious lamb. He also tells about a woman who loses a precious coin. In both cases, the individuals go looking and looking and looking until they find the precious lost item.

Jesus tells the stories to emphasize that He goes looking for something more precious than a lamb or coin. Jesus goes looking for us.

The Bible tells us that we were lost. (Have you ever been lost?) More frightening than being lost in the woods or lost in a store is to be lost in sin. When people don't know God and are separated from Him they are lost. When we were lost in sin, we couldn't find ourselves, and there was no other person who could find us and save us.

Jesus came and found us. Jesus came to earth as our Savior. He came to find sinners. Jesus finds us in our family, in our neighborhoods, and in our school. He brings us to Himself through our Baptism. When we disobey the commandments, we go wandering from Jesus. As we hear His words from the Bible He still comes looking for us.

Jesus tells each of us, "You are mine." We are precious to Jesus. We know that because He has found us, we will be with Him forever. There are many who do not know Jesus as their Savior. We may have friends or family members who are lost." We have the joy of telling them about how Jesus comes to find them.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for finding each one of us in our Baptism. Thank You for the Good News that we are very precious to You and that You will keep us safe and secure in Your grace forever. Help us to bring the lost to You. Amen.



# Chained to The **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Amos 8:4-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-15; Luke 16:1-15

**Text:** 1 Tim. 2:1-5

**Song:** *LSB* #912: "Christ is Our Cornerstone"; *AGPS* #137: "In You is Gladness"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Set of handcuffs. Perhaps handcuff a student/fellow teacher to an object in the sanctuary.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Many times handcuffs have chain links holding the handcuffs together. Sometimes people are chained to an object that keeps them from getting away.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

The apostle Paul was chained like a criminal. When Paul wrote to his friend and student Timothy, he said that he was "bound with chains as a criminal." Paul had not stolen anything or committed murder or any other crime. Many did not want Paul sharing the Good News of Jesus with others, so they had him chained in a prison cell. There are still people today who are persecuted and chained for teaching about Jesus.

Several years before Paul heard the Good News of Jesus as his Savior, he had been chained to his sins. Paul (who was then known as Saul) had done many things himself to keep people from teaching and preaching about Jesus. Jesus showed Paul he had taken off the chains of his sins. Jesus released Paul from his sins by paying the price for his sins. Paul was free to share the Gospel.

While Paul was now free to go anywhere for Jesus, he always reminded himself that he would always stay connected to Jesus. The Spirit would chain Paul to His Word.

Like Paul, we were born chained to our sin. On our own we could not get away from the devil. Jesus released us and chained us to Himself. We are not chained to Him as criminals because He has forgiven us. Jesus chains us to Himself so that we will not go wandering back in our sins. Jesus chains us to Himself so that the devil cannot take us away from Him.

While we are chained to His grace, we have lots of links so that we can go anywhere telling others about Him.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for breaking the chains of sin that attached us to the world. Thank You also for the security of the chains which keep us safely attached to You, our Rock, so that we will never wander away. Amen.

# ROCK *Solid Leaders*

**Scripture:** Amos 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Luke 16:19-31

**Text:** 1 Tim. 3:1-7

**Song:** *LSB* #861; *AGPS* #81:  
"Christ Be My Leader"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Building blocks or other objects that can be stacked and knocked down.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Have you ever built a tower or some other structure only to have a younger brother or sister come and knock it down? Perhaps you have carefully built something only to accidentally hit it and knock it down. It's frustrating to see things crumble to the floor. Sometimes the words and actions of other people knock us down.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

The apostle Paul compared the Church to a building. God built the Church on the rock solid foundation of His Word. On the foundation of His Word, God put His leaders, the apostles and prophets. It is a strong building of faithful leaders who believe in God.

God is still building His Church! God places our pastors and teachers on the foundation of His Word. Our pastors and teachers study God's Word so that they can stay solid on His foundation. As they teach us God's Word, He adds us as pieces to His church.

Our brother or sister may playfully try to knock down our towers. The devil tries to knock down the pieces of the Church. The devil isn't playing a game. He does not want the church of Jesus to stand. He doesn't want more pieces added to the building of the church.

We have God's promises that nothing will ever knock down the church. The church is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. When we teach God's Word and when we believe in the promises of our Baptism, we are attached so securely to the foundation of Jesus that nothing will knock us down.

God still uses us, our pastors and teachers to add pieces to His building. We want everyone to be on the foundation of Jesus.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the sure foundation of Your Church. Thank You for our pastors and teachers, whom You have placed on Your foundation. Keep each one of us securely on the foundation of Your grace. Amen.

# Passing on The ROCK

**Scripture:** Hab. 1:1-4; 2:1-4; 2 Tim. 1:1-14; Luke 17:1-10

**Text:** 2 Tim. 1:3-5

**Song:** LSB #728: "How Firm a Foundation"; AGPS #196: "Pass It On"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Family heirlooms; something passed on from one generation to another; a gift from a special friend.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

I'd like to share with you something special that was given to me (share story of the item). Maybe you, too, have something special that you have received from a family member or special friend. God's Word for today tells us about the special gift that Timothy received from his family.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

One of the many people that the apostle Paul loved and taught was a boy named Timothy. Timothy was able to travel with Paul on his missionary journeys. Timothy became a pastor in the early Church. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote letters to his friend and mission partner, Timothy.

The gift that Timothy received from his mother and grandmother was not a picture, book, new ball glove or any object. It wasn't the kind of gift that we might get for Christmas or for our birthday. This was a gift for Timothy's heart. It was a gift that would bring forgiveness for Timothy's sins. It was an eternal gift.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well" (v. 5). Lois and Eunice believed that Jesus died and rose for them. They knew they were going to heaven because Jesus had forgiven all their sins. Grandmother Lois and mother Eunice wanted Timothy to know about Jesus. They wanted Timothy in heaven with them.

Your parents and grandparents may have given you many gifts. The most important gift they can give you is knowing about Jesus. It is only the gift of Jesus that tells you about the Savior who died to offer forgiveness for all your sins. As your parents send you to this school so you can hear about Jesus every day, they are giving you God's gift of His grace every day.

Thank your parents (and grandparents) for the gift of faith.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for those you have chosen to share the gift of Your grace with us. Keep them in Your grace. Lord, give us the privilege of passing on the Good News to our family, friends and others that You place around us. Amen.



# ROCK

## *Solid Relationships*

**Scripture:** Ruth 1:1-19; 2 Tim. 2:1-13; Luke 17:11-19

**Text:** Ruth 1:16-17

**Song:** LSB #725; AGPS #80: "Children of the Heavenly Father"

### ROCK COLLECTING:

Pictures of paths or perhaps a simple path laid out in the worship area.

### ROCK EXPLORATION:

What kinds of paths have you walked on (or played on)? Have you walked on a garden path? A path through a forest? Have you skied down a slope or snowy path? Today's Bible lesson tells us about the path that Ruth chose to follow.

### STANDING ON THE ROCK:

The path of Ruth, Orpah, and mother-in-law Naomi had been rocky. All three women had experienced the death of her husband. Naomi had not only experienced the death of her husband, but also the death of her sons, the husbands of Ruth and Orpah. Now it was time to leave Moab and walk the path back to Bethlehem.

Naomi encouraged her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab, the land in which they were born and in which their families lived. Naomi thought the women might prefer to stay with their families and in a culture which they knew. Would Ruth stay on the paths of Moab or would she take a new and uncertain path to Bethlehem?

Our text tells us Ruth's choice. "Where you go I will go ... your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Through the witness of Naomi and her family, Ruth has met the true God of Israel. She would take the path back to Bethlehem and take a new path of faith.

God blessed Ruth's walk. The rest of the book of Ruth tells about Ruth's walk into wheat fields to find enough food for Naomi and herself. On that path God led her to Boaz, who would become her husband. Ruth and Boaz would have a son by the name of Obed who was the grandfather of King David. Through this family God would send His Son. Ruth's path was part of the path of salvation.

Through our Baptism God has put us on the path of faith. We were taken off the path that led us away from Jesus and into eternal death. We are blessed to see the path of salvation that Jesus walked. He has blessed us to follow Him. King David wrote (Psalm 23) that we are put on the "paths of righteousness" (v. 3). We walk together following the path of God's Word.

### RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, sometimes our paths seem rocky and uncertain. Yet You have chosen to come to earth and walk the path of salvation so that we might walk with You. Walk with us down uncertain paths and assure us of Your presence. Amen.

# Resting on The ROCK

**Scripture:** Gen. 32:22-30; 2 Tim. 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8

**Text:** Gen. 28:11

**Song:** *LSB* #901: "Open Now the Gates of Beauty"; *AGPS* #251: "We are Climbing Jacob's Ladder"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Favorite pillows.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Do you have a favorite pillow? Perhaps some of you have a favorite pillow with an animal face, cartoon character or some other feature. Some of you may even take your favorite pillow with you when you stay at a friend's house or travel. Do any of you have a rock for a pillow?

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Today's Old Testament lesson tells us about God's servant Jacob. As Jacob travels, God meets him and shares a special promise with him. This wasn't the first time God had met Jacob on his travels. Many of you have learned the Bible stories of Jacob cheating his brother out of the family blessings and having to run from his angry brother. Jacob leaves his home and travels to live with his uncle Laban. As Jacob is on that journey, he stops to rest in an open field, using a rock for a pillow (Gen. 28:11).

As Jacob sleeps, God blesses Jacob with a dream that shows a ladder to heaven with angels going up and down the ladder. God promised Jacob that He would always be with him and that through his family all the families of the earth would be blessed. God was again promising that He would bless everyone through the Savior. The Savior would come from Jacob's family.

When Jesus came to earth, He had no special pillow. The Bible says, "The Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head" (Matt. 8:30). Jesus did not come to earth to be comfortable. Jesus traveled about teaching and doing miracles on the way to the cross. We are blessed to hear about Jacob's journey and Jesus' journey in God's Word.

Does God give us messages? (Yes.) Does God give us messages in dreams? He could, but now God gives us messages in His Word. God gives us the message that we travel in sin and need the forgiveness of Jesus. God gives us the message that Jesus traveled to the cross to save us. We can rest peacefully (even on our favorite pillows) knowing that we are in God's care.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the promises You gave Jacob in a dream. Thank You for fulfilling all Your promises in Jesus and for giving us the message of salvation in Your word. Amen.

# ROCK *Solid Kids*

**Scripture:** Gen. 4:1-15; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; 16-18; Luke 18:9-17

**Text:** Luke 18:15-17

**Song:** *LSB* #578; *AGPS* #246: "Thy Strong Word"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Exercise equipment or athletic equipment.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Sometimes the words "rock solid" are used to describe the health of our body. The words mean that we want to be strong and healthy. What do you need to do to be a rock solid kid? You need to drink your milk and eat the right foods. You need to get plenty of exercise. You may want to use exercise items like the ones I have with me.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Jesus certainly wants us to have healthy bodies. Jesus created us and wants us to take care of what He created. There is something even more important to Jesus than our strong and healthy bodies. He wants us to have strong faith.

Many parents brought their children to Jesus to have Him heal their sickness, open their blind eyes, mend their broken bones, and in other ways take care of their bodies. Jesus' miracles make for physically "rock solid" kids. In today's Bible lesson we read about parents who brought their children to Jesus to have Him bless them.

All the children brought to Jesus needed their hearts and bodies healed from sin. Jesus greeted the children and told them that they belonged to His Kingdom. When we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we are members of His Kingdom. In His kingdom we have our sins forgiven and we have the promise of heaven.

Does God want us to have solid healthy bodies? Yes! We should exercise, eat well, and get rest to keep our bodies healthy. We should exercise in physical education classes and on the playground. We may even use some exercise equipment. All the right food and right exercises can't take away our sins. We have a Savior who keeps us healthy with the water of our baptism and the food of His Word.

Jesus continues to bless us as we gather for worship together, hear His Word in our religion classes, and gather with our families in devotions. With faith in Jesus we continue to be rock solid kids.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the healthy bodies You give us. Thank You for the hearts and minds that know You and love You. Keep us strong in our faith. Amen.



# Built on The **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Ps. 46; Rom. 3:19-28; John 8:31-36

**Text:** Ps. 46:2-3

**Song:** LSB #656; AGPS #50: "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Picture of waves crashing against a rock.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Have you ever been next to the ocean and heard the waves crashing against the rocky shore? Imagine huge waves coming in and rolling into huge rocks and strong cliffs. The waters may splash with great force, but the rocks stand solidly in place.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

God's Spirit moved the writer of Psalm 46 to share this picture: "Though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its water roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling ... God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved" (vv. 2-5). Just like very large rocks aren't moved by the waves, God is immovable!

This week the Church celebrates Reformation. We remember a time in the Church's history when there were lots of waves crashing against the Church. There was the wave of false teaching. There was the wave of lies that people could buy their way into heaven. There were the waves of governments that were against the truths of God's Word.

Martin Luther saw all the waves crashing in on the Church. He felt the waves of threats against his life. He felt the waves of sadness and confusion. He felt the devil's wave assaulting his faith.

Luther knew that God had sent the waves of his baptism that covered him and all who believed. He knew that God's Word was true, and that God's Word alone had the message of Jesus. There was no wave that would destroy Martin's faith in Jesus.

God is with His church today. There are the waves that say the Bible isn't true; waves that try to wash away Jesus as the only Savior; waves that splash against faith alone as the way to salvation. Psalm 46 and the story of the Reformation tell us that nothing can move our God and His love for us.

Sometimes we may feel that there are waves of problems, sickness and other troubles that crash against us. We may wonder if our faith will stay solid. God's Word tells us God is with us and we will not be moved.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Word of truth. Thank You for Martin Luther and other leaders of the Reformation You used to keep Your Church anchored in the storms. Amen.

# ROCKS *in Heaven*

**Scripture:** Rev. 7:2-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12

**Text:** Rev. 21:15-27

**Song:** *LSB* #672: "Jerusalem, the Golden"; *AGPS* #131: "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Pieces of wall construction: boards, dry wall, bricks, etc.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

What are the walls of our classroom made of? What are the walls of our church and school made of? What are the walls of our homes made of? Building walls are made of a variety of materials: bricks, dry wall, plaster, etc.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

What do you think the walls of heaven are made of? In the book of Revelation God shares the vision of the apostle John. No matter the materials, the walls of our school building are made of temporal materials. Over time they will weaken. Just like walls will eventually deteriorate, our bodies also weaken. The Bible describes our bodies as "perishable" (1 Cor. 15:53).

When Jesus comes again on the Last Day everything will be eternal. God will make everything new. It will last forever.

Our first Bible reading told how people from every nation will stand before the resurrected and victorious Jesus. Revelation 21 describes the time and place we will be with Jesus forever. Because Jesus paid for our sins and because Jesus rose from the dead, all who believe in Him will be blessed to be with Him forever. On earth we see the walls of sin everywhere. Those walls divide us. Those walls come crashing down.

Jesus will remove the walls of sin and bless us with new life in a new and perfect place. God's Word describes the walls of the new earth as walls of precious stones: jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, chrysolite, etc. (Students may want to research the precious and unusual stones.)

When Jesus comes again and we are with Him, we will have more important things to do than try to identify rocks. We will be with Jesus and with the fellow saints who believed in Him and whom He has gathered together to be with Him forever. We know that everything will be perfect and beautiful forever.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for the walls of our church and school. These walls protect us. We anticipate being with You forever where there will only be Your glory. Amen.

# ROCKS *Tumble*

**Scripture:** Mal. 4:1-6; 2 Thess. 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-28

**Text:** Luke 21:5-8

**Song:** *LSB* #909: "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"; *AGPS* #218: "Soon and Very Soon"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Picture of an earthquake scene.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What happens when there is an earthquake? Earthquakes are measured on a Richter scale. The higher the numbers on the scale, the more intense the shaking of the earth's surface. Sometimes earthquakes cause major damage where buildings fall and hillsides and mountains tumble.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

The temple in Jerusalem was a special place to worship. Jesus went there with His family as a boy. (Remember the story of the 12-year-old Jesus at the temple.) In today's lesson, Jesus looks at the temple and prophesies that the stones of the temple will tumble down. As the all-knowing Son of God, Jesus knew what would happen in the future. Jesus' prophecy came true. Heathen armies came and destroyed the temple because they wanted to destroy any symbol of Christianity.

Jesus had a greater message than tumbling walls of stone. Jesus was sharing the message of a more permanent tumbling. When Jesus comes again on the Last Day, the earth will crumble in a flash. Jesus shared this message so that His listeners would repent of their sin and find their hope in Him.

We are in the last weeks of another church year. As the year comes to an end we are reminded that someday all of creation will come to an end. The Bible tells us that we won't stand and watch buildings crumble. The earth will be destroyed in a flash of time. God will come to judge the world of its sins. While rocks and everything else crumbles and tumbles, the Church of Jesus will stand.

While we love our church and school building, it too will tumble on the last day. The Church that we are part of is the Church of all who believe in Jesus. That Church is bigger and stronger than a building. We are built on the foundation of God's Word written by His apostles and prophets. We are built on the Rock that is Jesus.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, You are eternal and You stand forever. Thank You for building us on the foundation of Your Church. We anticipate with joy the day that we will be with You. Help us to share what is permanent with others. Amen.



# ROCKS *or Bread*

**Scripture:** Deut. 8:1-10; Phil. 4:6-20; Matt. 7:7-11

**Text:** Matt. 7:7-11

**Song:** *LSB* #789; *AGPS* # 197: "Praise and Thanksgiving"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

An assortment of rocks.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Since Thanksgiving Day is coming up soon, I thought I'd share some food items with you (begin to hand out rocks). Is there some problem with what I'm giving you?

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

It's rather ridiculous (and cruel) to give you rocks to eat. We all know that we can't chew or digest rocks. As Jesus was teaching His followers about prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, He asked if any father would give rocks to his son when he asked for bread. The answer was obvious: "Of course not."

God our Heavenly Father blesses us with many good things to eat. Many of us will sit down to wonderful Thanksgiving dinners. I know none of us will be fed rocks. We thank God for everything He gives us. In Luther's Small Catechism, we have some helpful lists of the things God gives us (note the explanation to the First Article and the explanation to the Fourth Petition). We can certainly expand on those lists. On this national holiday we are thankful for all the blessings in the country God has given.

None of the many things God has given us can save us from our sins. Most of all we are thankful for our Savior Jesus, Who gives us His forgiveness and love. Jesus is called the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35). Jesus is the Bread that we get through His Word that feeds us forever.

At this time and at all times we are thankful for a Heavenly Father who doesn't give us rocks to eat. He gives us daily bread to bless our lives every day. He gives us the Bread of His Son to sustain us to eternity. We give Him thanks on Thanksgiving Day and every day.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, while we may deserve only rocks to eat, You give us so much more. You give us the blessings of food, home, family and country. Thank You especially for Your Son Jesus and for giving us the Bread to feed us to eternity. Amen.

# Rolling Like a **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Rom. 13:11-14

**Text:** Is. 2:1-5; Rom. 13:11-14;  
Matt. 21:1-11

**Song:** *LSB #332; AGSP #205:*  
"Savior of the Nations, Come"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Picture of the Times Square New Year's Eve countdown ball.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

What happens in Times Square in New York City every New Year's Eve? Exactly at midnight a brightly lit ball rolls down from the top of a tower to the street below. The rolling ball reaches the bottom exactly at midnight and the new year begins.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Happy New Year! No, I'm not mixed up on the months of the year. 2017 is still a few weeks away. However, it is a new year in the church. The church year starts with the season of Advent. The new church year doesn't start with a ball (or rock) rolling down the aisle of the church. The signs of our new church year are more important and more worshipful. We see some of the signs of Advent with the royal blue color in the church, the Advent wreath, and ... (note other signs and symbols in the school and sanctuary that might be part of the local church tradition).

The message of Advent is that our King, Jesus, has come. While we are excited about Christmas and Jesus' birthday, we know that He already came when He was born over 2000 years ago. We know that Jesus still comes to us in His Word. We know that Jesus will come again. Advent prepares us for Jesus' coming again.

If we know guests are coming to our home or classroom, how do we get ready? We may clean, decorate, or make other special preparations. We are reminded that our hearts and lives are not ready to receive Jesus. We have many things to "clean up." We need to clean up our minds from our sinful thoughts. We have to clean up our conversations from some of the sinful things we say. We have to clean up our lives from some of the sinful things we do.

We can't clean up our lives by ourselves. We are always unclean in sin. The Good News of Advent is that Jesus has come to clean up our hearts and lives. Jesus has brought us the cleaning water of Baptism. Jesus gives us the cleaning Word of His forgiveness. People get ready for New Year's Eve with party hats and blowers. We get ready for the Advent season by confessing our sins. We get ready for the new church year by celebrating in worship together.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we celebrate a new year in our church. Thank You for coming to us day after day, year after year, with the Good News of Your forgiveness. Come to our church and school this Advent season and come to our families with Your presence. Help us to celebrate Your coming. Amen.

# Growing from a **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Is. 11:1-10; Rom. 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12

**Text:** Is. 11:1-5

**Song:** *LSB* #348; *AGPS* #228: "The King Shall Come"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Picture of a tree growing out of a rock on a mountain side, or a plant and a planter full of rocks instead of soil.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Have you ever seen a tree grow out of a rock or on a very rocky surface? (Can I place this plant in this container of rocks and expect it to grow?) It seems impossible that a tree could grow out of a rock. Where will the roots find water? Where will the plant find nutrients in the soil?

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

The prophet Isaiah shares another seemingly impossible picture: a tree grows out of a stump. A stump is what's left of a tree after it has been cut down. All the leaves and branches are gone. The roots may still be there, but they are no longer feeding the cells of the tree. There is no need for the water and nutrients to go up the tree because there is no life in the tree.

The story of Jesus "growing" from the family of Jesse seemed impossible. This was a family that included a foreign woman by the name of Ruth. This was a family that included a king (David) who had committed adultery and murder. Like our families, the family of Jesse was far from perfect. God chose this family as an example of His grace.

Out of this family Jesus would be born. We remember all the Advent promises that God made to His people throughout the Old Testament. God chose the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God chose the family of Judah. All these families were sinful people. God chose to send His Son through them for the forgiveness of their sins and ours. We celebrate the fulfillment of those promises.

God continues to do His growing in some amazing ways and places. Our lives are sinful and our hearts are rocky. Yet God chooses to plant His Word in us. Our faith grows and gets rooted. Our faith not only grows, but, through the Spirit, "fruit" is produced in us.

Where does God want us to plant His Word? We may have family members or friends in whom we don't see God's grace growing. God invites us to continue to share His amazing, life-giving Word and to watch Him make it grow.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we rejoice that You made the promise of Your Son grow in the stump of Jesse. You make faith grow in the often rocky places of our hearts. Continue to plant Your Word even in seemingly impossible and unlikely places, so that we might rejoice in Your grace. Amen.

# ROCK *Garden*

**Scripture:** Is. 35:1-10; James 5:7-11; Matt. 11:2-15

**Text:** Is. 35:1-2

**Song:** *LSB* #359: "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"; *AGPS* #164: "Listen! You Nations"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Box of sand.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Do you see any beauty in this box of sand? There may be different colors of the grains of sand, and there may be some interesting shapes, but "it's just sand!"

If we look at a desert scene, the comment might be, "It's just sand and rocks and cacti." Our conclusion might be that nothing can grow there. But it can. The desert can be beautiful. During certain seasons of the year and after even a very small amount of rain, the desert is colorful.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

God's people in the Old Testament were familiar with deserts. For 40 years they had wandered through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. God had been with them and blessed them. God had not only brought the beauty of creation to them, He had brought the beauty of His presence and care.

Many years later the prophet Isaiah shares another picture of a desert: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom" (v. 1b). Because of their sin and worship of idols, God's people found themselves far from God. The desert of their lives was dry. Like a person lost in the desert without food and water, they could not survive on their own.

God came to them with His promise. He would make everything bloom again with the Good News of the Savior who would come and bring life to them. Just as water makes the desert bloom, so the water of God's grace would make them bloom brightly and joyfully again. This third week of Advent has an emphasis on joy (pink candle). God did not leave His people in the desert of their sin.

While the Advent season helps us think of Jesus' coming as the Baby in Bethlehem, we have the joy of knowing that He has already come. He was born for us, died for us and rose again for us.

Sometimes it may seem as though we are living in a desert. We may see very few blossoms and have few happy thoughts. We may feel lost and alone. We know that Jesus has come for us. He finds us in our deserts and brings the joy of His forgiveness.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the joy and beauty of Your creation in deserts and many other places. Thank You for bringing joy to the deserts of sin that are the world and our lives. Help us to blossom in Your grace and to share Your joy with others. Amen.



# ROCK *My World!*

**Scripture:** Is. 7:10-17; Rom. 1:1-7;  
Matt. 1:18-25

**Text:** Matt. 1:18-25

**Song:** LSB #370; AGPS #262:  
“What Child is This?”

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Newspaper Headlines: examples of bad news and good news.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Have you heard or read any bad news lately? There is bad news of war, crimes, deaths and other things that show the sin of the world. (Share newspaper examples.)

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Joseph was facing bad news. Joseph was excited about getting married to Mary, the girl to whom he was engaged. Then Joseph got what he thought was the bad news that Mary was going to have a baby. Joseph knew that he was not the father of the child. Joseph faced the bad news that he might have to leave Mary.

In today's Bible lesson an angel had good news for Joseph: “Do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (vv. 20-21).

The Good News for Joseph is the Good News for us and for all the world. The bad news is that we are sinners. We not only see and hear bad things in the news but we do bad things. The Good News is that the baby born to Mary and Joseph would be named Jesus because “he will save his people from their sins.” The Baby Jesus would grow to be the Man who would die on the cross for the sins of the world.

There is still bad news in our world and sometimes bad news in our school and in our families. No matter what the bad news is, we have the Good news that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that He was born for us.

There is good news in the newspaper (share headlines). The best headline ever is God's Word in today's reading that Mary had given birth to a son and that His name was Jesus (v. 25). We will read and hear that headline in our Christmas worship. We will celebrate that headline with our families. We will share that headline with everyone.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we confess the bad news of the world and of our lives. Thank You for changing the bad news of Joseph's world and our world to the Good News of Jesus' birth. Help us to believe Your headline for us. Help us to share the Good News with others. Amen.

# ROCKS *and Clocks*

**Scripture:** Is. 63:7-14; Gal. 4:4-7;  
Matt. 2:13-23

**Text:** Gal. 4:4

**Song:** LSB #761: "Rock of Ages";  
AGPS #104: "Go Tell It On the  
Mountain"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Pictures of the Grand Canyon

## **ROCK EXPLORING:**

How old are the rocks in the Grand Canyon? Are they hundreds of years old? Thousands of years old? Even more?

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

The visitor's center at the Grand Canyon describes how the beautiful formations developed over many years. Scientists have methods they use to try to guess the age of the earth and how various features came into being.

God's clock is perfect. God's creation clock says that everything was made in six days. God's perfect creation was stained by the sin of Adam and Eve. God judged their sin, and the sin of the family that followed, in a Flood that covered the earth. The Fall into sin, the Flood, and the earliest biblical events took place thousands of years ago.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God set another clock. God had set a time when He would send His Son as the Savior. God's people waited generation after generation for God to keep His promises. The words of the Old Testament tell us of the time of waiting.

Our Bible passage for today says, "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." God picked exactly the right time in history to send Jesus.

We think and talk a lot about time. Is it time for recess or lunch? Is it time to go home? Is it time to get up? We wonder when our family is going on vacation or our class on a field trip. Because Jesus came at just the right time and spent time on earth, He chooses to be present with us at all times and to bless our times.

We do know that God is in charge of all times and especially the time of our salvation.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we know that You are the Lord of creation and of all times. We know You chose the time to come to earth to be our Savior. Help us to trust Your timing in every aspect of our lives. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Rolled Away

**Scripture:** Is. 42:1-9; Rom. 6:1-11;  
Matt. 3:13-17

**Text:** Rom. 6:4-5

**Song:** *LSB* #605; *AGPS* #95:  
"Father Welcomes"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Large cut-out of rock placed in front of baptismal font.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Did you notice that there's a barrier in front of the baptismal font today? How do we get to the baptismal font? We have to move the rock away.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Fortunately, there is no rock or any other barrier in front of our baptismal font. God wants the blessings of Baptism to be there for everyone. God wants us to see the baptismal font as a reminder of the blessings He has for us in our Baptism.

Our Bible reading for today from Romans 6 tells us about a barrier in front of everything that God would have us see and receive. The barrier is sin. Sin keeps us from a relationship with God. Sin keeps us from enjoying a relationship with other people. Romans 6 reminds us of Jesus' journey from the cross to the grave. It tells us of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Neither the devil nor anything else could set up a barrier big enough to keep Jesus away from His baptism and His cross.

The apostle Paul shares that when we are baptized we are baptized into Jesus' death and Jesus' resurrection. The barriers that keep us from God are removed. Even as tiny babies brought to the baptismal font, we need to have our sins washed away. God makes us His children and gives us new life in our Baptism.

This week the church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus. Unlike us, Jesus did not have to be baptized to have His sins washed away. He was the perfect Son of God. Jesus' Baptism was God's announcement that His Son was beginning the journey to the cross. The blessings of Jesus' death and resurrection are given us in Baptism. Jesus' Baptism reminds us of the blessings of our Baptism.

The lesson says that our Baptism blesses us to "walk in the newness of life." God has taken away every barrier that would keep us from praising Him and living our lives for Him.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Baptism and the blessings that come to us from Your journey from the Jordan River to the cross of Calvary. Thank You for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation that come to us through our Baptism. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Was Christ

(1 Cor. 10:4)  
Part I: The Rock is Faithful

**Scripture:** Is. 49:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

**Text:** 1 Cor. 1:9

**Song:** LSB #696: "O God, My Faithful God"; AGPS #175: "My Faith Looks Trustingly"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Picture of Old Faithful.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

How faithful is Old Faithful? The Yellowstone National Park geyser shoots hot water out of the ground every 38 to 90 minutes. A tourist may stand near Old Faithful and have to wait and wait and wait. Old Faithful is not perfectly faithful to a time schedule.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

We are not always faithful. We are not always faithful in getting our homework done, obeying our parents and doing many other tasks. We are not always faithful in worshiping at church or in the classroom. We are not faithful in studying or keeping God's Word.

The apostle Paul was not always faithful. Before he was a follower of Jesus, Saul (whose name was later changed to Paul) persecuted Christians. Saul wanted to stop others from hearing about Jesus. Jesus met Saul on the way to Damascus and showed Himself as the risen Savior. God called Saul to be His follower and missionary. God was faithful to Paul.

Paul now writes to the Church in Corinth, "God is faithful" (v. 9). God is faithful in Christ. God kept His promise to send Jesus. Jesus was faithful in doing everything necessary to fulfill God's plan of salvation. Jesus was faithful to His Father and went to the cross as the sacrifice for our sins.

God is faithful to us. God brought all the blessings of His grace to us in Baptism. God brings us His Word to keep our faith in Him strong. God will keep us in the faith until He comes again so that we can be with Him forever.

Sometimes our parents, teachers, pastors and others let us down. They are not always faithful. God will never let us down. We don't have to wait and wait and wait to see His blessings erupt before us.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, we confess that we are often unfaithful to You and to each other. Forgive us in the name of our forever faithful Jesus. Help us to listen to Your Word faithfully. Help us to be faithful in worshiping You and serving each other. Amen.



# The **ROCK** Was Christ

Part 2: The Rock is Powerful

**Scriptures:** Is. 9:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-25

**Text:** 1 Cor. 1:17-18

**Song:** LSB #549; AGPS #56:  
"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Pictures of powerful sources or objects: a large machine, sources of energy, "Superman" or other heroes, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What do all these items have in common? They are powerful. Are they all-powerful?

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

No matter what sources of power we may picture, they are all limited. An electrical power plant can run out of an energy source. A powerful machine may run out of fuel and cease to be powerful. Usually the power is listed to a certain place for a limited time. Some "power" sources are only imaginary.

Unlike our earthly power sources, we have an all-powerful God. An all-powerful God made the world. An all-powerful God keeps the earth in motion, the stars in the sky, and every detail of His creation working perfectly.

In contrast to God, we are powerless. We rely on God for everything. We are especially powerless when it comes to our sin. We can't make things right with each other and with God.

In our Bible reading for today, the apostle Paul writes about the power of God. "The word of the cross is the power of God." God's Word is powerful not only in creating everything but in saving us from our sins.

People couldn't believe that there was power in the cross. The cross was a picture of torture and shame. Only criminals died on a cross. But when Jesus died on the cross, He paid for our sins. When we believe in what Jesus did on the cross for us, we receive His forgiveness. God's Word has the power to forgive our sins. When the pastor announces each Sunday, "As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I forgive you all your sins," it is the power of Jesus' cross and God's Word that shares His forgiveness. The simple water and words of our Baptism have the power to forgive our sins and to bring us into God's family.

Many times we may wish for the power to change how we look or to change how people treat us. We wish we had the power to keep our family safe and happy. We have an all-powerful God who hears our prayers, loves us, forgives us and promises us the power of His presence every day.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, we celebrate You as the only all-powerful God. When we were powerless over sin, You brought the power of the cross to us. Help us to see and trust in Your power. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Was Christ

Part 3: The Rock is Wise

**Scripture:** Micah 6:1-8; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Matt. 5:1-12

**Text:** 1 Cor. 1:24

**Song:** LSB #760; AGPS #263:  
"What God Ordains is Always Good"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Describe some situations that are not wise: crossing the street in the middle of the block, riding in the car without the seatbelt on, playing computer games rather than doing one's homework, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

With each situation ask the children, "Is that wise?" In each situation the children should come to the conclusion, "That's not wise!" Ask for other examples of unwise actions.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

We do many things that aren't wise. Our unwise choices are sometimes dangerous for ourselves and others. Our unwise choices are sometimes disobedient and disrespectful to our parents, teachers or fellow students. Our unwise choices sometimes hurt ourselves and others.

Our unwise choices are evidence of our sins. Our sins are more than unwise and dangerous; they also leave us separated from God. We are not wise enough to figure out a way to please God and to take care of our sins. God is all wise. He knows everything. He knew that we were not wise enough to figure out our salvation.

In today's Bible reading, Jesus is called "the wisdom of God" (v. 24). There were many people in Corinth who thought they were very wise. They may have known other languages. They may have traveled the world of their day. They may have been wealthy business persons. However, they were always doing foolish things that left them lost in their sins.

God sent Jesus, Who died for all the foolishness of the world and our many unwise choices. When we were not wise enough to choose and follow Jesus, God's Spirit gave us the wisdom to know and believe in Jesus as our Savior.

You are in school to get wise: to learn important facts and gain important skills. God gives you a wisdom you can't learn from your teacher or from books, computers or other sources. In your Baptism God has given you the wisdom of knowing Jesus as your Savior. He will make you wise to salvation. As we wait for His perfect wisdom, we live wisely as His children, obeying His commandments.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the books, teachers, technology and other sources of wisdom in our school. Thank You especially for the wisdom You have given us to know Jesus as our Savior. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Was Christ

Part 4: The Rock is Revealed

**Scripture:** Is. 58:3-9; 1 Cor. 2:1-12; Matt. 5:13-20

**Text:** 1 Cor. 2:9-10

**Song:** LSB #537; AGPS #70: "Beautiful Savior"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Various items that are hidden from the children's view.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What would you guess is hidden under these coverings today? (Have students guess the items and then reveal what's under the coverings.)

It may be an enjoyable game to guess what's hidden. Little babies enjoy playing peek-a-boo when a covering is briefly put on their face and then pulled off. When you were young children, many of you enjoyed playing hide-and-seek. It's enjoyable to look for Waldo or other items hidden in a picture.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Fortunately, there's no game called, "Where's God?" God doesn't hide Himself. We are blessed to look out at the beauty of creation and know that God made everything. We are blessed to look at our wonderful bodies and to know that God made us in His image. However, we don't find the story of our salvation in a beautiful scene of nature or printed on our hand.

Our Bible reading for today tells us that "these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (v. 10).

By ourselves we live in the darkness of sin. It's like a covering was over us and any view or knowledge of God was hidden. We couldn't pull the cover off our face. In Baptism God pulls the cover off our face. He begins to show us and share with us everything about Him that was hidden. That God loved us and sent His Son for us is no longer hidden. That Jesus died and rose again is no longer hidden.

God reveals Himself to us through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit works through God's Word to reveal many things about Himself to us. As we worship together in chapel, as we study God's Word together in our classroom, as we read the Bible in our school or home, God the Spirit continues to pull more coverings off so that we see and learn more about our God and His plan for us. It's a blessing to be in a Lutheran school where God is revealing Himself to us every day.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Spirit of revealing. Thank You for uncovering Your Word so that we might see You. Bless us as we join you in the adventure of seeing Your revelations. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Was Christ

Part 5: Building on The Rock

**Scripture:** Deut. 30:15-20; 1 Cor. 3:1-9; Matt. 5:21-37

**Text:** 1 Cor. 3:9

**Song:** LSB #644; AGPS #224:  
"The Church's One Foundation"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Construction materials used by children: blocks, Lincoln logs, Legos, erector sets, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

It's fun to build. I have a variety of building materials with me today. As little children you may have taken blocks and built a simple tower. Depending on your age and interest you may have gotten more adventurous and detailed in your constructions. Many of you still enjoy your building projects with different materials.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

God builds. Obviously God is the builder of everything. He provides us with our building materials (whether it's a play project or a huge skyscraper). How amazing it is that God provides all the materials for every building project. He is the Creator of bricks, lumber, steel, nails, and everything else.

God builds His church. While our church/school building is made of different building materials, the Church the Bible talks about is built with people. Everyone who believes in Jesus is a piece of God's Church. Our Bible reading for today says, "You ... are God's building."

How amazing that God would make us part of His building. People who build things want to use the very best of materials. In our sin, we are like pieces of junk and there is nothing special about us. Yet God chooses to use us to build His church. It's like someone wanting to build a nice house by starting with pieces from the local dump. God takes all the different pieces and chooses to use us in His building.

Sometimes we feel bad about ourselves. Others may try to make us feel bad about ourselves. God says, "You are my building." God chose us in our Baptism to be in His Church. God continues to use us in special ways to be part of and to build up His kingdom. He takes us from junk and makes us His best building.

(Depending on the size of the school, the setting, etc., every child could be given a piece of building material — brick, lumber, etc. — and a simple construction could be put together. A church carpenter or parent volunteer might be delighted to coordinate the project.)

## RELYING ON THE ROCK

Lord Jesus, You are the Master Builder of Your Church. Thank You for choosing us to be a piece in Your building. May the temple of our bodies and the building of Your Church always be places of praise. Amen.



# The **ROCK** Was Christ

Part 6: The Rock is Humble

**Scripture:** Lev. 19:1-2; 9-18; 1 Cor. 3:10-23; Matt. 5:38-48

**Text:** 1 Cor. 3:21-23

**Song:** LSB #783; AGPS #223: "Take My Life"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

School trophies, ribbons, certificates and other items that show recognition or achievement.

## ROCK EXPLORATIONS:

Our school has been blessed to win some athletic tournaments, music contests, etc. We have the trophies and awards to prove our success.

## BUILDING ON THE ROCK:

What do we have to brag about? Maybe some of you have been part of teams that have won trophies. Maybe some of you have gotten awards for art pieces you have done, music you have played or sung, or some other activity. Maybe some of you have been able to go home with great grades on your report cards.

God blesses us with gifts to win games, art and music contests, good grades, etc. It's important to succeed and to be recognized for our hard work. It's even fun to share our success with others. Sometimes we forget to thank God for our gifts and start bragging about ourselves.

Some of the people in Corinth were bragging. They weren't necessarily bragging about their accomplishments; they were bragging about people they were following. They were bragging about knowing Paul, Peter, Apollos and other men. The apostle Paul tells them, "Let's not brag about men. Let's celebrate being followers of Jesus."

Jesus never bragged about Himself. He didn't brag that He was the Son of God, or that He was the wisest and most powerful person on earth. Jesus was always humble. God's Word says, "He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). There was nothing more humbling than being crucified.

Because of Jesus' humble death, we have the forgiveness of sins. We cannot brag about our salvation. Jesus did it all for us.

The most important statement we can make is, "I'm a Christian." We don't brag about being Jesus' followers because He chose us to follow Him. However, we are proud to follow Him and proud to tell others about Him. Being a follower of Jesus is never anything to brag about or to be ashamed of. We don't wave our trophies or ribbons. We wave the cross of Jesus and praise and thank Him.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the gifts You give me. Help me to use them to Your glory. Thank You, Jesus, for Your humble suffering and death. Make us bold to share all that You have done. Amen.

# Words on a **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Ex. 24:8-18; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9

**Text:** Ex. 24:12

**Song:** LSB #579; AGPS #230:  
“The Law of God is Good  
and Wise”

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Writings on a rock.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Have you ever seen words on a rock? Sometimes people put their names or other messages on a rock. (In national parks and other places it is against the law to put words on rocks.) Names and messages (sometimes even Bible passages) are put on rocks in a cemetery. What other places might we see words on a rock?

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

God wrote words on a rock for Moses and the children of Israel. The children of Israel had traveled out of Egypt and through the Red Sea and were on their way to the Promised Land. The large group of travelers stopped at Mount Sinai. God visited His people from Mount Sinai. The thunder, lightning, clouds and quaking mountain (Exodus 19) made it very obvious that God was there.

At Mount Sinai, God gave Israel (and us) the Ten Commandments. We have them written today in Luther’s Small Catechism. God wanted His people to only worship Him and to worship Him faithfully. God wanted His people to live lovingly with each other.

In today’s Bible reading God invites Moses and Joshua to come to the mountain, “that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandments.” God wrote His laws on stone so that they could not be erased. They were to read them and keep them forever.

The commandments on the stone tablets were also for us. We are to only love God and to love our neighbor. Do we keep the commandments perfectly? (Obviously not!) The commandments that were written on stone were later broken (Ex. 32). We still break the commandments. Jesus kept the commandments perfectly for us. By His suffering and death, He forgives us for all the commandments we break.

On another mountain, the Mount of Transfiguration, we see only holy Jesus as He came to keep the commandments as the perfect Son of God. With Peter, James, John, Moses and Elijah, we worship Him only.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we celebrate the Father’s coming on a mountain to give us His Law. We celebrate Your coming on a mountain as the Fulfiller of the Law. Bless us as we worship and serve You only. Amen.

# ROCK *that Crushes*

**Scripture:** Gen. 3:1-21; Rom. 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

**Text:** Gen. 3:15

**Song:** *LSB* #420; *AGPS* #82:  
"Christ the Life of all the Living"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Grinding stone, picture of a grist mill, other examples of a productive crushing rock.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

Do rocks crush? In earlier days in our country's history, mills were built along rivers so that the water could turn a huge wheel, which in turn powered a grinding stone to make flour. In some primitive parts of the world today, people use a stone to crush grain kernels into food they can eat.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Stones are used to crush items for helpful purposes. Heavy rocks can also be powerful and dangerous. Sometimes, accidentally, rocks slide or fall off a mountain and crush a car or even a person.

The devil had come to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and tempted them to sin. Because they disobeyed God they would be driven from the garden. Outside the garden they would live in the reality of their sin for the rest of their lives. God shares His words of punishment with Adam and Eve in today's Bible reading.

God also shares His word of judgment for the devil. God announces to the devil that his head would be crushed. In this verse God gives the first promise of the Savior. The devil would never win the battle against God.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus was often tempted and challenged by the devil. The devil tempted Jesus for 40 days in the wilderness. The devil worked through Judas to betray Jesus. The devil worked through the criminal on the cross to try to talk Jesus off the cross. Jesus never gave in to any temptation. Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection were His victory over the devil. Every time we say the Apostles' Creed, we say, "He descended into hell." Jesus went down to hell to show the devil that He was alive and that the devil was defeated. He was crushed forever.

The devil still tempts us to lie, cheat, disobey God or our parents, and do other wrong things. When we hear and see the devil's temptations, we can remember Jesus' victory that is ours in our Baptism. We can announce to the devil: "You are crushed!" You have no power over me because my Jesus is alive."

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your crushing death and resurrection. Thank You for making Your victory mine in my Baptism. Give me the power of Your Word to continue to crush the devil's temptations. Amen.

# Altars of ROCK

**Scripture:** Gen. 12:1-9; Rom. 4:1-8; 13-17; John 3:1-17

**Text:** Gen. 12:7-9

**Song:** LSB #571, AGPS #109: "God Loved the World"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Prior to chapel time, a class or group might build a simple altar with rocks.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What do you think of our altar? We are blessed to have a beautiful altar in our church and altars in our classrooms. In Bible times the altars may not have been as beautiful. The altars in the Bible were usually made from a collection of rocks. Those altars were just as important to God's people in their worship of God as the altar in our church is to us.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

As we follow God's people through the Old Testament, we find them often building altars. Noah built an altar thanking God after the flood (Gen. 8:20). In today's Bible reading, Abram builds an altar to the Lord.

God had called Abram to leave his country and his family and to travel to a place that God would show him. Abram took his wife, his nephew Lot, and all of his possessions and traveled hundreds of miles while awaiting God's word, "This is the place." When Abram got to a place called Shechem, God told him, "This is the land that I will give to you and your family." Abram built an altar to the Lord.

Altars were places to thank God. Abram thanked God for His protection and direction. Many times altars were also the place of sacrifice. Animals were killed and offered on the altar. The sacrifices followed God's direction for seeking His forgiveness. We also come before our altars with thanksgiving. We thank God for all that He has done for us. Fortunately, we don't come to our altars to offer sacrifices for our sin. We don't come to Sunday worship or weekday chapel with lambs and other animals to lay as sacrifices on the altar.

When Jesus began His ministry, John the Baptist announced his coming: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus had come to be God's sacrifice on the altar of the cross. As we gather at our altar, we confess our sins that made Jesus' sacrifice necessary. We come thanking Jesus for the sacrifice that forgives us. At our altar, we bring all of our prayers to God, knowing that He hears us because through our Baptism we are children of the Heavenly Father.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for teaching us about the altar of Abraham and God's choosing of Abraham. We rejoice that You have also chosen us, and that we come to our altar praising You for Jesus' sacrifice. Amen.

# Water from a ROCK

**Scripture:** Ex. 17:1-7; Rom. 5:1-8;  
John 4:5-26

**Text:** Ex. 17:7

**Song:** LSB #729; AGPS #126:  
"I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Pitchers of water, bottles of water, other water sources.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Where does our water come from? We are blessed to have safe and clean water sources. Our water comes from the local river (lake, spring, etc.), where it is taken into our city's water purification system so that we can enjoy it.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

There were many challenges as the children of Israel crossed the desert on the way to the Promised Land. When the hundreds of thousands of children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, one of their first questions was, "What are we going to eat?" God provided manna and quail for them every day.

In today's Bible reading, the children of Israel are complaining again. They were in the middle of the desert and wondered where they were going to get water. We can understand their concern. It would take a lot of water to keep them alive, and they were in a desert.

Perhaps we can identify with them. Do we ever worry about things? We may worry about whether our family will have enough food, whether our parents have a job, whether we are safe in a storm, and many other things. Even though we know God has taken care of us many times in the past, we still don't trust Him.

God does another miracle for Moses and His followers. He provides water from a rock. Once again He had taken care of His people.

Many years later, Jesus described Himself as the "living water" (John 4). Jesus provided more than water to quench the thirst of a woman at the well. He took away her spiritual thirst by forgiving her sins. Jesus makes us His children in the water of Baptism. Jesus gives us "living water" to forgive our sins. Listening to and believing God's Word is like getting a cool drink on a warm day.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for a cool drink on a warm day and for a swim in the water of a pool or lake. Thank You especially for the waters of Baptism where our sins are washed away. Bless us as we serve Your "water" to others. Amen.



# Watch for the ROCKS

**Scriptures:** Is. 42:14-21; Eph. 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

**Text:** Eph. 5:8

**Song:** LSB #707; AGPS #191:  
"Oh, That the Lord Would Guide  
My Ways"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

A path with obstacles along the way (rocks, etc.); a blindfold for a student.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

I am going to take one of your fellow students on a walk with me this morning. The walk is difficult enough being blindfolded. What makes the walk even more challenging? (There are obstacles in the way.)

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Most people learn to walk when they are around a year old. When you learned to walk, your footsteps were unsteady. You fell down often. To help you learn, your parents tried to give you lots of space with very few obstacles as well as people to help you and sometimes hold your hand. With the muscles, bones and coordination God has given you, you have been walking ever since.

Our lives as God's children can be compared to a walk. We have always walked in sin. There are lots of obstacles that the devil and the world put in our path. There are the obstacles of our pride, anger, etc. The devil may put the temptation to lie, cheat, etc. on our path. The obstacles cause us to trip and perhaps even fall. Sometimes when we fall we hurt ourselves or others.

Jesus came to walk on this earth. He learned to walk as a small child. He walked down the dusty streets of Nazareth. He walked with His disciples. Finally, Jesus walked to the cross to die for us. There was no obstacle that was going to keep Jesus from walking for our salvation. As we are God's children, Jesus walks with us and we walk with Him.

In today's Bible reading the apostle Paul writes, "Walk as children of light." God has taken off the blindfolds and shown us His love in Jesus, the light of the world. Every place Jesus walks with us is a place of light. It's much easier and safer to walk in a place that is well lit than a place that is dark and dangerous. Jesus is the light for our path.

God has given us the light of His Word to guide us on our path. May we always take His light with us.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for taking off the blindfold of my sin and placing me on the path of life with Your light. Shine on my path, Jesus, so that I may safely walk with You. Bring others on Your lighted path with me. Amen.

# Petrified ROCKS

**Scriptures:** Ezek. 37:1-14; Rom. 8:1-11; John 11:1-45

**Text:** Ezek. 37:1-14

**Song:** LSB #496; AGPS #120: "Holy Spirit, Light Divine"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Samples of or information about petrified rocks.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What is petrified rock? Have you ever seen petrified rock? (Explain how wood becomes "rock" under certain conditions.) God has to coordinate many amazing circumstances for wood to become petrified. Wood that once was made up of living cells and once had water running through it is first completely dry and lifeless and then hard as rock. God provides the right conditions for us to see a "petrified forest."

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Today's Old Testament lesson has an even more amazing process. Something greater than any scientific process takes place before the prophet Ezekiel's eyes. Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones. At the command of the prophet, the dry bones suddenly come together, are covered with muscle and skin, and become living beings again. This was not some sort of horror movie. It was a message from God.

God's people were dead in sin. They were like a field of lifeless dry bones. Only God's Word could bring life to them again. God's Word to them was that He would not forsake them in their sin but that they would find life again in the promise of Jesus. Just as the bones came to life through the Word of the Spirit, God's people would come to life as the Spirit brought them to faith in Jesus.

God gave amazing visions to Ezekiel and to other Old Testament prophets. The visions showed the power of God. The visions also showed that only God's Word could bring life into them again.

Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises. The bones of Jesus would not dry up in a grave. The bones of Jesus came to life again on the third day and Jesus came out of the tomb. When we believe in Jesus, our bones come to life again. God promises that we too will rise from our graves. Our bones will have muscle and skin on them again, and we will stand on this earth with Jesus.

God promised Ezekiel, "I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live" (v. 14). God has given us His Spirit in our Baptism. God's Spirit is in us so we can live worshiping and serving Him. We can live obeying Him and loving others.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the bones of my body that support my frame; thank You for muscles and skin and all that is me. Thank You for the Spirit who has given me life in my Baptism and who directs me to live and serve as Your child. Amen.

# Loud ROCKS

**Scripture:** Is. 50:4-9; Phil. 2:5-11;  
Luke 19:28-40

**Text:** Luke 19:40

**Song:** *LSB* #443: "Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"; *AGPS* #121: "Hosanna, Hallelujah!"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Pile of rocks.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

(Chapel leader pretends to have a conversation with the rock pile.) Does it make any sense to try to carry on a conversation with these rocks? Can these rocks talk? Rocks weren't made to talk. In today's Bible reading Jesus shares that rocks could cry out His praises.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

After 33 years on earth and three years of preaching, teaching and doing miracles, it was finally time for Jesus to do what He had come to earth to do. It was time for Him to die for the sins of the world. Jesus had said that He would die in Jerusalem.

On a Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. Many people, including many children, were on the streets welcoming Jesus as a king. They shouted their praises and waved their palm branches. (That's why we call it Palm Sunday.) However, not everyone welcomed Jesus with praises. Some people in the crowd asked Jesus to keep His followers quiet. Jesus told them, "The very stones cry out" (v. 40).

Everything in creation was created by God at the beginning of time. Everything in creation celebrates God as its creator. We confess and celebrate that God has made us and everything around us.

We celebrate Him as our Redeemer. Jesus is the One who came to earth. Jesus is the One who rode on a donkey into Jerusalem to suffer and die for us. He is the only One who could pay for our sins. This week is called Holy Week. While we learn about and think about Jesus' journey to the cross every day, we gather in worship to follow Him and praise Him especially this week.

If stones can cry out praises to Jesus, we have even more reason to shout our praises. Jesus went to the cross for each of us. Jesus has forgiven our sins. Jesus has made us His children in our Baptism.

The stones don't have to cry out (and can't cry out). We can and we will this week and always.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for the wonder of Your creation. Help me to see what You have done around me. This Holy Week help me to see again what You have done for me. Thank You for Your journey to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and Your journey to the cross on Good Friday. Bless our journey with You. Amen.

# The **ROCK** Rolled Away!

**Scripture:** Acts 10:34-43; Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 28:1-10

**Text:** Matt. 28:2

**Song:** LSB #461; AGPS #127: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Easter picture with open tomb; stone rolled to the side of the tomb.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What was in front of Jesus' tomb? Why was there a stone in front of the tomb? (Review Jesus' burial and the Roman guard; Matt. 28:59-66.)

## STANDING ON THE ROCK

When the women went to Jesus' tomb early on Sunday morning to complete His burial, they wondered, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" (Mark 16:3) The stone was too large for a few women to move it.

The Bible tells us that when the women arrived, the stone had already been moved. The Easter story in the Gospel of Matthew tells us "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled the stone back and sat on it" (v. 2).

We don't know exactly when Jesus arose on Easter Sunday morning. We know that as the almighty risen Son of God, Jesus didn't need an angel to help get Him out of the tomb. The Good News was that Jesus was alive just as He had promised. Death could not keep Him in the tomb.

The angel rolled the stone away so that the women and disciples could look in and see an empty tomb. With the stone rolled away, the women and disciples who also came to the tomb could look in and see that Jesus was not there. Some who looked in saw an angel who greeted them. Some looked in and saw the cloths in which Jesus was buried. Nobody saw Jesus in the grave because He had arisen. For 40 days after Jesus' resurrection many people saw Him alive again.

We don't need to go to Jerusalem to try and find Jesus' tomb to see if it's really empty. In the Bible, we have the words of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Paul, all of whom saw Jesus alive again. Through the eyes of the apostles in God's Word, we can see that the stone was rolled away and know Jesus is alive.

The rolled away stone and the empty tomb mean that Jesus has defeated death for us. There is nothing that can keep our loved ones or us in our graves. God's Word tells us that when Jesus comes back on the last day, all who believe in Him will come out of the grave to be with Him. Our stones, too, will be rolled away.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, we praise You for your resurrection. We rejoice that because the stone is rolled away and You are alive again, we can live for You now, and we will be alive with You for eternity. Amen.

# Words from a **ROCK**

Series on 1 Peter:  
Rock of Hope

**Scripture:** Acts 5:29-42; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

**Text:** 1 Peter 1:3

**Song:** LSB #738; AGPS #167:  
"Lord of All Hopefulness"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Picture of the Hope diamond.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

The Hope diamond is the world's largest deep blue diamond. It is kept safely in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. It is very, very valuable.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

What would it be like to own the Hope diamond? Obviously you'd be very wealthy. You might also be very frightened, as others might want to steal it from you.

It's perhaps nice to dream about having very valuable things and being very wealthy. It can also be very challenging because of the temptations and risks that come with having lots of things.

Does the Hope diamond give its owner hope? Obviously not! Does owning the Hope diamond give the owner the hope of heaven? Obviously not. We can never find hope in any object or even in any person.

Today's Bible reading says, "According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). We are in the Easter season of the church year. Easter is celebrated for seven weeks. More important, we celebrate Easter every Sunday and every day in our Lutheran school.

Because Jesus is risen from the dead, we have hope. It's not the kind of hope for a special gift, a family trip or other things that we might hope we get or hope to do. This hope is more permanent. We celebrate what is certain. We know that we will go to heaven because we believe that Jesus died for us and rose again. We are certain that we are God's children now and will be with Him forever. That's hope in Jesus.

That hope is more precious than the Hope diamond or any piece of jewelry or anything else that we might hope to own.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, sometimes I hope for things that really aren't very important. You give me the certain hope of heaven because You are risen from the dead. Help me to share Your hope with many people who feel things are hopeless. Amen.



# Words from a **ROCK**

Series on 1 Peter:  
Imperishable Rock

**Scripture:** Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-25; Luke 24:13-35

**Text:** 1 Peter 1:23-25

**Song:** LSB #633; AGPS #66: "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Perishable items: food with expiration dates, wilting flowers, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What does it mean that something is perishable? A bouquet of flowers will not last forever. Flowers are perishable. A piece of fruit left on the counter (or in the school locker) will begin to decay after a few days. It is perishable. Even canned goods have an expiration date on the can. After a period of time they are not safe to eat. They are perishable.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

Every living thing is perishable. As a result of sin, things die and decay. Our bodies are perishable. Our bodies get cuts, bruises, sores, wrinkles. Every human body perishes.

Today's Bible reading from 1 Peter tells us about the imperishable. Peter quotes God's Word from the Old Testament (Is. 40:8) which describes grass as perishable. When grass is cut or pulled from the soil it withers and dies. Peter reminds his listeners that God's Word is imperishable.

When Jesus' friends took Him off the cross, they put Him in a tomb where they assumed that His body would perish. Women went to the tomb on Easter Sunday morning to finish anointing Jesus' body for burial. God's Word tells us about the imperishable Jesus who rose again from the dead. Jesus rose victoriously and now reigns over all creation. He will never perish.

Because Jesus is alive, His Word is always alive. Nothing God says to us will ever wither and fade away. God's promises can never be destroyed. God's Word also tells us that because of Jesus' death, the bodies of all believers are imperishable. The apostle Paul writes about Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection: "What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable" (1 Cor. 15:42). Because of Jesus' resurrection, our bodies will become imperishable like His. On the last day God will raise us from the dead and we will have perfect bodies that will live forever.

We can celebrate, "In Jesus' resurrection, I am imperishable!"

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, as the risen Lord You are forever imperishable. Thank You for the gift of faith in Your resurrection which assures us that in our resurrection, we too will be imperishable. Amen.

# Words from a ROCK

Series on 1 Peter:  
Rock of Healing

**Scripture:** Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

**Text:** 1 Peter 2:24

**Song:** LSB #543: "What Wondrous Love is This"; AGPS #239: "This Is He"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Things that promote healing: bandages, antibiotic creams, first aid kit, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

Imagine that you are playing on the playground and you accidentally cut yourself. What would you do? You certainly would share your injury with your teacher or the school nurse, who would get the first aid kit to tend to your injury. With the proper attention, your cut would begin to heal.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

It's one thing to have cuts, bruises, and even broken bones that need attention. Sometimes there are even more serious wounds and diseases like cancer. God provides many kinds of medical professionals, medications, and treatments to help us heal. We thank God for things that heal.

The Bible talks about other wounds that we all have. These wounds are much more serious. Our hearts and bodies have been injured by sin. We have hurts in our hearts from words that hurt us. We hurt others by the things that we say or do. There are no bandages or healing creams or other treatments that can help us heal from sin.

Today's Bible lesson from 1 Peter says, "By His wounds you have been healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Peter helps us remember the wounds of Jesus. Jesus was wounded by the crown of thorns, the beatings from the Roman soldiers, and the nails in His hands and feet as He hung on the cross. As the perfect Son of God, Jesus could have chosen to heal His own injuries, but He chose to suffer, bleed and die for us. The Bible says, "He was wounded for our transgressions" (Is. 53:5).

Because Jesus was wounded for us, we are healed. Jesus heals us from our sin. Sometimes with bandages, doctors, nurses and other gifts from God, we are healed from our cuts and bruises and sicknesses. God alone heals us from our sin.

We thank God for parents, teachers and others who help us heal from our cuts and hurts. God gives us His Word that we share with others so that God can also heal them from their sins. (Perhaps share a bandage on a note card with every child and the message, "Jesus heals us.")

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for healing the cuts and bruises on our bodies. Thank You for the Good News of Your resurrection and the assurance that You have healed us from the wounds of sin. Help us to share Your healing Word with others. Amen.

# Words from a **ROCK**

Series on 1 Peter:  
Chosen Rock

**Scriptures:** Acts 6:1-9, 7:2, 51-60;  
1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

**Text:** 1 Peter 2:9

**Song:** LSB #590: "Baptized into  
Your Name Most Holy"; AGPS  
#269: "Yes"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Several scenarios or situations where volunteers are needed: I need a volunteer to get me a glass of water; I need someone to pass out the songbooks; etc.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

I appreciate your willingness to help me this morning. As I asked for volunteers, I noticed a number of you quickly raised your hand and indicated your willingness to help. Often when a volunteer is needed in the classroom I hear many of you saying, "Pick me!" Whether it's an errand at school or home, or whether it's a classroom or playground game, we often hear the words, "Pick me!"

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

We like to be chosen. We say, "Pick me!" Pick me!"

What does it feel like not to be chosen? Sometimes we experience the disappointment of not being chosen. Obviously the teacher can't choose everyone every time for an errand. Obviously not everyone can play every position on the school team. There are times where we feel we aren't chosen because we aren't good enough at something. Sometimes we may not be chosen because we feel that others pick someone they like more than us. It's disappointing not to be chosen.

God's Word to us today in 1 Peter 1:9 is that we are chosen. God chose to send Jesus, His only Son to be our Savior. Our lesson says that "the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone." Many people looked at Jesus and didn't see anything special about Him. Comparing Jesus and His Church to a building, some saw Jesus as just another rock. Jesus is the capstone, the center of our salvation (1 Peter 2:7). Jesus was God's only choice to give us salvation. Only the perfect Son of God could fulfill God's Law perfectly. Only the sacrifice of the Son of Man could take care of the payment for our sins. Jesus is the Rock of salvation.

God chose us in our Baptism. He chose to suffer and die for us. He chose to forgive us. He chose to make us His children. God did not choose us because we are good-looking, good students, athletes or for any other reason we might consider important. God chose us because He loves us and wants us to be His children. No matter how many times we might feel disappointed at not being chosen, God's message to us is, "I choose you!"

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for choosing us to be Your children. Amen.

# Words from a ROCK

Series on 1 Peter:  
Saving Rock

**Scripture:** Acts 17:16-31; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

**Text:** 1 Peter 3:21

**Song:** LSB #744; AGPS #63:  
"Amazing Grace"

## ROCK COLLECTING:

Life-saving equipment: life jacket, life-saving "ring" from swimming pool, etc.

## ROCK EXPLORATION:

What's important about these items? It is important to put on a life jacket if you are water skiing or participating in water sports. If you or anyone else gets in trouble in a swimming pool or lake, the life guard will throw the floating ring out for you to grab and be pulled to safely.

## STANDING ON THE ROCK:

We thank God for the life-saving tools that He gives us at swimming pools, lakes and other places. Can any of these items save us from sin?

When we realize how often we break the commandments and disobey God, we realize that we are drowning in our sin. There is no life jacket or any other equipment that we can wear or that someone can throw out to save us from our sin. Only God can save us from sin. Only Jesus can save us from our sin. Today our Bible reading tells us that God has given us the life-saving "equipment" of Baptism.

The Bible lesson reminds us of the Old Testament story of Noah. God sent the Flood as a punishment for the sinful world of Noah's time. God provided Noah with some life-saving equipment. There wasn't a life jacket or anything else that would keep Noah and his family floating when the whole earth was covered with water. God saved faithful Noah and his family by putting them in an ark. If Noah and his family had not been in the ark, they certainly would have drowned with everyone else.

God saves us from drowning in our sin by throwing us the life-saving equipment of our Baptism. The Bible reading says, "Baptism now saves you" (v. 21). Hanging on to our Baptism, we know that God will rescue us. When we are floating in temptations, God throws us our Baptism to remind us that the devil has been drowned. When we are floating in a sea of the world's evil, we hang on to our Baptism to remind us that God will keep us floating in His grace.

When we are safe in water, it's a lot of fun to swim, dive, and do other things. Knowing that we are safe in the grace of our Baptism, we can enjoy living and playing as God's children.

## RELYING ON THE ROCK:

Lord Jesus, thank You for saving my life through Baptism. Thank You for putting Your grace around me to protect me from the temptations of the world and the devil. Keep me floating in Your grace. Amen.

# Words from a **ROCK**

Series on 1 Peter:  
Watching from  
the Rock

**Scripture:** Acts 1:12-26; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11; John 17:1-11

**Text:** 1 Peter 5:8

**Song:** *LSB* #670: "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones"; *AGPS* #247: "Thy Word"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Binoculars

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

How many of you have ever used binoculars? When might they be used? There are a variety of situations where we could use them. We might use them at a ball game (especially if we are seated a long way from the action). We might use them to observe wildlife in the distance. Binoculars help us to watch more carefully and specifically.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Our Bible words from 1 Peter today include the warning "be watchful." Peter tells his readers (and us) to be watching for the devil. He goes on to compare the devil to a roaring lion.

Imagine being on a wildlife safari in Africa. We certainly would want to see wildlife. We want to take our binoculars and scan the area, looking for lions. Obviously we'd want to do so from a safe distance. If a lion got too close to us, we'd trust our guide to protect us.

We are not on a wildlife adventure in Africa where we hope to see a lion. We are on a life adventure where the lion comes to find us. Like a lion looking for its prey to catch and eat, the devil walks around looking for ways to catch us as his prey. The devil wants to do everything possible to keep us away from our Protector, Jesus.

We know that Jesus has defeated the lion of Satan. While Satan would want to stalk us and drag us away from Jesus, he can never do that because God has claimed us as His in our Baptism. He protects us with His Word.

God gives us faith binoculars so that we can look for the devil. The devil is hiding in all sorts of places. The devil is hiding in places where we aren't safe or other people are tempting us to do things that aren't God's will. We always keep our faith binoculars out to see if the devil may be hiding.

When we see the devil, we can use the weapons of God's Word to chase him away. God's Word keeps us "firm in our faith" (v. 9). We are always safe on the high and firm ground of God's Word.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your victory over the devil. I know that You are always with me to watch out for me and protect me. Help me to look through the binoculars of Your Word. Amen.



# Splash on the **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Num. 11:24-30; Acts 2:1-21; John 7:37-39

**Text:** Acts 2:18

**Song:** LSB #500: "Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid"; AGPS #252: "We Are the Church"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Children's pool, large pan, rock (or other hard surface), pail of water to pour on the hard surface.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

What happens when the water is poured on the hard surface? It splashes all over the place. That splash can be most enjoyable on a warm summer day when we are dressed for the fun.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Today's Bible lesson tells us about a splash in Jerusalem. It was the splash of the Holy Spirit.

The true God is the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also eternal and has always been present. The Holy Spirit filled hearts and directed the words of the prophets. Jesus had promised that after His resurrection and ascension, He would send the Holy Spirit to the church to an even greater measure.

Forty days after His resurrection Jesus ascended into heaven, and 10 days later the Spirit appeared to Jesus' followers gathered in Jerusalem on a day we now call Pentecost. The Spirit's appearance might be compared to a big splash. It wasn't just the splash of a pitcher of water in a pool. The splash of Pentecost is a major splash, like the splash of Niagara Falls or another huge water fall, splashing on a rocky surface. Acts 2 tells us of the special event. There was a rushing mighty wind, tongues of fire, and the disciples speaking many different languages. There was no doubt that the Spirit of God was at work.

In Peter's Pentecost message, he shares that the biggest splash of all was the fact that Jesus died and rose again. From the cross God splashed the blood of Jesus on the world. Through Jesus' blood we receive the forgiveness of our sins.

A splash is part of our journey as God's child. When we were baptized, the pastor took water and splashed it on our head in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Along with the splash of water was the splash of God's Word which announced that we are forgiven and chosen children of God.

Pentecost shares the message that God's Spirit is still at work splashing us with the Good News of Jesus. As you play in water this summer, remember God's splash for you.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, we give praise and thanks today for the Holy Spirit, who splashes us with Your grace in our Baptism. Use us to splash others with the Good News that You came to suffer and die for us. Amen.

# ROCKS *from Everywhere*

**Scripture:** Gen. 1:1 – 2:4; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; Matt. 28:16-20

**Text:** Matt. 28:16-20

**Song:** *LSB* #507; *AGPS* #119: "Holy, Holy, Holy"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

The chapel leader brings rocks (or other items) collected from various travel destinations. Children may also be asked to bring collected items from their travels.

## **ROCK EXPLORATIONS:**

Do you collect a particular kind of souvenir when you take a trip? Many of us collect items from our travels to remind us of the places we've visited. Some travelers pick up a postcard from the places they visit. Other might collect a rock or something else.

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

Jesus had traveled the earth for 33 years. In our worship and Bible studies this year, we have traveled with Jesus. Jesus traveled from Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum and other towns teaching and doing miracles showing that He was the Son of God and promised Messiah. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world and to rise again. Jesus did not come to earth as a tourist to see beautiful places or to visit interesting historical sights. Jesus didn't come to collect rocks (or anything else) from the mountains He stood on or from the lake shores He visited. Jesus came to visit every detail of His Father's plan of salvation.

The only thing Jesus collected was sinners. Every place Jesus went people came to Him with their diseases which were the result of the sins of the world. Jesus came to collect people who had been possessed by the devil, the father of sin. Jesus came to collect people who had led sinful lives and who needed the forgiveness that only He could give.

In our Baptism Jesus collected each of us as a sinner. Every week when we gather in Sunday worship or gather in school chapel we are a collection of sinners. Jesus gathers us together and then announces to us that our sins are forgiven through His suffering and death. It's great news that we are part of Jesus' collection.

Jesus uses us, His Church, to continue to collect sinners. Today's Bible passage includes the words of the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus uses us to bring sinners to Him so that they too might be baptized and saved. Where are you traveling this summer? What are you collecting? Let's collect disciples for Jesus.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for finding and collecting me, a sinner. Bless us as we share Your invitation with others. Amen.

# Upon This **ROCK**

**Scripture:** Is. 26:1-8; 1 Cor. 10:1-4;  
Matt. 7:24-27

**Text:** Matt. 7:24-25

**Song:** LSB #922; AGPS #102:  
"Go, My Children, with My  
Blessing"

## **ROCK COLLECTING:**

Pictures from school year; trophies and other objects collected during the year; assortment of highlights and memories from the school year.

## **ROCK EXPLORATION:**

God has blessed our time together in our Lutheran school this year. I've collected just a few items that might remind us of some of the places we visited, things we did, and things that you've accomplished. (Share of the items and memories.)

## **STANDING ON THE ROCK:**

All of the experiences and memories of the school year are important. However, there were probably some activities we reviewed when you thought, "I had already forgotten that." There are so many things that go on at school, in our neighborhood and in our family, that we quickly forget them. We may even lose some of the pictures we've taken or break some of the trophies we've gathered.

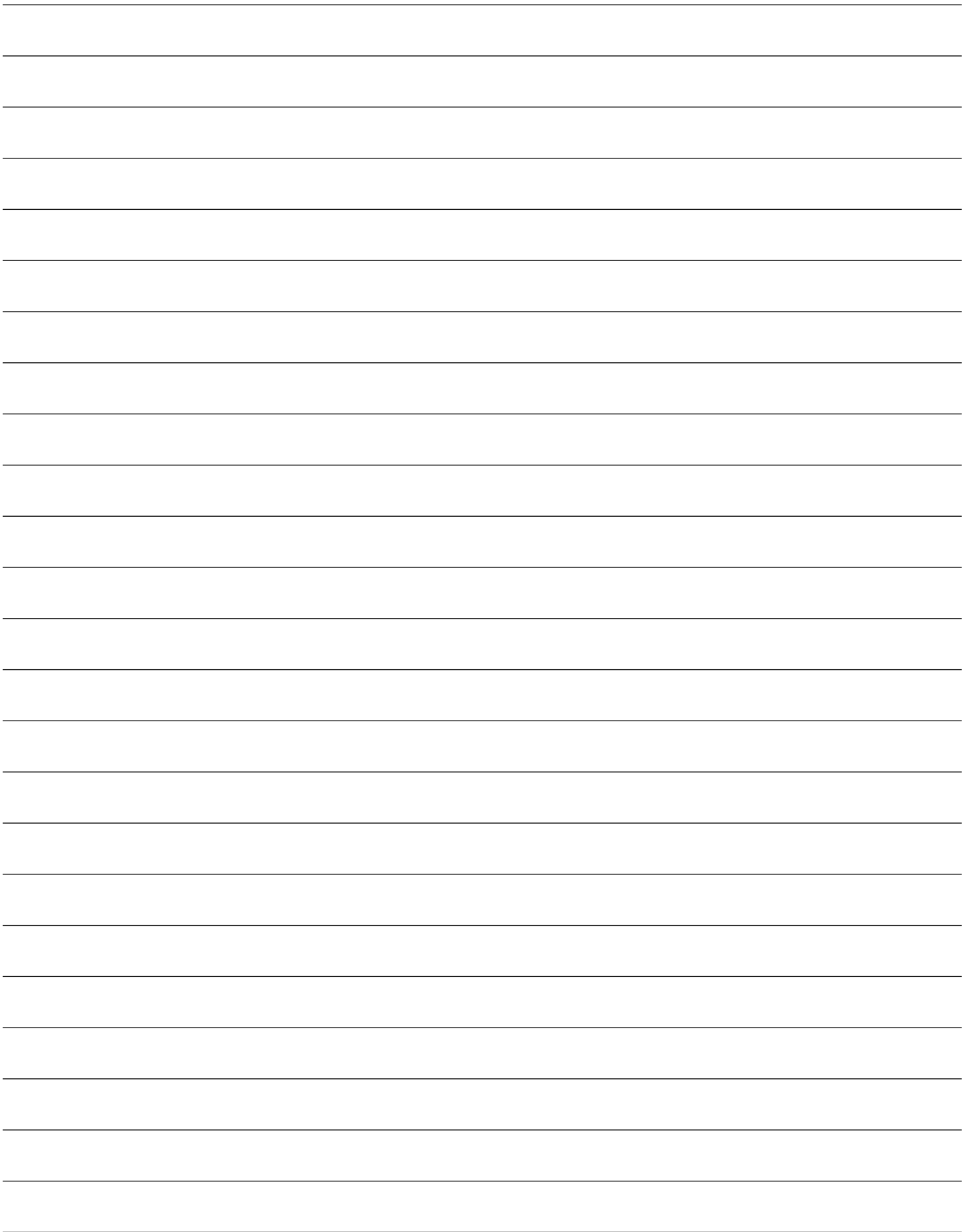
In today's Bible lesson Jesus shares with us what's important to remember and build upon. In today's lesson Jesus is teaching in what is called "The Sermon on the Mount." For three chapters (5-7) in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus shares important teachings with His followers. Jesus tells the story of two men who build houses. One man built his house on a rock. The other man built his house on sand. Wind, rain, and floods came and beat on the houses. Which house do you suppose stayed standing? (The house on the rock!)

You've done many interesting things this year and learned many important lessons. It is great to look at the trophies and ribbons that you won with your schoolmates. It's important that you remember your math tables, history facts, science experiments, sentence parts and all the other lessons your teachers worked so hard to get into your brain. You will use those lessons many times in the next years.

The most important lesson we have learned this year is that Jesus is our Rock. Jesus is the Rock of salvation. We build our school, our families, and our lives on that Rock. No flood, blast of wind, or anything else can ever wash the "house" of your faith away. Our worship theme has been "Upon This Rock." Our Rock is Jesus, and as our lives are built on Him we can celebrate the Good News that our sins are forgiven and that we will be together in heaven forever. Go make some more summer memories with your family and friends. Most important, worship, study God's Word, celebrate your Baptism and build on the Rock that is Jesus.

## **RELYING ON THE ROCK**

Lord Jesus, You alone are the Rock of Salvation. Keep our lives built on You forever. Amen.



“Trust in the Lord forever, for the  
Lord God is an everlasting rock”

**IS. 26:4 ESV**

