

# Sunday, July 8

First Reading  
[Ezekiel 2:1-5](#)

Psalm  
[Psalm 123](#)

Second Reading  
[2 Corinthians 12:2-10](#)

Gospel  
[Mark 6:1-13](#)

## OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth shall  
proclaim your praise.  
Glory to the Father,  
and to the Son and to  
the Holy Spirit: as it  
was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be  
forever. Amen.

## CLOSING PRAYER

O God, you have  
called your servants  
to ventures of which  
we cannot see the  
ending, by paths as  
yet untrodden,  
through perils  
unknown. Give us  
faith to go out with  
good courage, not  
knowing where we go,  
but only that your  
hand is leading us  
and your love  
supporting us;  
through Jesus Christ  
our Lord. Amen.

Additional prayer ideas  
on Page 2.

## Theme reading

Jesus left that part of the country and returned with his disciples to Nazareth, his hometown. The next Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. They asked, "Where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles?" Then they scoffed, "He's just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us." They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family." And because of their unbelief, he couldn't do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people. And he called his twelve disciples together and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority to cast out evil spirits. He told them to take nothing for their journey except a walking stick—no food, no traveler's bag, no money. He allowed them to wear sandals but not to take a change of clothes.

"Wherever you go," he said, "stay in the same house until you leave town. But if any place refuses to welcome you or listen to you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate."

So the disciples went out, telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil.

## I WONDER

- I wonder what it was like for Jesus to be at home.
- I wonder why people were offended by Jesus.
- I wonder how the disciples feel to be given power over evil spirits
- I wonder what it feels like to take nothing with them. I wonder if they will have enough? I wonder what people think of their message.

## SLOW DEVOTIONS

Empty out your mobile church bag (or use a large grocery bag.) Imagine going away for two weeks and only being able to take what could fit in that bag. What would you pack?

If you were going to be staying with good friends, would that change the way you pack? If you were staying with family would it change?

Why do you think Jesus said don't take money, food or a suitcase? Are those bad things? Are there any things we should consider leaving behind when we do God's work? Any ideas, feelings or traditions we should leave behind? Who can we depend on for help (besides God?)

## ACTIVE DEVOTIONS

→ **Serving two by two:** Pair up people in your group or contact a friend to join you. Each pair thinks of a way to help others today or anytime this week, makes a plan and goes out to do it!

→ **Gather together:** People get into twos, then blindfold half of the pair. Scatter some pinecones, pool toys, water balloons, etc., on the ground and give the blindfold halves 3 minutes to grab as many as they can, carrying them in their arms. Their partner has to shout out directions to them. Set up a bucket for each team to deposit their items into when their arms get too full.

# Going Deeper

## PRAY A NEW WAY

**Beach ball prayer:** Select someone to start the prayer. Holding the ball, the leader says, “**Dear Lord, You give us so many reasons to praise you. We thank you for this time together. We thank you for sending us your son to guide and walk with us. And we thank you for ...**” The leader tosses the ball to someone in the group, who shouts out the first thing that pops into their head and then tosses the ball to another. Keep tossing the ball until everyone has shared — keep going if the group wants!

**Leader-led prayer:** Select a leader. Each member of the group shares their prayer request with the group. This can be done at the start of the devotion time or the end. The leader takes notes and includes the requests in the closing prayer. (This is a great way to teach kids to be comfortable with making up their own prayers.)

**Praying with posture:** Follow your heart’s lead to pray with mind and body. You can use the prayer below or say your own.

- Kneeling
- Sitting
- Standing
- Bowing
- Lying prostrate (face-down and flat)
- Hands up

**O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Theme : Blessed and Sent

*This kingdom vision — our identity as those blessed and sent — must work itself out in the small routines of our daily work and vocation, as we go to meetings, check our email, make our children dinner, or mow the lawn. -- Tish Harrison Warren*

We live out the mission of God in the everyday tasks of home, workplace, church and community. As we work become “hints of hope” in this world, there are 4 areas to consider:

- **Competency:** using and developing the gifts God has given us. In doing our tasks well, we are praising the God who gave us skills.
- **Caring:** acting for the good of others. We can make the love of Christ apparent in the places we go and people we work with.
- **Choices:** Asking if “Christ is in this choice” in large matters and small. Wise, caring, morally strong choices aren’t always easy, but are always signs of the reign of God.
- **Change:** Working for change when it is needed. How can your workplace or community be more just? How can your home or community be more loving. Even small changes are the mission of God.

Where are you sent by God? Can you see yourself doing God’s mission in everyday tasks? How might that change the way you see ordinary life? Remember what you are doing is holy and blessed.

## ANYTIME ACTIVITIES

- ★ [Create a mandala](#)
- ★ [Make a Zen garden](#)
- ★ [Gratitude photo hunt](#)
- ★ [Finger labyrinth](#)
- ★ [Praying in Doodles](#)

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