

Getting Ready for Chapter 17

Take Home



A New Life and a Coming Messiah

Some years after their return from exile, the Jewish people were ruled by nations that tried to prevent them from practicing their faith. The Temple was filled with statues of pagan gods. A group of Jewish warriors led a revolt and reclaimed the Temple. Out of the struggles of God's people grew the hope that God would send a messiah and reward his faithful ones with peace after death.

ACTIVITY

Family Time Capsule The Jewish people drew strength from recalling past experiences of God. Collect items that remind your family of happy times. Store the items in a decorated box. Set a date to open the box.

WEEKLY PLANNER

On Sunday

Light a candle for someone in your family who is struggling, ill, or deceased. Ask God to give that person happiness and peace.

On the Web

www.blestarewe.com



Visit our Web site for the saint of the day and the reflection question of the week.

Saint of the Week



Saint Lucy
(285–304)

Saint Lucy is honored as a young martyr from the early Church. She was denounced for her faith, and the governor ordered her killed. After torture that included being blinded, she was executed. Legend says her eyesight was restored before her death.

Patron Saint of: people with eye diseases

Saint Feast Day: December 13



A Prayer for the Week

Lord, to believe in you is to believe that even when we walk in darkness, a great light awaits us. Help us to remain firm in our faith. Amen.



Scripture Background

Before the Time of Jesus

Reclaiming the Temple When Antiochus became ruler of the Syrian Empire in 175 B.C., the empire included Palestine. Antiochus wanted to promote Greek culture and suppress Judaism. In 167 B.C., when Antiochus offered a sacrifice to the god Zeus in the Temple, a priest named Mattathias killed the emperor's representative. Mattathias and his sons fled to the hills and gathered an army. By 164 B.C., the Jews again controlled most of Jerusalem, and they cleansed and restored the Temple. The Jewish feast of Hannukah commemorates this event. Read about the purification of the Temple in 1 Maccabees 4:36–56.

OUR CATHOLIC TRADITION in Sacramentals

Lighting Candles Many Catholic churches feature rows of votive candles in front of statues or sacred images of Jesus and the saints. A churchgoer can light a candle and pray for a special intention. The burning candle suggests a continual rising of the intention toward Jesus or the saint who has been asked to intercede.

Burning candles have a long history of religious symbolism. Candles or oil lamps burned outside saints' tombs in the third century. In the Middle Ages people sometimes lit candles as tall as themselves before they prayed, to signify their coming into the light of faith. Lighting candles in a menorah is also an important part of the Jewish feast of Hanukkah.