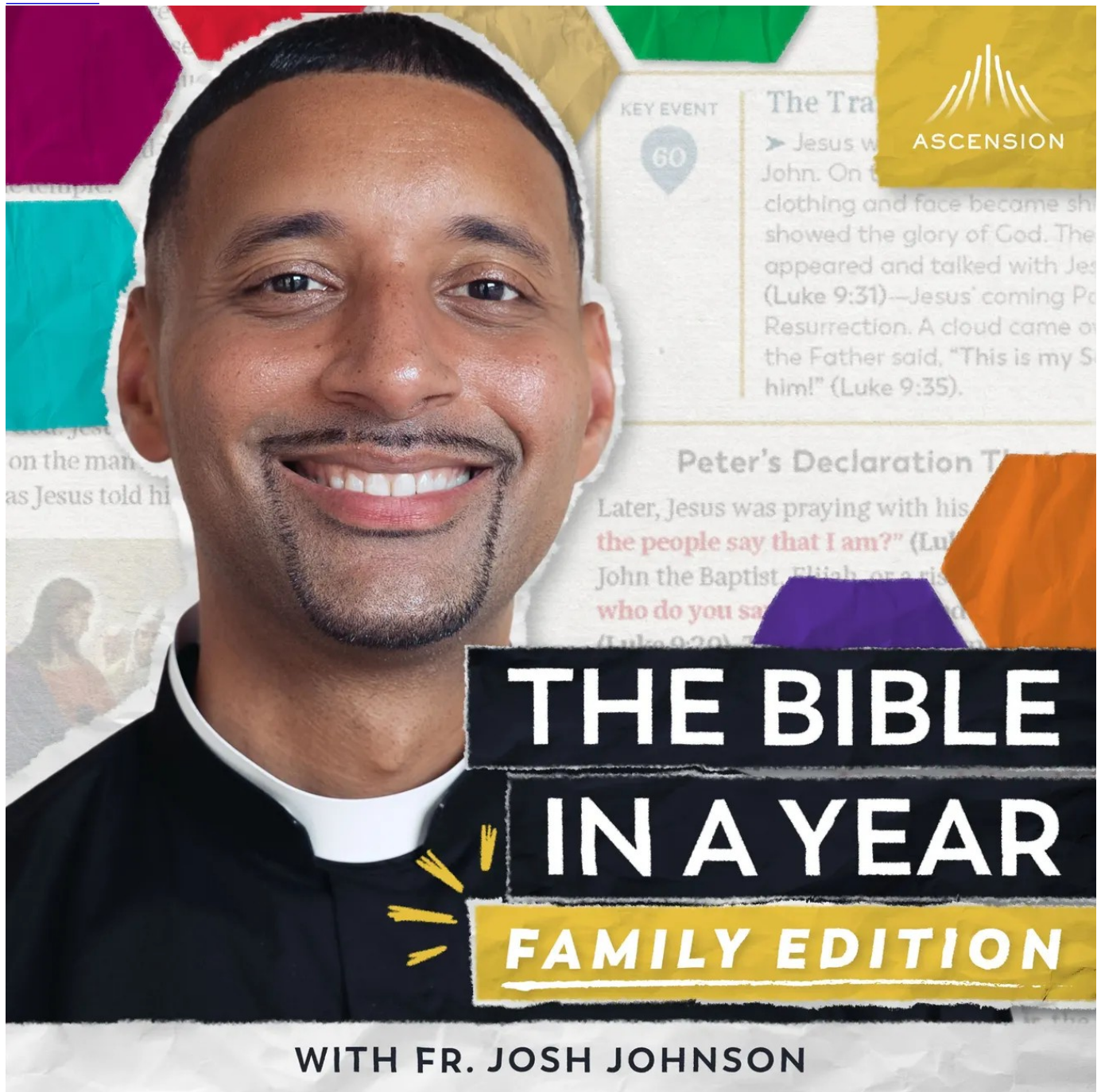




Ascension Press will be launching a new podcast entitled 'Bible in a Year: Family Edition' Jan. 1, 2027. The daily video podcast, hosted by Fr. Josh Johnson, aims to help families encounter Scripture together and discover God's voice. (Black Catholic Messenger/Ascension Press)



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Parents today are competing with countless voices for their children's attention. Between TikTok, television, streamers, and social media, children are constantly absorbing messages about who they are, what they should value, and what their lives are meant to become. Amid that noise, one voice is too often pushed to the margins: the voice of God.

Addressing that is the vision behind Ascension's newest project, "[Bible in a Year: Family Edition](#)." Launching Jan. 1, 2027, the daily video podcast, hosted by Fr. Josh Johnson, aims to help families encounter Scripture together and discover God's voice.

Joining the project

Despite his longtime partnership with Ascension Press — including authoring books and study guides, producing videos and hosting "[Ask Father Josh](#)," — Johnson did not immediately say yes to the new project.

"For the past year, I took a break from doing extraordinary work with Ascension Press as well as in general speaking," he said.

Instead, he wanted to devote his attention to the Diocese of Baton Rouge's seminarians in his new role as director of the Blessed Stanley Rother House of Formation, and to the families of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, where he pastors, and the parochial school.

When Ascension invited him to host "Bible in a Year: Family Edition," Johnson immediately recognized how naturally the project aligned with his love for serving children. Still, he was not sure if it was God's will.

As he does with every major decision, he brought the opportunity to prayer and invited his discernment team to do the same.

"I have a team of discerners here in Baton Rouge, and they intercede for me," Johnson said.

"They pray for me, they fast for me, and they give me their discernment. And I just knew they were going to say no... but when they discerned it, both of them separately said yes."

That confirmation was followed by the encouragement of his bishop, Michael Duca, who expressed confidence in his ability to balance the additional responsibility. Around the same time, another longtime intercessor, someone he had not spoken to in more than a year, unexpectedly reached out after prayer to tell him she believed God was calling him to say yes.

Looking back, Johnson sees those moments as clear signs of God's providence and that not only was this the right opportunity for him, but that now is the right time for families to receive it.

Why this project — and why now?

For Johnson, "Bible in a Year: Family Edition" is about far more than creating another children's Bible resource. It's about giving families a shared experience of Scripture that invites conversation, prayer and deeper relationships with both God and one another.

In a culture where technology increasingly shapes children's imaginations and faith formation is often divided by age groups, he believes families need opportunities to grow together as the domestic church.

"We're providing a platform for parents and kids to have the same resource," he said.

Even ahead of the podcast's release, Johnson says the project has already transformed his own spiritual life. Much of the recording has taken place this summer between visits to the chapel at Sacred Heart School. After recording an episode, he spends time with Jesus in the Eucharist, surrounded by stained-glass images of young saints, before returning to record the next.

"It's been really cool for [Jesus] and I, because I'm essentially devouring the Word of God and then sitting with Eucharist," he said.

"It's been very edifying and life-giving for my relationship with the Lord."

The students at Sacred Heart have also become collaborators in the project. Their thoughtful questions about Scripture have shaped the episodes, and their feedback has helped ensure the content speaks naturally to children.

"Every kid in the program is a Sacred Heart of Jesus student," Johnson said. "I'm super excited for the world to get to see the gift they are because I just love those kids so much."

Looking ahead

At a basic level, Johnson hopes the podcast helps children discover that holiness is not reserved for adulthood. With the canonization of St. Carlo Acutis in 2025 and the growing number of young people interred in the Catholic faith, Johnson believes children need to know they can become saints now — not someday.

"We don't have to wait till we're old to be a saint," he said.

More than simply teaching Bible stories, Johnson hopes every episode helps children recognize that God is speaking personally to them. As young people become familiar with God's voice through Scripture, Johnson prays they will learn to distinguish it

from the many competing voices around them.

He also hopes families will discover something deeply reassuring while journeying through the stories of the Scripture: that every family in the Bible is imperfect.

"I hope that it inspires the families to see, like, 'Wow, we're not alone,' " he said.

"The struggle is real for us, and it's been real for God's people throughout salvation history."

Representation matters

The project also carries special significance for Johnson, as one of the relatively few African-American Catholic priests serving in active ministry today.

Growing up, he wondered whether someone who looked like him could become a priest, since he rarely encountered Black clergy. Now, he hopes Black children will see both themselves and their families reflected in the Church through "Bible in a Year: Family Edition."

"I think that representation is one of the most important things," he said, adding that he hopes the podcast inspires a new generation of young people to discern priesthood and religious life.

As production continues, Johnson asks readers to pray that every episode faithfully communicates only what God desires. He also requested prayers for the eight seminarians entering formation for the Diocese of Baton Rouge this year.

If the podcast succeeds, Johnson anticipates it will do more than help children understand the Bible. He hopes it will develop a desire within them to seek God's voice in Scripture, seeing him truly as their best friend.

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