



trees

preparing

What does it look like to trust God? To lay down. To set aside. To loosen your grip. To free yourself of the holding so that you are free to hold on to Him. Here's what the Lord invites us to remember so that we can hope:

**7 "But the person who trusts in the Lord will be blessed.
The Lord will show him that he can be trusted.
8 He will be strong, like a tree planted near water.
That tree has large roots that find the water.
It is not afraid when the days are hot.
Its leaves are always green.
It does not worry in a year when no rain comes.
That tree always produces fruit." (Jeremiah 17:7-8)**

settling and listening

You might want to have this conversation while at home or in the car or any time that you hear that still small voice cheering you on.

If at home and if you make it a practice at home to set aside a special time and place, consider laying out a cloth and lighting a candle as you say

LEADER: Come, let us draw near to God.

PEOPLE: And God will draw near to us.

Prayer leader can pray. **"Come, Holy Spirit. As we make space for you, open our ears to hear. Open our mind to understand. Stir our heart. Help us to know and love you more. Amen."**

[pause]

If the nudge to speak comes at a time when you are out and about, just go for it!

Ask, **what's something you know about trees?** Allow kids to share ideas/ connections.

Let's see what God's Word tells us about trees.

Our reading today is from Psalm 1; the very first song or poem in the whole book of Psalms. (Do you remember what the word "Psalms" means? Praise!) I wonder what you'll notice about this special tree?

Invite another leader or child to read:

A Reading from Psalm 1:1-3

- 1** Blessed is the person who obeys the law of the Lord.
They don't follow the advice of evil people.
They don't make a habit of doing what sinners do.
They don't join those who make fun of the Lord and his law.
- 2** Instead, the law of the Lord gives them joy.
They think about his law day and night.
- 3** That kind of person is like a tree that is planted near a stream of water.
It always bears its fruit at the right time.
Its leaves don't dry up.
Everything godly people do turns out well.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

What does the Psalmist say this person is like? How do they act? Let's remember what we read about the tree? What is special about it? What connections can you make?

Or, choose to read the Gospel passage:

Today we'll read a story about a man named Zaccheus and Jesus. I wonder what you might notice in our reading today that you may not have noticed before.

***This is the Holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** A man named Zacchaeus lived there. He was a chief tax collector and was very rich. **3** Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. But he was a short man. He could not see Jesus because of the crowd. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree. He wanted to see Jesus, who was coming that way. **5** Jesus reached the spot where Zacchaeus was. He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today." **6** So Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him gladly. **7** All the people saw this. They began to whisper among themselves. They said, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner." **8** But Zacchaeus stood up. He said, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of what I own to those who are poor. And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay it back. I will pay back four times the amount I took." **9** Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to your house. You are a member of Abraham's family line. **10** The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them."

***The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Christ.***

Invite kids to share what they observed in this passage.

praying

Seal your time and conversation by giving thanks to God by saying together the Lord's Prayer or singing the Doxology.