

Lectio in Lent

*A Lent prayer guide
for kids and the grownups who love them*

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¹⁶ I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit.

I want you to know God better. ¹⁸

I pray that you may understand more clearly.

[That you might see with the eyes of your heart.]

Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive.

You will know that what God will give his holy people is rich and glorious. ¹⁹ And you will know God's great power. It can't be compared with anything else. His power works for us who believe. It is the same mighty strength ²⁰ God showed. He showed this when he raised Christ from the dead. God seated him at his right hand in his heavenly kingdom. ²¹ There Christ sits far above all who rule and have authority.

He also sits far above all powers and kings.

He is above every name that is appealed to in this world and in the world to come.

Ephesians 1:16-21

Notes for grownups as you talk to your kids.

What is Lent?

Lent is a 40-day season to remember who we are through self-reflection. Through that self-reflection we are invited to say no to something so we can say yes to God. Creating this space allows us to grow closer to him. Lent is also a time to prepare for the sadness of Jesus' death and to celebrate the hope of his resurrection at Easter.

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**. We receive ashes in the form of a cross on our foreheads as a reminder of two things: (1) we are not perfect, but God is, and (2) we are loved and forgiven by Jesus.

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week, when we remember, retell, and reenact the last week of Jesus' life on earth. It begins with **Palm Sunday**, when we wave palm branches and join in the loud chorus of "Hosannas!", remembering the way Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, just as the prophets foretold. On **Maundy Thursday**, we remember how Jesus washed his disciples' feet as we get our feet washed or wash one another's feet, too. On **Good Friday**, we remember the last hours of Jesus' life as he suffered, died, and was buried in a tomb. On **Holy Saturday**, we remember the quiet waiting. Then, on **Easter**, we celebrate the miracle of his resurrection!

Reading and remembering and talking to God about his BIG story of love and forgiveness, we remember, too, that we are known, loved, and not alone because:

God created us.

Jesus loves us deeply.

The Holy Spirit lives in us and goes with us everywhere.

An introduction to lectio divina.

This Lent, we invite you to experience the season through a way of reading and praying the scriptures together as a family that is based on the ancient practice called Lectio Divina or “divine reading”. It’s a spiritual practice that allows the Word of God, which is living and active, to be at work in us, helping us know and love him more as we read, notice, wonder, and pray. While reading a passage a few different times, we simply sit *with* the Lord and delight in the one whose words reveal more of himself to us.

Lectio Divina allows you to listen and see with the “ears and eyes of the heart” for a word or phrase that captures your attention or ignites your imagination. We’ll outline a way of engaging in this divine reading in the pages that follow.

With children in our midst, “simply sitting” may look more like moving our whole selves while we listen. Or, it may be that ideas swirling inside tumble out as words immediately—whether we understand the connection or not. We invite you to rest and to be curious together, learning from one another. God works through all things, so we can trust that he is working through whatever your time together as a family might look like.

It is our hope that this guide helps you create space to encounter the Lord as you incorporate ways of prayer that suit your family and your home. Allow yourself freedom and grace, knowing that not every day—or every season—will look the same.

As you plant seeds of prayer and Scripture, and cultivate habits of worship, look for good things to grow in you individually and as a family.

A hands-on project.

Sometimes the movement of God within us can be hard to see. So, we've prepared a small project as a way of reminding you that through gentle planting and tending, much like reading, noticing, praying, and wondering with God, he is growing and changing us from the inside out.

The tools included in the purple bag will help you grow microgreens, which, when ready, you can add to a salad, top off a sandwich, or use to garnish some scrambled eggs. We hope you enjoy the process of planting, watering, tending, and waiting as you anticipate the harvest that is to come.

It is our prayer that, during this season of Lent, you would allow your imagination to expand as you reflect on who Jesus is and join him in his journey to make all things right again through his death and resurrection—all because he loves you that much.

the liturgy for each day

You may want to prepare a special place—a sacred space—where you go to rest and remember, listen and wait, as you read God's Word and talk to him each day. Some of the tools we use in kids' small groups are a cloth, a ribbon, and a candle. Allow your child(ren) to show you.

You may also want to gather some supplies—paper and pencils or crayons, or other creative tools for hands to engage with—as a way to express some of your noticings and wonderings that bubble up in you.

prepare

Take a few moments to quiet your heart. In the silence, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice all that he has to say to you.

leader: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves

all: ***and take up their cross and follow me.***

confess

Tell God silently or aloud the things you have done to hurt him or others.

"I'm sorry for _____. Help me to _____. Thank you, Jesus."

He loves you and forgives you.

leader: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

all: ***and renew a right spirit within me.***

read

Use the scripture passages for each day which are found on the following pages. We use the NIV translation. Read the day's story all the way through one time.

notice

What do you notice deep inside of you that is capturing your attention? Is there a word or a phrase that jumps out to you? Is there a picture that these words have created in your mind? Maybe there is a part of your body that you notice is responding to the words as you hear them or read them. Sit with what you notice—that word, that phrase, that picture, that feeling. Roll it around in your mind. What is the Lord showing you?

*Read the day's story all the way through again. Or, depending on the attention span of those with whom you are reading, read only **the bolded words** in the story, or just read a portion of the story that draws your attention.*

wonder

Wonder together about the story. You may want to use the questions offered or allow each person to share their own wonderings. Wondering questions have no clear answer, they simply invite you to sit in the mystery of not knowing and to marvel at the marvelousness of God.

pray

*Give thanks to the Lord for his kindness. Talk to Jesus about the things you are thinking and feeling. Offer prayers for yourself and others. Pray **The Lord's Prayer** (p. 76) or **The Apostles' Creed** (p. 77), or sing the **Doxology** (p.77)*

bless

all: ***May the Lord bless us and keep us. May he make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord turn his face toward us and give us peace.***

leader: And may we each remember this

all: ***God knows me! He is crazy about me! And he goes with me everywhere!***

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

<p>ASH WEDNESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY <i>stories that tell God's big story</i></p>	<p>Genesis 3:1-24 Isaiah 53:1-5 Luke 2:1-21</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 14</p>
<p>THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT <i>stories that tell of Jesus' love for us</i></p>	<p>John 10:1-10, 14-15 Psalm 23 Luke 15:1-7 Luke 15:8-10 Luke 15:11-32</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 22</p>
<p>THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT <i>stories that tell of Jesus' invitation to follow him</i></p>	<p>Mark 10:13-16 Luke 5:1-11 Mark 2:13-17 John 1:43-51 Mark 3:13b-19 Mark 10:17-31</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 29</p>
<p>THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT <i>stories that tell of Jesus' power to do miracles</i></p>	<p>John 2:1-11 Mark 2:1-12 Luke 18:35-43 John 5:1-15 Luke 17:11-19</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 37</p>
<p>THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT <i>more stories that tell of Jesus' power to do miracles</i></p>	<p>Mark 6:30-44 Matthew 8:23-27 Matthew 14:22-33 Matthew 9:18-26 John 11:1-44</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 45</p>

<p>THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT <i>stories that tell of the gift of the Holy Spirit</i></p>	<p>Acts 1:2b-8 Acts 2:1-4 Acts 3:1-10 Acts 3:11-26 Acts 9:1-20 Acts 12:1-17</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 55</p>
<p>PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK <i>stories from the last week of Jesus' life</i></p>	<p>Matthew 21:1-11 Matthew 21:12-17 Luke 7:36-39, 44-50 Luke 22:1-6 John 13:1-17 Matthew 27:26-61</p>	<p>The readings begin on p. 64</p>
<p>EASTER <i>the story of Jesus' resurrection</i></p>	<p>Luke 24:1-12</p>	<p>This reading begins on p. 75</p>

THE WEEK BEGINNING

ASH WEDNESDAY

stories that tell God's BIG story

WEDNESDAY

Take turns telling the familiar story of how God created the world and everything in it from Genesis 1-2. Then read the story of the terrible lie from Genesis 3.

A reading from Genesis 3.

¹ The serpent was more clever than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. The serpent said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat fruit from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden. ³ But God did say, 'You must not eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden. Do not even touch it. If you do, you will die.' "

⁴ "You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "God knows that when you eat fruit from that tree, you will know things you have never known before. Like God, you will be able to tell the difference between good and evil."

⁶ The woman saw that the tree's fruit was good to eat and pleasing to look at. She also saw that it would make a person wise. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he ate it. ⁷ Then both of them knew things they had never known before. They

realized they were naked. So they sewed together fig leaves and made clothes for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking in the garden. It was during the coolest time of the day. **They hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.** ⁹ **But the Lord God called out to the man. "Where are you?" he asked.**

¹⁰ "I heard you in the garden," the man answered. "I was afraid, because I was naked. So I hid."

¹¹ The Lord God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten fruit from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "It's the fault of the woman you put here with me. She gave me some fruit from the tree. And I ate it."

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?"

The woman said, "The serpent tricked me. That's why I ate the fruit."

¹⁴ So the Lord God spoke to the serpent. He said, "Because you have done this,

"You are set apart from all livestock

and all wild animals.

I am putting a curse on you.

You will crawl on your belly.

You will eat dust

all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will make you and the woman hate each other.

Your children and her children will be enemies.

Her son will crush your head.

And you will bite his heel.”

¹⁶ The Lord God said to the woman,

“I will increase your pain when you give birth.

You will be in great pain when you have children.

You will long for your husband.

And he will rule over you.”

¹⁷ The Lord God said to Adam, “You listened to your wife’s suggestion. You ate fruit from the tree I warned you about. I said, ‘You must not eat its fruit.’

“So I am putting a curse on the ground because of what you did.

All the days of your life you will have to work hard.

It will be painful for you to get food from the ground. ¹⁸ You will eat plants from the field,

even though the ground produces thorns and prickly weeds.

¹⁹ You will have to work hard and sweat a lot

to produce the food you eat.

You were made out of the ground.

You will return to it when you die.

You are dust,

and you will return to dust.”

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve. She would become the mother of every living person.

²¹ The Lord God made clothes out of animal skins for Adam and his wife to wear. ²² The Lord God said, “Just like one of us, the man can now tell the

difference between good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out and pick fruit from the tree of life and eat it. If he does, he will live forever." ²³ So the Lord God drove the man out of the Garden of Eden. He sent the man to farm the ground he had been made from. ²⁴ The Lord God drove him out and then placed angels on the east side of the garden. He also placed there a flaming sword that flashed back and forth. The angels and the sword guarded the way to the tree of life.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

*I wonder if you've ever done something you knew was wrong
and tried to cover it up or tried to hide?*

*I wonder what you notice about how God responds
to Adam and Eve when they tried to hide?*

I wonder how you see God's kindness in His response to them?

A reading from Isaiah 53:1-5.

¹ Who has believed what we've been saying?

Who has seen the Lord's saving power?

² His servant grew up like a tender young plant.

He grew like a root coming up out of dry ground.

He didn't have any beauty or majesty that made us notice him.

There wasn't anything special about the way he looked that drew us to him.

³ People looked down on him. They didn't accept him.

He knew all about pain and suffering.

He was like someone people turn their faces away from.

We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him.

⁴ **He suffered the things we should have suffered.**

He took on himself the pain that should have been ours.

But we thought God was punishing him.

We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer.

⁵ But the servant was pierced because we had sinned.

He was crushed because we had done what was evil.

He was punished to make us whole again.

His wounds have healed us.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder how you have seen the Lord's saving power?

I wonder how you see Jesus described in these words?

I wonder how Jesus' wounds heal us and make us whole again?

*I wonder how you have been healed in your heart,
mind, or body because of Jesus?*

A reading from Luke 2:1-21.

¹ In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

⁴ So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. ⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. ⁶ While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.

⁸ There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

¹⁴ "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ **So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger.** ¹⁷ **After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child.**

¹⁸ **All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.**

¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. ²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

²¹ When the child was eight days old, he was circumcised. At the same time he was named Jesus. This was the name the angel had given him before his mother became pregnant.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why a Christmas story is part of the Easter story?

THE FIRST WEEK OF LENT

stories that tell of Jesus' love for us

MONDAY

A reading from John 10:1-10, 14-15.

¹ "What I'm about to tell you Pharisees is true. What if someone does not enter the sheep pen through the gate but climbs in another way? That person is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him. The sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own sheep, he goes on ahead of them. His sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger. In fact, they will run away from him. They don't recognize a stranger's voice."

⁶ Jesus told this story. But the Pharisees didn't understand what he was telling them.

⁷ So Jesus said again, "What I'm about to tell you is true. I am like a gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers. But the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I'm like a gate. Anyone who enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out. And they will find plenty of food. ¹⁰ A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way. . . ."

¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me.

¹⁵ They know me just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I give my life for the sheep.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder how you see Jesus as a Good Shepherd?

I wonder what Jesus' voice sounds like to you?

A reading from Psalm 23 (ESV).

¹ **The Lord is my shepherd;** I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

³ He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness

for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for **you are with me;**

your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

forever.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder what you notice about how the Lord – the Shepherd – cares for his sheep?

I wonder how the Lord cares for you?

A reading from Luke 15:1-7.

¹ The tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were whispering among themselves. They said, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ Then Jesus told them a story. ⁴ He said, "Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Won't he leave the 99 in the open country? **Won't he go and look for the one lost sheep until he finds it?** ⁵ **When he finds it, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders** ⁶ **and go home. Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, 'Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.'** ⁷ I tell you, it will be the same in heaven. There will be great joy when one sinner turns away from sin. Yes, there will be more joy than for 99 godly people who do not need to turn away from their sins.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder how the man knew one sheep was missing?

I wonder if you've ever wandered off and then were found?

A reading from Luke 15:8-10.

⁸ "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the house? Won't she search carefully until she finds the coin? ⁹ And when she finds it, she will call her friends and neighbors together. She will say, '**Be joyful with me. I have found my lost coin.**' ¹⁰ I tell you, it is the same in heaven. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin."

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why the woman looked everywhere for the coin?

I wonder if you've ever lost something important to you and then found it again?

A reading from Luke 15:11-32.

¹¹ Jesus continued, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger son spoke to his father. He said, 'Father, give me my share of the family property.' So the father divided his property between his two sons.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son packed up all he had. Then he left for a country far away. There he wasted his money on wild living. ¹⁴ He spent everything he had. Then the whole country ran low on food. So the son didn't have what he needed. ¹⁵ He went to work for someone who lived in that country. That person sent the son to the fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ The son wanted to fill his stomach with the food the pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "Then he began to think clearly again. He said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough food! But here I am dying from hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and

sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattest calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ This son of mine was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "The older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants. He asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come home,' the servant replied. 'Your father has killed the fattest calf. He has done this because your brother is back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry. He refused to go in. So his father went out and begged him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've worked like a slave for you. I have always obeyed your orders. You never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But this son of yours wasted your money with some prostitutes. Now he comes home. And for him you kill the fattest calf!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me. Everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad. This brother of yours was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.' "

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what made the younger son come back?

I wonder why the older son was so upset?

I wonder what you think about the father's response to both sons?

THE SECOND WEEK OF LENT

*stories that tell of Jesus'
invitation to follow him*

MONDAY

A reading from Mark 10:13-16.

¹³ **People were bringing little children to Jesus.** They wanted him to place his hands on them to bless them. But the disciples told them to stop. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was angry. He said to his disciples, **"Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them.** ¹⁵ What I'm about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it."

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what this story makes you think about Jesus?

I wonder what this story shows you about how much Jesus loves you?

A reading from Luke 5:1-11.

¹ One day Jesus was standing by the Sea of Galilee. The people crowded around him and listened to the word of God. ² Jesus saw two boats at the edge of the water. They had been left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into the boat that belonged to Simon. Jesus asked him to go out a little way from shore. Then he sat down in the boat and taught the people.

⁴ When he finished speaking, he turned to Simon. **Jesus said, "Go out into deep water. Let down the nets so you can catch some fish."**

⁵ **Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."**

⁶ **When they had done so, they caught a large number of fish. There were so many that their nets began to break.** ⁷ So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees. "Go away from me, Lord!" he said. "I am a sinful man!" ⁹ He and everyone with him were amazed at the number of fish they had caught. ¹⁰ So were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who worked with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore. Then they left everything and followed him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder what you think Simon Peter believed about Jesus?

I wonder what you believe about Jesus?

A reading from Mark 2:13-17.

¹³ Once again Jesus went out beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him. He began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting at the tax collector's booth. **"Follow me,"** Jesus told him. Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ Later Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples. They were part of the large crowd following Jesus. ¹⁶ Some teachers of the law who were Pharisees were there. They saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors. So they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ Jesus heard that. So he said to them, **"Those who are healthy don't need a doctor. Sick people do. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me."**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

*I wonder why Jesus compared those who are sinners
to those who are 'sick'?*

A reading from John 1:43-51 and Mark 3:13b-19.

⁴³ The next day **Jesus** decided to leave for Galilee. He **found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."**

⁴⁴ Philip was from the town of Bethsaida. So were Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, **"We have found the one whom Moses wrote about in the Law. The prophets also wrote about him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."**

⁴⁶ "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael approaching. Here is what Jesus said about him. "He is a true Israelite. Nothing about him is false."

⁴⁸ "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree. I saw you there before Philip called you."

⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel."

⁵⁰ Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." ⁵¹ Then he said to the disciples, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You will see heaven open. You will see the angels of God going up and coming down on the Son of Man."

¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside. He called for certain people to come to him, and they came. ¹⁴ He appointed 12 of them so that they would be with him. He would also send them out to preach. ¹⁵ And he gave them authority to drive out demons.

¹⁶ So Jesus appointed the 12 disciples.

Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the name Peter.

¹⁷ There were James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. Jesus gave them the name Boanerges. Boanerges means Sons of Thunder.

¹⁸ There were also Andrew,
Philip,
Bartholomew,
Matthew,
Thomas,
and James, son of Alphaeus.
And there were Thaddaeus
and Simon the Zealot.

¹⁹ Judas Iscariot was one of them too. He was the one who was later going to hand Jesus over to his enemies.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I wonder how the disciples changed because they spent time with Jesus?

I wonder how you change when you spend time with Jesus?

A reading from Mark 10:17-31.

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him. He fell on his knees before Jesus. "Good teacher," he said, "what must I do to receive eternal life?"

¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good except God.

¹⁹ You know what the commandments say. 'Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not be a false witness. Do not cheat. Honor your father and mother.' "

²⁰ "Teacher," he said, "I have obeyed all those commandments since I was a boy."

²¹ **Jesus looked at him and loved him.** "You are missing one thing," he said. "Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

²² The man's face fell. He went away sad, because he was very rich.

²³ Jesus looked around. He said to his disciples, "How hard it is for rich people to enter God's kingdom!"

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter God's kingdom! ²⁵ Is it hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? It is even harder for someone who is rich to enter God's kingdom!"

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed. They said to each other, "Then who can be saved?"

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With people, this is impossible. But not with God. **All things are possible with God.**"

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

²⁹ "What I'm about to tell you is true," Jesus replied. "Has anyone left home or family or fields for me and the good news? ³⁰ They will receive 100 times as much in this world. They will have homes and families and fields. But they will also be treated badly by others. In the world to come they will live forever.

³¹ But many who are first will be last. And the last will be first."

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I wonder why it was hard for the rich young man to do what Jesus told him?

I wonder if you can imagine Jesus' face looking at you and loving you?

THE THIRD WEEK OF LENT

stories that tell of Jesus' power to do miracles

MONDAY

A reading from John 2:1-11.

¹ On the third day there was a wedding. It took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Dear woman, why are you telling me about this?" Jesus replied. "The time for me to show who I really am isn't here yet."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "**Do what he tells you.**"

⁶ Six stone water jars stood nearby. The Jews used water from that kind of jar for special washings. They did that to make themselves pure and "clean." Each jar could hold 20 to 30 gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the top.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now dip some out. Take it to the person in charge of the dinner."

They did what he said. ⁹ The person in charge tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He didn't realize where it had come from. But the

servants who had brought the water knew. Then the person in charge called the groom to one side. ¹⁰ He said to him, "Everyone brings out the best wine first. They bring out the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink. But you have saved the best until now."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana in Galilee was the first of his signs. **Jesus showed his glory by doing this sign. And his disciples believed in him.**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the servants thought about Jesus when they saw that he had turned the water into wine?

I wonder what you think about Jesus?

A reading from Mark 2:1-12.

¹ A few days later, Jesus entered Capernaum again. The people heard that he had come home. ² So many people gathered that there was no room left. There was not even room outside the door. And Jesus preached the word to them. ³ Four of those who came were carrying a man who could not walk. ⁴ But they could not get him close to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made a hole by digging through the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered the man through it on a mat. ⁵ Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶ Some teachers of the law were sitting there. They were thinking, ⁷ "Why is this fellow talking like that? He's saying a very evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!"

⁸ Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Is it easier to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven'? Or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But **I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**" So Jesus spoke to the man who could not walk. ¹¹ "I tell you," he said, "get up. Take your mat and go home." ¹² The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the man thought when his sins were forgiven?

I wonder what the man thought when he could walk?

A reading from Luke 18:35-43.

³⁵ Jesus was approaching Jericho. A blind man was sitting by the side of the road begging. ³⁶ The blind man heard the crowd going by. He asked what was happening. ³⁷ They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

³⁸ So the blind man called out, "**Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!**"

³⁹ Those who led the way commanded him to stop. They told him to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, "Son of David! Have mercy on me!"

⁴⁰ Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When the man came near, **Jesus spoke to him.** ⁴¹ "**What do you want me to do for you?**" **Jesus asked.**

"**Lord, I want to be able to see,**" the blind man replied.

⁴² **Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you."**

⁴³ **Right away he could see. He followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why the man ignored the people telling him to be quiet?

*I wonder how Jesus healing the man's blindness
helps you to see who Jesus is?*

A reading from John 5:1-15.

¹ Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts.

² In Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate is a pool. In the Aramaic language it is called Bethesda. It is surrounded by five rows of columns with a roof over them. ³⁻⁴ Here a great number of disabled people used to lie down. Among them were those who were blind, those who could not walk, and those who could hardly move. ⁵ One person was there who had not been able to walk for 38 years. ⁶ Jesus saw him lying there. He knew that the man had been in that condition for a long time. So he asked him, **“Do you want to get well?”**

⁷ “Sir,” the disabled man replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when an angel stirs up the water. I try to get in, but someone else always goes down ahead of me.”

⁸ Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” ⁹ The man was healed right away. He picked up his mat and walked.

This happened on a Sabbath day. ¹⁰ So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath day. The law does not allow you to carry your mat.”

¹¹ But he replied, “The one who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

¹² They asked him, “Who is this fellow? Who told you to pick it up and walk?”

¹³ The one who was healed had no idea who it was. Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴ Later Jesus found him at the temple. Jesus said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵ The man went away. He told the Jewish leaders it was Jesus who had made him well.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder why Jesus first asked the man if he wanted to get well?

*I wonder what the man thought
when it was Jesus who healed him and not the water?*

A reading from Luke 17:11-19.

¹¹ Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. He traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, **ten men met him.**

They had a skin disease. They were standing close by. ¹³ And **they called out in a loud voice, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!"**

¹⁴ **Jesus saw them and said, "Go. Show yourselves to the priests." While they were on the way, they were healed.**

¹⁵ When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back. He praised God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan.

¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Weren't all ten healed? Where are the other nine?" ¹⁸ Didn't anyone else return and give praise to God except this outsider?" ¹⁹ Then Jesus said to him, "Get up and go. Your faith has healed you."

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why Jesus had the men go before they were healed?

I wonder if you have ever done something by faith?

THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT
*more stories that tell of Jesus'
power to do miracles*

MONDAY

A reading from Mark 6:30-44.

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus. They told him all they had done and taught. ³¹ But many people were coming and going. So they did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said to his apostles, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place. You need to get some rest."

³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a quiet place. ³³ But many people who saw them leaving recognized them. They ran from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ **When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. They were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.**

³⁵ By that time it was late in the day. His disciples came to him. "There is nothing here," they said. "It's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away. Then they can go to the nearby countryside and villages to buy something to eat."

³⁷ But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's pay! Should we go and spend that much on bread? Are we supposed to feed them?"

³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five loaves and two fish."

³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of 100s and 50s. ⁴¹ **Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to his disciples to pass around to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.** ⁴² **All of them ate and were satisfied.** ⁴³ **The disciples picked up 12 baskets of broken pieces of bread and fish.** ⁴⁴ **The number of men who had eaten was 5,000.**

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder what surprises you most in this story?

*I wonder what you think about Jesus
because of what happened in this story?*

A reading from Matthew 8:23-27.

²³ Jesus got into a boat. His disciples followed him. ²⁴ Suddenly a terrible storm came up on the lake. The waves crashed over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him up. They said, "Lord! Save us! We're going to drown!"

²⁶ He replied, "Your faith is so small! Why are you so afraid?" **Then Jesus got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop. It became completely calm.**

²⁷ **The disciples were amazed. They asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the disciples believed about Jesus before the storm?

I wonder what the disciples believed about Jesus after he calmed the storm?

I wonder if you have ever been afraid and someone calmed you?

A reading from Matthew 14:22-33.

²² Right away Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then he sent the crowd away. ²³ After he had sent them away, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone. ²⁴ The boat was already a long way from land. It was being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn, **Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the lake.** ²⁶ **They saw him walking on the lake and were terrified.** "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear.

²⁷ Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," Jesus said.

So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!"

³¹ Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?"

³² When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those in the boat worshiped Jesus. **They said, "You really are the Son of God!"**

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I wonder what Peter found most surprising?

*I wonder what you think about Jesus
because of what happened in this story?*

A reading from Matthew 9:18-26.

¹⁸ [A] synagogue leader came [to Jesus]. He got down on his knees in front of Jesus. He said, "My daughter has just died. **But come and place your hand on her. Then she will live again.**" ¹⁹ Jesus got up and went with him. So did his disciples.

²⁰ Just then a woman came up behind Jesus. She had a sickness that made her bleed. It had lasted for 12 years. She touched the edge of his clothes.

²¹ She thought, "**I only need to touch his clothes. Then I will be healed.**"

²² **Jesus turned and saw her. "Dear woman, don't give up hope," he said. "Your faith has healed you." The woman was healed at that moment.**

²³ When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house, he saw the noisy crowd and people playing flutes. ²⁴ He said, "Go away. The girl is not dead. She is sleeping." But they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been sent outside, **Jesus went in. He took the girl by the hand, and she got up.** ²⁶ News about what Jesus had done spread all over that area.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what you notice in this story?

I wonder what you think about Jesus because of what happened in this story?

A reading from John 11:1-44.

¹ A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ² Mary would later pour perfume on the Lord. She would also wipe Jesus' feet with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was sick in bed. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus. "Lord," they told him, "the one you love is sick."

⁴ When Jesus heard this, he said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory. God's Son will receive glory because of it." ⁵ Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So after he heard Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. ⁷ And then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

⁸ "But Rabbi," they said, "a short time ago the Jews there tried to kill you with stones. Are you still going back?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Aren't there 12 hours of daylight? Anyone who walks during the day won't trip and fall. They can see because of this world's light.

¹⁰ But when they walk at night, they'll trip and fall. They have no light."

¹¹ After he said this, Jesus went on speaking to them. "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep," he said. "But I am going there to wake him up."

¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been speaking about the death of Lazarus. But his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your benefit, I am glad I was not there. Now you will believe. But let us go to him."

¹⁶ Then Thomas, who was also called Didymus, spoke to the rest of the disciples. "Let us go also," he said. "Then we can die with Jesus."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found out that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. They had come to comfort them because their brother was dead. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home.

²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask for."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again. This will happen when people are raised from the dead on the last day."

²⁵ **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. ²⁶ And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"**

²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied. "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God. I believe that you are the one who is supposed to come into the world."

²⁸ After she said this, she went back home. She called her sister Mary to one side to talk to her. "The Teacher is here," Martha said. "He is asking for you."

²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Jesus had not yet entered the village. He was still at the place where Martha had met him.

³¹ Some Jews had been comforting Mary in the house. They noticed how quickly she got up and went out. So they followed her. They thought she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

³² Mary reached the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet. She said, "Lord, I wish you had been here! Then my brother would not have died."

³³ Jesus saw her crying. He saw that the Jews who had come along with her were crying also. His spirit became very sad, and he was troubled. ³⁴ "Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how much he loved him!"

³⁷ But some of them said, "He opened the eyes of the blind man. Couldn't he have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Once more Jesus felt very sad. He came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone in front of the entrance. ³⁹ "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days."

⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up. He said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the

benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

I wonder what you think about why Jesus cried?

I wonder how you see God's glory in this story?

I wonder where you see God's glory in the world around you?

THE FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

*stories that tell of
the gift of the Holy Spirit*

MONDAY

A reading from Acts 1:2b-8 and Acts 2:1-4.

² Before Jesus left, he gave orders to the apostles he had chosen. He did this through the Holy Spirit. ³ After his suffering and death, he appeared to them. In many ways he proved that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days. During that time he spoke about God's kingdom. ⁴ One day Jesus was eating with them. He gave them a command. "Do not leave Jerusalem," he said. "Wait for the gift my Father promised. You have heard me talk about it. ⁵ John baptized with water. But in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ Then the apostles gathered around Jesus and asked him a question. "Lord," they said, "are you going to give the kingdom back to Israel now?"

⁷ He said to them, "You should not be concerned about times or dates. The Father has set them by his own authority. ⁸ But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other.**"

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¹ When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers gathered in one place.
² **Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It filled the whole house where they were sitting.** ³ **They saw something that looked like fire in the shape of tongues. The flames separated and came to rest on each of them.** ⁴ **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this.**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what Jesus' friends imagined the promised gift to be?

I wonder what it was like to receive the gift?

A reading from Acts 3:1-10.

¹ One day Peter and John were going up to the temple. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. It was the time for prayer. ² **A man unable to walk was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful. He had been that way since he was born. Every day someone put him near the gate. There he would beg from people going into the temple courtyards.** ³ He saw that Peter and John were about to enter. So he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, and so did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man watched them closely. He expected to get something from them.

⁶ **Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold. But I'll give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk."** ⁷ Then Peter took him by the right hand and helped him up. **At once** the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ **He jumped to his feet and began to walk.** He went with Peter and John into the temple courtyards. He walked and jumped and praised God. ⁹ **All the people saw him walking and praising God.**

¹⁰ **They recognized him as the same man who used to sit and beg at the temple gate called Beautiful. They were filled with wonder. They were amazed at what had happened to him.**

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what it was like for this man who had been unable to walk his whole life to "all at once" become strong and walk?

I wonder what amazes you about this story?

A reading from Acts 3:11-26.

¹¹ The [lame man who was healed] was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed. They came running to them at the place called Solomon's Porch. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said, "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us? It's not as if we've made this man walk by our own power or godliness. ¹³ The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has done this. God has brought glory to Jesus, who serves him. But you handed Jesus over to be killed. Pilate had decided to let him go. But you spoke against Jesus when he was in Pilate's court. ¹⁴ You spoke against the Holy and Blameless One. You asked for a murderer to be set free instead. ¹⁵ You killed the one who gives life. But God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ This man whom you see and know was made strong because of faith in Jesus' name. Faith in Jesus has healed him completely. You can see it with your own eyes.

¹⁷ "My fellow Israelites, I know you didn't realize what you were doing. Neither did your leaders. ¹⁸ But God had given a promise through all the prophets. And this is how he has made his promise come true. He said that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ **So turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away. The time will come when the Lord will make everything new.** ²⁰ He will send the Messiah. Jesus has been appointed as the Messiah for you. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time when God makes everything new. He promised this long ago through his holy prophets. ²² Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He

will be one of your own people. You must listen to everything he tells you.

²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'

²⁴ "Beginning with Samuel, all the prophets spoke about this. They said these days would come. ²⁵ **What the prophets said was meant for you. The covenant God made with your people long ago is yours also.** He said to Abraham, 'All nations on earth will be blessed through your children.' ²⁶ God raised up Jesus, who serves him. God sent him first to you. He did it to bless you. He wanted to turn each of you from your evil ways."

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the people understood about who God is?

*I wonder how people responded to the invitation to turn away from their sins and turn toward God so
their sins could be forgiven?*

I wonder how you respond to that invitation?

A reading from Acts 9:1-20.

¹ Saul continued to oppose the Lord's followers. He said they would be put to death. He went to the high priest. ² He asked the priest for letters to the synagogues in Damascus. He wanted to find men and women who belonged to the Way of Jesus. The letters would allow him to take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ On his journey, Saul approached Damascus. Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground. He heard a voice speak to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you opposing me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus," he replied. "I am the one you are opposing. ⁶ Now get up and go into the city. There you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there. They weren't able to speak. They had heard the sound. But they didn't see anyone. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he couldn't see. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was blind. He didn't eat or drink anything.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a believer named Ananias. The Lord called out to him in a vision. "Ananias!" he said.

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street. Ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying. ¹² In a vision Saul has seen a man come and place his hands on him. That man's name is Ananias. In the vision, Ananias placed his hands on Saul so he could see again."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I've heard many reports about this man. They say he has done great harm to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Now he has come here to arrest all those who worship you. The chief priests have given him authority to do this."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen this man to work for me. He will announce my name to the Gentiles and to their kings. He will also announce my name to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for me."

¹⁷ **Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. He placed his hands on Saul. "Brother Saul," he said, "you saw the Lord Jesus. He appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. He has sent me so that you will be able to see again. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit."** ¹⁸ **Right away something like scales fell from Saul's eyes. And he could see again. He got up and was baptized.** ¹⁹ After eating some food, he got his strength back.

Saul spent several days with the believers in Damascus. ²⁰ Right away he began to preach in the synagogues. He taught that Jesus is the Son of God.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what you like best in this story?

A reading from Acts 12:1-17.

¹ About this time, King Herod arrested some people who belonged to the church. He planned to make them suffer greatly. ² He had James killed with a sword. James was John's brother. ³ Herod saw that the death of James pleased some Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴ After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in prison. Peter was placed under guard. He was watched by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put Peter on public trial. It would take place after the Passover Feast.

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed hard to God for him.

⁶ It was the night before Herod was going to bring him to trial. **Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Two chains held him there. Lookouts stood guard at the entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. A light shone in the prison cell. The angel struck Peter on his side. Peter woke up. "Quick!" the angel said. "Get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists.**

⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter did so. "Put on your coat," the angel told him. "Follow me." ⁹ Peter followed him out of the prison. But he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards. Then they came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. They went through it. They walked the length of one street. Suddenly the angel left Peter.

¹¹ Then Peter realized what had happened. He said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his angel. He set me free from Herod's power. He saved me from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

¹² When Peter understood what had happened, he went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark. Many people had gathered in her home. They were praying there. ¹³ Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴ She recognized Peter's voice. She was so excited that she ran back without opening the door. "Peter is at the door!" she exclaimed.

¹⁵ "You're out of your mind," they said to her. But she kept telling them it was true. So they said, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶ Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷ Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. He explained how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said. Then he went to another place.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I wonder what amazes you most about God's power in this story?

PALM SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK

stories from the last week of Jesus' life

PALM SUNDAY

A reading from Matthew 21:1-11.

¹ As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage. It was on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two disciples. ² He said to them, "Go to the village ahead of you. As soon as you get there, you will find a donkey tied up. Her colt will be with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them. The owner will send them right away."

⁴ This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would come true. It says,

⁵ "Say to the city of Zion,

'See, your king comes to you.

He is gentle and riding on a donkey.

He is riding on a donkey's colt.'"

⁶ The disciples went and did what Jesus told them to do. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt. They placed their coats on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ Some of the people went ahead of him, and some followed. **They all shouted,**

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. The people asked, "Who is this?"

¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus. He is the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the people really believed about Jesus?

I wonder what they expected from him?

A reading from Matthew 21:12-17.

¹² Jesus entered the temple courtyard. He began to drive out all those who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables of the people who were exchanging money. He also turned over the benches of those who were selling doves. ¹³ He said to them, "It is written that the Lord said, 'My house will be called a house where people can pray.' But you are making it 'a den for robbers.' "

¹⁴ Blind people and those who were disabled came to Jesus at the temple. There he healed them. ¹⁵ The chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did. They also saw the children in the temple courtyard shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But when they saw all this, they became angry.

¹⁶ "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus. "Haven't you ever read about it in Scripture? It says,

**" 'Lord, you have made sure that children and infants
praise you.' "**

¹⁷ Then Jesus left the people and went out of the city to Bethany. He spent the night there.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why the chief priests and the teachers of the law were so angry?

I wonder how you praise Jesus?

A reading from Luke 7:36-39, 44-50.

³⁶ One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So he went to the Pharisee's house. He took his place at the table. ³⁷ There was a woman in that town who had lived a sinful life. She learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house. So she came there with a special jar of perfume. ³⁸ She stood behind Jesus and cried at his feet. And she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair. **She kissed them and poured perfume on them.**

³⁹ The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this. He said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him. He would know what kind of woman she is. She is a sinner!"

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman. He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water to wash my feet. But she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss. But this woman has not stopped kissing my feet since I came in. ⁴⁶ You did not put any olive oil on my head. But she has poured this perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ So I tell you this. **Her many sins have been forgiven. She has shown that she understands this by her great acts of love.** But whoever has been forgiven only a little loves only a little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to talk about this among themselves. They said, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*I wonder what you think about each person's reaction in this story:
the woman, the Pharisee, Jesus, and the other guests?*

A reading from Luke 22:1-6.

¹ The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was near. ² The chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus. They were afraid of the people. ³ Then Satan entered Judas, who was called Iscariot. Judas was one of the 12 disciples. ⁴ He went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard. He talked with them about how he could hand Jesus over to them. ⁵ They were delighted and agreed to give him money. ⁶ Judas accepted their offer. He watched for the right time to hand Jesus over to them. He wanted to do it when no crowd was around.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder why the chief priests and the teachers of the law wanted to get rid of Jesus?

I wonder why Judas agreed to hand Jesus over to them?

MAUNDY THURSDAY

A reading from John 13:1-17.

¹ It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world. It was time for him to go to the Father. Jesus loved his disciples who were in the world. So he now loved them to the very end.

² They were having their evening meal. The devil had already tempted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. He had urged Judas to hand Jesus over to his enemies.

³ Jesus knew that the Father had put everything under his power. He also knew he had come from God and was returning to God. ⁴ **So he got up from the meal and took off his outer clothes. He wrapped a towel around his waist.** ⁵ **After that, he poured water into a large bowl. Then he began to wash his disciples' feet.** He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶ He came to Simon Peter. "Lord," Peter said to him, "are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't realize now what I am doing. But later you will understand."

⁸ "No," said Peter. "You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me."

⁹ "Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet! Wash my hands and my head too!"

¹⁰ Jesus answered, "People who have had a bath need to wash only their feet. The rest of their body is clean. And you are clean. But not all of you are."

¹¹ Jesus knew who was going to hand him over to his enemies. That was why he said not every one was clean.

¹² When Jesus finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes. Then he returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³ "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You are right. That is what I am. ¹⁴ I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example. You should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ What I'm about to tell you is true. A slave is not more important than his master. And a messenger is not more important than the one who sends him. ¹⁷ **Now you know these things. So you will be blessed if you do them.**

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

I wonder what Jesus shows us about who he is by washing others' feet?

A reading from Matthew 27:26-61.

²⁶ Pilate let Barabbas go free. But he had Jesus whipped. Then he handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

²⁷ The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the palace, which was called the Praetorium. All the rest of the soldiers gathered around him. ²⁸ They took off his clothes and put a purple robe on him. ²⁹ Then they twisted thorns together to make a crown. They placed it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand. Then they fell on their knees in front of him and made fun of him. "We honor you, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰ They spit on him. They hit him on the head with the stick again and again. ³¹ After they had made fun of him, they took off the robe. They put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to nail him to a cross.

³² On their way out of the city, they met a man from Cyrene. His name was Simon. They forced him to carry the cross. ³³ They came to a place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means the Place of the Skull. ³⁴ There they mixed wine with bitter spices and gave it to Jesus to drink. After tasting it, he refused to drink it. ³⁵ When they had nailed him to the cross, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. ³⁶ They sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him. It read,

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁸ Two rebels against Rome were crucified with him. One was on his right and one was on his left. ³⁹ Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads ⁴⁰ and said, "So you are going to destroy the

temple and build it again in three days? Then save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" ⁴¹ In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders made fun of him. ⁴² "He saved others," they said. "But he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross! Then we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him. He's the one who said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ In the same way the rebels who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him.

⁴⁵ From noon until three o'clock, the whole land was covered with darkness.

⁴⁶ About three o'clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice. He said, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" This means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?"

⁴⁷ Some of those standing there heard Jesus cry out. They said, "He's calling for Elijah."

⁴⁸ Right away one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar and put it on a stick. He offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

⁵⁰ **After Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, he died.**

⁵¹ **At that moment the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook. The rocks split. ⁵² Tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs. After Jesus was raised from the dead, they went into the holy city. There they appeared to many people.**

⁵⁴ The Roman commander and those guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened. They were terrified. They exclaimed, "He was surely the Son of God!"

⁵⁵ Not very far away, many women were watching. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to take care of his needs. ⁵⁶ Mary Magdalene was among them. Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, was also there. So was the mother of Zebedee's sons

⁵⁷ As evening approached, a rich man came from the town of Arimathea. His name was Joseph. He had become a follower of Jesus. ⁵⁸ He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹ Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰ He placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Then he went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there across from the tomb.

**The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

I wonder what the Roman commander and those guarding Jesus understood about who Jesus is?

EASTER SUNDAY

*the story that tells of Jesus'
resurrection*

A reading from Luke 24:1-12.

¹ It was very early in the morning on the first day of the week. The women took the spices they had prepared. Then they went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from it. ³ When they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ They were wondering about this. Suddenly two men in clothes as bright as lightning stood beside them. ⁵ The women were terrified. They bowed down with their faces to the ground. Then the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ **Jesus is not here! He has risen! Remember how he told you he would rise.** It was while he was still with you in Galilee. ⁷ He said, 'The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful people. He must be nailed to a cross. On the third day he will rise from the dead.' " ⁸ Then the women remembered Jesus' words. ⁹ They came back from the tomb. They told all these things to the 11 apostles and to all the others. ¹⁰ Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them were the ones who told the apostles. ¹¹ But the apostles did not believe the women. Their words didn't make any sense to them. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent over and saw the strips of linen lying by themselves. Then he went away, wondering what had happened.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*I wonder which words or parts of the story make your heart flutter?
I wonder what you hear the Spirit teaching you about who God is? About who Jesus is?*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE DAILY EXAMEN

A way of praying through your day at bedtime to notice God's presence, give thanks, and ask for help for tomorrow. Adapted from "Pray as You Go."

BREATHE. As you breathe in say: "I love you, Lord." As you breathe out say, "You are my Good Shepherd." Repeat three times.

REFLECT. Look back over your day. Where did you go? What did you do? Who were you with?

HAPPY. I wonder where you experienced God's beauty today? Was it in something you saw? Was it in a conversation you had? Was it in something you did or something someone did for you? As you think about those good things, give thanks to God for all you experienced that is happy and beautiful.

SAD. Did anything make you sad today? Maybe something that happened, or something that someone said or did? Did you do something that made you feel unhappy? Is there something for which you need to say sorry or something for which you need to ask for help because it made you sad? No matter what made you feel sad or unhappy, remember that you are precious to God. Nothing ever changes that.

TOMORROW. Now think about your day tomorrow. Is there anything you are excited about? Is there anything you are worried about? Is there anything you need? Talk to God about it now and ask him to help you notice his presence with you throughout your day tomorrow.

LISTEN. I wonder if there is anything God is saying to you?

Say together: **God knows me. He's crazy about me. He goes with me everywhere. Amen.**

NOTICINGS & WONDERINGS . . .



**God knows you.
He is crazy about you.
He goes with you everywhere.**