

MY LENTEN BOOK

Lent and Easter 2024

A daily devotional illustrated by our St. Paul's Kids



"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." Luke 4:1

 **St. Paul's Kids**

A Journey through Lent to Easter Sunday!

LENT

Lent is the period of 40 days just before Easter (not counting Sundays). It begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Week. Lent is a season for thinking about how much God loves us, and feeling especially close to God. We are encouraged to repent, or turn away from bad choices and toward God's goodness. At church, the season of Lent is observed with the royal color of purple. Traditionally we do not say "Alleluia" during Lent—we save it for Easter.



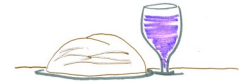
Fasting During Lent



During Lent we remember that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness preparing for his ministry. He fasted, prayed, and overcame temptation. We spend the 40 days of Lent doing some preparation of our own! Sometimes people do this by fasting, or giving something up, until Easter. Often fasting means going without food for a short time, or going without certain foods like desserts. Sometimes people then donate the money they would have spent on desserts to a charity. Fasting can also be giving up some TV time and doing good deeds instead. Some people "fast" from complaining or saying mean things about people, and try to keep that going long after Lent ends. Some people take on a habit instead of giving things up. You might make time every day to read the Bible or a devotional. However you observe Lent, use this special season to connect with God as you learn to follow Jesus every day!

Holy Week

St. Paul's offers special services and events all week long. Check our website for the schedule!



Palm Sunday reminds us of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of the Passion, or the events leading up to his death. We wave palm branches and sing praises!

Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper and Jesus' mandate to serve one another and gather around the Lord's table. We end this service by taking away the shiny decorations from the Sanctuary.

Good Friday is a sad and serious day that focuses on the crucifixion and death of Jesus. Our Children's Tenebrae Service at 11am tells this story in an age-appropriate way.

Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday reminds of Jesus' followers waiting with hope for new life.

You can visit the "**Walk through Holy Week**" exhibit in the Jones Basement or take a walk on the labyrinth any time the church is open throughout Holy Week.

EASTER

Easter is the joyful celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Alleluia! The Easter season is 50 days in length, lasting from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday. The color for Easter is white or gold. It is a season of rejoicing, a time to celebrate the triumph of life over death and our new life in Christ. Observing a holy Lent prepares us to celebrate Easter with great joy!



Making Lent and Easter a special time for your family...



Daily Devotionals

Set up a special place at home for your prayer time during Lent. You could decorate it with a candle, a cross, your Bible or Bible Story Book, and things you treasure. Light a candle while you pray or read from the Bible.

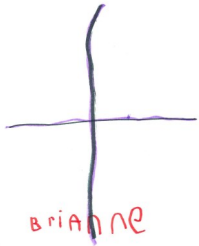
If you don't get to do your devotional every day, that's ok! Do not feel like you are "behind"— just jump back in on whichever day you can!

For older children and adults who would like to read or study more deeply, the complete Lectionary scriptures for Lent and Easter Sunday are listed below.

Using This Book

Each daily devotion includes a scripture from that week's lectionary readings and a suggestion for a response. Children may enjoy responding to the daily readings by coloring in this booklet, drawing their own pictures, working with clay or other materials, re-enacting the stories, dancing, singing, playing music, writing stories or prayers, or other creative activities.

You'll need basic art supplies such as paper, crayons, paint, scissors, and glue. A few activities suggest special supplies so read ahead to prepare. You may adapt any activity using supplies you have on hand. If the weather isn't great for an outdoor activity, you could switch around the days and choose an indoor idea instead.



Many thanks to our St. Paul's kids, teachers, and staff for all their work in creating this resource for our families!

If you have any questions as you go through this season of Lent, send them to Pastor Kate. (She LOVES questions!)

kflint@stpaulshouston.org

We hope you have a blessed Lenten season and a joyful Easter!



Lectionary Readings for Lent and Easter Day (Year B):

	Psalm	Old Testament	Epistle	Gospel
Ash Wednesday	Psalm 51:1-17	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
1st Sunday in Lent	Psalm 25:1-10	Genesis 9:8-17	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1: 9-15
2nd Sunday in Lent	Psalm 22:23-31	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38 (or 9:2-9)
3rd Sunday in Lent	Psalm 19	Exodus 20:1-17	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 2:13-22
4th Sunday in Lent	Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22	Numbers 21:4-9	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
5th Sunday in Lent	Psalm 51:1-12 (119:9-16)	Jeremiah 31:31-34	Hebrews 5:5-10	John 12:20-33
HOLY WEEK				
Palm Sunday	Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 11:1-11
Monday	Psalm 36:5-11	Isaiah 42:1-9	Hebrews 9:11-15	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	Psalm 71:1-14	Isaiah 49:1-7	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	John 12:20-36
Wednesday	Psalm 70	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Hebrews 12:1-3	John 13:21-32
Thursday	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19	Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14	1 Corinthians 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday	Psalm 22	Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12	Hebrews 10:16-25	John 18:1-19:42
Easter Eve	Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Isaiah 55:1-11; Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26 or Psalm 33; Isaiah 12:2-6; Genesis 7:1-3, 11-18, 8:6-18, 9:8-13; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Psalm 46; Psalm 42; Genesis 22:1-18; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 16; Psalm 143; Exodus 14:10-31, 15:1b-21; Romans 6:3-11; Psalm 114; Matthew 28:1-10; Psalm 98; Zephaniah 3:14-20			
EASTER DAY	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24	Acts 10:34-43	1 Corinthians 15:1-11	John 20:1-18 or Mark 16:1-8



Antony 8

Feb. 14 ASH WEDNESDAY Read Psalm 51:10.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.
In many churches on this first day of Lent, ashes are used to make the sign of a cross on people's foreheads or hands. The ashes are made by burning the palm branches that were waved on Palm Sunday last year. A long time ago, people put ashes on their heads to show that they were sorry. On Ash Wednesday, we think about what we need to say we are sorry for, and we are thankful that God forgives us. We also think about getting to be with God forever in Heaven after our lives on Earth.



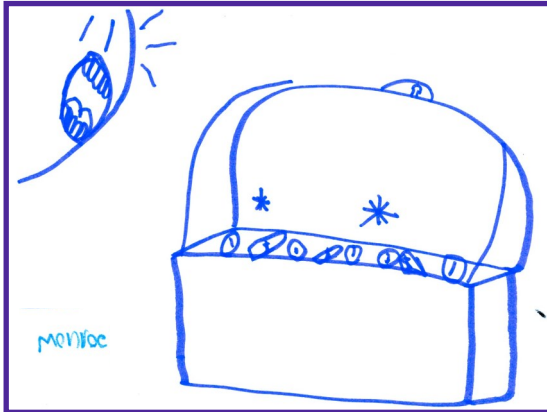
Feb. 15 Thursday Read Psalm 51:15.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Many times every day we can stop for a moment and give praise to God - with words, music, our hands, our hearts, or our actions. Sing a song, or name several things that make you want to praise God!



Feb. 16 Friday Read Matthew 6:19.



Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Decorate a box or envelopes for collecting your special offering during Lent. Offerings can be money, food, clothing - or anything that can be shared. You may save your offering for Easter Day or take it to church each Sunday in Lent.

Feb. 17 Saturday Read Joel 2:13b.

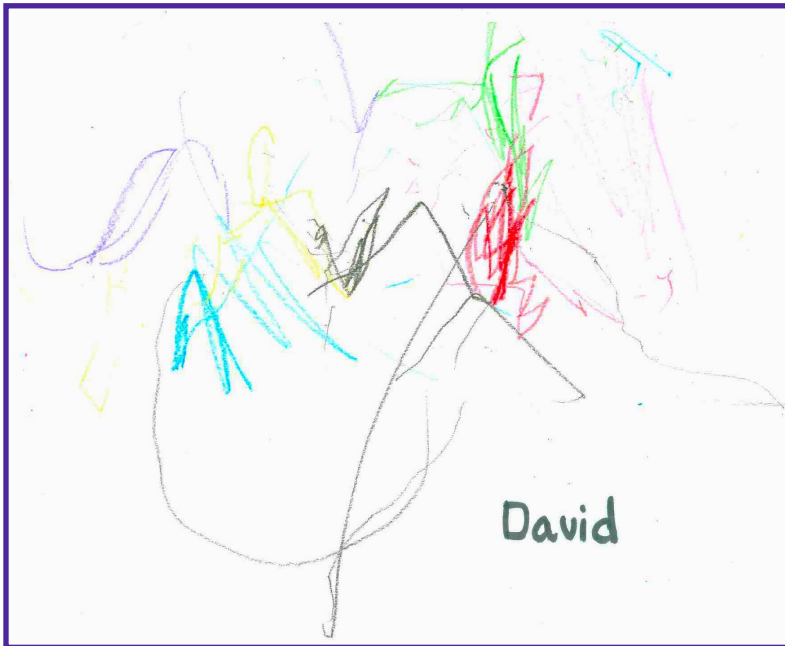
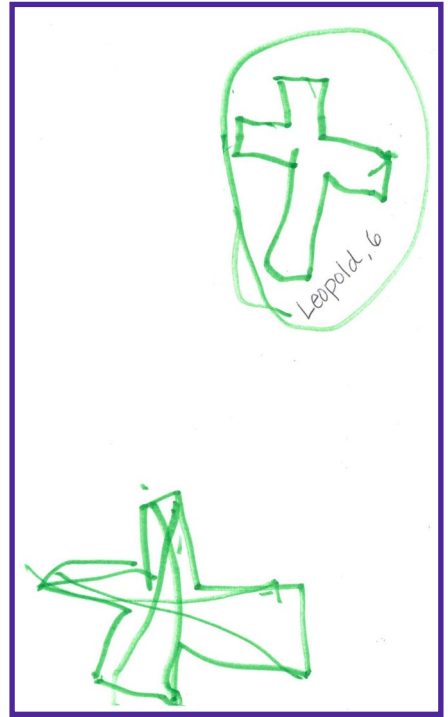
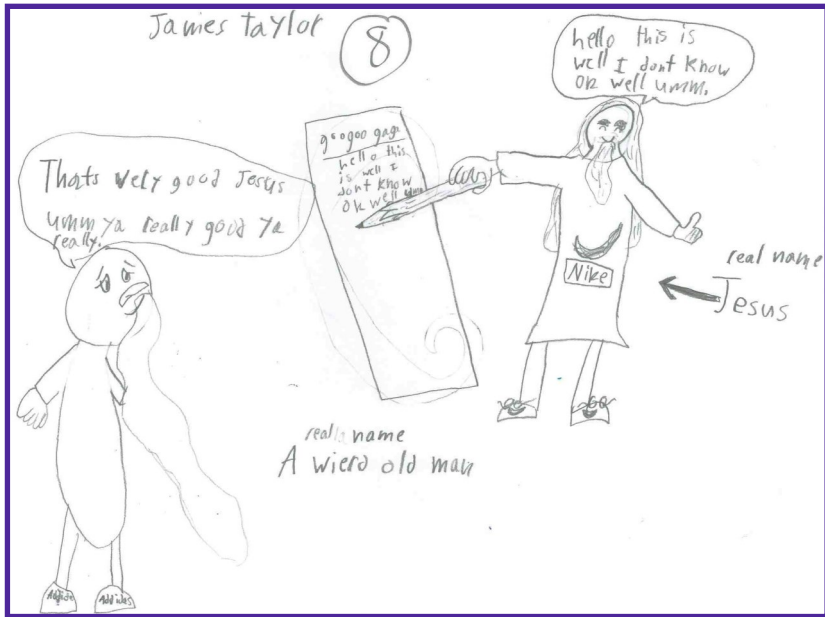
Return to the Lord, your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

During the 40 days of Lent, we find ways to draw closer to God. Make a special place for praying and reading the Bible with your family – you can add a candle, your Bible, a cross, and some things you treasure.

Think about the love you share in your family. Can you imagine how much God's love for us is even greater – always overflowing and never ending!

"Dear God, your love is pouring out to us even when we are worried, sad, angry, or when we forget to think about you. Thank you for understanding our feelings and being patient with us. Help us open our hearts to receive your love and share it with others. Amen."





Feb. 18

The First Sunday in Lent

Read about the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1:9-11.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

John baptized people with water, calling them to live as God's people. At Jesus' baptism, God's Spirit was with him. Our baptism is the sign that we belong to God and are part of God's big family all around the world, and God's Spirit is with us too. Look at family photographs and talk about the baptism of someone in your family.



Feb. 19

Monday

Read about the story of Noah building an ark for his family and all the animals in Genesis 7, 8 and 9 or in a story Bible.

God made a promise to Noah and his family, and a rainbow in the sky was a sign of that promise. Make or color a rainbow to hang in your home. Every time you see it, remember God's promise to love and care for us.



Feb. 20

Tuesday

After Jesus was baptized and God's Spirit was with him, he went to a lonely place called a wilderness for 40 days. Jesus needed time to pray and get ready for the work of sharing God's love with all the people. The 40 days of Lent reminds us of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness and Noah's 40 days of rain.

Light a candle and spend some quiet moments

feeling close to God. Listen to your own breathing, and think about how God's love is inside and all around you, as close as your breath.



Feb. 21

Wednesday

Read Mark 1:14-15.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

After his time in the wilderness, Jesus was ready to begin his work - proclaiming God's good news. Take turns sharing some good news about your day. Imagine what it must have been like to hear Jesus tell about the good news of God's love.

Feb. 22

Thursday

Read Psalm 25:1.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O God, in you I trust.

Think about the story of Noah's ark and how Noah trusted God.

Noah listened to God's instructions, followed them carefully, and all the animals were safe!

Look for the words "In God we trust" on coins or paper money - you might want to use a magnifying glass. What do these words mean to you?



Feb. 23

Friday Read Psalm 25:10.

*All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.*

How are you living in God's ways and following Jesus? Plan with your family to reach out with caring and kindness to someone you know or a stranger.

Feb. 24

Saturday Read Psalm 25:4-5.

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.*

*Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.*

There are so many things to learn, no matter what age we are. Following Jesus is a life-long adventure. We never stop learning about God's love! Think of all the ways we learn about God's goodness. We read our Bibles, we pray and worship, and we enjoy time with our loved ones. We can even experience God in nature.

Take a walk in your neighborhood or a park, and look for signs of spring. These remind us of how God is faithful to us year after year! Pick up a few of nature's treasures to keep in your prayer place.



Feb. 25 The Second Sunday in Lent

Read Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous. You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations." God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai, your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and I will give you a son."



Abraham and Sarah were very old, so they were surprised when God told them they would have a baby. Sarah couldn't keep from laughing! God told Abraham his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Draw a picture of the night sky, or go outside after dark and look up at the moon, planets, and stars - the same stars Abraham saw in the sky.

Feb. 26 Monday Read Romans 4: 20-21.

Abraham did not waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

Pray that your faith will continue to grow strong like the faith of Abraham and Sarah. Thank God for all the people in your family. God's love for us never ends!



Feb. 27 Tuesday Read Psalm 22: 27.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

Families help us grow in God's way by reading the Bible and praying with us, taking us to church, and loving us just the way we are. Do something special for your family today - maybe you want to make it a surprise.

Feb. 28 Wednesday Read Psalm 36:5-6.
*Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your
judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and
animals alike, O Lord.*
Are there clouds in the sky today? If the weather is nice,
relax outdoors and enjoy the sky, trees, squirrels, birds, your
pet, and whatever else you can see.
Thank you, God, for our wonderful world!



Feb. 29 Thursday
Long before Jesus was born, God gave Moses some laws or rules that are
sometimes
called the Ten Commandments. You can read them in **Exodus 20: 1-17**. These
commandments help us love and respect God and other people by worshipping
God, telling the truth, respecting other people's things, listening to our parents, and
more!
Which of these rules do you think might be hard to follow? Which rules do you
already follow and find easy?

March 1 Friday Read Matthew 7:12.
*Jesus said, "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for
this is the law and the prophets."*
This Bible verse is called the "Golden Rule." Memorize it so you can remember it
whenever you are playing or working with others. Sometimes it is hard to follow
this rule, but keep trying!

March 2 Saturday Read Mark 8:34.
*Jesus called the crowd with his disciples and
said to them, "If any want to become my
followers, let them deny themselves and take
up their cross and follow me."*
When Jesus said, "Take up your cross," he meant
that living in God's way is not always easy.
Sometimes God's way means doing things that
are not popular or living without something we
want. But when we follow Jesus, we find that
our lives are also filled with joy. Draw or make
a cross to display in your home to remind you that
you are following Jesus.



March 3 The Third Sunday in Lent

Read Exodus 20:7.

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.

Some of the 10 Commandments are about loving and respecting God; others are about loving and respecting people. In Jesus's time and today, Jewish people began their Sabbath day on Fridays at sunset. Christians celebrate the Sabbath, our holy day, on Sundays.

Sunday is the day Jesus was resurrected from death to a new life. It was at sunrise when the women discovered that Jesus wasn't dead any more but had risen to a new life. Every Sunday is kind of like Easter, even during Lent - we celebrate the good news of Jesus!

How does your family keep the Sabbath day holy and more special than other days?

March 4 Monday Read John 2:13-22.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple, he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. They were taking too much of peoples' money, and making it harder to worship God. Jesus drove all of the animals out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!"

Jesus felt angry when he found people selling animals in the temple instead of worshiping God. What makes you angry? Can you be angry with someone you love? It's good to talk to God when we are angry so God can help us make good choices. Sometimes we can do something to change a situation that makes us angry so that it's better for everyone.



March 5 Tuesday Read 1 Corinthians 1:25.

God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Think of the strongest or wisest people you know. God is stronger and more wise than even them! Everybody makes a foolish choice now and then—we're just humans! It's good to think about our mistakes and try to learn a better way for the next time. We're all growing in God's love together and trying to follow Jesus' example. Sing "Jesus Loves Me."

March 6 Wednesday Read Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. he makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his names sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

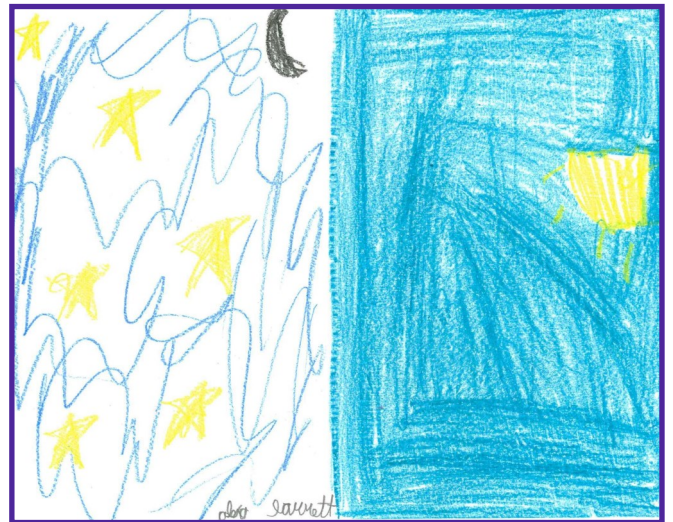
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

“Dear God, we thank you for taking care of us, always giving us more than we need. We feel safe and satisfied when we think of how much you love us. Bless us and help us follow your ways like a sheep follows its good shepherd. Amen.”

March 7 Thursday Read Psalm 19:1.

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Go outside and look up at the sky. Isn't it amazing how different the sky looks in the daytime or nighttime and in clear or rainy weather! Thank God for such an awesome world for us to enjoy.



March 8 Friday Read Psalm 19:14.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Maybe you remember hearing or saying these words during worship. God's people have been praying this prayer in worship for thousands of years!

You can also say them whenever you pray or read from the Bible. God understands what is in our hearts even when we can't think of the words to describe our feelings or hopes and dreams.

March 9

Saturday

Read Psalm 19:7-10.

*The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are
right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord
is clear, enlightening the eyes.
More to be desired are they
than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey, and
drippings of the honeycomb.*



Look at all the words in this psalm that mean 'law' or 'rule.' Long before Jesus was born, God's faithful people read the scriptures containing the 10 Commandments and other laws from God. These laws taught people how to love God and other people. Jesus reminds us that the greatest commandment is LOVE – love God and love others! Everything that was written in the law points us to these main ideas!
How do you follow God's commandments by loving?



March 10 **The Fourth Sunday in Lent**

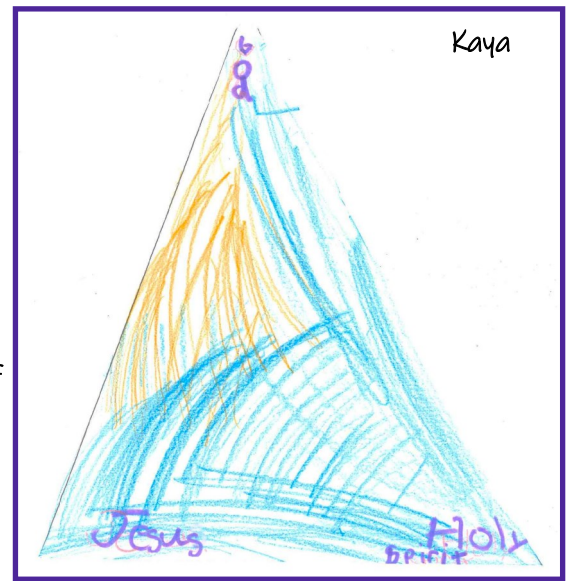
Every Sunday we stand and say the Apostles' Creed together. A creed is a list of things we believe. There are a lot of words to understand, but we keep learning what they mean as we grow older. Christians have said these words for hundreds of years.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, the third day he rose from the dead; he

ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick 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.

Cut out a paper triangle. On the three sides write the words God (Father), Jesus (Son), and Holy Spirit. Three sides make up one triangle, God has three ways of being but is always one God. Sometimes we think of God as the maker of the whole world; sometimes we think about God coming to live among us as Jesus; and sometimes we think of God as a Spirit who is always with us.



March 11 Monday

Read Psalm 107:1.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

Name as many good things about your life as you can - say a prayer of thanks to God. Sing some of your favorite songs, or teach someone a song you like.



March 12 Tuesday Read Ephesians 2:8.

By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

When the apostle Paul wrote these words in a letter, he wanted people to understand that God is always reaching out to us, giving us everything we need. We don't have to earn God's love with our actions. Because God gives us so many wonderful gifts, we want to do good things for God and for others. Are you collecting an offering during Lent?



March 13 Wednesday Read Ephesians 2:9-10

We are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

As Christians, we do God's work in the world, following the way Jesus taught us to live. What can you do to share God's love with someone today?

March 14 Thursday Read Romans 5:5b.

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

The Holy Spirit is the part of God that is always with us even though we can't see it. God is too amazing to describe with just one word! Listen to your own breathing, close your eyes, and be silent for awhile. Feel God's love pouring into your heart.

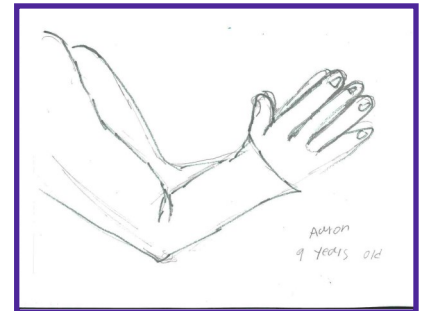
March 15 Friday

Say the Lord's Prayer together. You can read it in Matthew 6:9-13.

Here are the traditional words we usually pray in church:

"Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be 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 forever. Amen."



March 16 Saturday Read John 3:16.

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

Try to memorize this verse – it's one of the best-loved promises in the Bible.

Look at a globe or map of the world. Imagine God's love for all the people in all the nations. Draw your own picture or map as you think and wonder about this Bible verse.

"Dear God, we praise and thank you for loving each one of us as your special child and for pouring out your love to the whole earth. Thank you for the promise that love is stronger than anything, even death. Amen."

March 17 The Fifth Sunday in Lent Read Jeremiah 31: 31, 33b-34.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord.

God has kept promises for thousands of years. Remember God's promises to Noah and to Abraham and Sarah? No one is too old or young to be included in God's promises.

March 18 Monday Read John 13:34-35.

Jesus has said, "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus already knew the Ten Commandments and all the other laws that the people of God were trying to follow.

Jesus gave us a new rule that is easy to remember, but is it easy to follow? Plan some ways to show love this week, not just feel it.



March 19 Tuesday Read John 12: 23-24.

Jesus said to his disciples, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Jesus knew he was going to die soon, and he tried to prepare his disciples. He told them a parable about wheat. A small wheat seed has to be planted in the earth to grow into a new wheat plant with thousands of seeds. It doesn't really die, but it grows into a new kind of life. See if you can find some seeds (acorns, apple seeds, etc.), and look at them very closely. Isn't it amazing how the life of a new plant is contained in a little seed!



March 20 Wednesday Read John 11: 25-26.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

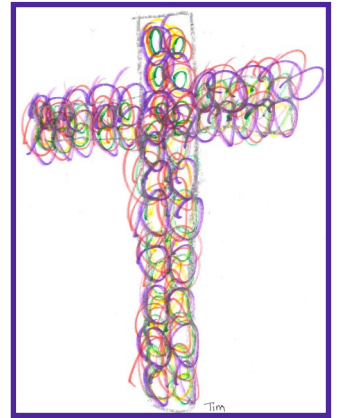
We know that all plants and animals must finally die. But Jesus promises that even after we die, we will live forever with God. We know this is true, but it is hard to understand how it will happen.

Plant some seeds or a bulb. By Easter Sunday, you might have some tiny green sprouts to remind you of the new life we have in Jesus.

March 21 Thursday Read Philippians 2:5-11.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Kneel and say a prayer together. Make an Easter card or picture for your Sunday School teachers or another special friend.



March 22 Friday Read John 12:27.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say - 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name."



One week from today is Good Friday, when Christians think about the day Jesus died. Jesus knew how he would die and that he would "rise again" (come back to life) on the third day. Jesus explained these things to his disciples, but they did not really understand. There are many things we do not understand, but we can wonder and pray about them together. Share any worries that are in your mind or heart.

March 23 Saturday Read John 12:26.
Jesus said, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor."

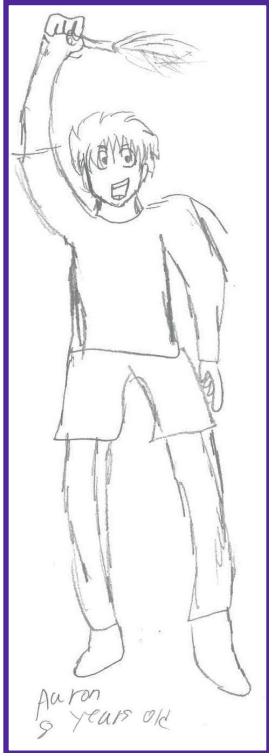
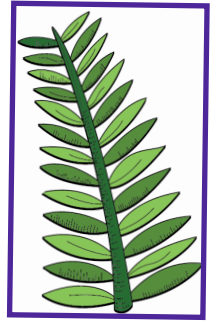
Jesus showed many ways to love and care for people. Following Jesus means serving others, not just thinking about our own needs and wants. Love is the spark that helps us know how to serve. "Jesu, Jesu" is a folk song from Ghana in western Africa (Jesu is pronounced jee-soo). If you know the tune, you can sing it together, or read the words as a prayer.

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.
(United Methodist Hymnal, #432)

Holy Week

March 24 Palm Sunday Read Mark 11:1-10.

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'"



They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

*"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

This is an exciting day for Christians! Like the people of Jerusalem long ago, children wave palm branches and sing "Hosanna!" to show how much we love Jesus. Take home two palm leaves and make a cross; cut a small slit in one leaf, then slide the other leaf through. Keep your palm cross in a special place, use it as a bookmark, or give it to someone you love.



March 25 Monday Read Isaiah 42: 1, 5-8.

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name.

Say a prayer together. "Lord, you are as close as our breath. Hear us when we call your name. Keep us safe, surrounded by your love, and lead us in your light. Amen."



March 26 Tuesday Read John 12:35-36a.

Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of the light."

Jesus is like a light for the whole world. Take a candle or flashlight into a very dark room or closet. The darkness doesn't make the light seem dim - instead, the light looks even brighter in the dark!



March 27 Wednesday Read John 13:1, 3-9.

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have not share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus surprised his disciples by washing their dusty feet, a job usually done by servants. Since we do not wash our feet before eating, as people did long ago, think of other ways we can follow the example of Jesus by serving others.

March 28 Maundy Thursday

Today, Christians gather to remember the night Jesus shared his last meal with the disciples. During the sacrament of Holy Communion, we re-tell the story and repeat the words Jesus spoke to his disciples. The bread and juice remind us that Jesus died so that we may live forever with God.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (from a letter written by Paul).

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Read John 6:35. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

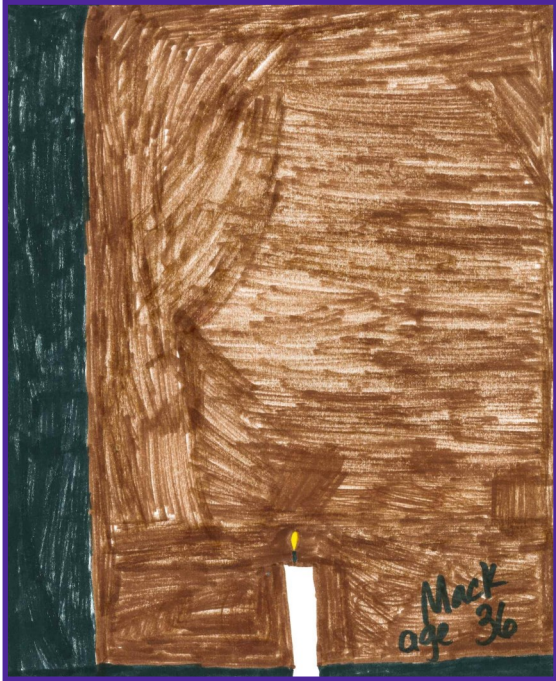
Jesus left us a special way to remember him and to celebrate his life with us. Here is a prayer we can say before Holy Communion or any meal, to remember Jesus.

Be present at our table, Lord.

Be here and everywhere adored.

Thy creatures bless and grant that we may feast in paradise with thee. Amen.





March 29 Good Friday

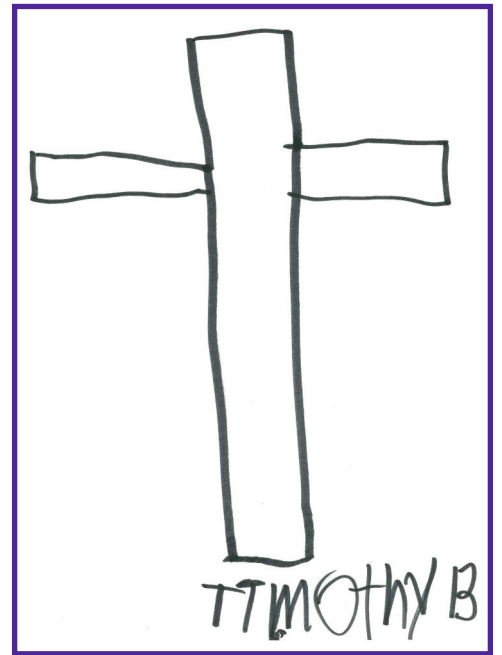
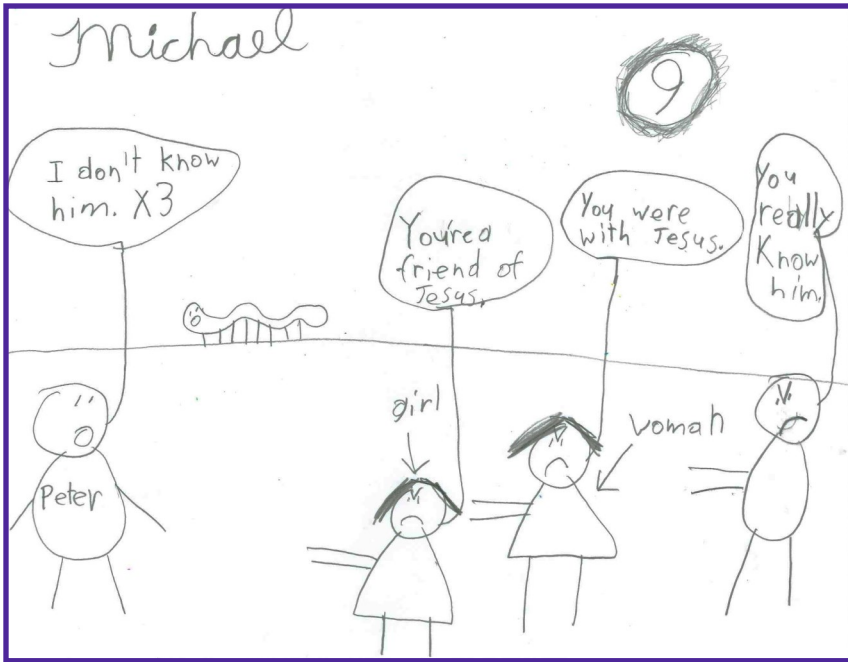
This is a sad day when we remember that Jesus died on a cross. Read in a story Bible or in **John 18 and 19** about how Judas helped the soldiers arrest Jesus, how Peter was afraid to be known as a disciple of Jesus, how Jesus died on a cross, and how his body was buried in a tomb. For Christians, the cross is a symbol of new life and Jesus' victory over death. An old tradition for Good Friday is to make hot cross buns (you can pipe the shape of a cross with white frosting onto plain buns).

Say the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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, forever. Amen.





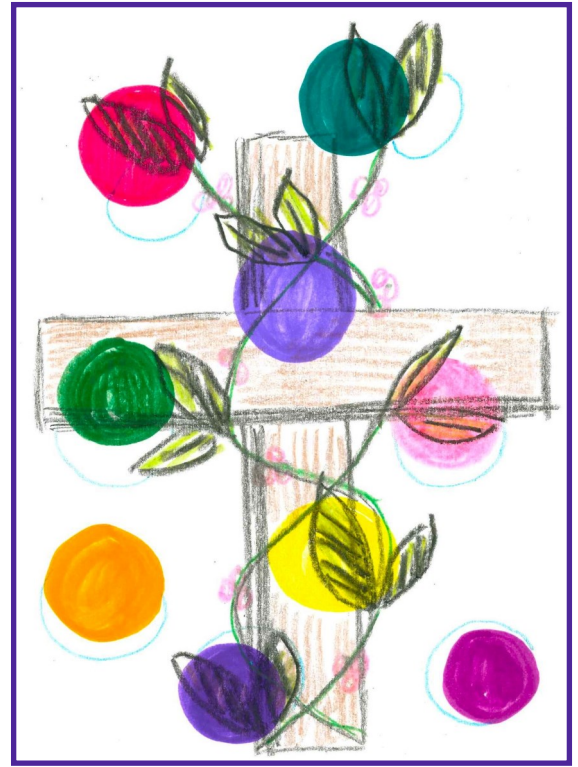
March 30 Holy Saturday Read Psalm 46:1-3, 10-11.

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."
The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

The day after Jesus died was a very sad and fearful time for the people who loved him. They did not know what to do, since the person they thought would save them was gone. What should they do now? They felt hopeless. But they didn't know that Jesus would come back from death to a new life. God's love is stronger than anything. This is the good news of Easter that we celebrate tomorrow!

Today, children will decorate Easter eggs, have an egg hunt, and do crafts that remind us of Spring. Think about how dead our gardens looked after the freezing weather and long nights this winter. Compare that to the springtime flowers and sprouting plants, baby animals being hatched or born, and butterflies coming out of chrysalises. All of these are signs of the new life! At Easter, we remember the hope for New Life that we have in Jesus.





HAPPY EASTER SUNDAY

Read John 20:1-18.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her,

"Go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! We celebrate Easter with joy because we know that Jesus is alive. Churches are full on Easter Sunday because we like to celebrate this most joyful holiday with our church family. We hear joyous music, and churches are decorated with beautiful flowers. At St. Paul's, we bring flowers to decorate a wooden cross on the church lawn to remind us that Jesus was victorious over death. 'Alleluia' is a joyous Easter word—shout it!

