

FINDING HOPE IN THE DESERT

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21

Read the Bible: Luke 4:1-13

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

discuss ...

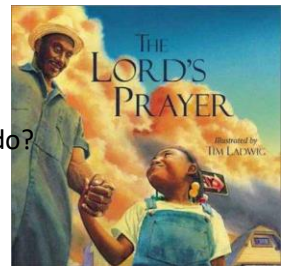
- What do you think it means to be full of the Holy Spirit?
- We are now in the season of Lent. Lent is 40 days of waiting for Easter, and it is a time we focus on prayer. Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and prayed while he was there.
- What do you want to pray about this Lent?

Read: The Lord's Prayer by Tim Ladwig

Read along on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRdGnWuqL-U>

discuss ...

- what is your favorite part of this book?
- In the pictures the little girl is tempted to keep the necklace she finds. What does she do?
- Have you prayed this prayer before?



Activity: Sand Drawing

Put your sand on a plate or small pan. Draw some prayers in the sand. (When you are done your sand will go in the terrarium.)

Can you draw a prayer that is something you hope for in the future?

Can you draw a prayer for safety?

Can you draw a prayer for someone you love?

Can you draw a prayer for peace?

Can you draw a prayer that says thank you to God?

Terrarium Instructions

Pour the enclosed sand into the bottom of your terrarium to create a base for planting. This layer should be ½" - 1" deep. This sand will remind us that the Holy Spirit is with us everywhere we go, just like the Holy Spirit was with Jesus in the desert.

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7

Read the Bible: 1 Kings 19:11-12

¹¹ *The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."*

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

discuss ...

- Elijah was waiting on instructions from God but how do you think Elijah knew to listen to God in a gentle whisper?
- Why do you think God spoke to Elijah in the gentle whisper instead of the earthquake or fire?
- Have you ever heard or seen God?

Read: *Maybe God is Like that Too* by Jennifer Grant

Read along on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kw32hmxYLg>

discuss ...

- What is your favorite part of this story?
- How does the kid in this story see God around their city?



Activity: Lectio Divina

Life is noisy. People talk and yell, devices beep and buzz. How do we listen for God's voice in all that noise? This week, we will focus on the ancient practice of praying the Scripture called Lectio Divina, which means "divine reading" or "sacred reading". During Lectio Divina, one listens with the heart to the Scripture for a message from God.

Go to a quiet place and put your body in a comfortable position. Choose a favorite passage in Scripture or read this week's bible story. Have someone read the story to you while you listen. Maybe even read it twice! As you listen with your ears and your heart you can draw words or pictures that seem important to you. If you are reading from 1 Kings you can color the coloring page provided. After you are done you can share what seemed important to you in the story and what God might have been saying.

Terrarium Instructions

Use the Model Magic air drying clay to create a symbol of God's presence in your life or your family's life. Let it dry next to your terrarium and we will add it in after we add the dirt next week. Model Magic can be decorated with permanent markers or waterproof paint.

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 7

Read the Bible: Exodus 16:1-8; 31

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

³¹ The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.

discuss ...

- The Israelites had been following God through the desert but were getting hungry. They cried out to God for food and God sent manna. Have you ever needed help from God?

Read: How Did that Get in My Lunchbox? By Chris Butterworth

Read along on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhVKIm5yltk>

discuss ...

- What was your favorite part of this book?
- What foods are you MOST thankful that God made for us?
- It takes so many people to get food in our lunchbox or on our dinner table, lets be sure to thank God for this big community of people that help take care of us!



Activity: Mindful Eating Meditation: AUDIO Available Online

Prepare something small to eat like a cracker or a slice of apple ... something simple is best. Begin by letting yourself rest in your seat, breathing in and out.

Now, slowly bring awareness to the food before you. Say "I know this is a piece of _____."

If you look deeply at this piece of food, you can see the whole universe in it - the sunshine that helped the food to grow, the rain that nourished the seeds, the richness of the soil...the farmer who the food ...the truck driver who transported the food ...the shop keeper behind the register....you can see the earth, the rain and the sky. It has come from the whole cosmos for your nourishment.

When you are mindful, you see and feel the food. What does it look like? What shape and color is it? What temperature? What is its texture like?

Bring the food close to your mouth ... what does it smell like?

Notice how your body responds to bringing the food close to your mouth...does your mouth water? Does your belly gurgle? Do you feel an urgency to put the food in your mouth?

You may like to smile to the food before you put it in your mouth, appreciating God's gift of nourishment, giving thanks....

As you slowly place the food in your mouth, what happens? What do you notice as you very slowly begin to chew? Do you feel an urge to rush? To quickly swallow? What's it like to slow down...to let the food linger on your tongue?

As you chew, let yourself simply be aware of chewing. Slowly enjoy this bite of food, this miracle.

What do you notice as you swallow? Can you feel this food begin to nourish every cell of your body? Pause a moment to simply appreciate being nourished by this, God's gift of food to you.

Alternate Activity: Taste Testing

Have a grown up pick out three food for you to try. **Close your eyes**, and when they or you put the food in your mouth try and guess what the food is by how it tastes. Can you guess all three correctly?

Now pick three foods for your grown up to try and guess! How many did they guess right?

The taster can also close their eyes, hold out an empty spoon and when someone puts food on the spoon they can taste it themselves.



Terrarium Instructions

Gently pour soil over the layer of sand. This layer should be about 1" or so deep. Add in your dry clay symbol from last week.

Just like our bodies are fed by food and plants are fed by soil, our spirits are being fed as we worship, pray, read and reflect this Lent. Take a moment to reflect on what you hope is being nourished and growing in you during this Lenten season.

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 14

Read the Bible: Psalm 102:1-2

¹ Hear my prayer, LORD;
let my cry for help come to you.
² Do not hide your face from me
when I am in distress.
Turn your ear to me;
when I call, answer me quickly.

discuss ...

- This prayer is in the Bible, what feelings do you think the writer was feeling when they wrote this?
- We can tell God when we are happy or mad, thankful or angry, silly or sad. What other emotions can we tell God about?

Read: B is for Breathe: The ABCs of Coping with Fussy & Frustrating Feelings by Melissa Munro Boyd

Read along on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEmkSIzZNo>

discuss ...

- What was your favorite part of this book?
- Which of these ideas have you tried? Which would you like to try?
- Does praying make you feel peaceful?



Activity: Rock Painting

In your box are a few small rocks for your terrarium and a large rock to share as part of our Palm Sunday processional. Paint on your rocks something that symbolizes our absence from our church building, but the unity of our church family nonetheless. We hope you will bring your large painted rock to ELPC for our outdoor Palm Sunday Processional, as our stones will be placed in the Sanctuary on Easter morning – a visual representation of the steadfast reality of our unity in Christ, even in a season of feeling scattered.

Terrarium Instructions

Place smaller rocks on top of soil leaving room in the center for your plant.

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 21

Read the Bible: John 12:1-8

12 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. **2** There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. **3** Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. **4** But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, **5** "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" **6** (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) **7** Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. **8** You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

discuss ...

- Why do you think Mary washed Jesus feet with expensive perfume?
- Why do you think Judas was upset by Mary's action?
- How do you show people you love them? (I'm guessing its not by washing their feet with your hair!?!)
- There are lots of stories about Jesus eating with people in the Bible. Can you think of any other dinner stories in the Bible?

Read: At God's Table by Maria Cornou, Carrie Steenwyk, and John Witvliet

Read along on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE_d2hExPEg

discuss ...

- What was your favorite part of this book?
- Did you see the picture of food washing in the book?
- If you were at a dinner party with Jesus what would you want to talk with Jesus about?



Activity: Blessing Beads

Jesus saw Mary's gift of perfume as a blessing. A blessing is a sign that we are loved by God. Think of some of the blessings in your life (people who love you, talents you have, things that bring you joy). Put a bead on the string for every blessing you can think of. You can use this beaded string to hang your terrarium or as a necklace or bookmark.

Terrarium Instructions

Terrarium instructions – Tie a rope or ribbon onto your terrarium as a symbol of the ways we are all connected to one another. We encourage you to stay connected this week to our church family by BEING a blessing to someone else. Here are a few suggestions ...

1. make a phone call
2. write a note/card
3. offer to do an errand
4. offer to do a chore-shovel snow, work in garden, clean
5. cook/bake something
6. take someone to a doctor's appointment
7. send/drop off some flowers
8. pick up some books from the library/bookstore
9. rent a movie
10. serenade someone

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 28

Read the Bible: Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

Read: The Last Supper part of the Holy Moly curriculum.

A copy of the story is attached.

discuss ...

- What was your favorite part of this book?
- What do you think made Omu's dinner the best one she ever had?
- Why do you think Omu was so willing to share her delicious stew?

Activity: Walk

Go on a walk together as a family. You might want to follow the Walking Meditation provided in the Lenten devotional or the audio available online.

As you walk play a game of I-spy. You can look for colors but you can also get creative.

I spy something delicious ...

I spy something fluffy ...

I spy something stinky ...

I spy something that reminds me of God ...

Terrarium Instructions

Our succulent represents the hope and life God gives in the deserts of our lives. Using your fingers gently dig a hole in the center of your terrarium for your plant. It's okay to dig to the bottom of your container. Take succulent in hand and gently squeeze pot to loosen and release plant from pot. Gently break up the soil/roots of the plant and place in terrarium. Depending on the size of your plant you may want to plant it more on its side and allow the plant to drape over the edge of the opening. Gently pat soil around succulent and rearrange your rocks as necessary.

Water the plant lightly- enough to moisten the soil but not so much that water pools up in the bottom. Start with 1/8c. of water and add more if necessary. You may use a spray bottle as well.

Succulents like a lot of light and not a lot of water. Keep your terrarium in a place where it will receive the most sunlight and only water once the soil is bone dry. It's better to under-water especially since there are no drainage holes.

