



CREATED IN THE **IMAGE OF GOD**



SHAPED BY *Jesus*

2023 Lenten  
Worship Guide



**Mennonite  
Education  
Agency**





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## Lent at Home 2023

February 22 to April 9, 2023

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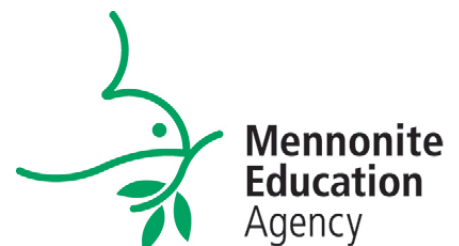
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# Created in the Image of God, Shaped by Jesus

We are human beings. That is both wondrous and complicated! This year's Lenten journey is all about discovering what it means to be fully human. The journey is shaped by communion with our Creator, a closer walk with the ultimate human, Jesus, and sensitivity to the breath of God, the Holy Spirit.

At the heart of this journey is a question. "How can we be and become the kind of humans God created us to be?" We are created to be in community with God, ourselves, others, and all of creation. Being human means that we are gifted with an innate sense of connection to God, to other creatures, to nature, and to the inner workings of our own selves. The writers of this year's *Leader* magazine materials have woven Lenten scriptures together to lead us into greater authenticity as human beings. And these Lent at Home materials, which complement the *Leader* worship resource, are designed to help you discover your human self - with all your wonder and complexity.



## What Is Lent?

Lent prepares us for Easter, as Advent prepares us for Christmas. It is a time to:

- Focus on the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Clean out our lives and make room for hearing and responding to Jesus' call to us.
- Think about our response to the call to follow.
- Confess what stands in our way of responding to God's call.
- Practice humility, confessing our human limitations and our need for God.
- Come into alignment with the call of Jesus.
- Make space for God to lift us up!

**Lent is when we walk with Jesus all the way to the cross.**

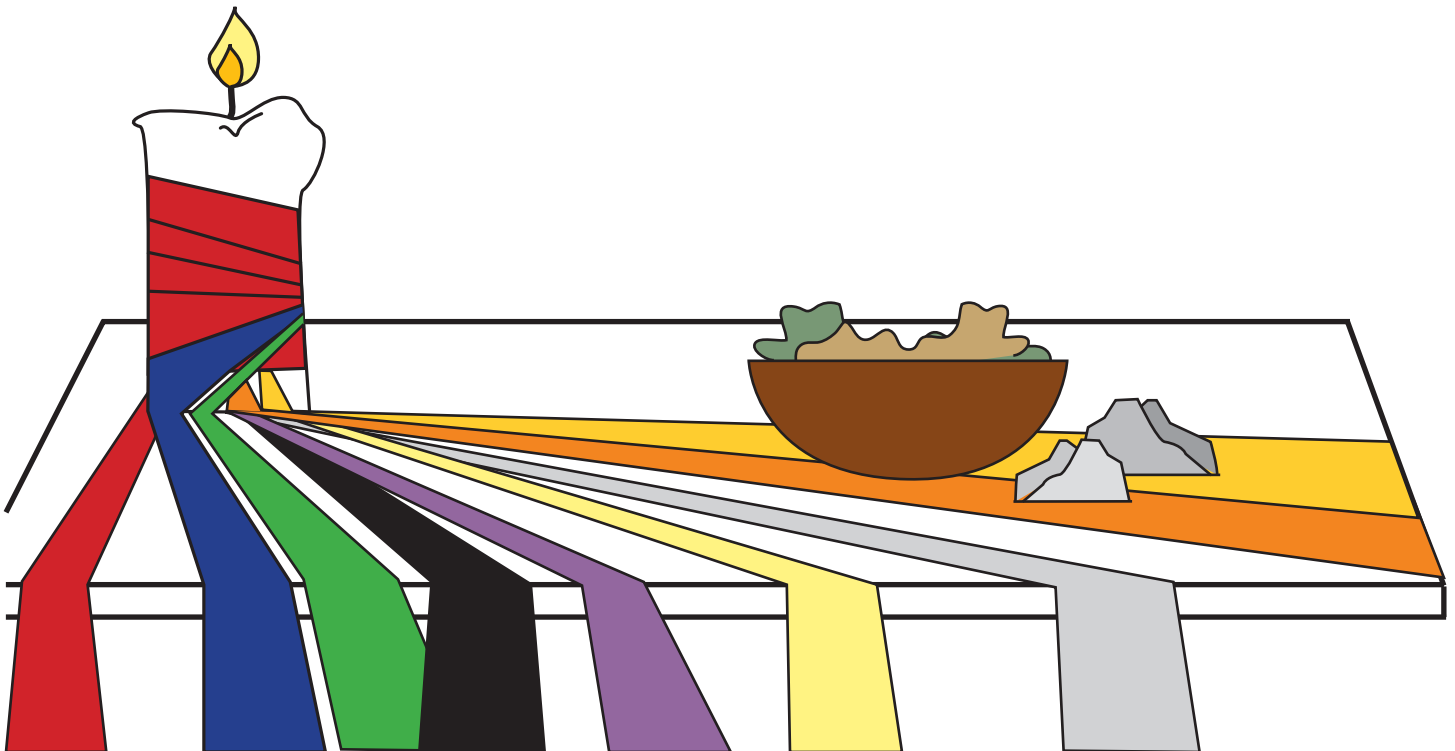
### Lent Rhythm

1. February 22: Begin with the Ash Wednesday ritual. This will help your household step fully into the Lenten journey.
2. February 22 through April 2: Daily (or weekly) candle and calendar ritual.
3. April 6 through April 8: Observe Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday with simple rituals.
4. April 9: Celebrate Easter Sunday with a sunrise ritual and other activities you choose.



## Prepare Ahead

1. **Create a centerpiece.** *This is inspired by the Leader Magazine worship visual ideas. If you attend a church that follows that resource, you may have some synchronicity between home and worship with this visual.*
  - a. Prepare your Christ candle.
    - i. Gather one large pillar candle (of any color you choose).
    - ii. Wrap it in ribbons. These will get unwrapped each week, so here's your reverse order for wrapping.
      1. Gold - the liturgical color for Easter (Resurrection Sunday, April 9)
      2. Black - the liturgical color for Good Friday (Good Friday, April 7)
      3. Purple - worship (Palm Sunday, April 2)
      4. Green - life (March 26)
      5. Yellow - light (March 19)
      6. Blue - water (March 12)
      7. Orange - new life/sunrise (March 5)
      8. Red - testing/temptation (February 26)
      9. Gray (Ash Wednesday)
  - b. Place your candle on a tray or piece of wood (so that you can move it out of the way if needed).
  - c. Add humus. Humus is technically a kind of rich soil, but you can symbolize it with a variety of materials - lumps of clay (wrapped in plastic so they don't dry out), a bowl of rich soil, a sealed container of compost...get creative with what you have available. Arrange your version(s) of humus around your Christ candle on your tray.
  - d. Alternative idea: Instead of (or in addition to) adding humus, add the earth, air, fire and water elements from the Ash Wednesday ritual. Because this ritual is so connected to this year's broader Lent theme, you may find yourself wanting to come back to it over the course of Lent.
2. **Print the Lenten calendar** and place it wherever you'll be doing your daily ritual. You may want to print copies for each member of the household and laminate them, then use them as placemats for the season of Lent.
3. **Take a look at the Human Time option** and think through what you might want to try.
4. **Look over** the Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday rituals and think about which of these you would like to do. Note what you might want to do to prepare ahead of time.



## **The Daily Ritual**

Choose a time of day that will work well for your household. Supper time and bedtime are common choices. At this regular time of day, gather around your centerpiece with your calendar.

1. Light the candle.
2. Follow the prompt on your Lenten calendar.
3. Play with whatever forms of humus you have on your centerpiece (do this as you follow the prompt and pray, or you can skip this part depending on the day).
4. Close your time together with a prayer. On your calendar, you'll find a prayer suggestion for each week, or you can do it your own way!
5. Blow out your candle.

Feel free to change around the prompts during the week (such as doing Monday's prompt on Thursday). Some of the prompts are more activity-oriented and may need to be moved to fit your household's schedule.

## **Weekly Option**

A daily ritual may not feel like a good option for your household. If you'd like to focus your time on one day per week, here's one way to do that.

1. Light the candle.
2. Do the Monday prompt from your calendar (this will always be unwrapping the candle and adding on to the clay human you'll be creating).
3. If you like, check through the other prompts for the week and choose one or two to do in addition to Monday's prompt.
4. Have some Human Time together.
5. Create some forms with the clay or dip your fingers in the other forms of humus as you do the prompts.
6. Pray, using the weekly prayer suggestion or your own way.
7. Blow out your candle.

## Human Time

This year's theme just begs for a weekly time of focusing on being authentically human! Think of this as an invitation to a weekly mini retreat. Your human time could take on many different forms. The goal of human time is very simple: to get in touch with your own humanity, in all its wonder and complexity. Choose a regular time each week when you can set aside some time to explore your humanity. Here are just a few varied ideas of what you can do during your human time - choose one of these or let them inspire your own idea!

- **Follow the children.** We are born with an innate connection to God, self, others, and creation, and children are often more in tune with that connection than adults are. So, try human time that follows a child's lead. Go out into nature and follow their curiosity. Watch an infant or toddler discover their hands. Notice the way a very young child feels each emotion so fully. Bring nature inside and dissect a mushroom or flower together, following the child's questions and imaginings. Create art together, following the child's inspiration and ideas (and not worrying about the final product). Listen to music and see how it moves you. If your household doesn't include children, try borrowing some - or perhaps your memory and imagination are dexterous enough that you can channel your inner child!
- **Experience your senses.** Choose a sensory experience for each week (or maybe you'll linger on the same one throughout Lent). These can be quite easily adapted to do with children. Here are some sensory ideas:
  - **Sit with a mug of a hot beverage.** Close your eyes and feel the weight of the mug, the warmth coming through to your fingers, the pain when it gets a little too hot to keep holding. Take a sip and feel the warmth fill your mouth, then slide down your throat and through your chest until it lands in your middle. Notice the way the sensation of warmth slowly fades. As you repeat this, sip after sip, let it become a prayer of thanks. No words are needed.
  - **Do yoga.** Notice what your body can and cannot do. Feel the stretching as your body pushes a little beyond its comfort. When there is pain, rather than ignoring it, acknowledge it. It's part of being human. Let your stretching and reaching and balancing become a prayer of communion with the One in whose image your body, with all its beautiful flaws, was made.
  - **Go outside and open your senses.** Choose an area (maybe 8' square) and linger there, noticing what you see, smell, feel, and hear (and maybe taste, depending on where you are!). Let your senses bring you into greater communion with God's good creation.
  - **Snuggle.** Sometimes we need to be reconnected with the part of ourselves that longs for companionship. Hold a child or a furry friend, or snuggle up close to another human. Notice the weight of that contact. Notice the temperature differences between the point of contact and other places on your body. How does the contact make you feel? How might God be calling you to connect with others?
- **Look in a mirror.** Really look at yourself. Notice the little things - freckles, wrinkles, scars. Remember the sun, life experiences, and tumbles that brought all that humanity to your face. Look into your own eyes until they become weird and eventually you see the beauty in them. Make faces, seeing how your face can stretch and contort and emote. Imagine God looking at that face and saying, "Yes. This one is very, very good."
- **Journal.** Reflect on your week. What sensations did you experience? When did you feel like your best human self? When did you sense the Holy Spirit? When did you feel near or far from Jesus? When did you feel pain? What moments of deep joy did you have? When did you laugh? When did you feel connected with God, yourself, others, and/or creation?

# Ash Wednesday Ritual

Note that this simple ritual can easily be adapted for a corporate setting. In fact, it is based on an all-age Ash Wednesday service from College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

## What is Ash Wednesday?

- Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent.
- We confess our humanity. We are humans, not gods.
- That means we miss the mark. We hurt others. We break relationships.
- And being human means we are created by God, in the image of God. It means God sticks with us.
- Being human means we are an integral part of creation, created to live in community with God, ourselves, others and all of creation.
- To be human means to be deeply connected with God's sustaining creation – with the water that cleanses and renews us, the fire that refines and comforts us, the wind that moves us, and the earth from which we come and is our life source.

**On Ash Wednesday, we dig deep and start to discover what it is that keeps us from being our best human selves.**

## Prepare for the Household Ritual

### Ashes

- Traditionally, we burn the palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday, but you can burn any organic material to make your ashes.
- Mix them with a bit of oil (olive oil is great) to help them stick together.

### Stations

- Earth: A container with some soil (preferably good, rich soil!) and a towel to wipe off hands.
- Fire: A "Christ candle" (maybe use your candle from Advent) and enough other candles with candle holders for every member of your household.
- Water: A pitcher of water and some small cups.
- Air: A bottle of bubbles and bubble wands.
- Print out the Scripture passages and the reflection and action instructions for each station if you want the stations to be self-guided. Otherwise, you can just read these for each station.

## Do the Ritual Together

**Introduction:** Introduce the ritual by explaining the meaning of Ash Wednesday. You could read through all of "What is Ash Wednesday," or choose points from it that are most helpful for your household. You may want to play this Ash Wednesday playlist (<https://spoti.fi/37kVXbv>) softly in the background (Free Spotify account required).

**Imposition of Ashes:** Anoint each other's foreheads (or your own forehead) with ashes in the shape of a cross. Speak the words, "From dust we come, and to dust we will return." Genesis 3:19

**Explore Your Humanity:** You may want to do each thing as a household, or let everyone explore at their own pace. Very young children will probably need to partner with a grown-up. There is an option for a (very simplified) reflection for young children.



## Earth

- Scripture:
  - Genesis 2:7, 9
  - Genesis 2:19
- Reflection and Action:
  - We come from good soil that has been shaped and brought to life by God. And we will return to the soil.
  - Put your hands in the soil. Touch it. Smell it. Look at it closely. God has taken great care to create you from good soil. God has taken great care in creating all living things from good soil. And God takes great care as soil receives death and decay. What remains is good soil, ready for God to use, again and again.
  - For young children: "Just like things grow in this good soil, the love of Jesus grows in me." Explore the soil.



## Air

- Scripture: Joel 2:28-29
- Reflection and Action:
  - The Holy Spirit can be a gentle breeze that lightly lifts a fallen leaf or a rushing wind that rearranges the world. The Spirit moves around us and through us, connecting us in our very human form to our Creator.
  - Blow some bubbles, and as you do, notice the way your breath helps to create them. Observe the different kinds of bubbles that form when you blow with a gentle breath or with a stronger breath.
  - Imagine the Holy Spirit creating in you the way that your breath creates the bubbles. What dreams and visions might the Holy Spirit be stirring in you?
  - For young children: "Jesus gives me life and makes me move." Blow bubbles.



## Fire

- Scripture: Psalm 51:15-17
- Reflection and Action:
  - Light a small candle from the Christ candle.
  - Reflect on the ways that the light of Christ provides direction, comfort and challenge in your life. What are the things that block the light of Christ in your life? What are the "burnt offerings" you're tempted to offer in place of walking in the light of Christ?
  - Sit (or stand) with the light, inviting an awareness of God's presence with you.
  - Pray for courage to face whatever lies before you and to walk in the ways revealed to you by the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. As a sign of hope and courage, leave your lit candle in the candle holder until you blow it out at the end of this Ash Wednesday ritual.
  - For young children: "Jesus, show me your way." Light a candle.



## Water

- Scripture: Isaiah 58:11
- Reflection and Action:
  - Pour yourself a glass of water. Watch as the clear, clean water fills your cup.
  - Drink the water, paying attention as it washes through your mouth, down your throat, through your chest and to your stomach.
  - Imagine it making your bones strong, washing through you to renew and refresh you.
  - Say a prayer of thanks for God's provision and renewal.
  - For young children: "Jesus gives me what I need." Drink some water.



### Closing:

From the *adamah* (the Hebrew word for soil) of the earth, God shaped us and breathed life into us. Nothing separates us from the love of God. One day, we will all return to the earth from which we've been made, fed, nurtured and sustained, and out of which new life comes. What a glorious circle of life!

Ashes to ashes.

Dust to dust.

Life to life.

Love to love.



# Daily Ritual Calendar

## **Week 1, February 22-25: Created in the Image of God**

**Prayer:** Creator, you made us in your image, and you made us humans. We confess that sometimes we aren't our best human selves. Turn our hearts toward your loving justice. Amen.

**Feb. 22:** Do the Ash Wednesday Ritual in this resource, or attend a communal Ash Wednesday service.

**Feb. 23:** Read Joel 2:1. Find some noisemakers in your house - horns, bells, pots, and pans...and make lots of noise!

**Feb. 24:** Read Isaiah 58:1-12. This sounds a little bit like what Jesus said in Matthew 5:31-46. Respond to a need you see in the community around you.

**Feb. 25:** Read Matthew 6:19-21. If someone were to do an inventory of your household life, where would they conclude your heart is?

## **Week 2, February 26-March 4: Shaped by Testing**

**Prayer:** God, we confess that we often miss the mark. We get tempted to do things that disconnect us from you, from your creation and other humans. Turn us toward the way Jesus showed us. Amen.

**Feb. 26:** Worship God in Community.

**Feb. 27:** Unwrap the gray ribbon on your candle to reveal the red wrapping (which symbolizes temptation). Place your gray ribbon in your centerpiece. Create some feet out of the clay on your centerpiece.

**Feb. 28:** Read Genesis 3:1-7. What do you think you would have done if you were the woman and the man?

**March 1:** Read Psalm 32:5. Take a moment to confess the times you haven't been your best human self. Allow God to forgive you.

**March 2:** Romans 5 essentially calls Jesus the "new Adam." Adam is closely related to the Hebrew word adamah, which means earth. Touch some soil and marvel at this connection of humanity with the earth.

**March 3:** Read Matthew 4:1-11. Part of Jesus being an authentic human was this time in the wilderness. What do you think Jesus' temptations really were?

**March 4:** Take some time to reconnect today - with humans, yourself, or creation. And know that in the midst of doing so, you are reconnecting with your Creator.

## **Week 3, March 5-11: From Fear to Compassion**

**Prayer:** Jesus, sometimes following you means letting go of what has been and stepping into something new. That's hard for us to do. Forgive us for the times when we've held on too tightly. Help us release what we need to so we can walk with you. Amen.

**March 5:** Worship God in Community.

**March 6:** Unwrap the red ribbon on your candle to reveal the orange wrapping (which symbolizes new life). Place your red ribbon in your centerpiece. Add legs to the clay feet in your centerpiece.

**March 7:** Read Genesis 12:1-4a. God called Abram, and he went. When are times in your life you have responded to God's call?

**March 8:** Go outside and read Psalm 121.

**March 9:** Read Romans 4:13-17. Abraham's belief in what God called him to be was a little ridiculous! When has it been hard for you to believe?

**March 10:** Read John 3:1–17. Jesus tells Nicodemus he needs to be “reborn.” What has or would rebirth look like for you? Another way to think of this is having a fresh start or transformation.

**March 11:** Get up early and watch the sunrise. Breathe in the crisp morning air and notice the sense of promise this time of day brings.

#### **Week 4, March 12-18: Shaped Through Thirst**

**Prayer:** God, you give us desires that bring us closer to you. Help us be in touch with our needs and our thirsts and follow them to your way. Amen.

**March 12:** Worship God in Community.

**March 13:** Unwrap the orange ribbon on your candle to reveal the blue wrapping (which symbolizes water). Place your orange ribbon in your centerpiece. Add a torso to the clay legs in your centerpiece.

**March 14:** Read Exodus 17:1–7. Remember and tell stories about when you were really, really thirsty.

**March 15:** Read Psalm 95. Grab some instruments or pots and pans and make a joyful noise.

**March 16:** Read Romans 5:1–5. Do an activity that requires endurance - see how long you can be quiet, or sing a note, or stand on one foot...

**March 17:** Read John 4:5–42. How did Jesus help the woman be her most authentic human self?

**March 18:** Enjoy some water today. Drink it, take a bath, hand wash some dishes, pour it, explore it!

#### **Week 5, March 19-25: Called to the Light**

**Prayer:** God, we confess that we don't always see ourselves and others the same way that you do. Shine your light on us and the people around us so that we can see humanity in all its beauty. Amen.

**March 19:** Worship God in Community.

**March 20:** Unwrap the blue ribbon on your candle to reveal the yellow wrapping (which symbolizes light). Place your blue ribbon in your centerpiece. Add some arms to the clay person in your centerpiece.

**March 21:** Read 1 Samuel 16:6–13. God saw something in David. What do you imagine God sees in you?

**March 22:** Read Psalm 23 outside.

**March 23:** Read Ephesians 5:8–14. Take a walk outside - in daylight or guided by flashlights. Literally, walk in the light.

**March 24:** Read John 9:1–41. Touch the humus in your centerpiece and imagine mixing that saliva and putting it on someone's eyes.

**March 25:** Play with light. Shine it in shadows, reflect it with mirrors, sit in sunlight...get creative!

## **Week 6, March 26-April 1: Called to Life**

**Prayer:** God, we confess that we don't always want to let you in. We sometimes run away from the life that you give. Help us have the courage to let your Spirit animate us and bring us to new life. Amen.

**March 26:** Worship God in Community.

**March 27:** Unwrap the yellow ribbon on your candle to reveal the green wrapping (which symbolizes life). Place your yellow ribbon in your centerpiece. Add hands and a neck to the clay person in your centerpiece.

**March 28:** Read Ezekiel 37:1–14. Relax your body and feel your bones. Breathe deeply and imagine the Holy Spirit bringing you to life.

**March 29:** At nighttime, go outside and read Psalm 130 out loud.

**March 30:** Read Romans 8:6-8. Think through your morning routine, a time when we focus on getting our bodies ready for the day. What would it look like to orient your morning (and body care) toward God?

**March 31:** Read John 11:1–45. Imagine it happening. Act it out. Create parts of it with the clay on your centerpiece. Imagine the sounds, sights, and smells of the story.

**April 1:** Host a scar party. Invite your guests to show a scar on their body and share the story of how they got it. Or if they don't have scars to share, they can tell a story of how they earned their wrinkles.

## **Week 7, April 2-8: Called to Worship (Holy Week)**

**Prayer:** Jesus, we're in that week of the year when we remember you coming into Jerusalem to shouts of joy. And then we remember how you were tested and made fun of and hurt. You were a human, and you felt those things just like we would. You walked this path for us. Help us walk it with you this week. Amen.

**April 2:** It's Palm Sunday! Worship God in Community.

**April 3:** Unwrap the green ribbon on your candle to reveal the purple wrapping (which symbolizes worship). Place your green ribbon in your centerpiece. Give the clay person in your centerpiece a head.

**April 4:** Read Psalm 31:9–16. Jesus knew this song. Imagine when he might have said it or thought about it during the week leading to his death.

**April 5:** Read Philippians 2:5–11. Form a cross out of the clay on your centerpiece, or out of sticks or other found materials, and place it on your centerpiece.

**April 6:** Do the Maundy Thursday ritual in this resource or attend a communal worship service.

**April 7:** Unwrap the purple ribbon on your candle to reveal the black wrapping (which symbolizes death). Place the purple ribbon in your centerpiece. Do the Good Friday ritual in this resource or attend a communal worship service.

**April 8:** When Jesus died, the Light of the World went out. Don't turn on any lights today.

## **Easter, April 9**

**Happy Resurrection Day!** Unwrap the black ribbon on your candle to reveal the gold wrapping (which symbolizes resurrection). Place the black ribbon in your centerpiece. Animate your clay person with a facial expression.

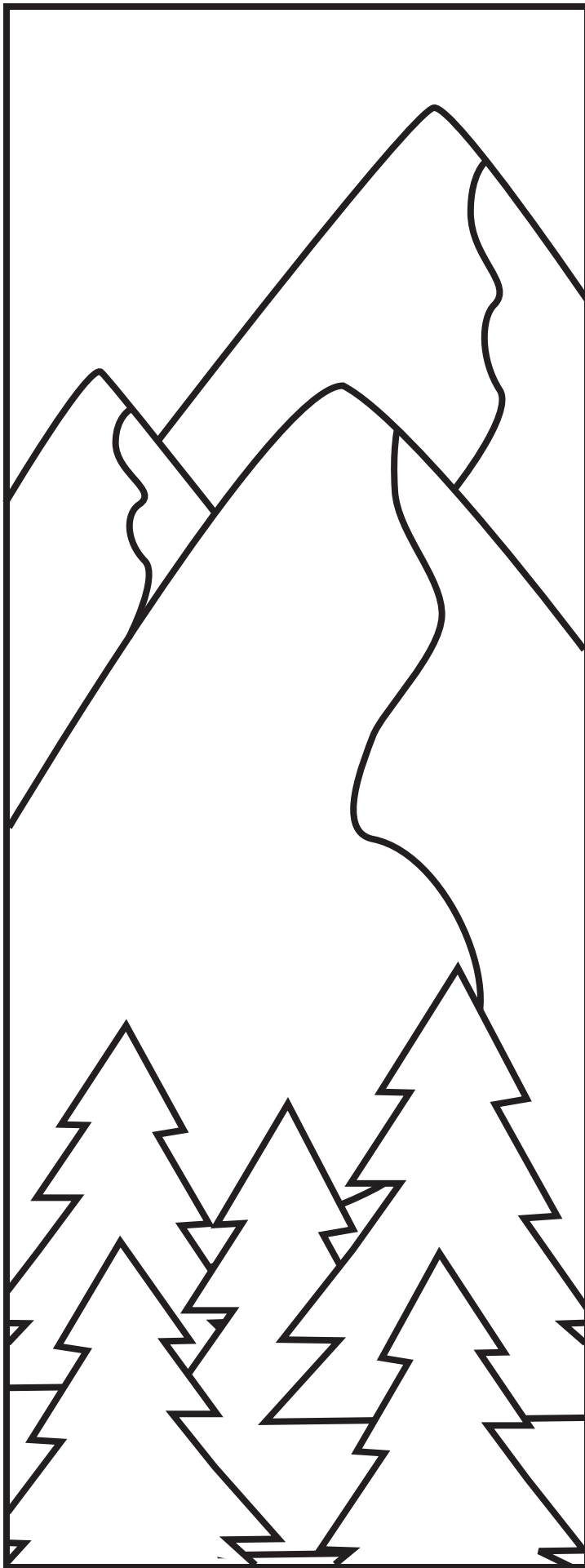
Choose from the Easter Day activities in this resource as you celebrate resurrection!

# EARTH



Then the  
**LORD GOD**  
**FORMED**  
**MAN** from  
the dust of the  
ground &  
**BREATHED**  
into his nostrils the  
breath of life, &  
the man became  
a **LIVING**  
**BEING.**

Genesis 2:7, NRSV



# FIRE



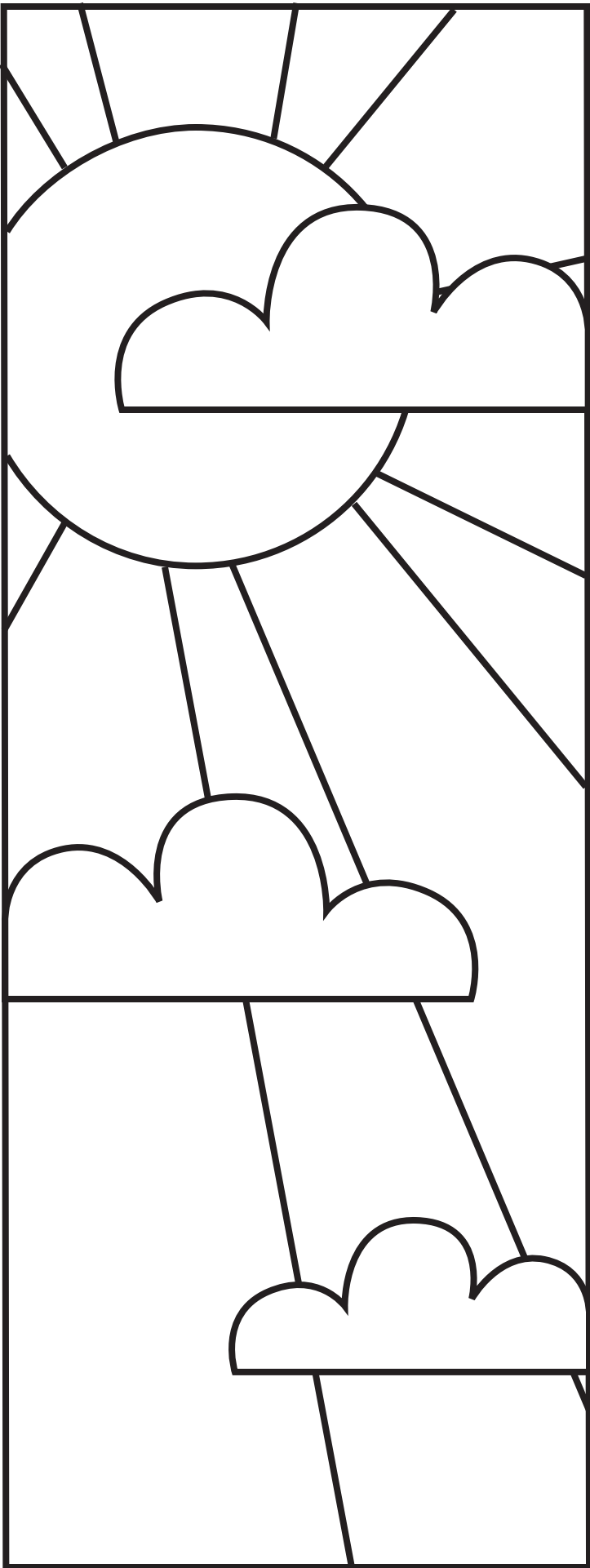
O LORD, open my lips, & my mouth will **DECLARE YOUR PRAISE.**

For you have **NO DELIGHT IN SACRIFICE;** if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken & contrite heart, **O GOD, YOU WILL NOT DESPISE.**

Psalm 51:15-17, NRSV





# AIR



Then afterward I will  
**POUR OUT  
MY SPIRIT**

on all flesh; your sons  
& your daughters shall  
**PROPHECY,**  
your old men shall  
**DREAM DREAMS,**  
& your young men  
shall

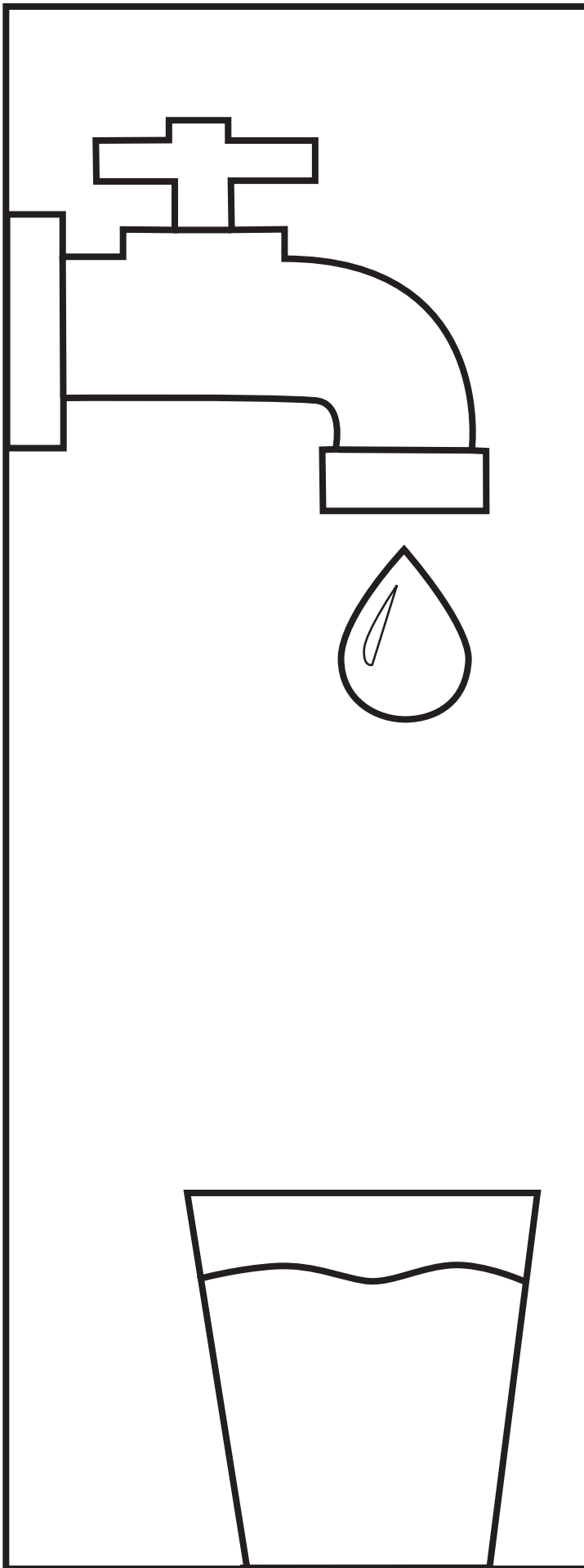
**SEE VISIONS.**

even on the male &  
female slaves,

in those days I will

**POUR OUT MY  
SPIRIT.**

Joel 2:28-29, NRSV



# WATER



THE LORD will  
**GUIDE** you  
continually

& satisfy your  
needs in parched  
places

& make your  
bones strong,  
& you shall be  
like a watered  
garden,

like a spring of  
water **WHOSE**

**WATERS**

**NEVER FAIL.**

Isaiah 58:11, NRSV



# Maundy Thursday Rituals

## You will need

1. Towels
2. Large bowl or tub filled with warm water for foot washing
3. A Bible or "Shine On: A Story Bible" (optional)
4. A simple meal (perhaps soup and bread)
5. Set the table for the meal and have everything ready to go before you begin the ritual.
  1. If you're using the centerpiece idea, place it in the middle of your table and light the Christ candle.
  2. Consider making this feel like a special meal. Maybe in your household this means it's candlelit, or that you use special dishes.
6. If your household enjoys background music, turn on some soft music, or use this Maundy Thursday Meal playlist: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2ZEcPhEY9wf8Im4WFHbOOL>

## Foot washing

*Before the meal with his disciples, Jesus washed their feet. He told them that they should also serve each other in this way, so we do it together to remember Jesus' example.*

1. Set the scene: Back in Jesus' time, people wore sandals. Roads were made of dirt, not paved like they are now. So imagine: if you were wearing sandals and walking on dirt roads all day, what would your feet look and feel like at the end of the day? Pretty dirty and gross! So usually, a servant of the house would have the lovely job of washing everyone's feet. Imagine the disciples' surprise when this happened instead.
2. Read John 13:3-17 ("Shine On: A Story Bible," page 260).
3. Your turn! Wash the feet of others in your household. If you are alone in your house, consider doing a different act of service of your choosing.
  1. There's no science to washing feet, so do this as it works for you. (It is certainly easier to do if the person whose feet are being washed is seated.) Take turns washing each other's feet. Young children may want to do it over and over again. Let them lead the way.
  2. If the moment feels right, spend some time noticing how you feel. What was it like to have someone else wash your feet, or to wash someone else's? Were you uncomfortable? Was it gross? Interesting? Did it tickle? Wonder: Did the disciples and Jesus feel any of the things you're feeling?

## Meal

*After Jesus surprised the disciples and showed them this way of service, they all ate a meal together.*

1. Read Matthew 26:17-30 (Shine On page 264).

This isn't just a happy meal together. There's some betrayal creeping its way in. Notice that discomfort, and let it be on your mind as you eat together even if it's not part of the conversation. Even when Jesus knew betrayal and death were coming, he still served and fed his friends. Notice that hope, and remind yourself of it as you eat together.
2. Eat your meal together, knowing that there are going to be some difficult times before the joy of Easter morning.



## Closing Words

If you want to wrap up your time together, these words may be helpful: "We have remembered the meal Jesus shared with his disciples and his service to them as he prepared for what he knew was to come. We now continue in Holy Week, moving toward Jesus' death, which we can remember on Good Friday tomorrow. And on Sunday, we will emerge from the depths into new life."

## Prayer

God, we cried to you, "Hosanna, save us!" You answered in ways we did not expect. Walk with us in this journey of your passion. Lead us to live out your new covenant in all that we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OR, Pray the Lord's Prayer together. Matthew 6:9-13

# Good Friday Ritual

This ritual is designed to take you through the story of Jesus' death. If you have young children, you may want to use the modified ritual. Note that, taken out of the context of the whole Bible, the gospel of John's telling of the night Jesus died can sound like an indictment of the Jews. Take care to remember as you read it that Jesus and all of his disciples were Jewish, and the intention of this Scripture is not to blame the Jewish people for the death of Jesus. Concentrate instead on the actions, both helpful and hurtful, of the people who were close to him.

**Materials:** Lenten centerpiece, six extra candles, Bible.

**Begin** by gathering around your Lenten centerpiece and lighting all seven candles (the Christ candle plus your six extras).

**Read** John 18:1-11.

**Extinguish** one candle.

**Read** John 18:12-18.

**Extinguish** the second candle.

**Read** John 18:19-27.

**Extinguish** the third candle.

**Read** John 18:28-19:16a.

**Extinguish** the fourth candle.

**Read** John 19:16b-25a.

**Extinguish** the fifth candle.

**Read** John 19:25b-30.

**Extinguish** the sixth candle.

**Read** John 19:31-42.

**Extinguish** the final candle.

This is an account of the death of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of God.



## Modification for young children

**Begin** by gathering around your Lenten centerpiece and lighting all seven candles.

**Read** pg 267 in the "Shine On: A Story Bible" or an account of the arrest of Jesus through Peter's betrayal from another story Bible.

**Extinguish** four candles.

**Read** pg 269 in the "Shine On: A Story Bible," or an account of Jesus' death from another story Bible.

**Extinguish** the remaining three candles.

When Jesus died, the whole earth was broken and sad.

# Easter Sunday Ritual Ideas

## ***Alleluia! It's Resurrection Day!***

### **Sunrise Ritual**

- Wake up just before dawn. Check to see what time sunrise is in your area, and get your household up 10-15 minutes before sunrise.
- Grab your Bible, bundle up and go outside. If you aren't able to go outside where you live, go to an east-facing window.
- Turn on the Easter morning playlist (<https://spoti.fi/3adic4Q>) and watch for the sunrise.
- Read John 20:1-18 as the sun comes up. Read it a couple of times, maybe taking turns reading it or acting out the story. This story is on page 270 of "Shine On: A Story Bible," but it would be good to read it at least once from the book of John!
- Celebrate! Shout, "Alleluia!" Make some noise, sing a song, dance or run laps around your yard or block. Get silly and joyful in whatever way works for you!
- If you followed yesterday's prompt and didn't turn on any lights, it's time to break your light fast.

### **Other Celebration Ideas**

- Symbolic egg hunt: If you have children celebrating with you today, this can be a fun one. Fill eggs with these symbols of Easter and let each child find one egg with each symbol. Come back together to see if you can all figure out what the meaning of each symbol is. We find it's helpful to have three different colors of eggs, one for each symbol, so that each child can find one of each color.
  - Symbol 1: Seeds (to be planted in the spring). We bury the seed in the ground, and we don't see signs of it for a while. Then, it sprouts and bears good things. This can remind us of how Jesus died and was buried, but then rose to new life.
  - Symbol 2: Rock. This reminds us of the stone placed in front of Jesus' tomb that was rolled away. If you want some extra fun, paint your rocks today.
  - Symbol 3: Empty (don't put anything in this egg). When Jesus' friends came to care for his body, the tomb was empty!
- Resurrection Rolls: As you make these, tell the story of Jesus' body being prepared for burial, then placed in a tomb. When they come out of the oven, marvel at the empty tomb. Here is a recipe ([apinchofjoy.com/2012/04/resurrection-rolls/](http://apinchofjoy.com/2012/04/resurrection-rolls/)) using store-bought dough, but you can also make them with simple homemade bread dough.
- New Life Treasure Hunt: Go exploring in your yard or a nearby park or trail. Take pictures or field notes, or draw the signs of new life you see.

