

March 3, 2021

Family Lent Devotion: Week 3*

WEEKLY SCRIPTURE: LUKE 13:1-9 (CEB)

Some who were present on that occasion told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices. He replied, “Do you think the suffering of these Galileans proves that they were more sinful than all the other Galileans? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did. What about those eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think that they were more guilty of wrongdoing than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did.”

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WEEKLY LENTEN DISCIPLINE: PRAYER



When you find yourself in a space such as Lent, where life seems thinner than usual and the journey more focused than normal, what do people of faith do to keep journeying on? In ancient times, rituals helped to remind the people of the promise, as yet unfulfilled, and gave reason to trust what seemed to be impossible.

In this week’s Scripture, we hear the parable of the fig tree and the gardener. We hear God calling us to change and grow, reminding us that there is always time for repentance and response. One of the ways we respond to God’s call to change and grow in love is through prayer. In prayer, we ask the question:

“God, who are you calling me to become?”

This week’s Lenten discipline, prayer, provides another practice that helps us respond to God’s love and grace and gives us a tool that we can use to stay in relationship with our loving creator. God loves us and calls us into relationship. Prayer, talking to God, is one way we respond to this offer.

It is important to remember that prayer is not a tool used to change God, but instead is a discipline that helps change the one who’s praying.

It is important to remember that there are many ways to talk to God:

- We can sing a song.
- We can write a letter.
- We can draw a picture.
- We can sit quietly listening.
- We can listen to music.

Our prayers come in many different forms. This discipline keeps us connected to the one who created us, reminding us that we are loved and called into relationship with God and with others. We can pray at different times and for different reasons too:

- When we are sick
- When we are in trouble
- To confess sin
- To show faith
- For others
- When we are happy
- At all times

Discuss and Share:

- I wonder how you talk to God?
- I wonder what position you feel comfortable in when you talk to God? (Examples: lying on the ground, sitting with head bowed and hands folded, standing up straight with arms reaching to the sky)
- I wonder when you've heard God?
- I wonder what God said to you this week?
- I wonder what you want to tell God today?

Practice:

Learning How to Pray (The Hand Prayer):

This is one way of teaching children how to pray and gives them some ideas about what they might pray for. Begin by showing children your hand, saying:

- **Friends and Family:** Thumb (*people who are close to you*) — These are your close friends and family, often the first people you think about when you pray. Give thanks to God and ask his protection on your parents, siblings, friends, and classmates.
- **Leaders and Teachers:** Pointer (*people who point the way*) — These are leaders in your life, such as teachers and pastors. Offer God your thanksgiving for them and ask him to help them in their important work.
- **Government Leaders and Those in Authority:** Tall Finger (*people in authority*) — The big people in the world need prayer too. Ask God to give wisdom to our government, military, and police.
- **In Need of God's Help:** Ring Finger (*people who are weak*) — This is your weakest finger. We should remember others who are sick, live in poverty, or are treated badly. Pray that Jesus will give them new strength.
- **Myself:** Pinky or Little Finger (*your own needs*) — God wants to hear your needs too, especially when you put others first. Pray for your own growth in mind, body, and spirit. Again, this is just a helpful guide. It's important to remind children that it doesn't matter how, where, when, or what they pray. God is always with them, always loving them, and always listening. Take time every day to pray with each member of your family and to include family prayers at important times of the day, such as meals.

WEEKLY WONDERING QUESTIONS:



- I wonder when you talked to God this week?
- I wonder when you listened to God this week?
- I wonder what you heard God say?
- I wonder where you saw the color purple today?
- I wonder when you felt close to God this week?
- I wonder who showed you God's love this week?
- I wonder how you showed God's love to others?

WEEKLY FAMILY PRAYER:

Loving God, You are always with us, guiding us and loving us. We know you hear us when we pray, and you listen to us whenever we talk to you. Thank you. Help us remember to take time every day to talk to you. We know that getting ready for the mystery of Easter is big work. During this season, help us learn how to trust you, love you, and share your love with others! Thank you for being with our family as we travel together, preparing our hearts and minds to enter into the mystery of Easter. Bless us in our work. It's in your holy name, we pray, Amen..