

ASH WEDNESDAY

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle



CONFESS: God of love, you are God, and we are not. While you mend, too often we tear apart with injustice. While you are the very breath of spring, we are dust, and to dust we shall return. Mend us, heal us, bless us, and make us live again in you. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 1 Tealight

READ: Isaiah 58:5-8

MEDITATE: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as we begin our Lenten journey from ashes to crocuses. In Jesus' name, Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle



CONFESS: Dear God, here we are: beloved, flawed, beautiful, failing, and trying again to be your people in the world. Forgive the wrongs we have done, and the good we have left undone. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 2 Tealights

READ: Mark 1:9-15

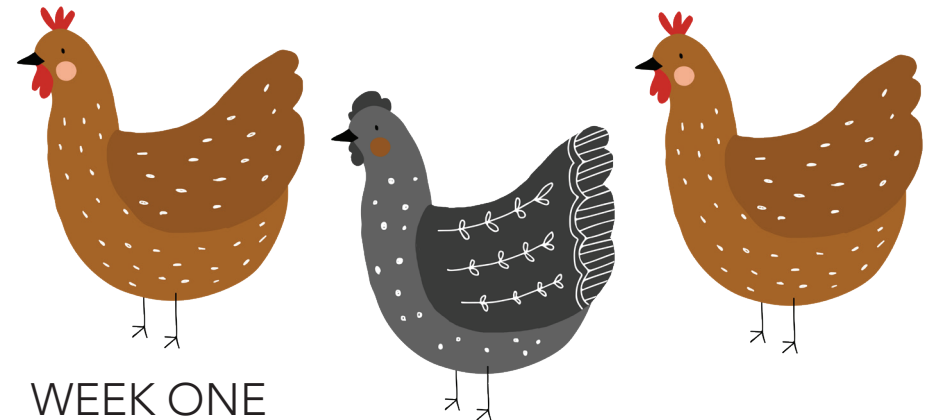
MEDITATE: Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Child, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you become who you truly are: God's beloved child, in whom God is well pleased. Amen.



WEEK ONE PRACTICE

Place a little bowl of water by the front or back door this week, and every time you enter and exit, dip your finger in the water and sprinkle some on your face, or draw a little heart on your forehead. Remember that you are blessed: "You are God's beloved!"



WEEK ONE PRACTICE

When Jesus was baptized, scripture says that the Holy Spirit descended "like a dove," but the Greek word can also mean "pigeon." Take a walk this week and see if you can find any pigeons, doves, or any other birds. Reread Mark 1:9-15, and substitute whatever birds you saw on your walk ("like a sparrow," or "like a chickadee," or "like a blue jay"!).



WEEK ONE PRACTICE

When you wash your face, remember your baptism.
+ Martin Luther

This is good advice – and it also extends to washing the dishes, cleaning the toilet, and doing laundry. Pick a chore this week that involves water, and do it without being asked, remembering your (and Jesus’) baptism as you do. Many hands make light work!

WEEK ONE PRACTICE

5 THINGS TO GIVE UP THIS LENT:

- Complaining
- Consuming
- Worrying
- Negative self talk
- Comparing yourself to others



WEEK ONE PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- Have you ever been baptized? Do you remember it? What details do you (or your family) remember? And in any case, what does baptism mean to you?
- What makes you feel loved? What makes you feel safe? What makes you feel happy?
- Name three things about yourself that you’re proud of.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: Loving God, heal our hearts, transform our relationships, and transfigure our lives so that we too might dazzle and love and dream and live more like Jesus. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 3 Tealights

READ: Mark 9:2-9

MEDITATE: And Jesus was transfigured before them, his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you follow Jesus’ bright and brilliant ways of truth and life. Amen.



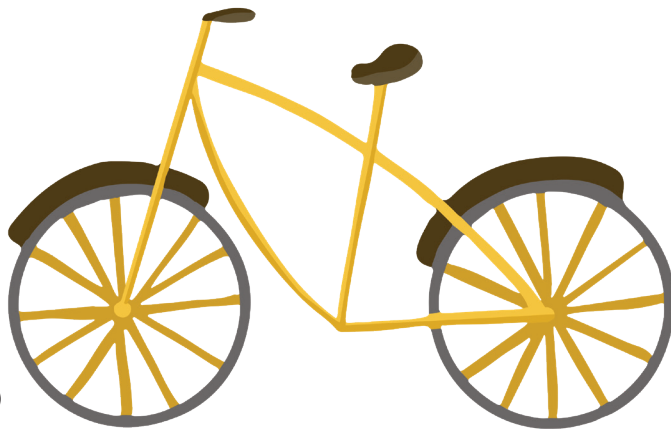
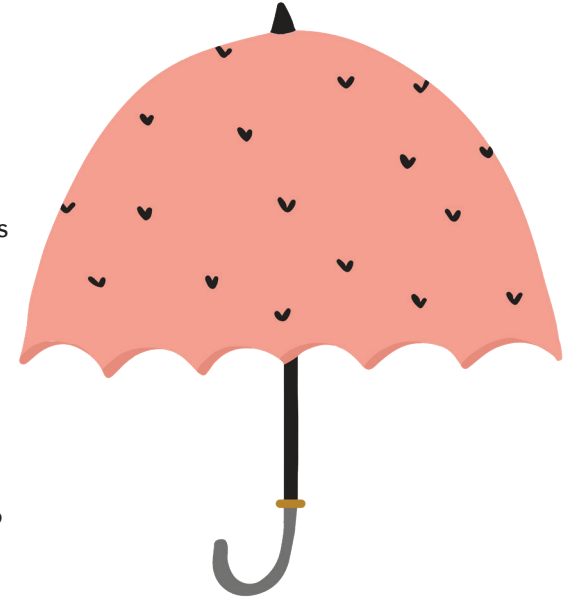


WEEK TWO PRACTICE

This week, go climb a mountain, or a hill, or simply go for a walk! As you go, play a walking game together. For example, tell a story by having one person begin with one sentence, followed by the next person with another sentence. Build your story together, one sentence at a time!

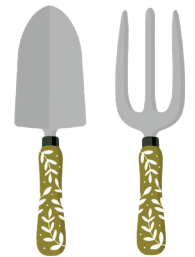
WEEK TWO PRACTICE

When Jesus was transfigured, the scripture says, "his clothes became dazzling white," or "as white as lightning." Research and find five cool lightning facts. Here's one: until the late 18th century, people believed that ringing church bells repelled lightning, so many bells bore the inscription, *fulgura frango* ("I chase lightning").



WEEK TWO PRACTICE

You can transfigure the world! This week, choose one way (or more!) to help the earth by recycling, composting, turning off lights, eating vegetarian or vegan, biking or walking instead of driving, and (most important of all!) urging your elected representatives to support environmental protection legislation.



WEEK TWO PRACTICE

Make your yard (or a nearby abandoned lot) more beautiful by planting a few packages of hearty seeds that will bloom this summer. Try cosmos, zinnias, forget-me-nots – or whatever your favorites are! After you plant your seeds, raise your hands in blessing and pray, "Loving God, please make the earth laugh with even more flowers. Amen."



WEEK TWO PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- What’s your favorite item of clothing?
- When have you had to be brave or courageous? What happened? What did you do?
- What do you like or think is special about your family? Name at least three things!

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: God of new life, here’s the truth: too often, we’re angry when we shouldn’t be, and not angry enough when we should be. Give us your passion and gentleness – and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 4 Tealights

READ: John 2:13-22

MEDITATE: After Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered what he had said; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you see and name both the injustices and blessings of this broken, beautiful world. Amen.



WEEK THREE PRACTICE

Do you ever look around the world and feel angry? Anger is an important emotion, and can often call our attention to injustice. Do you ever look around the world and feel blessed? As a family, make two pairs of homemade goggles (or just decorate old sunglasses) and take turns putting them on to “see” both injustices and blessings alike.



WEEK THREE PRACTICE

Play a “compassion memory” game! The first player starts by saying, “I went grocery shopping and bought a _____.” The second player continues, “I went grocery shopping and bought a (names first item) and a _____ (a new item).” Continue taking turns, remembering the items in order; see how far you can go! Now, as a family, go to the store and purchase the appropriate items to donate to your local food bank.

WEEK THREE PRACTICE

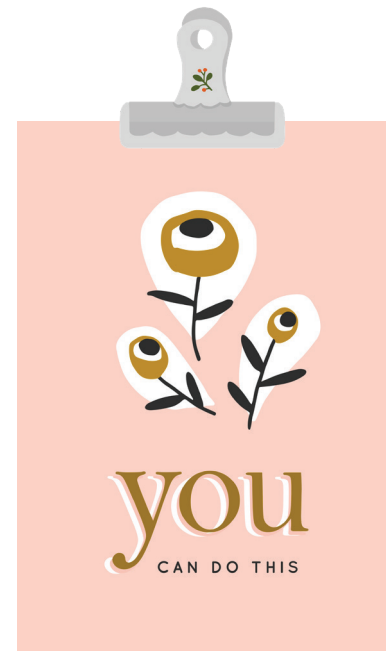
Have a family “emotional check-in time” where you each give a “weather report” on how you’re feeling. For example: “I’m dark and cloudy with a chance of rain.” Or: “The rain has finished, and I’m feeling sunny – with a rainbow arc across the sky.” Bless each and every “weather report.”



WEEK THREE PRACTICE

THINGS TO REMEMBER THIS LENT:

- It’s okay to make mistakes
- It’s okay to have bad days
- It’s okay start again
- It’s okay to be awesome



WEEK THREE PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- If you could change one thing in the world, what would you change?
- What’s the biggest way you’ve changed over the years?
- The disciples remembered and believed in Jesus’ teachings all the more after his death and resurrection. Have you ever lost someone you loved? If so, what’s one thing you remember them telling you before they died?



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: Forgiver of our souls, our hearts are hard; soften them. Our hands are fists; open them, and continue to breathe into us your spring-smelling newness of life. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 5 Tealights

READ: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

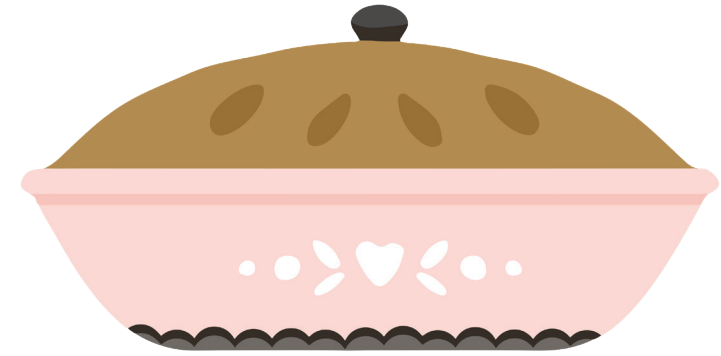
MEDITATE: O give thanks to God, for God is good; God’s steadfast love endures forever.

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you learn to serve your neighbor with God’s steadfast love. Amen.



WEEK FOUR PRACTICE

The sign for “I love you” in American Sign Language is the pinky finger, index finger, and thumb pointed straight out (with the middle two fingers held down to the palm). Post a picture of your family making this sign, so that everyone in your community feels the love!



WEEK FOUR PRACTICE

From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, food is at the center of community in many cultures – and therefore a great way to introduce your family to customs and traditions different from your own. This week, try three new dishes from a variety of cultures, and open your family’s hearts and palates to the beauty of God’s diversity.

WEEK FOUR PRACTICE

PICK ONE (OR TWO!):

- Pick up trash in the neighborhood.
- Put out bird seed for the birds.
- Give outgrown clothing to a smaller friend.
- Draw a picture for your librarian or mail carrier, with a note saying “Thank You!”
- Write “Bless this mess!” in chalk on a sidewalk near your church or home.



WEEK FOUR PRACTICE

THINGS TO REMEMBER THIS LENT:

- You are valuable.
- You are enough.
- Your mistakes do not define you.
- You are loved.



WEEK FOUR PRACTICE



“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- The passage this week from the Psalms recommends singing “songs of joy.” What songs make you feel joyful?
- How do you show someone you love them?
- What makes you feel loved? (Be specific!)

WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

Though our souls are deeply troubled by personal and systemic racism, this week we’re going to embrace what Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called the “fierce urgency of now,” declaring with Jesus that “for this reason we have come to this hour!”

Look at yourself in the mirror, individually or as a family. Say and embrace these words from the poet Rumi: “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: Gracious God, have mercy on us when we follow paths that do not lead to life. Forgive us when we choose the way of bitterness, indifference, violence, or death. Have mercy on our troubled souls, and turn them around for the sake of Your creation. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 6 Tealights

READ: John 12:20-33

MEDITATE: Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say, “God, save me from this hour?” No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour!

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you seek out and find what God is calling you to in this hour. Amen.

WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

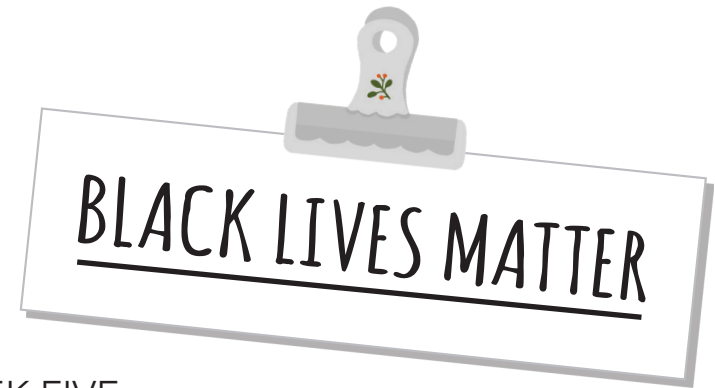
Learn (or re-learn) American history by watching, “Roots,” “Cesar Chavez,” “12 Years a Slave,” “13th,” “Stand and Deliver,” and/or “Selma” this week. Or try listening to “1619,” a fascinating podcast by the New York Times, as a family.





WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

Support Black businesses (check out webuyblack.com for ideas!) and stop buying from companies that use prison labor (McDonald's, Wendy's, Walmart, Starbucks, and many more). Companies that use prison labor avoid providing benefits like health insurance, sick days, vacation time, and raises, and can also operate without the labor protection of unions.



WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

Donate to organizations doing vital work to eliminate racial disparities. Check out your local Black Lives Matter Chapter, the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, the NAACP, the United Negro College Fund, the Sentencing Project, and/or Dream Defenders.



WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

Find out your community's policy on no-knock warrants (the policy that led to Breonna Taylor's killing). Contact your city or town government representative(s) and police chief to discontinue no-knock warrants.

WEEK FIVE PRACTICE

"DIG DEEPER" TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- What's your earliest memory of becoming aware of racism?
- Talk about a time when you or someone else said or did something racist. Did you interrupt it? Did you speak up? Why or why not?
- Is there anything you haven't done yet, no matter how large or small, that you are willing to do to help end racism? If so, what is it? And what plan can you make to start?



PALM SUNDAY

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: Dear God, you hear us shout and sing, "Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!" And yet, all too soon, we turn away and are silent in the face of hurt, violence, and injustice all around. Forgive us and restore to us courage and kindness. Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 7 Tealights

READ: John 12:12-16

MEDITATE: Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written, "Do not be afraid, sons and daughters of Zion. Look, your Savior is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you shout and sing "Hosanna!", calling a whole new world into being. In Jesus' name, Amen.



WEEK SIX

PRACTICE

Make a Palm Sunday Sundae! All you'll need is green ice cream (to evoke green palms; for example, try mint chocolate chip!) and a few mint leaves that have little triangles cut out of the sides, turning them into little palm fronds. As you eat, proclaim the good news: "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God! Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!"



WEEK SIX

PRACTICE

Buy or make a little bouquet of flowers, or bring inside some forsythia branches from outside. Let the blooms give you hope that resurrection is at loose in the world! Or go with two bouquets – and give one to a neighbor.



WEEK SIX

PRACTICE

On Thursday, fill a bowl with water and find a soft towel, as Jesus did, and wash your beloveds' feet. Tenderness can change the world – and your lives may never be the same!

WEEK SIX PRACTICE

“DIG DEEPER” TEA CEREMONY QUESTIONS:

Make a pot of tea, invite your beloveds to sit at a table or on the floor in a circle, and ask everyone these questions:

- What’s been the best part of your Lenten journey so far?
- Have you noticed anything in the Jesus stories that reminds you of today?
- We’re about to go into the valley of the shadow of death with Jesus, and then rise again on Easter morning. What’s your biggest fear these days? And what do you think is on the other side of that fear, if you were to move through it?



GOOD FRIDAY

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

CONFESS: God of life and death, forgive what we have done and what we have left undone. Forgive the suffering we have caused and the suffering we have neglected to see, the resurrections we have overlooked and the resurrections we have neglected to be. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

EXTINGUISH: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle

READ: Psalm 22

MEDITATE: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you as you sit in the shadow of death. May resurrection be your hope, today and everyday. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

THE EASTER TRIDUUM

Sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday are the three most mysterious and heart-breakingly beautiful days of the Christian calendar. The word “triduum” (pronounced “TRID-yoo-um”) comes from two Latin words meaning “three” and “days.”

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO MARK THESE THREE DAYS AT HOME:

- Fast from all digital devices and social media
- Eat dinner in the dark on Good Friday
- Buy nothing for three days
- Fill empty eggshells with soil, seeds, and water, and place them in a sunny window
- Make hot crossed buns
- Make holy water in your house by blessing it first and then drawing a cross on everyone’s forehead, saying with a smile, “Bless this mess!”



EASTER SUNDAY

LIGHT: 8 Tealights + Christ Candle (plus flowers!)

SING: This Little Light of Mine

READ: Mark 16:1-8

MEDITATE: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here!”

BLESS: May God bless you and keep you! May the radiant face of God shine upon you as you become God’s Easter people who know victory over death and joy over despair – for God has raised Jesus from the dead! Alleluia, Amen!