**LENT IN A BAG**

Lent is a season when many people make a special focus on enhancing their relationship with God. Jesus’ life, ministry, and death are remembered during this season. It’s also a time to think about how God is with us all the time. You may do this through prayer, reading the Bible, helping others, or something else. Anything that connects you to God is a great practice. Even walking the dog, seeing the green grass, or hearing chirping birds can be a way to be with God!

Each week in Lent (there are 6) you are encouraged to use one of the symbols from your Lent in a Bag gift for reflection as you make your way through this holy season. Place the symbol in a prominent place each week to aid your reflection.

**WEEK 1 - Sand**

Between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness or desert for 40 days ‘to be tested’. The desert is a dangerous place and Jesus was hungry, cold, and tired. He was also tempted and tormented, but he didn’t give up.

Read the story of Jesus wandering in the desert below, then open the sand and touch it and reflect on the questions below the scripture.

## ***The Temptation of Jesus – Matthew 4: 1-11***

*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written,  
“One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” ’*

*Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,  
“He will command his angels concerning you”,  and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.” ’   
Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’*

*Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! for it is written, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” ’   
Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.*

* When things get tough, how do you remember God is there for you?
* What constitutes wilderness or desert in your life?
* What have you learned there?
* What might you learn there?

**WEEK 2 – Rock**

While in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by the devil to transform stone into bread. He knew he was not called to do this by God. He didn’t change the rock into food.

Later, Jesus became known for doing amazing things. He fed the hungry, offered encouragement, and healed people.

* When you are angry or sad, it may feel like your heart has become a

rock. How does that feel?

* How can you help someone who has a “rock” in their heart?
* How does it feel to help others?
* Think about a time where you helped someone.

Read the story of Zacchaeus below. Jesus transforms Zacchaeus. Jesus transforms us and helps us make better choices.

***Jesus and Zacchaeus – Luke 19: 1-10***

*He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.’ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.’ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.’*

* Is there a place in your life where you could make better choices, with Jesus’ help?

**WEEK 3 – Peg person**

Because Jesus was fully human, he gets us, understands us from inside our skin, and knows from experience that we’re each capable of great things, Godly things. No matter what we do, he keeps on inviting us to join us in his work which has become our own. Jesus knows that we can do good things on earth, just like he did. In Lent, we are counting down 40 days until Easter.

* What can you do to be more like Jesus at home?
* At school?
* Everywhere?

Read the story of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet. How can we live like Jesus?

*J****esus Washes the Disciples’ Feet – John 13:1-20***

*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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 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 no share with me.’Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’ Jesus said to him, ‘One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.’ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’*

*After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, “The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.” I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.’*

**WEEK 4 – Candle**

Jesus is called the Light of the World. Jesus told his disciples to be a light in the world too and make a difference.

* So where do you shine?
* What do you think you are good at?
* What is your talent?
* How can you encourage someone to see the good in themselves?

Read the scripture below. How do you let your light shine?

***Matthew 5:14-16***

*‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

**WEEK 5 – Shell**

Historically, the season of Lent was when new Christians were prepared for baptism. Jesus began his ministry after his baptism. Sometimes a shell is used to pour water over a person being baptised.

* As someone who may have been baptised what is your ministry?
* How are you living out the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant?

Read the story of Jesus’ baptism below. Do you think God is well pleased with you?

***The Baptism of Jesus – Luke 3:21-22***

*Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’*

**WEEK 6 – Butterfly**

Watching the growth of a caterpillar to a butterfly reminds us of the miracle of hope and transformation that is coming in the promise of Easter. The caterpillar changes; they decay as they transform into a new life – a new life that we can’t really imagine when it goes into its cocoon.

* Where is there hope in your life? Where is there mystery?
* What transformation do you hope for during the season of Lent?

Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed below and reflect on change. What other things can you think of that change?

***The Parable of the Mustard Seed - Matthew 13:31-32***

*He put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’*