



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church

**Walking towards  
Easter together**

## Recommended watching:

- Children explain Lent: [www.bit.ly/explainlent](http://www.bit.ly/explainlent)
- Lent in three minutes: [www.bit.ly/3minutelent](http://www.bit.ly/3minutelent)
- Lent song: [www.bit.ly/lentsong](http://www.bit.ly/lentsong)
- Reflective cartoon for Lent: [www.bit.ly/cartoonlent](http://www.bit.ly/cartoonlent)
- Cartoon for Lent: [www.bit.ly/cartoonforlent](http://www.bit.ly/cartoonforlent)



# Walking towards Easter together

This resource will take you on a journey. A pilgrimage to Easter. Each day is a step closer to celebrating Easter – 40 days of travelling together, and six Sunday ‘service station stops’ leading up to the big day.

**You are not journeying alone, we are all journeying together, all ages, all part of the body of Christ.**

Lent is the period running up to the festival of Easter. It represents the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert before he began his work on earth. He spent time with God, the Father, preparing for all he would need to do. In the same way, Lent encourages us to take time to go slower, take deep breaths, reflect on our faith, spend time with God and prepare our hearts for Easter.

It begins with Shrove Tuesday, when we use up all the treats from the house in preparation for a simpler way of living. Sometimes people give things up or make sacrifices during Lent. It’s not about punishing yourself, but it can be about rebalancing life. It ends with Easter Sunday – often a feast day of chocolate eggs and other treats.

Jesus spent his 40 days alone. The first thing he did when he left the desert was find 12 others to be with him. We encourage you to find a balance of time on your own during Lent, but also to encourage you to connect with others. Perhaps choose one person, or another family who you can touch base with regularly over Lent and share your journeys. Your local church might offer other ways to connect with others walking towards Easter using this diary. Our hope is that over Lent we will grow closer to God and to each other.



# Making the most of this book



This is your individual or household journal; it will guide you daily throughout Lent and into Easter and you will notice that it has space for you to fill. Journaling is a way of reflecting and responding creatively, similar to creating a diary that follows your journey. You can write, draw, knit, paint, take photos, stick things in – anything that will help you remember and reflect on your journey.

Flick through the book now and get familiar with the different pages for weekdays and Sundays, and all the activities to try. Hopefully some will appeal to you straight away, others you might consider trying later in Lent. These are designed to tear out so you can use them more easily (or pass them on someone who would love them).

Stand the book up somewhere you will see it each day. If you can, spend a little time reading the story, thinking and talking about the question(s), and reflecting on the Bible verse(s).

Use any of the activity ideas in this diary to help you in your journey through Lent. Use the larger stickers to remind you of what you did on different days – stick them in your journal and annotate them with your own thoughts and comments. You could add photos, your own stories, thoughts and prayers, anything that helps you reflect and speaks of your journey.

You could do it once a week or daily, you could do it as a family capturing activities and thoughts at the end of each day together, or weekly as part of the reflective Sundays. You don't have to use this book – you could each use a personal notebook, or make your own larger scrapbook, whatever suits you best.





# Journaling

The aim of journaling is to focus on God, reflecting and meditating on God's presence in words and quiet, activity and stillness. Here's a few top tips for those new to journaling, three simple steps to follow:

- **Experience** the story by reading it, listening to it, watching it and try different versions.
- **Explore** the story using some of the ideas in this book. Take your time, reflect, play with the themes in the story, talk to others, share ideas and thoughts, meditate on the story for a while.
- **Express:** this is the opportunity to respond to what you have heard and explored and capture it on paper, as you pray and respond to the story. Fill your pages with your feelings, ideas, prayers and more.

Every Monday to Saturday through Lent, this particular journal offers a real-life story of someone who is Walking the Way of Jesus, a Bible verse for inspiration, and a question for wondering, with space to record your own thoughts, in whatever way suits you.

Sundays allow for a more in-depth look at the Bible, through prayer and other activities, to assist your journaling.

The final week, known as Holy Week, invites you to make an Easter garden and offers daily reflections with prayer activities.

By the time Easter comes you will have a fabulously filled journal that will enable you to look back over the journey towards Easter together, and recognise the journey God has taken you on personally.



# Shrove Tuesday



# Pancakes

16/02/21

United Church, Winchester normally have a big Shrove Tuesday pancake party, with people coming into the church off the streets, families on their way home from school, people after work – all sharing food and fun, whilst raising money for the mission projects they support.

It is traditional to have a pancake feast today as a way of preparing for our 40 day 'fast', or time with fewer distractions, so we can make room to focus on God and other people.



How might you start your journey through Lent with a celebration?

Who else could you involve in some way?

What might you say goodbye to for 40 days to make more room for God and others?

Who will be your companions for your journey through Lent?



***Matthew 22:2: The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.***

# Day 1

17/02/21



# Madeline

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1702](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1702)

Sometimes we can feel pressured into doing things we either hadn't thought of doing – or definitely don't want to do! Around 40 years ago a parent of a young person attending the local Girl Guide unit 'encouraged' Madeline to consider helping out at her local unit as it might potentially otherwise 'have to close'.

Madeline offered and had never regretted her decision. It provides Madeline with an opportunity to use her skills and gifts to benefit others, and also to talk about her faith – when the subject arises naturally – though she doesn't push it forward on the agenda. As she says, "I am not someone who shouts about Jesus from the rooftops. But then did he? His friends followed him because of his example and his time for those who needed him. In my own life, that is, I think, what I try to do, based on Jesus' life and teaching."



***Matthew 28.19: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***



I wonder who was the last person with whom you talked about Jesus?

# Day 2

18/02/21



# Noah

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1802](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1802)

The very youngest among us have a message to share and Noah (aged four) responded to that call by asking his minister if he could lead online worship for their church. The result was an intergenerational act of worship, where this young man's faith shone through his prayers, his singing, his craft ideas, his questioning of the minister about the Bible story they shared – unsurprisingly, the story of his namesake Noah.

He proceeded to ask to do a further online worship and also contributed to the URC Education Sunday service. Noah received the Lundie Memorial Award for the part he plays in the mission of God and told us he “felt super duper happy and excited... I choose to buy puppets because we can do a show about Jesus and his friends to teach people about Jesus”.



***Genesis 9:16: When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.***



I wonder what does the rainbow says to you?



# Day 3

19/02/21



**Keiran**

[www.bit.ly/URCLink1902](http://www.bit.ly/URCLink1902)

Fifteen year old Keiran is a member of Pilots, and always first to volunteer and spot where help may be needed – something which is greatly appreciated by his church and his fellow Pilots, who describe him as helpful and considerate.

He was nominated for the Lundie Memorial Award, however, for his day-to-day role supporting his mother and nine year old sister as carer and helper, representative of all those young carers around the country who often go unnoticed.



***1 Thessalonians 5:12: But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you.***



Who has helped you along with Way of Jesus?

# Day 4

20/02/21



# Diana

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2002](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2002)

We're never alone when we walk the way of Jesus. I'm sure you're familiar with the 'footsteps' reflection that reminds us God is always with us to support us when we need it, and to be with us when we don't.

West Midlands synod has been helping people to 'walk the way of Jesus together' by producing short booklets with prayers and reflections to help people reflect on God's presence wherever they are. They were developed by Marion Thomas who, before lockdown, led a 'Pilgrimage in the Park' in, you guessed it, a local park. Coronavirus restrictions put paid to those so Marion developed the booklets to encourage people to pray for the people and places they could see from their windows. As retiree Diana reflects, sometimes we forget that we are part of a community that lives and breathes and struggles. But God is always with us to support us.



***Matthew 7.14: For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.***



I wonder if you have a favourite place to visit?

# First Sunday in Lent

21/02/21

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone.'"*

*Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"*

*Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"*

*Jesus answered him, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Luke 4:1-13

## Wondering questions



- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder if it is ok to be tempted, is it our reaction to that temptation which really counts?
- I wonder what your wilderness is?
- I wonder if short cuts make everything take longer?

## Prayer activities



### **Prayer walk**

Walk around the local area, take photos of things you see and note the street names. Alternatively, if you cannot go out, take a walk in your imagination in the area around your home. When you get home you can spend time praying for people, places and things on the streets you have walked. You could print out the images and create a visual prayer map of your neighbourhood. This prayer can be taken to someone in a care home to engage with. You could do this for different streets each day of the week.

### **Wandering pencil prayers**

Take a pencil for a walk – just let your pencil go on a wander all over the page. Now sit and look at it for a while. What can you see? Outline the shapes which stand out for you. There is no right or wrong way to pray this way, it just frees your mind and focuses it into the things which are important to you during this Lenten time.

## Tenebrae prayer



Tenebrae means “darkness” or “shadows”, and is the name given to a ritual before Easter of gradually extinguishing of candles. It is a time to reflect the pain of a people longing for hope within a fragile world.

If you have seven candles, you may like to arrange them in a circle of six with a central Christ light. Each Sunday we light fewer candles, and then extinguish an extra one whilst saying a very short prayer, concluding on Good Friday with the Christ light. You may prefer to sit in a darker room and have a single candle you blow out with the prayer each time. Today, light all seven candles, then blow out one whilst praying:

**Jesus, light of the world,  
shine in the darkness to  
guide our feet to the way  
of love.**





# First Sunday in Lent

21/02/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
[www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures)



# Day 5

22/02/21



**Louise**

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2202](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2202)

It is a valuable gift to be able to encourage others, and when the Covid-19 lockdown was implemented, young people were invited to help their local Children's and Youth Development Officer run online youth groups, gathering young people from across the synod. Louise immediately offered to run an online music quiz, researching and delivering the questions herself.

It was so successful that the other young people asked for more, and the music quiz has become a regular feature. Through her willingness to use her gifts and talents for the benefit of the group, she not only enabled the group to take place, but also encouraged others to do likewise.



***John 1:3: All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.***



I wonder how technology can help us on the Way of Jesus?

# Day 6

23/02/21



# Peter

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2302](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2302)

Playing an instrument is such a great gift to have – it brings enjoyment to others, and a sense of achievement to yourself. Like all skills, it has to be practiced and, in the beginning, can be painful to your, and everybody's, ears! But you have to persevere. If you give up too easily or quickly you'll never know how good you could be. You lose the opportunity to fulfil your potential.

Peter is learning the saxophone, and when that became unavailable after an accident to the instrument, he started learning the piano. These things take time. And they take commitment. And that's not always easy! As Peter says, "It's hard to be patient, when we want things to come right." But patience is a virtue and, like a musical instrument, you need to practice and commit to it.



***Micah 6.8: He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?***

# Day 7

24/02/21



# Marie

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2402](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2402)

Are churches places where we can escape from the pressures of living as part of a local community for an hour or so on a Sunday? Or are they places that should be serving the local community in which they are based? Marie Trubic is a Church Related Community Work Minister based in Scotland – and she firmly believes the latter statement, whether it's hosting community meals or creating green spaces. Building relationships with local people and local organisations, showing that the church building, and its worshipping congregation, are part of the local community gives the church purpose. And we all need a purpose.



***Luke 24.30: When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.***



I wonder what God's purpose is for you, today?



# Day 8

25/02/21



# Derby Central

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2502](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2502)

Anybody, anywhere can help with God's plan. Feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, visiting the isolated... these are all suggestions about some of the things God wants us to do. Can we combine some into one activity?

Realising that many older members of the community lived in isolation and with mobility issues, Central URC in Derby developed a weekly '3Fs' group which focuses on fellowship, food and fitness. The hungry are fed. Those imprisoned by isolation are freed. And friendships and relationships are strengthened. Everyone leaves feeling better than when they came – and ready to face the challenges of the week ahead.



***1 Corinthians 6.19: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?***



I wonder what activities keep you active and healthy?



Join URC Youth Trialogue tonight – live discussion for 16-25s, broadcast 7pm on YouTube and Facebook: [www.bit.ly/trialogueURC](http://www.bit.ly/trialogueURC)

# Day 9

26/02/21



# Trinity

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2602](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2602)

It can be hard to commit to doing something week in, week out, especially when it involves hard and sometimes quite challenging work. Trinity, who is 14 years old, was nominated for the Lundie Memorial Award for her dedication to giving time to helping in her church's open kitchen, a service providing free meals to the homeless and vulnerable members of their local community. Over the six years that the open kitchen has been operating, they have given away over 12,000 meals to people in need, and Trinity's contribution has really been appreciated, especially her cheerfulness and enthusiasm week by week.



***Matthew 25:35: For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.***



I wonder how you do / can support vulnerable people?

# Day 10

27/02/21



# James

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2702](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2702)

13 year old James' technical skills have proven invaluable to his local church during the pandemic. He was invited to join the All Age Planning team, where he has shown himself to be a wonderful asset not only in sharing thoughts and ideas for online church services, but also creating YouTube videos for those services. He has helped provide the team with a growing confidence to tackle the production of online services, and to cope with projects they never thought possible. With his sense of humour and his lively personality, he keeps the team on their toes and is greatly appreciated for his skill and his dedication.



***1 Timothy 4:12: Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.***



I wonder what you have learned from someone of a different generation to you?

# Second Sunday in Lent

28/02/21

*When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’*

Luke 4:16-19

## Wondering questions



- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder where you can bring good news?
- I wonder who the poor are in your community today?
- I wonder who needs to be set free in some way?



## Prayer activities



### **Anointing prayers**

Gently rub some hand cream into your hand or someone else's hand, anointing them to proclaim the good news.



As you rub this cream in, pray for people who are bringers of good news to the world and our communities.

### **Button prayers**

Feel the hardness of a button (loose or on a piece of clothing) and think about people who are going through hard times, and how we can serve them.

Buttons are used to fasten clothes together.

Ask God to bring together people and bring them peace.



## Tenebrae prayer



(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

Today, light six of the candles, including the central Christ light, then blow out one whilst praying:



**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness to guide our feet to the way of peace.**

# Second Sunday in Lent

28/02/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
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# Day 11

01/03/21



# Tim

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0103](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0103)

How do we treat ‘others’ in our churches? Not other people who are like us, but those who are NOT like us? Tim Billingsley was aware that people with learning difficulties often aren’t given the opportunities to share, and develop, their faith journeys. And he instinctively knew that this wasn’t right. God kept nudging him to do something about it. Following a diagnosis of MS he had the time, and desire, to respond to God’s call.

So, as he says, “God led me to seek support to start the ‘ALL, Together’ services at Northcliffe, in Shipley, where, five times a year, we enjoy worship which specifically caters for the needs of people with learning disabilities, as we praise, make and share together.”



***Genesis 21.2: Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him.***



I wonder what unexpected things have shaped your life?

# Day 12

02/03/21



# Isaac

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0203](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0203)

What holds us back from doing all the things we want to do? Often it's money or opportunity. But it should never be 'disability'. Isaac is well known to young people who have attended the URC Youth Assembly. He has not let his physical disability hold him back. Indeed, he refers to having 'this ability' rather than disability. His enthusiasm for life, and his faith in God, has opened up many experiences for him – from skydiving to speaking about his life and faith at conferences. He uses 'this ability' to encourage others to see that we all have gifts and abilities. To not use them would be a waste.



***Ephesians 4.11-12: The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.***



I wonder whether you feel anything holds you back?

# Day 13

03/03/21



# Young adults

[www.bit.ly/URCLink0303](http://www.bit.ly/URCLink0303)

Everyone knows that Walking the Way of Jesus today, being a disciple and going to church, is a serious business, right? We're not allowed to have fun and enjoy ourselves. REAL Christians are miserable. Of course, that's rubbish; but it's what many who don't come to church (and some who do!) seem to think. And why do we mainly talk about God in our churches? God is everywhere!

In Pontypridd, God is in a local pub where young adults meet to explore questions of faith, the universe, morality and life together in a warm, welcoming place with people they trust as they enjoy a drink together.



***John 2.10: Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.***



What's your favourite activity to share with others?

# Day 14

04/03/21



# Margaret

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0403](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0403)

Do we finish learning when we leave school or university? Life surely becomes too busy for learning after that, we've mouths to feed, mortgages or rent to pay and any free time is precious and should be spent relaxing, surely?

But why can't learning be relaxing? The apostles were learning all the time they were with Jesus, and we can be, too. Margaret was adamant that evangelism was not for her. But a small group from her church in Muddiford took some time to look at videos from LICC about evangelism – and that learning experience changed her mind, and her life. Well, they say a little learning is a dangerous thing!



***James 1.5: If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.***



I wonder if you have learnt anything new today?

# Day 15

05/03/21



# Charlotte

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0503](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0503)

With a strong faith which really shines out and inspires and encourages others, 16 year old Charlotte is an active member of her local church. But her discipleship does not stop there. She has, for several years, been involved with “Youth Ukraine Mission”, heading out to serve two Ukranian villages by helping to run a club for school children and sharing her faith and her Christian values through her enthusiasm and passion for her work with countless children and young people.

Back home she continues to raise money and also to inspire and encourage other young people to discover and use their own God-given talents and gifts.



***Proverbs 3:23: Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.***



I wonder where you would most like to travel?

# Day 16

06/03/21



# Grace

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0603](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0603)

Grace was eleven when she was nominated for the Lundie Memorial Award for playing her part in the mission of God. She took on a vital role running the prayer zone as part of the leadership team of two holiday fun clubs. She was described as holding an inner confidence around prayer.

Her youth leader commented “Grace has a gift in leading individuals in prayer and enabling others to feel a part of something bigger ... I look forward to Grace stepping further into her gifting and seeing how God uses her for his work”. Grace told us “My faith is my life, really. Everything I do is in the name of Jesus.”



***Philippians 4:6: Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.***



I wonder how you do / can help others to pray?



# Third Sunday in Lent

07/03/21

*The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, 'Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.' But he said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' They said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish – unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.' They did so and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.*

Luke 9:12-17

## Wondering questions



- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder what it means to share all you have?
- I wonder what the world will look like if everyone had enough to eat?
- I wonder if you share the little you have, will spark a ripple of giving?

## Prayer activities



### **Ripple prayers**

Drop a small stone into a bowl of water, and look at the ripples. Consider the people affected by my sharing, and how that small act makes a huge difference to the world. Where in my life are there opportunities to “share my food” so others will have enough?



### **Popcorn prayers**

Take some popping corn kernels. Reflect on the popcorn, how small and hard it starts out as and how large and tasty it becomes. As you make the popcorn, (following the instructions on the packet) consider how our small acts can change things, and when we love each other that makes a small amount go a long way. As you eat the popcorn, consider the food we have and how we can share what we have with those around us. Can you make some popcorn to give to someone else?

## Tenebrae prayer



(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

Today, light five of the candles, including the central Christ light, then blow out one whilst praying:

**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness to guide our feet to the way of justice.**



# Third Sunday in Lent

07/03/21



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# Day 17

08/03/21



# Claudette

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0803](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0803)

Wanting to make a difference, Claudette helped to run a Christmas party for Asylum seekers two years ago. She also supported them with weekly food products via a donations box at church, and recommended that the church offer a monthly donation to this cause.

She has personally donated 14 Christmas gifts for Asylum seekers at Christmas this year. As she says in the video, “It’s something every church can do really, because it’s part of our service to others. We can’t think of ourselves only.”



*Jeremiah 22:3 : Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed.*



I wonder what social justice causes you do / can support?

# Day 18

09/03/21



# Sharon

[www.bit.ly/URCLent0903](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent0903)

At the start, I didn't go to church and, to be honest, didn't really know God, but I must have had a small belief because I would say a prayer before bed. In time, I started to get more involved in church life. I told a friend about it, and she did too!

A church leader showed great faith in me, and asked if I'd be interested in developing what has now become a thriving Community Hub, called 'Fusion', which has allowed me to share God's love and presence with lots of others, some of whom now attend church and are part of a loving church family.



***1 Thessalonians 5:11: Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.***



I wonder who you do / could encourage on the Way of Jesus?

# Day 19

10/03/21



# Emma

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1003](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1003)

Emma is a 17 year old student who has been gifted with a talent for music and dance. She uses this gift to the glory of God, playing keyboard and singing in the worship band at church and more recently leading worship. Drawing on her talents, she choreographed a dance for the theme song for the church holiday club – simple enough for the children to follow, and yet worshipful.

A dance video was then produced with Emma dancing, and this was used in a number of children's clubs and groups – both in Emma's own church and others. This is all done in her free time, alongside her studies at dance college. Her commitment has clearly enriched the worship life of young and old alike in her church.



***Psalm 98:1: O sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things.***



I wonder what is your favourite piece of worship music?

# Day 20

11/03/21



# Dorothy's Café

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1103](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1103)

“I feel that meeting together and having conversations keeps me on my toes.” So says one of the regular visitors to Dorothy's Café at Sale URC. Set up in memory of a much loved member of the congregation, the café is a safe space for people who are troubled with dementia in their advancing years, along with their families and carers.

It is a community with a purpose – to share fellowship, friendship and support, just as Jesus did with members of his own community who had been forgotten about. We all need support sometimes. Hopefully we'll have access to somewhere like Dorothy's Café when we do.



*Proverbs 27.17: Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.*



I wonder how you and your friends support each other?



Join URC Youth TRialogue tonight – live discussion for 16-25s, broadcast 7pm on YouTube and Facebook: [www.bit.ly/trialogueURC](http://www.bit.ly/trialogueURC)

# Day 21

12/03/21



# Amelia

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1203](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1203)

For two years, 21-year-old Amelia has been a youth placement student with her local church, whilst studying for a photography degree. During this time, she has made a real impact on the community, from supporting holiday clubs for children to engaging with isolated older adults attending a variety of different groups and activities.

Since her graduation, she has used her skills to produce a series of inspiring videos to encourage children and families to engage in home based creative activities, and is now creating a photographic record of encouraging experiences of families the church is linked to in order to create a historic print of life as it is and can be, whilst continuing to serve the church and community in a voluntary capacity.



***Galatians 6:9: So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.***



I wonder how you inspire others to action?



# Day 22

13/03/21



# Andrew

Andrew found himself struggling with his feelings. He spoke with his minister, who gave him a holding cross. It has smooth edges, and is shaped to be held in one hand. Andrew was encouraged to keep it in his pocket and hold it when the feelings overwhelmed him, giving those feelings to God. He found great comfort in this, and wanted to share that with others. He was in a 'Men in Sheds' group, and made holding crosses there.

One Sunday he presented his minister with a bag full of crosses to pass on, each carefully and lovingly made. There was so much demand for them that Andrew began to make more. What a powerful, tangible way for him to share his faith and the blessing it gave him!



***John 14:27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.***



I wonder what helps you feel calm when you are anxious or angry?

# Fourth Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday

14/03/21

*He (Jesus) was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say:*

*Father, hallowed be your name.*

*Your kingdom come.*

*Give us each day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our sins,*

*for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.*

*And do not bring us to the time of trial.’*

Luke 11:1-4

## Wondering questions



- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder where your place to pray is?
- I wonder what you call God when you pray?

- I wonder how often you pray for ‘us’ rather than ‘me’?

## Prayer activities



### Sacred spaces

Just as Jesus prayed in a certain place, create a sacred space where you can go and pray. A place to breathe slowly, to be still and listen, to be with God.

Take time to sit quietly with God and slowly pray the Lord’s prayer in a

version you are unfamiliar with, such Luke 11: 2-4 in The Message:

“Father, Reveal who you are. Set the world right. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.”



## Finger labyrinth



Pray the Lord's Prayer whilst moving your finger around the labyrinth. You could simply draw circles in the palm of your hand.



Reflecting on the prayer and asking some questions as you pray.

- How might you live your life in a way that's just a little closer to God?
- What needs do we easily take for granted?
- How might God use you to help meet someone else's needs?
- What hurts are you carrying because of something someone said or did to you?
- Has there been a time when you did something even when you knew it was the wrong thing?
- What makes you aware of God's kingdom, power and glory?

## Tenebrae prayer



(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

Today, light four of the candles, including the central Christ light, then blow out one whilst praying:

**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness to guide our feet to the way of worship.**



# Fourth Sunday in Lent – Mothering Sunday

14/03/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
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# Day 23

15/03/21



# Herbert Cecil Pugh

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1503](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1503)

Nobody ever said that walking the way of Jesus was going to be easy. But most of us are, thankfully, never going to be asked to make the ultimate sacrifice in the same way Jesus did for us. But some are. And some have. Herbert Cecil Pugh was on a troop ship in 1941 when it was torpedoed. With the ship already sinking, and many men trapped below decks, Mr Pugh insisted on being lowered down so that he could pray with, and be with, them in their final moments.

“When the story broke, a journalist asked my mother if he was brave,’ says his daughter, Fiona Daukes. ‘My mother replied that my father wasn’t brave, but that he had learned to be obedient to that voice within. For him it was just the next step.” He was posthumously awarded the George Cross.



*John 15.13: No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*



I wonder who your heroes are?

# Day 24

16/03/21



# Lucy

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1603](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1603)

It is always a challenge to find willing volunteers to lead children's and youth groups, but 17 year old Lucy stepped into the breach when one of her Girls' Brigade leaders moved away. She had already been very active supporting the younger girls and helping the leaders deliver badge work etc, but despite recently starting an apprenticeship, she has taken on the role of helping to run the Company.

From supporting sleepovers and going out of her comfort zone to join in an activity centre day, to turning up straight from work to help run the weekly sessions, she has taken on the role with maturity, sensitivity and professionalism. Her enthusiasm and passion for Girls' Brigade inspires all she comes into contact with.



***Colossians 3:23: Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters.***



I wonder what are you most passionate about and how you share that with others?

# Day 25

17/03/21



# Anne

Throughout her life, Anne's smile has brightened the lives of those around her. She has worked hard for children and young people, committing many years of service to Scouting, and has always looked out for others in her local church and wider neighbourhood. She has endured suffering in her life, including the loss of a dear grandchild. In these moments, she has not been afraid to be honest with God about her feelings, and to call for God's help.

Carrying all of this, she is still able to recognise God's presence in her life and those around her, spreading God's joy with her smile, God's empathy with her heart and God's kindness with her hands.



***Romans 12:15: Rejoice with those who rejoice,  
weep with those who weep.***



I wonder how you share God's presence in your life with others?

# Day 26

18/03/21



# Tom

[www.bit.ly/URCLent1803](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent1803)

We can often get overwhelmed by what's in our diaries – such a busy day ahead! But every entry is an opportunity to see God in the faces of those we meet. And not just people with whom we're meeting, but those we meet on the way; bus drivers, shop assistants and others.

Taking time to have a chat with God at the beginning of each day, Tom, a retired Methodist Youth and Community Worker in Wiltshire, makes God a promise: "I promise that I will meet each person as though I am meeting Jesus Christ himself." And maybe he has.



***Colossians 4.2: Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.***



I wonder how often we take time to talk to God?



# Day 27

19/03/21



# Gabrielle

In the midst of Covid-19, life has been difficult for many, leaving people feeling isolated, neglected and unsure what to do to make things better. Much of the time, church organists have either found themselves left without work, or have been inundated with requests to play music at funerals. Gabrielle, however, realised that people were travelling to the centre of town to buy their essential shopping, with the church building sitting empty in the middle of it all.

She opened the doors and started playing music to bring cheer to the gloomy shoppers, taking their requests. Although no one could sing, people could still listen, and know that the church was thinking about them during this difficult time.



*Psalm 40:3: He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.*



I wonder what tune you would ask Gabrielle to play?

# Day 28

20/03/21



# Gus

When he's not travelling around the world with work, you'll likely find Gus working with children and young people from the community around his local church. You'll also find him supporting children's and youth work across his entire region, in his voluntary role as Synod Pilots Officer for East Midlands.

With his skills and talents, he could use his spare time to achieve anything he wanted. He chooses to use it in the service of others, and in building up a new generation to love and serve God.



***1 Chronicles 22:15: You have an abundance of workers: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and all kinds of artisans without number, skilled in working.***



I wonder what skills from your work relate to your faith?

# Fifth Sunday in Lent

21/03/21

*He (Jesus) 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.'* Luke 19:1-10

## Wondering questions



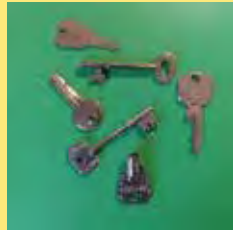
- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder who you would most like to visit your home?
- I wonder what potential you can see in people you know?
- I wonder if God surprised you when choosing disciples and friends?

## Prayer activities



### **Unlocking prayers**

Choose a key, hold it in your hand, and think about the potential you have within you. It comes with lots of challenges but lots of opportunities too. What potential, opportunities and challenges are you facing?



Imagine that these things are like a door into something new. What key do you need to unlock the door? If you want to, place one of the keys in a bowl, or by a candle as a symbol of asking God to unlock your potential.

### **Praying and sharing**

Make some biscuits, cookies or shortbread. As you make them, pray for the person you are baking for. Parcel them up and deliver them to someone you

would not normally speak to. This small act can transform someone's day.

### Tenebrae prayer



(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

Today, light three of the candles, including the central Christ light, then blow out one whilst praying:



**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness to guide our feet to the way of fellowship.**



# Fifth Sunday in Lent

21/03/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
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# Day 29

22/03/21



# Yvonne

As General Secretary of the Congregation Federation, Yvonne has many important responsibilities and engagements she must engage with, keeping an awareness of what's going on in lots of different places and contexts at once. Yet, when you speak with her, it is obvious that the inspiration and energy she needs comes from her work with children and young people.

As she leads her Pilots groups in craft activities, teaches them about the Bible, encourages them to ask questions and acts as a role model for them, Yvonne learns from the wisdom which children and young people can teach us, no matter what roles or responsibilities we might hold.



***Matthew 18:3: Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.***



I wonder what your favourite craft activity is?

# Day 30

23/03/21



# Margaret 'Mam'

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2303](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2303)

When her daughter signed up for the 'Growing Leaders' course being run in her region, Margaret wanted something do together with her, and so she signed up too. She wasn't sure what was going to happen, but was welcomed into the group, and enjoyed the sessions. She became such a part of the group that everyone simply knew her as 'Mam'.

She found, over the course, that she was learning and growing just as much as anyone else, realising her own potential as a leader, considering the role her faith played in strengthening her for God's service. We are never too old to learn, or to help build God's vision of justice and joy for all peoples.



*Philippians 4.13: I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*



I wonder what you do / could do to challenge yourself?

# Day 31

24/03/21



# Henry

[www.bit.ly/URCLent240](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent240)

Seven year old Henry has been described as “the answer to prayer and an inspiration”, as his fascination with streetlights led him to hear of a village in Sierra Leone where it goes dark at around 7pm and there is no electricity to provide light. The people of York Village prayed that somehow they would raise the money for solar streetlights, and Henry was the person God chose to answer that prayer. He and his brother made cakes and biscuits on a lamppost theme and sold them, raising enough money for a number of solar lights to be bought and installed. And, inspired by his efforts, other groups continued to donate and raise funds too.



***John 8.12: Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”***



I wonder how you do / can bring light into the lives of others?



# Day 32

25/03/21



# Bethesda

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2503](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2503)

How many stories are there in the Gospels about Jesus sharing a meal with others? Most of our churches would describe themselves as 'hospitable' – but how many share a mission of hospitality?

Bethesda United Reformed Church in Tongwynlais does. So much so that it's known locally as 'cuppa and a chat church'. It's a place of fellowship and worship, where people know they will receive a warm welcome, and meet people who listen with compassion as visitors open up about mental health concerns, issues of isolation and rejection, poverty and any other worries which they face. Jesus would be a regular visitor and would, I'm sure, end up volunteering!



***John 14.17: This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.***



I wonder how God does, or could, work through you?



Join URC Youth TRIalogue tonight – live discussion for 16-25s, broadcast 7pm on YouTube and Facebook: [www.bit.ly/trialogueURC](http://www.bit.ly/trialogueURC)

# Day 33

26/03/21



# Marissa and Poppy

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2603](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2603)

Many people, especially the elderly, felt isolated and cut off from their church community during lockdown, so Marissa (16) and Poppy (nine) devised ways of supporting and reaching out to them. It began with Mothering Sunday 2020, when they created posies of flowers and delivered them to church members. They continued to send parcels of hand-made gifts, helped with shopping and running errands, and accompanied some elderly people on socially distanced short walks near their home. One church member commented, “It’s hard to describe the surprise and joy when, in the middle of stress of lockdown, we opened the post and these (hand-sewn bookmarks and butterfly) dropped out of the envelope. I was close to tears.”



***Isaiah 35:1: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.***



I wonder what are your favourite flowers?

# Day 34

27/03/21



Liz

[www.bit.ly/URCLent2703](http://www.bit.ly/URCLent2703)

Liz began volunteering as a delivery cyclist for the Urban Lunch project at Clapton Park URC at the start of lockdown, hauling cooked meals and Food Bank parcels through Hackney's eerily empty streets on her old touring bicycle. "These daily encounters – with the kids who know you always sneak extra cake into the bag for them, with the blind man whose microwave we fitted with braille stickers so he could reheat his meals – lifted the fog of lockdown for me. It's strange to think ... that it took social distancing to bring me closer to my community."



*Matthew 25.35: For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.*



I wonder who you have become closer to in these difficult times?



## Welcome to Holy Week

Congratulations, you have almost made it to the end of Lent – but our journey is not yet over. From here, we journey with Jesus, exploring his final week.

The next eight days, often called Holy Week, is an emotional rollercoaster, taking us from the noisy, welcoming crowds of Palm Sunday, to an intimate supper, to the violent arrest and trial, before taking us to the cross where Jesus died. Saturday sees us hold our breath in the hope of Sunday coming, when our sadness is turned to celebration with Jesus rising from the dead. A champion, a victor, giving us hope for today and the future.

Why not try making your own palm cross, or ‘growing tree’ on Palm Sunday?

From Monday, you are invited to create an Easter garden slowly over the coming days as part of your walk towards Easter. Turn to the end of the activity pages for ideas for each day, and a variety of ways to make a garden.

The Easter story told by children: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1t-Tv6VpU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1t-Tv6VpU)



# Sixth Sunday in Lent – Palm Sunday

28/03/21

*... he (Jesus) went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it."' So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' They said, 'The Lord needs it.' Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of*

*the Lord!*

*Peace in heaven,*

*and glory in the highest heaven!'*

*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.'*

Luke 19:28-39

## Wondering questions



- I wonder what the most important thing in this passage is for you?
- I wonder who inspires you, who do you want to follow and cheer on?
- I wonder where you see people who carry on, even when they know the road ahead is difficult?
- I wonder how you can praise God noisily today?

## Prayer activities



### **Journey prayers**

Look at a map, and think about your journey through life. It can be hard to make the right choices and find the right way, there will always be difficult decisions to be made. We need each other and God to help us follow the path that God has got ready for us. Pray about your life, what decisions have you had to make recently, were they easy, did you ask for help? Ask God to help you on the journey, and any difficult path you may need to take.



### **Palm prayers**

Today is Palm Sunday, when people waved and cheered as they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem.



Think of the joyful times when you

wave, cheer and clap to show your appreciation and support of someone. Over the next week, Holy Week, Jesus will know times when hands are used to wave, to care, to bless, to pray and to hurt.

As you pray, really look at your hands in different ways, think of the things you use your hands for. Ask that your hands might be God's hands in the world.

### Tenebrae prayer



(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

Today, light two of the candles, including the central Christ light, then blow out one whilst praying:



**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness to guide our feet to the way of the cross.**

# Sixth Sunday in Lent – Palm Sunday

28/03/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
[www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures)



# Day 35



29/03/21

# Monday of Holy Week

***Genesis 3.8: “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze.”***

What a lovely image: it is the end of the day, and we find God walking in the garden. Such a peaceful image, it speaks of calm and quiet. As we begin the last part of our journey together into Holy Week, the disciples and Jesus are not having such a calm or peaceful walk. They are walking into the temple, the place of worship in Jerusalem, the place where people come to find God. And yet they find it full of people who are doing things that go against God’s way of being. People taking advantage of the poor, occupying spaces reserved to welcome others, focussed on personal profit rather than everyone’s worship. Jesus gets very angry. He turns over the tables of the traders and chases them out of the temple. His actions and words cause quite a scene, and certainly get people talking.

Contrast the two images we have today: calm, breeze, beauty, creation; busy, noisy, cross, building. And yet God was there in both situations.

Sometimes before there can be peace, there has to be change. Anger can be the energy that enables us to no longer accept things that are wrong. Righteous anger at injustice can move us to speak out, to act. But not all our anger is Godly, not everything we say or do in anger is righteous. To walk with God in the calm of the evening, we need to not let the sun go down on our anger. We need to work through it with God, discerning its root and its fruit. God is never afraid of our anger, but there with us. In the thick of it. Loving us.





Anger is a feeling that is common to us all; sometimes with good reason, sometimes less so, and it can be difficult to tell the difference. Gather some stones and explore their texture and shape with your hands. Think about the things that make you angry – situations, people, news, in your own daily life or on a wider scale.



Talk to God about these, and ask for help to recognise which anger you need to lay aside and place in God's hands, and which you need to do something about. Squeeze the stones carefully in your hand – feel the hardness and discomfort. Holding on to anger can hurt. Then slowly open



your hand, take the stones one at a time, and place them gently on the ground or drop them into a pool of water as you give your anger to God.

# Day 36



30/03/21

# Tuesday of Holy Week

***Isaiah 28:24: “Do those who plough for sowing plough continually?  
Do they continually open and harrow their ground?”***

I am no farmer, but at school I learned that the land cannot be used to grow crops every year, or the soil becomes very poor and not a lot grows. Sometimes we need to let things rest. Sometimes we need to give things a break. And we need a break, too. If we are constantly busy, if we take on too much and never find time to rest, if we keep ourselves busy to avoid facing certain things, eventually our bodies will protest. Bits will stop working properly or our thoughts will get so heavy and complex that in the end we have no choice but to stop!

The farmer is wise, wanting the best from the land, and so knows how important it is to care for it. In the same way, God wants the best from us and so encourages us to look after our minds, bodies and souls. In Holy Week, Jesus spent his days challenging the temple authorities with hard questions, and they got in a bit of a pickle trying to answer him. When they could not answer him, he refused to engage with them anymore. Each night after his encounters, he left Jerusalem and went and found rest. He knew how important it was to take time to challenge and question, but also to rest and renew his relationship with God. To be prepared for the next day and all it might bring.



Today's prayers are prayers of preparation. We are going to prepare ourselves for the events of Holy Week through confession, saying sorry to God for the things that spoil our relationship and come between God and us.

You will need a used copper coin. Look at the coin. Through its daily use, it becomes tarnished and loses its shine. Think about the things in your life that take you away from Jesus' way and tarnish or mess up your relationship with God. Now get a cloth and some brown sauce or tomato ketchup (or dissolve a little salt in vinegar or lemon juice).

Gently cover the coin with the sauce and, while it is covered, ask God to purify your heart, to clean away all the darkness and to replace it with God's light. Rub the coin and rinse it with some water. Thank God for making you like new.



# Day 37 Wednesday of Holy Week

31/03/21

***Luke 13:18-19: “the kingdom of God ... is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”***

Have you ever seen a mustard plant? They can grow quite tall and can be eaten as greens or dug back into the ground to help protect the soil against disease and to stop weeds from growing. Some mustard plants grow yellow flowers, and can grow to about 1m, and yet mustard seeds are quite small. When we speak of God’s kingdom, we speak of where God is and where people know about God. Sometimes the word kingdom makes people think that God is in charge like a king, above the people and distant from them. Whilst we do speak of God as king, we also have many other images of God, such as mother hen, a flying eagle, a shepherd, a gate. These images do not mean that God is literally ‘a gate’ or ‘a hen’! But these images help us to think about the many ways we can encounter God – as someone who helps us to correct ourselves when we go wrong, who cares for us when we are sad, who looks out for us, who shows us the way.

Miroslav Volf, talks of ‘the home of God’ instead of kingdom, a gentler image. If we think of the home of God as the mustard plant, we see something that starts small and gets bigger, spreads easily and looks beautiful, brings healing and protection and has a strong flavour. This helps us to understand that where God is there is life and love and flourishing and growth.



Spring is well and truly here. Take the opportunity to go for a walk in your local area or look out at the garden. Where can you see signs of new growth? Buds on the trees? Flowers opening? Fresh new leaves?



Our God is a God of new beginnings, of growth and potential. Take some time to thank God for the wonder of creation, for the potential hidden away in each seed and bulb. Ask God to help your faith to grow and blossom too, just like the plants around you in the springtime.



# Day 38



01/04/21

# Maundy Thursday

*Numbers 24:6: “Like palm groves that stretch far away, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters.”*

Today, we are thinking about the special time Jesus spent with his friends. Friends are very important. I am sure many of us have special friends, friends who we love dearly, friends who help us to be our true selves, friends who look out for us. Jesus had many friends. He had 12 special ones he chose to be his close followers or disciples, but he made lots of friends along the way. Do you know what I mean when I talk about the sort of people who make everyone feel special, important? The sort of people who involve everyone? The sort of people who encourage others and speak kind words? I believe Jesus was that sort of person.

When we encounter someone like that, we feel good. We feel better about ourselves. They help us to believe things about ourselves that we often struggle with. Look again at the reading for today, these words from God were being spoken to the people of Israel. They are positive words: not only are the people being compared to healthy beautiful plants and trees, they are near to water sources and so will continue to flourish and grow. When we spend time with people who are kind, who are generous, who are honest, these things rub off on us. We become kind and generous and honest. The people who followed Jesus became like him. We can do the same.



On Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus washing the feet of his friends. Jesus was not afraid to serve others.



Fill a bowl with warm water and have a nice towel nearby. Do you have some sweet smelling soap or bubble bath? If you are alone, soak your feet or hands in the warm water and cleanse them with the soap. If someone else is with you, perhaps you could wash each other's feet or hands. Think of the times when you may have been selfish or self-centred, maybe ignored others or looked down on them or wanted to be



first. Ask Jesus to forgive you, to wash you clean and help show you where you can serve others.

# Day 39

02/04/21



# Good Friday

***Isaiah 40:8: “The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.”***

Today is the day in the church year when we think about Jesus’ death.

It is a sad and solemn day as we think about his death and what happened. He had challenged many things in his time as a travelling teacher, sharing God’s love with the people he met. He had done things that some people thought were wrong; he had included the people that most other people excluded or ignored; he had spoken words that challenged the power of those in charge; he had spent time eating and drinking with people considered unworthy.

His actions and words inspired people and made them realise that there was a different way to look at the world, a way that was not about power but about love. And as this love spread, people began to behave differently. The people in charge were not happy about this, they realised they were losing control and that being loving, kind and caring could change the world and they could lose their power. So they got rid of the ringleader of this love movement by killing him.

Did this work? Whilst Jesus’ life ended, his influence didn’t. His words and actions are seen in every person who lives God’s way.

The love movement is still going, even death couldn’t stop it.





Today is a day of tears. There may be many reasons for sorrow and sadness, and we can bring these to God. God weeps when we weep and longs for us to turn to God for comfort.

- Use a piece of a coffee filter paper or a paper towel and a black permanent marker.
- Cut the paper into a heart shape.
- Draw a tear shape in the centre of the heart with black permanent marker. Think of the things which are on your heart which make you feel sad. Give these thoughts to God. Drip water slowly into the centre of the tear shape you have drawn, drips falling like tears. As we share our sorrow with God, God willingly takes on our sorrow. Watch what happens to the tear on the paper. God's promise is a promise of hope – we will be carried through the tough times and God will turn our sorrow into rejoicing.



### Tenebrae prayer

(see Sunday 21/02/21 for details)

On Good Friday, light only one candle, the central Christ light. As you blow it out whilst praying, let the smoke drift and remind you that the Holy Spirit is still with you in the dark times.

**Jesus, light of the world, shine in the darkness.**





# Day 40

03/04/21



# Holy Saturday

***James 5:7: “Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.”***

How good are you at waiting? Do you queue hop in the supermarket? Do you find yourself sighing when the person in front of you takes too long to pay? How does it feel? Today is Holy Saturday, a day of waiting. We have come from the darkness of the day of Jesus’ death, to wait. Because we know the end of the story, we know celebration and joy, chocolate and flowers are ahead. But pretend, for a moment, that you do not know this! How does it feel?

Let us go back to our farmer. The crops have been sown and the plants have germinated and are growing but are not ready for harvesting. None of this happens overnight. It takes time. It takes rain and sunshine, care, feeding and nourishment for the crops to grow and flourish. Nothing can be done that makes them grow any quicker. If the farmer did not wait, the crops would be no good.

Jesus’ death teaches us many things, about God and about ourselves. This time of waiting to see Jesus again reminds us that not everything happens quickly, that we may have to wait to see what God wants to do or is asking of us. Sometimes we want things to happen immediately, and are impatient and we can even think that God has forgotten us and not heard our prayers. Jesus’ death reminds us that joy will come, but not always as we might wish or expect and not always in the time limits that we set!



Today is a day of watching and waiting, waiting and wondering. It is a day of inactivity. Take some time to sit quietly. You may want to find somewhere quiet and dark to do it – maybe a pop-up tent. You may want to find somewhere close to nature, maybe a park bench or a seat in the garden or lying on a blanket looking up at the sky. Or how about sitting on a swing? Wait, and listen for God’s whisper of hope and promise.



# Easter Sunday

04/04/21



The tomb is empty! The stone has been moved, the guards have run away. Some of Jesus' friends and followers are telling stories of seeing him. What is going on?

## **Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

*While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.*

*Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their*

*minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'*

## **The Ascension of Jesus**

*Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to the temple blessing God.*

Luke 24:36-53



So much happens here, so much for the disciples to take in. Somehow Jesus arrives in the middle of things and changes everything. He responds to their fears by showing them he really is alive again. He responds to their doubts by explaining how God has fulfilled all the promises. He responds to their backwards-looking grief by giving them forward-focussed ways to share God's love with others. Then he blesses them, and they respond in joyful worship.

Fears replaced by hope, doubts removed by faith, grief resolved by love.

Today we celebrate new life in Christ. Somehow Jesus arrives in the middle of things and changes everything.

May you know the blessing of God's liberating love.

May you walk on from Easter in the light of Christ, in the company of God's people.

## Wondering questions



- I wonder which feelings you share with the disciples?
- I wonder what change you are praying for?
- I wonder what you value most from your journey through Lent?
- I wonder how you will celebrate Easter today?

Your local church will be celebrating Easter in some way – and you will be very welcome to join them.

Daily Devotions will broadcast a service:

**[www.devotions.urc.org.uk](http://www.devotions.urc.org.uk)**

You could read back through your journal and reflect on your journey.

You could enjoy a chocolate egg or something you have made – have a feast after the long fast of Lent.

## Prayer activities



### Easter egg prayer

You will need a hollow chocolate egg.



Hold the egg – not too tightly or it will melt. The egg reminds us of the tomb where the body of Jesus was laid by the people who loved him. They must have felt lost, abandoned, confused and sad. Sometimes we feel locked in by emotions like these.

But God’s love breaks through, and Jesus leaves the tomb empty behind him, as even death can’t hold God back. Smash the egg and see the hollow inside. Thank God that the tomb is empty and Jesus is alive. Shout Alleluia (it means “praise the Lord” in Hebrew”).

Now share the chocolate – this good news is for sharing – and eat the chocolate. Taste and see that God is good! (Psalm 34:8)

## Tenebrae prayer



On the Sundays through Lent we have used the Tenebrae tradition of gradually extinguishing candles and allowing the darkness to increase each week.

Today, we celebrate that we need no longer fear the darkness. Light all seven candles, saying a line of this prayer as you light each one:

**Jesus, Light of the World,  
Shine in the darkness  
To guide our feet  
As we walk in your way.  
Living Christ Jesus,  
Shine on us and through us,  
So the world may be filled with your light  
and know your love.  
Amen**



# Easter Sunday

04/04/21



For lots of family-friendly activities linked to today's Bible story, see our weekly resource:  
[www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures](http://www.urchurch.org.uk/families-on-faith-adventures)







# Activities



The rest of the pages of your diary are activity suggestions for you to dip into. We hope there is something here for everyone, whatever your circumstances.



You might like to:

- cook or make things for yourself, or to give away to others
- try some new and creative ways to pray on your own, or with others
- take up a social justice challenge, and share what you are doing with others
- find space in your day to think, discover, dream and play
- find ways to thank others, or raise a smile
- pull out the different pages to keep, or give away to someone you know would enjoy those activities
- cut them up to put into your journal, as a reminder of your journey towards Easter.



# Connect



We all have connections with others through family, neighbourhood, shared history, shared interests and shared values. We are connected to and through the natural world we share. We are affected by the actions of others, and we all impact this interconnected world in some way. Over Lent we can choose to connect with others.

Connect with your local church, or whoever gave you this diary – you could join in their Easter activities, share what you have been doing during Lent, or just ask them to keep in touch with you.

Connect with someone who shares a hobby or interest with you – perhaps join a group and work on a project or activity together (you could use some ideas from this diary).

Connect with one of the stories in the diary – perhaps you have something in common, or you think you would get along with this person.

Connect with someone else using the 'Walking towards Easter together' resource – agree a regular time to make contact, and share something from your journal or your week.

Connect with someone you know but have not been in touch with recently – give them a ring, send a text, email or card.

Connect people you know with each other – introduce one person to someone else you know that they have something in common with, that you think they might appreciate getting to know.

# Dream

Our dreams are important – they reveal our hopes. When we imagine a different world, we start to find ways to bring it into being.

What do you daydream about when you are doing nothing?  
Where does your heart and mind go when it is free?

What are your hopes and dreams for the people close to you?  
Can you share those with God in prayer?

What are your hopes and dreams for this year, for next year, for the future?  
What little thing could you do now towards those dreams?

Write or draw some of your dreams and put them somewhere you can see them every day – record on them whenever you see any sign of them being realised in any way, however small.

What are your dreams for our world? What change do you most wish to see? How might you enable this, or support those who can?



# Play



It is important to keep playing! When we play, we are enjoying God's world in some way. We open ourselves to new things, make space for creativity, find different ways to think about things, and change how we feel. Playfulness is next to Godliness, it connects us to the Holy Spirit, and enables us to sing a new song of praise.



Play a game on your own – patience, a jigsaw, computer game, imaginative game with your toys.



Play a game with others – set up a game and invite people to join you! People play chess by post, scrabble on the internet, do crosswords over the phone, play board games together, play active games outside. Choose a game you like and think of who to invite, and how you can play together.



Play with words – write or speak playfully. Enjoy words with different meanings (puns), rhymes, repeated sounds (alliteration), discover new words, tell jokes, invent limericks – find ways to have fun with words.



Play with sounds – play an instrument, sing a song, make a noise with household items, play your favourite music and join in somehow. Find ways to have fun with sounds.



Play with images – cut things up and makes a collage, set things up to create playful photos, photoshop images, draw or paint freestyle, create a video. Find ways to have fun with images.

# Smile



Make the effort to raise a smile! Smiling is good for everyone – it reduces stress, tension and pain, boosts your immune system, releases positive emotions, and connects us to others as smiles are infectious in the best possible sense.

What makes you smile? Count how many times you smile today.

Who can you smile at today? In person, as you pass on the street, via a screen, or through the window?

How might you bring a smile to someone else's face today? What could you do or say or share that might brighten their day?

How smiley is your face? Practice in the mirror smiling, so that even with a face mask on, you look smiley.

Can you laugh at yourself today? Try to catch yourself doing or thinking something silly.

How smiley is your voice? Try smiling before you say something in person or on the phone – does it change how you sound?

# Thank



Being thankful is an attitude, a choice we can make whatever our circumstances. It can be a habit to foster during Lent. Here are some suggestions to help you be more thankful:



Start each day by thanking God for today!  
*This is the day that the LORD has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)*



End each day by giving thanks for three things from the day, three things you have appreciated, however small. If you wrote these down each day you would have a record of over 1,000 blessings each year!



Remember to say thank you to everyone who does anything for you today. Think about the past week, month, year – who would you most like to thank for their support or help? Make or write a card to send them, expressing thanks.



One way to thank is to ‘pay it forward’ – to do for someone else what you have appreciated someone doing for you (rather than give back to the person you have received from). This can spark a chain of blessing.



Learn how to say thank you in other languages, (particularly those spoken by people in your local community) or in sign language or Makaton.



Give thanks before each meal, drink and snack you have today. Think of all the people who have been involved in growing, packing, transporting, selling and making what you are eating and drinking. Pray for them as you thank God for sustaining you through this food and drink.



## Think

Look at the I wonder questions. How do they speak to you?



## Give

What could you give today? Who could you give to? How will you give – secretly, as a surprise?



## Do

Have you put your faith into action today? What could you do to make a difference?



## Discover

What have you discovered about yourself, about others, about the world, about God, today?



## Share

How could you share some of your time, your energy, your resources, yourself with others today?

Try this!



## Make an Easter bowl

- Cover the outside of the bowl you are using with cling film or Vaseline. Make sure it covers the edge of the bowl as well as the outside.
- Mix PVA glue with three parts water and stir together well. You may want to keep this in a lidded jar.
- Tear newspaper or scrap paper into strips, and dip them into water for about five minutes. Then take them out, and lie them flat to remove excess water. Turn your bowl upside down, and cover with a layer of wet strips of paper. Make sure that they overlap so that the cling film is all covered. Brush the PVA mixture all over them, then cover with another layer of strips. Allow these to dry, and then brush these with PVA mixture and add another layer. Do this repeatedly until you have five or six layers.
- Once it is dry, remove the bowl and the cling-film, and tidy up the edge of your papier mache bowl with a pair of scissors. Use a bit of glue to fasten any loose edges. Paint your bowl all over with white poster paint as an undercoat, and then decorate with paints or Sharpies or however you choose. You may even want to varnish your finished article.
- Fill your bowl with bread or Easter biscuits or hot-cross-buns to share, or you may even want to gift it to someone.

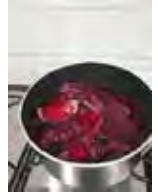




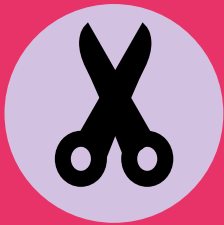
Try this!

## Onion skin dyed eggs

What you need:      Four red onions skins (the more onion skin used, the deeper the colour)  
Six eggs  
2 tsp of white vinegar  
Saucepan full of water (big enough to hold six eggs)  
Some leaves, herbs or small flowers  
Pop sox or tights (clean!) One for each egg.



- Put the red onion skins and the white vinegar in the saucepan and fill with water (leaving a 3" or 8cm gap between the water and the rim of the pan).
- Bring the water to the boil (ask for help if you do not usually use the hob) and allow to boil for ten minutes (to release the colour).
- Stick a leaf, herb or flower to your eggs (with water) and carefully put the egg inside the tight or pop sock and tie it closed, tightly.
- Using a spoon, place the eggs in the pan and boil for at least ten minutes. Leave in the water to cool.
- Remove from the water once cool and cut the pop sock/tights off and remove the flower, leaf or herb. You will reveal the lovely patterns left on the eggs. Rub with a little olive or coconut oil to make them shine.
- Put the used onion skins and flowers, leaf or herbs in the compost or food recycling bin (if available).
- The eggs can still be eaten (on the same day as cooked and with no shell ) or used for decoration (remember they may smell after a few days!) Or why not use them for egg rolling races?

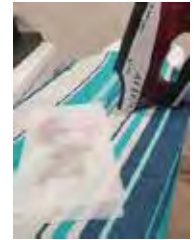


Try this!

# Pressing wild flowers and plants

What you need:      Flowers, blossom, leaves  
                              Baking/parchment paper (greaseproof paper)  
                              Iron and ironing board  
                              Book.

- Go for a walk in your garden, local park or countryside and look for flowers, blossom, leaves and interesting plants that might be good to press (be careful what you pick and wash your hands once home and after handling them!)
- Place the plants between two pieces of baking paper. Do only two or three at a time. Place a book on top to flatten them and make them easier to iron.
- Turn the iron on low. Do not use any water or steam features. Ask for help if you do not usually use an iron.
- Once the light goes out on the iron and it is warm enough, remove the book from the parchment paper. Put the paper and plants on the ironing board.
- Press the iron on the paper for about 15 seconds, moving it over the plants. Remove until the paper is cool again (about 15 more seconds). Repeat this process until the flower is dried.
- Once you have dried all the plants you want, why not stick them on a card or piece of paper and create a picture and send it to a friend or neighbour?

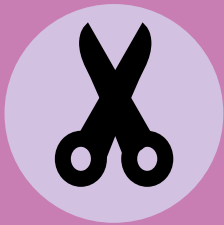
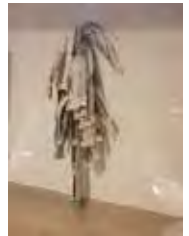


Try this!

## 'Growing' tree

Materials: A newspaper or A3 craft paper (at least four sheets)  
Sticky tape  
Scissors.

- Roll up the newspaper or craft paper into a tube with a 1.5" or 4cm diameter at the top.
- Stick the tube together with a strip of tape from the bottom, leaving the top 7" or 18cms unstuck. (Make sure that you only stick the outer sheet of paper with the tape.)
- Using your scissors, (and asking for help if needed) cut from the top of the tube, down 7" or 18cms in strips 1" or 2.5cms wide.
- Hold the inside strip, and gently pull it upwards and watch the tree 'grow'. Stop pulling upwards once the 'branches' begin to fan out.
- To make it stand up (optional), cut around the base of the tube 1" or 2.5cms, turn them outwards and stick to a piece of strong card.
- This is a good craft that makes a tree from a tree!



# Try this!



## Palm cross

Watch it being made: [www.youtu.be/jVN8OK9ke8k](http://www.youtu.be/jVN8OK9ke8k)

- You need a long narrow strip of paper. You could decorate the reverse with paint or pens. Start with the paper plain side up.
- Make a diagonal fold just about half way up your strip to make a right angle, with the side piece going out to the right, patterned side up, and then fold the side piece back over the front of the upright to go out to the left.
- Loop this part back round again behind the upright, but leave a loose loop to the left. Now take the end of the upright and loop that behind the knot so that it pokes out upwards. Bring the top part back down, looping forwards so that the plain side of the paper is towards you, and tuck it through the knot in the middle. You should now have two loops, one to the left and one to the top. Now you can pull on the two ends to tighten the knot. You should have an upright, plain side up, and a side piece out to the right, patterned side up.
- Loop the upright so that the patterned side is showing, pass the end through the knot in the middle and then loop over again above the knot, and tuck the end in at the back. This will make the two vertical parts of the cross. You may need to practice a little to get the lengths to the right proportions.
- Now do the same with the side piece – loop it through the side of the knot so that the patterned side is showing to the right, loop it back on itself and tuck the end in.



Try this!

## To be a pilgrim

A pilgrimage is a special type of journey – a journey of faith. It may be to a particular place which has special meaning to followers of a religion, usually because of something that happened there. While the pilgrim travels, they are also making a different kind of journey in their mind and their emotions, exploring their faith and their relationship with God. People have been going on pilgrimages for many years and still do so today. These crafts are designed to help you think about the tradition of pilgrimage. The song “To Be A Pilgrim” was written in the 17th Century by John Bunyan who wrote a book called “Pilgrim’s Progress”: [www.youtu.be/5yHJMPw8RHU](http://www.youtu.be/5yHJMPw8RHU)

## A pilgrim’s cross

Many pilgrims would carry a cross as a reminder and symbol of their faith – ranging from a simple wood to precious stones. The cross might be worn around the pilgrim’s neck, others may be hidden away in the pilgrim’s scrip or bag, away from prying eyes. This book includes several ways to make a cross. As part of your pilgrim journey, perhaps you could make one for yourself or someone else. Here is another way you could make one, by cutting out a cardboard shape and wrapping wool around it.



Try this!

## A pilgrim's clothing

In the past, a pilgrim's clothing was very important to them, as it would identify the traveller as being on a pilgrimage. That might help to keep them safe on their journey.

All pilgrimages tend to involve some walking. Pilgrims might even choose to do part of their journey in bare feet but many would wear sandals. You could make yourself some sandals out of recycled card by drawing around your feet and cutting it out, using a strip of card over the top to hold them on, or simply use some that you already own. As you put them on, think of places where you feel close to God.



A pilgrim would also wear a tunic, known as a Sclavein. Use a large T-shirt or pillowslip or make a tunic out of fabric or paper. Use a dressing gown cord or piece of rope as a belt. Pilgrims often shared stories or good news as they travelled together. You could decorate your tunic with symbols and pictures to tell your story and think of the stories you would share about your journey with Jesus.



A pilgrim would walk in all weather, and would need a broad, rimmed hat to protect the head from rain, wind, snow and sunshine. The hat would be quite recognisable, like the tunic, and would often be decorated with a badge, such as a shell shape, which is often used as a symbol of pilgrimage. Find a hat to wear and make a badge to decorate it. What will you use as a symbol of your journey with Jesus?



Try this!

## A pilgrim's bag – known as a scrip

No suitcases on a pilgrimage! While a modern-day pilgrim may have their rucksack, in the past, the scrip was all a pilgrim would have to carry a little money, documents, scripture, some food and a token taken from their journey on the way. There was not much room and what went into here was precious.



There are many fabrics you could use to make your scrip – try to recycle or reuse something that's no longer needed, such as some offcuts of material, some old clothing, a duster etc. Make sure the fabric is not too easy to tear, however. Using a dinner plate, draw a circle on your chosen material – remember, the bigger the circle, the bigger your bag will be. Now make a ring of small holes a short distance in from the edge, and weave through these holes using string, thick wool or cord. Gather your material together by pulling the drawstring tight. Remember to put some big knots on each end of your drawstring to stop it accidentally coming out of the holes.



Think about what is important to you in life – what would you carry with you in a small bag like this? Being limited on space forces us to cast off the unnecessary things and leave them behind us. Is there anything in your life God is calling you to leave behind?



Try this!

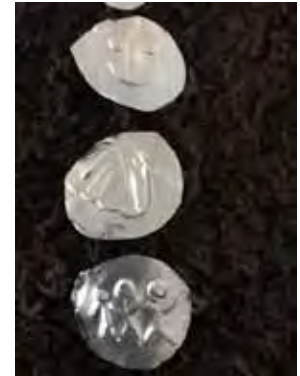
## A pilgrim's tokens

Pilgrims often collected tokens as they travelled to different holy places – this was to prove they had been, but also to remind them and others of their travels. Thick tin foil, for example that which is used to make food containers, is ideal for this or you can stick aluminium foil onto card. Obviously sharp edges may need rounding off to make them safe.



Using a pencil or knitting needle, carefully draw out your token image onto a circle of foil. What symbols can you come up with – either our usual Christian symbols, or maybe you could think of some of your own? You could design one token to put into your scrip for each week of Lent.

Thinking of symbols is a good way to mark our journey of faith. What simple image could sum up your experience of God each week? Perhaps you could illustrate it in your journal, or find a picture you could stick in there as a visual reminder of a spiritual journey. Or if you are a words person, what one word would you use to summarise it?





Try this!

## A pilgrim's staff

For pilgrims, this was perhaps one of the most important items to carry on their journey. The staff helped them to keep going as they walked, and it protected them from attackers and wild animals.

To make your staff, you could use a strong stick, a bamboo cane, a walking stick, or the cardboard tube from wrapping paper. You will also need ribbon, coloured strips of paper/pipe cleaners, and some pilgrim tokens.

The pilgrim would add small tokens to their staff and tie things around it as they journeyed. You could make some more foil tokens and add them to your staff. As you journey through Lent, you may choose to tie something round your staff each week – a coloured ribbon or coloured paper strip or a pipe cleaner. Think about the colours you choose – how could the colours reflect your feelings and experiences or, during Holy Week, the different parts of the story of Jesus? You could choose a brighter colour as we approach Easter day and maybe even add a bell or something that makes a cheerful noise for Easter to remind you that this is a happy celebration.

Maybe you already use a staff, a stick or other walking aid, or a wheelchair or buggy, to help you on your journey through life. The tying of ribbons or wool is a good way to mark your faith journey week by week through Lent, and can prove an opportunity to witness to others when they ask what the colours signify. If you don't have a stick at all, then think about the words of the Bible which strengthen and protect you. Perhaps you could write these on a stone to carry in your pocket when you go out and about.



# Try this!

## Walking finger puppets

You will need:      Card (plain or coloured)  
Pens or crayons  
Scissors.



- Draw a body of a person (with no legs). Arms can be out to the side or down at the side. Colour in your person.
- Cut out the body shape (ask for help if needed, when using the scissors) and then draw two holes (where your legs would start!) for your fingers to fit through.
- Cut out the holes and make sure your fingers fit through them.
- Feel free to add hair and even clothes... then get walking! Why not make more than one and they can chat, race or whatever your imagination leads you to!



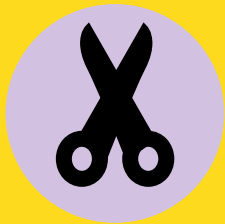
Try this!

# Beaded cross necklace

You will need:            120cm cord for lacing  
                                     8 pony beads.

What you do:

- Push on one bead into the middle of the lace.
- Put another bead onto the lace, and thread the other end through the bead to hold it secure (from the other end). Equal out the lace ends before moving on to the next step.
- Push on another three of the beads onto the lace on. And thread the other lace end back through them to secure. Equally out the ends once more.
- Put the last bead onto the lace, and thread the other end of the lace back through once more. Equalling out the ends again.
- If you wish, you can add another bead in the same way at the end of the lace, as a finishing touch.
- Tie the ends to secure.
- Wear your necklace, or give it to a friend.



Try this!



## Nail cross

You will need:            4x 5cm masonry nails  
                                     Thin wire.

What you do:

- Place two 5cm nails next to each other, facing opposite directions.
- Wrap the wire a couple of times around the nail, about 1/3 of the way from the top.
- Place the two nails next to each other, facing in opposite directions.
- Place them on top and across the nails and secure, and wrap the wire in a lashing style around the nails to form a cross.
- Bring the wire up and around to the head of the nail at the top of the cross.
- Wrap the wire around the head and then form a loop with the wire. Cut off the excess wire.
- You can also tie a red ribbon on the top of the cross, or wind it around the middle to signify the blood Jesus shed. Alternatively, you can add some wire with beads on to represent the resurrection.



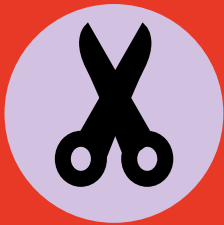
# Try this!

## Stained glass cross

Make your own stained glass window for Easter.

This craft can be adapted to make it as easy or as complex as you wish, but even the most basic looks lovely.

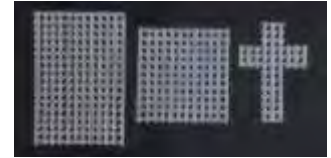
- Put a rectangle of sticky-back plastic sticky-side-up on a flat surface.
- Cut a broad cross shape out of thin card, then cut a slightly smaller cross out of the middle of this to make a cross-shaped outline. Place this onto your sticky back plastic.
- Now cut or tear pieces of tissue paper of various colours and use them to cover the inside of the cross shape by placing them on the sticky surface. It does not matter if they overlap slightly. If you are really artistic, you could use this to good effect! No tissue paper? You could use scraps of ribbon or wool or material. No sticky-back plastic? Why not put clear glue on a sheet of clear plastic wrapping or a filing pocket or strong clear plastic bag?
- When you have finished, you can use the stickiness to fasten your cross to the window and see the light come streaming in through the 'stained glass'.



Try this!

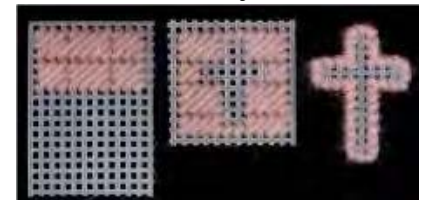


## Cross in a pocket



- Using seven count plastic canvas, cut three pieces:
  - A. Cross shape is two holes wide and 12 holes from top to bottom. At the cross arms it is eight holes wide.
  - B. The back piece is 11 holes wide and 16 holes high.
  - C. The square front piece is 11 holes by 11 holes.
- Using some knitting yarn or similar, measure off one yard, and thread it into a tapestry needle. Use this colour for the cross border and the two rows of stitching on the rectangular piece and the square piece of plastic canvas (see photo). Stitches are worked diagonally. See photo for length of each stitch. For the cross, whip stitch around the border, making two stitches at each outside corner, one going each way.
- Use a second colour stitch inside the cross as well as the cross-shape rows on the front square piece. Each stitch goes diagonally over one plastic canvas junction.
- Assemble the pocket by placing the square piece over the bottom of the rectangular piece, matching the plastic canvas holes. Use a complimentary colour of yarn to whip stitch around the top border, beginning with the top of the square piece, going from right to left. When you get to the end of the row, start going through both of the plastic canvas layers, connecting them together as you continue stitching down and around the bottom and up the next side, over the top and back to where you started sewing them together.

This is one of the crafts from the URC Greenbelt Festival – for more ideas and how to connect with this project see [www.urc.org.uk/greenbelt](http://www.urc.org.uk/greenbelt)



Try this!

## Egg cosy

Ideal for boiled eggs or small chocolate eggs!

You will need:            four ply (two colours)  
                                     number 12 needles.

What you do:

- Cast on 36 sts.
- Row 1-3 K1, P1.
- Rows 4-9 ST st.
- Row 10-20 change to second colour and work in G st.
- Row 21 change back to first colour and knit, decreasing 4 sts randomly across the row ( 32 sts).
- Row 22 knit.
- Row 23 knit, decreasing 4 sts randomly across the row ( 28sts).
- Row 24 knit.
- Row 25 knit, decreasing 4 sts randomly across the row (24sts).
- Row 26 knit.
- Row 27 knit, decreasing 4 sts randomly across the row (20sts).
- Row 28 knit.
- Break yarn, leaving a long end. Thread through stitches on needle and draw up tightly.
- Embroider a cross or flowers using either chain stitch to make a cross or lazy daisy stitch to add flowers.
- Pull up the thread holding the stitches at the top, darn the thread end into hold firmly in place and join the sides.



Try this!

# Crochet chick egg cover

You will need:            Yellow wool (DK)  
                                     4 or 4.5mm hook, depending on tension

Abbreviations:  
ch – chain  
dc – double crochet  
ss – slip stitch  
dtr – double treble  
tr – treble  
htr – half treble

What you do:

- Round 1: ch 6, join with slip stitch (ss).
- Round 2: 2 dc in each stitch (12 dc) join with ss.
- Round 3: [1 dc in first stitch, 2 dc in next stitch] repeat (18 dc) join with ss.
- Round 4: 1 dc in each stitch (18 dc) ss.
- Round 5: [1 dc in next 5 stitches, 2 dc in next stitch] repeat around (21 dc) ss.
- Round 6: [1 dc in next 6 stitches, 2 dc in next stitch] repeat around (24 dc) ss.
- Round 7-9: 1 dc in each stitch (24 dc) ss.
- Round 10: [1 dc in next 10 stitches, dec across next 2 stitches] repeat (22 dc) ss.
- Round 11: 1 dc in next 4 stitches, dec across next 2 stitches, 1 dc in next 9, dec across next 2 stitches, 1 dc in next 5 (20 dc) ss.
- Round 12: Miss 1 stitch, 1 dc in next 9 stitch miss 1 stitch 9dc (18 dc).
- Slip stitch to the next stitch to join, finish off and weave in ends.

Wings (make two).

- ch 8, dtr in 5th ch from hook, dtr in next ch, tr in next ch, htr in last ch 1, ss to starting ch (same ch that htr is worked in), stitch to each side of chick about halfway down.
- Embroider the face using satin stitch, a triangle for the beak and a few stitches together for the eyes. Leave the bottom open to be able to slide the egg inside.





Try this!

## Knitted hearts

You will need:

Double knitting wool, any shade  
4mm knitting needles  
Stitch marker  
Yarn needle  
Scissors  
Stuffing.

Abbreviations:

K = Knit

P = Purl

M1 = Make a stitch, using the left-hand needle lift the strand from the front between the two needles and knit into the back of that strand.

K2TOG = Knit the next 2 stitches together

P2TOG = Purl the next 2 stitches together

ST(S) = Stitch(es)

See [www.blog.createandcraft.tv/free-knitted-heart-pattern/](http://www.blog.createandcraft.tv/free-knitted-heart-pattern/) (crochet pattern also available) for illustration of the different steps. This was originally created in response to NHS appeal for gifts to give relatives unable to visit those in hospital.



### What you do:

- Make 2 sides.
- Cast on 3 sts.
- Row 1: Purl.
- Row 2: K1, M1, K1, M1, K1 (5sts).
- Row 3: Purl.
- Row 4: K1, M1, K3, M1, K1 (7sts).
- Row 5: Purl.
- Row 6: K1, M1, K5, M1, K1 (9sts).
- Row 7: Purl.
- Row 8: K1, M1, K7, M1, K1 (11sts).
- Row 9: P5, K1, P5.
- Row 5: Purl.
- Row 6: K1, M1, K5, M1, K1 (9sts).
- Row 7: Purl.
- Row 8: K1, M1, K7, M1, K1 (11sts).
- Row 9: P5, K1, P5.
- Row 10: K1, M1, K3, P3, K3, M1, K1 (13sts).
- Row 11: P4, K5, P4.
- Row 12: K1, M1, K2, P7, K2, M1, K1 (15sts).
- Row 13: P1, M1, P2, K9, P2, M1, P1 (17sts).
- Row 14: K3, P11, K3 (17sts).
- Row 15: P1, M1, P1, K13, P1, M1, P1 (19sts).
- Row 16: K1, M1, K1, P15, K1, M1, K1 (21sts).
- Row 17: P3, K15, P3.
- Row 18: K1, M1, K2, P7, K1, P7, K2, M1, K1 (23sts).
- Row 19: P4, K7, P1, K7, P4.
- Row 20: K4, P6, K3, P6, K4.
- Row 21: P5, K4, P5, K4, P5.
- Row 19: P4, K7, P1, K7, P4.
- Row 20: K4, P6, K3, P6, K4.
- Row 21: P5, K4, P5, K4, P5.
- Row 25: P9, P2tog (10sts).
- Row 26: K2tog, K6, K2tog (8sts).
- Row 27: P6, P2tog (7sts).
- Row 28: K2tog, K3, K2tog (5sts).
- Row 29: P2tog, cast off purl wise.
- With right side facing, re-join yarn top centre back, to complete left mound as follows:
- Row 24a: K2tog, K10 (11sts).
- Row 25a: P2tog, P9 (10sts).
- Row 26a: K2tog, K6, K2tog (8sts).
- Row 27a: P2tog, P6 (7sts).
- Row 28a: K2tog, K3, K2tog (5sts).
- Row 29a: Cast off 2sts, P2tog, cast off.
- Your first knitted heart is now complete! Repeat the whole process to create another heart, and complete the matching pair, which you can then stuff and sew together.

Try this!

# Footprint bookmark

You will need:

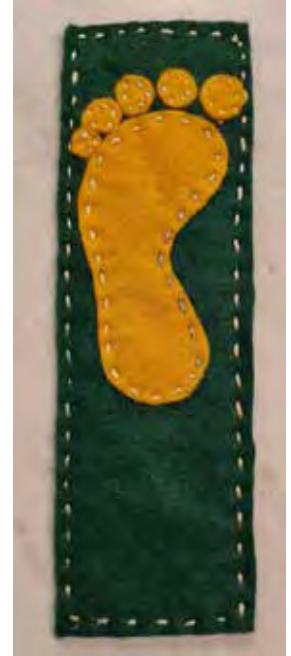
Felt, in two colours

Embroidery thread or fine wool

Cut two rectangles 17 x 5.5 cm of felt for the front and the back.

What you do:

- Cut out the foot template, and cut out each piece from your second colour of felt.
- Stitch the foot to one of the rectangles to form the front.
- If you do not want to stitch, you could use fabric glue as an alternative.
- Place the second rectangle on the back and stitch around the edge. You can use any stitch that you prefer. I used running stitch, but blanket stitch also works well.
- If you do not want to stitch, you can glue the two pieces together.





## God walks with you

*The Lord is my shepherd. I have everything I need. He gives me rest in green pastures. He leads me to calm water. He gives me new strength. For the good of his name, he leads me on paths that are right. Psalm 23:1-3*

The Shepherd is always with his sheep, just as God is with us always and as we journey through Lent. Read or watch Psalm 23. The Jesus Storybook Bible: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6fM4\\_8VU-8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6fM4_8VU-8)  
Rewrite the word of the psalm for yourself. Say thank you for all the ways God has taken care of you, and tell him anything you are worried about.

### Finger prayer walk

Collect some items that will help create a finger prayer walk, linking to the different parts of the psalm. Here are a few ideas:

- sandpaper
- stones

- blue paper
- foil paper
- bubble wrap
- corrugated card
- soft wool
- cotton wool



Place the items in a circle on the table or floor and use your finger to walk around the different textures. Ask God to walk with you. Stop and think how each one makes you feel.

With the hard and rough surfaces, talk to God about things that are difficult and frightening. With the shiny and water-like items, talk to God about what is making you sad. With the squishy items like the sponge, sink your fingers into the sponge. Ask God to help you and be with you when things are difficult. With the bubble wrap, pop the bubbles and talk to God about things you are worried about. Feel the items that are soft and comforting and remember that God loves everyone. As you reach the centre you can be still and when you are ready say: Amen.



## Thirsty - the need to be refreshed

*A deer thirsts for a stream of water.  
In the same way, I thirst for you, God.  
I thirst for the living God.  
When can I go to meet with him?  
Psalm 42:1-2*

Imagine you are out walking and you have been in the hot sun all day, and you are thirsty. You turn a corner and see in front of you a stream of clear fresh water. You long for a drink.

How much do you long for God? Is there a special place where you can meet with God, where you can sit and talk to God or read from the bible. God wants to spend time with you on the journey. Just spend some time quietly with God – find your favourite spot to sit, get comfy and just be quiet with God.



Or

Take a glass of fresh water and think about how good it is to be close to God. Sip gently from the glass and talk to God about your day. Perhaps what the day has been like or before the day begins ask God to be with you through the day.



## Direction – God leads you on your journey

*Lord, tell me your ways.  
Show me how to live.  
Guide me in your truth.  
Teach me, my God, my Saviour.  
I trust you all day long.  
Psalm 25 :4-5*

Ask God to guide you.

Sit quietly with some paper and coloured pens or crayons. Start praying by drawing a shape on your piece of paper. In the shape write your name for God. Ask God to part of your prayer time. Start to colour and draw around your God shape.

You can write words or just doodle. Add other shapes and colours as you pray. You can pray with words in your head, or write words on the paper. Enjoy your quiet time with God and see where the patterns and colours lead you.

If you would like to start with a template, you can download a selection here:  
[www.prayingincolor.com/handouts](http://www.prayingincolor.com/handouts)



## Forgiveness

*God, be merciful to me because you are loving.*

*Because you are always ready to be merciful, wipe out all my wrongs.*

*Wash away all my guilt and make me clean again.*

*Psalm 51:1-2*

What do you need to talk to God about? Where do you need God's forgiveness?

Talk to God about the things you have got wrong. Tell God that you are sorry and know that you are forgiven by God. God wants us to talk to him, and we can say sorry to God for things that we have done.

Try 'painting' with water and see how your picture is transformed and then disappears as the water dries.

Write, draw or make handprints with water on a suitable surface. As you watch the image disappear, say sorry to God and know that God forgives you because he loves you. He takes away those things for which you are sorry. Know that God hears you when you say sorry, and washes away the wrongs and gives you a clean heart. You could write the word 'sorry' in the mist, on a mirror, or in the sand and watch as the word disappears. Or, write the word 'sorry' in the centre of a page, and put your prayer/thoughts around the word.







## Blessings for others

*God, have mercy on us and bless us.  
Show your kindness to us.  
Then the world will learn your ways.  
All nations will learn that you can save.  
God, the people should praise you.  
All people should praise you.  
Psalm 67:1-3*

This psalm was a blessing for God's people. Who can you bless?

Write a card of blessing for someone. Bless members of your family household or a neighbour by doing something kind. Leave a note or a picture for them somewhere they will find it as a surprise for example in a lunch box, coat pocket or bag, or put it through their letter box.

Or

Get in touch with someone who you have not spoken to for a while. Make a card, give them a call or write letter.

Pray this blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace.



## Being thankful

*You are my God, and I will thank you.  
You are my God, and I will praise your greatness.  
Thank the Lord because he is good.  
His love continues forever.  
Psalm 118 :28-29*

As you journey, it is good to notice things around you – people, places and things that happen – and give thanks to God.

Take a few moment each day to think of things that you are thankful for. Take some ribbon or string and tie it to a notice board, door handle, a stick or piece of wood. You could use different colour ribbons to represent different things you are thankful for.

Or

Write a list of thanks, and pin it up on a notice board, or attach it to a mirror or window where you will see it. You can add to this through the journey to Easter.



Try this!

## Fish on Friday? Meat-free Monday?

For a long time, people stopped eating all meat except fish on the Fridays during Lent, to help them prepare spiritually for Easter.

Not eating meat can make a difference to our environment as well. Climate experts say we will need to reduce our consumption of beef and lamb in order to reduce carbon emissions and prevent climate change.

But take care: alternatives to meat can create greenhouse gas emissions too.

- Could you and your family plan a meat-free day?
- Which recipes could you swap with other households?
- Which foods produce the highest and lowest amounts of greenhouse gases?

Follow the links for more information:

[www.bbc.com/future/article/20200211-why-the-vegan-diet-is-not-always-green](http://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200211-why-the-vegan-diet-is-not-always-green)

[www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/classic-recipes-minus-meat](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/classic-recipes-minus-meat)



Try this!

## Nothing new?

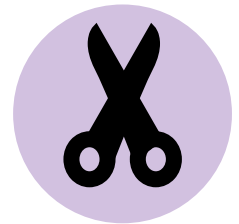
How are your fixing skills? Could you sew a button or mend a sock? Could you refashion old clothes?

One new T-shirt creates the same carbon emissions as two to three days of energy use in your home. Buying second-hand or enjoying what you already have are great ways to lower your carbon emissions, to help reduce the effects of climate change.

- Apart from food, medicines and basic toiletries, could you spend Lent mending, borrowing, buying second-hand, or going without?
- Give away things you don't need: is there someone else who could make use of it, or a charity shop that could benefit?

Follow the link for more information:

**[www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/nothing-new/](http://www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/nothing-new/)**



Try this!

## Go-go-go green?

Walking and cycling can be great for our health and well-being. They can help make the world better for others too by reducing our carbon emissions.

- Could you cycle or walk today instead of motorised transport?
- How long could you go without using a car?
- Could you talk to your council about improving transport options in your area?

Follow the link for more information:

[www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/transport/](http://www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/transport/)



Try this!



## Low power mode?

In the UK, a quarter of a person's carbon footprint is from the energy they use at home. Gadgets, TVs, lights, cooking and heating – they all add up!

- Could you make an effort to lower your energy bills over Lent and do good for the environment too?
- Where are you wasting energy by not switching off? A home energy monitor can help you identify savings.
- Could you cope with your home being 1°C cooler?

Some people choose a 'green' tariff for their energy bills, but some are 'greener' than others. Can you find out how 'green' your energy is? Ask your supplier if they actually invest in renewable energy sources.

Follow the link for more information:

[www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/energy-use/](http://www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/energy-use/)



**Try this!**

## **It's rubbish!**

Most of us have seen the harm that plastic waste can cause to our environment. But we still throw away or recycle lots of plastic in our household bins every week. Recycling is better than landfill but uses a lot of energy.

- Could you do a week's shopping without any throw-away plastic packaging?
- How many days in a row could you manage not to throw out any plastic?
- Take a rubbish bag with you when you go for a walk and gather up any plastic waste you spot. A litter picker is a fun way to do it!

Follow the link for more information:

**[www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/single-use-plastics/](http://www.livinglent.org/what-could-i-do/single-use-plastics/)**



Try this!

## Bring a banana?

Which of your possessions would you miss the most if it disappeared? Your phone? Your TV? Your bed? People without a home of their own often live with very few things and life can be very difficult. It can be tough to know how best to help.

- Could you show kindness to a homeless person? A bottle of water or a ripe banana can be appreciated as a gift, but why not ask first to make sure.
- Ask your church what is being done to address homelessness in the community.
- Find out more information from **[www.housingjustice.org.uk](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk)**: you can donate there too.

Follow the link for more information:  
**[www.housingjustice.org.uk](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk)**





Try this!

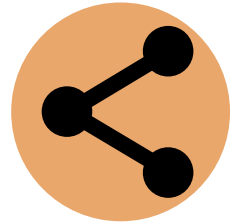
## A little letter

Words are powerful! There's a phrase 'The pen is mightier than the sword'. If you want to change something about your community, who could you ask? What sorts of words would you use?

- Find out how to get in touch with your local political representatives and councillors. What could you say to them?
- Ask friends if they agree with you about things that you think should be changed. Could you inspire them to send a message to their politicians too?
- Would your politicians come on a walk with you or your church group while you show them that you would like to change (respecting safe distances and safeguarding)?

Follow the link for more information:

[www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/meetyourmp/](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/meetyourmp/)



## Gather

This week we're going to make an Easter Garden. This can be done on any scale. You could make it in a clean yogurt pot, the sort that has a treat in the corner. You could make it in a take-away tub or on a tray. You might have a small corner of your own garden which you could transform. Each day of Holy Week will see our garden develop.

Today we simply gather together the things we will need. If you're unable to make a living garden, why not make one from lego or modelling clay, or draw on a paper plate? For a living garden you will need:

- a waterproof container for your garden (or a corner yoghurt pot)
- some compost or soil
- twigs
- moss
- small stones for a path
- something to form the tomb – the base of a milk bottle or juice carton, some plasticine, papier mache, or anything else that you can think of. It needs to form a mound / hill, and you need to be able to form a doorway or entrance. (If you are making a corner yogurt pot garden, this is already there for you).

### **For Wednesday**

- some flowers and leaves (or things to make some).

### **For Thursday**

- card and pens.

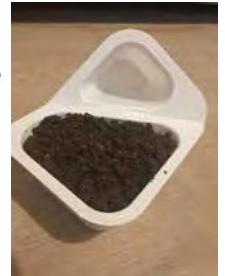
### **For Friday**

- lollypop sticks or twigs to make the cross, and glue or twine to fasten them
- a stone, big enough to cover the entrance to the tomb.

## Prepare

Having gathered your resources, it is time to prepare the ground. The parable of the sower reminds us of the importance of well-prepared soil.

- Break your compost up and use it to fill your container. Add some water to help it settle.
- Make your tomb at one edge of the garden. You may want to bury this slightly, or cover it with moss.
- Use moss to make the grass in the garden but leave some space for trees and flowers.
- Make a path to the tomb if you have room. If your garden is big enough, why not make a silver-foil pond too? You might even make a fence around your garden if you choose. We are made in the image of a creator God – use your creativity to design your garden.



## Create and plant

“I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them” it says in Ecclesiastes 2:5.

Now you can fill your garden with beautiful things – flowers (or simply flower heads if your garden is small), trees made of twigs and leaves – if you have no flowers, make some with paper. Aim for a riot of colour.



## Feed and pray

1 Corinthians 5:7 reminds us that it is not important who does the planting or who does the watering, what's important is that God makes the seed grow.

The planting and watering has to be done, and today we will very gently water our garden, making sure that everything is damp. It is probably best to do this with a spray bottle or drops from fingers like rain as too much water can damage it just as much as letting it dry out.

We water it and remember that Jesus is the water of life. Using the card and some brightly coloured pens, design a sign to put with your garden, using the words *"The Lord will guide you always, he will satisfy your needs.... You will be like a well-watered garden" Isaiah 58:11*



## Sorrow in the garden

Today is a day of sorrow. There are just two things our garden needs to change it from an ordinary garden to an Easter garden.

We think of the Jesus dying on a cross. Using two sticks, form them into a cross and stand it in a corner of the garden. Pause for a moment. After the crucifixion, Jesus' body was laid in the tomb and a stone was rolled in front of the entrance to seal it. Place your stone in front of the entrance to the tomb.



## Wait and wonder

We wait and we wonder. This is the hardest day, a day of inaction. There is nothing we can do but wait.

I wonder how this day would have been for Jesus' followers? I wonder where God was in the waiting? I wonder where we see God in our experiences of waiting? I wonder what can be gained from these waiting times?



## Rejoice

Remove the stone from in front of the tomb. Alleluia, Jesus is risen!



As well as making an Easter garden with plants and soil, you could also make an Easter garden like this one.



You need a digestive biscuit for the ground, some icing coloured green with food colouring for the grass, a jam sandwich biscuit with a heart shape in the centre for the tomb (you will need to cut the bottom off this carefully), a mini-egg for the stone (again, you may need to cut the base off this for it to stand, depending on the depth of your icing) and some cake decorations.

Use the icing as a glue to fasten the different parts together.





# Thank you for journeying with us over Lent and into Easter.

We pray you have drawn closer to Christ through this time together.

We hope you have managed to share something of your journey with companions along the way.

Now we are called to travel onwards, walking the way, living the life of Jesus today as Easter people, wherever we are.

This is a gift from your local church, specially created by the United Reformed Church [www.urc.org.uk](http://www.urc.org.uk).





**Walking towards Easter together** is a joint project by URC Children's and Youth Work, Communications, and Education and Learning.

Many thanks to everyone involved in helping bring this into being. Special thanks to all those who shared their story; to Sue Fender, Nicola Grieves, Judy Harris, Hannah Middleton, Jenny Mills, Simon Peters, Sam Richards, Leo Roberts, Roo Stewart, Lorraine Webb and Ruth White for their creative contributions, and to Sara Foyle, Andy Jackson, Laura Jones and the mighty URC Communications Team.





*The*  
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