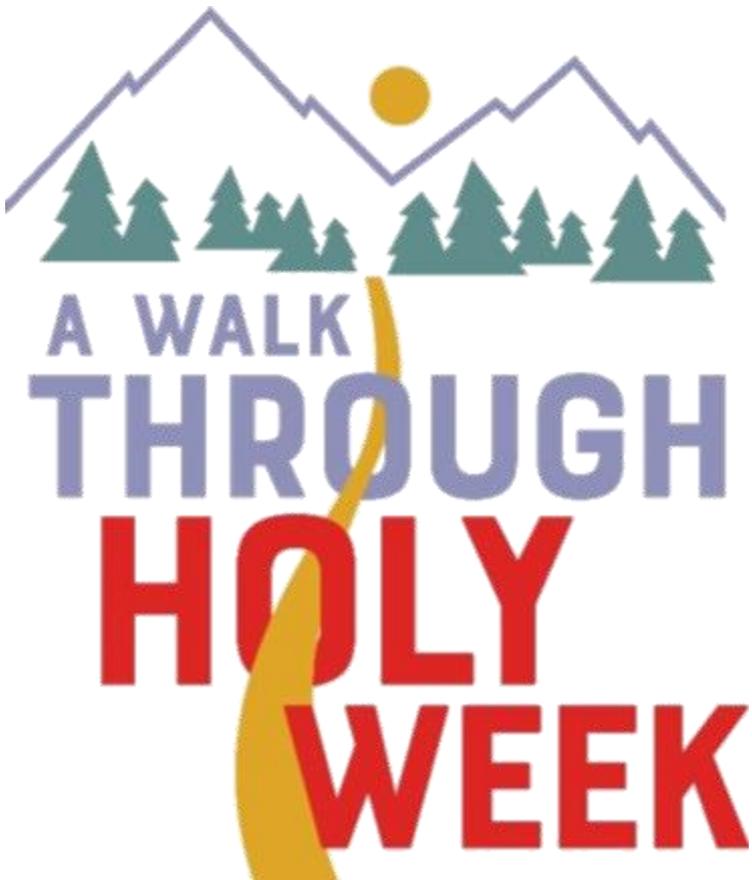


2020 Lenten Family Devotional

**Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Waynesboro, PA**



Dear ELC Families,

On Ash Wednesday, February 26th we're starting the season of Lent, a six-week long journey towards Easter. This year we'd like to journey together as we explore some of the main events of Jesus' life before his crucifixion and resurrection. We'd like you to do one devotional each week on the day that suits you the best. These specific themes will be incorporated into our Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer worship, and then be a part of our *Walk through Holy Week* during Sunday school on Palm Sunday, April 5th. You're invited to join us to go through these stations. We pray that this Lenten journey will be a blessing for you all.

Some of the questions below might be too complex for younger children, please lead the conversation in a way that will be age appropriate for your family. For the Bible readings you might choose to use a different, more child friendly translation. For each session, as you gather—we suggest lighting a candle or gathering around a cross to create a sacred space that will be free from distractions.

No Matter the Cost

Week 1 (Sun. Feb. 23 – Sat. Feb. 29)

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What will you give me if I betray him to you?’ They paid him thirty pieces of silver and while they were eating, he said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.’ Judas, who betrayed him, said, ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’ He replied, ‘You have said so.’

Matthew 26:14-15; 21-25

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*Judas betrayed the trust of Jesus and his fellow disciples in betraying Jesus to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver. Jesus predicts that one the disciples will betray him.*)

- What were the reactions of the disciples when Jesus said that one of them will betray him? *(They were upset saying that surely they would never do such a thing. Even Judas himself denied that he would ever betray Jesus.)*
- Do we sometimes betray each other's trust? *(You can talk about trust between you and your children, children and their siblings and friends, etc.)*
- What does it feel like when someone betrays our trust? *(This might be more difficult to answer for the younger children, but give it a try. Please keep the conversation focused and don't allow this time to be a blaming session between the kids. Focus on feelings, not specific occasions. You might address those later.)*
- Do we sometimes betray God's trust? *(Have kids share examples of the way we might betray God. You can talk about sin or other ways in which we might be unfaithful in our faith walk.)*
- What is God's response to our unfaithfulness and betrayal? *(Talk about God being saddened by our betrayals, but also talk about God's unconditional love, grace and forgiveness. Talk about Jesus loving and forgiving his disciples.)*
- Closing Prayer *(Pray for God's forgiveness for the*

times you have turned your back on him or your loved ones. Give God thanks for his unconditional love and grace.)

- Blessing (*Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can say something like: May God always bless you with his grace and love.*)

Love Incarnate Denied

Week 2 (Sun. March 1 – Sat. March 7)

Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, ‘I do not know the man!’ At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: ‘Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.

Matthew 26:74-76

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*Peter’s fear for his own life caused him to denounce his relationship with Jesus. Peter denied Jesus three times.*)
 - How did Peter feel after he denied Jesus? (*He felt sad and ashamed. He regretted his*

actions.)

- Is it difficult to be openly Christian among non-Christian friends or family? Have you ever pretended to “not be a Christian” in order to gain acceptance from others? *(Talk about how we sometimes fear that people will make fun of us, or that we won't be accepted by others because of our faith.)*
- How do we feel when we deny Jesus before others? *(We might feel sad, ashamed, hypocritical.)*
- How does God feel when we deny him or run away from him? *(It saddens God, for he wants us to remain faithful and courageous.)*
- What is God's response when we deny him? *(Even when saddened, God always searches for us because he loves us. Even when we deny him, he remains faithful and welcomes us back. After his resurrection, Jesus came to Peter and asked him three times whether Peter loved him and three times Peter answered that he did. (John 21:15) Peter received a second chance and a new beginning.)*
- Closing Prayer *(Pray for God's forgiveness and the strength to stand firm for what you believe. Give God thanks for his unconditional love and second chances.)*
- Blessing *(Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can something like: May God always bless you*

with his forgiveness and second chances.)

Pilate Washes His Hands

Week 3 (Sun. March 8 – Sat. March 14)

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood: see to it yourselves.”

Matthew 27:24

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*Pontius Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the crowds shouted to crucify him. Because he didn’t want to be blamed for Jesus’ death, he ceremoniously washed his hands, telling people they are the ones guilty and that he is innocent.*)
 - What do you think, was Pilate innocent or guilty? (*His guilt remains because he handed Jesus over to be crucified, when he had the power to free him.*)

- Have you ever failed to stand up for what is right, just telling yourself it's not "my problem"? (*This might be more difficult to discuss with younger children, but you might talk about bullying or standing up for a sibling or a friend. You can talk about helping someone in need or protecting the environment...*)
- Why is it our calling and responsibility to stand up for the weak, the poor, the oppressed? (*God calls us to love our neighbor, especially the one in need. You can mention the Good Samaritan story. Luke 10:25-37*)
- What should we do after we realize that we didn't stand up for someone or something that is right? (*We can apologize to the person, we can ask God for forgiveness, we can change our ways.*)
- What does God do when we fail standing up for what is right? (*He forgives us when we're sorry, and he continues to put on our hearts his calling to be merciful, just, kind and loving.*)
- Closing Prayer (*Pray for God to guide you and to give you the strength and courage to do "what the Lord requires of you" "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."* Micah 6:8b)
- Blessing (*Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can something like: May God always bless you*

with his mercy and courage.)

The Painful Thorns

Week 4 (Sun. March 15 – Sat. March 21)

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’

Matthew 27:28-29

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*The soldiers mock and beat Jesus. They make a crown of thorns and put it on his head. Then they make fun of him and call him king of the Jews.*)
 - How do you think Jesus felt when this happened to him? (*Jesus felt the pain. He must have felt alone and abandoned.*)
 - Why was Jesus willing to go through such pain? (*He willingly suffered this pain on our behalf, because he loves us. He paid the price*

for our sins and took our punishment on himself so that we didn't have to be punished.)

- Do you think that Jesus can relate to us when we're hurting? When we feel pain or when we are sad and alone? *(Yes, Jesus can relate, because he went through all of the pain and suffering.)*
- What is God's response to our pain and suffering? *(God is broken hearted when we're hurting. He is there when we're in pain. He wants us to know that we're never alone and that he loves us. God sends people into our lives, that are there for us when we're sad, hurting or alone. He gives us parents, siblings, friends, as well as the family of faith that cares about us.)*
- What can we do when someone else is hurting? *(We can help them, pray for them, comfort them and be there for them.)*
- Closing Prayer *(Thank Jesus for enduring the pain, thank him for suffering for your sins. Ask him to be there for you when you're hurting and help you to be there for those who are in pain.)*
- Blessing *(Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can say something like: May God always bless you with his comfort and healing.)*

The Cross

Week 5 (Sun. March 22 – Sat. March 28)

Then (Pilate) handed him over to them to be crucified. So

they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

John 19:16-18

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*Even though he was innocent, Jesus is being sentenced to death. Jesus is forced to carry the heavy cross upon his shoulders to the place where he is crucified.*)
 - What does the heaviness of the cross signify? (*This might be rather abstract concept for the younger children, but if they're able to understand, you can talk about cross signifying the burden of our sin. Jesus had to carry the weight of our sin on his shoulders. He had to take it all on himself. You can use an image of carrying a bag full of rocks, it's heavy and it wears us down. Bible describes sin as heavy burden we often carry.*)
 - How does the sin and bad things in our lives

weigh us down? *(When we don't treat each other well or when we hurt others, it makes us and people around us feel hurt, sad, upset and isolated.)*

- How can knowing that Jesus carried and endured the weight of the cross help us when we struggle with the weight of our sin? *(It can comfort us and give us strength, knowing that Jesus can relate to our struggles with sin and brokenness and that he can understand our hurts and pains.)*
- What should we do when we struggle with heavy burden, whether it's something bad we did or something bad that has happened to us? *(We can always come to Jesus, come to the cross and "lay our burdens down". We can pray for God's help, comfort and peace. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.")*
- What should we do when we see someone else struggle with something difficult? *(We're called to help one another, comfort and strengthen each other. We read in Galatians 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." We're called to carry each other's burdens... talk to kids how we can do this... by being kind, being good helpers, by sharing things, etc.)*
- Closing Prayer *(Thank Jesus for carrying the weight*

of the sin upon his shoulders. Ask him to be there for you when you feel like you're carrying a heavy burden. Ask him to help you to be there for those who are struggling.)

- Blessing (*Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can something like: May God always bless you with his comfort and strength.*)

Remember Me

Week 6 (Sun. March 29 – Sat. April 4)

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him saying "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 23:39-43

DIRECTIONS:

- Highs and Lows (Start with a quick round of Highs and Lows. Have each member share their high of the day and their low of the day.)
- Opening Prayer (Someone leads a short prayer.)
- Bible Reading
- Questions
 - What is happening in the reading? (*Jesus is*

being crucified with two criminals. One is mocking him while other is saying that they are deserving the punishment, while Jesus is being crucified even though he didn't do anything wrong. Then one criminal asks Jesus to remember him when he comes to heaven. Jesus tells him, that that very day he will indeed see him in heaven.)

- Why did Jesus have to die on the cross? *(Jesus paid the price for our sins. He took our place and endured punishment we deserved. Because God is merciful and he loves us, he chose to forgive us and give us grace, but because God is also just, someone still had to pay the price. And that someone was Jesus—God Himself. Out of his love and obedience Jesus gave his life for ours and saved us from punishment and death.)*
- How do Jesus' words to the criminal make you feel? *(Jesus' promise to repentant criminal should give us a lot of hope. Jesus is reminding us that he has power even over death and that he can give the gift of eternal life to all who come to him and believe in him. Apostle Paul says in Romans 8 "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.")*
- How does it make you feel that Jesus gave his life for yours? *(We may experience all kinds of feelings, like feeling of gratefulness, joy, humility, hope, etc.)*

- What should be our response to Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf? *(Just like the criminal being crucified with Jesus, we should always trust in Jesus, knowing that he loves us even to the death on the cross. We should take comfort in the fact that he is our Savior, and that because of his death, we don't have to fear death.)*
- How can we share this good news with people around us? *(By the way we live our lives, filled with hope and joy we experience through our relationship with Jesus. We can tell others that Jesus loves them and that he died for them. We can tell them that there is nothing that can separate them from the love and grace of God.)*
- Closing Prayer *(Thank Jesus for remembering us in the time of trial. Ask him to be there for you especially in the moments when it's difficult to feel God's presence.)*
- Blessing *(Bless each other with a sign of the cross. You can say something like: May God always bless you with his comfort and strength.)*