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Our Journey Through Lent

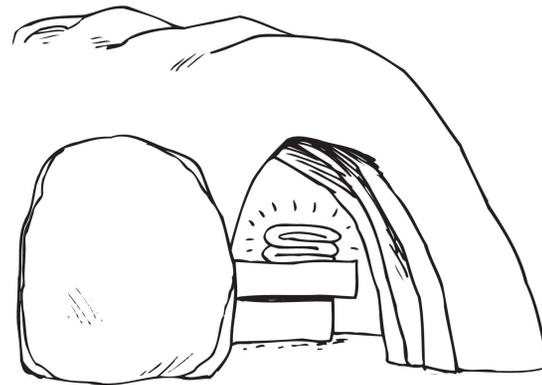
Reading Through the Gospel of Mark

February 16 - April 12, 2020

Colour and Journal

We experience so many emotions this week as we read these stories. Write down or colour some of your thoughts each day.

Look back at all of the stories of our lenten journey. What stories surprised you most? What stories challenged you the most? What stories marked you as Jesus' own? How will you live differently because of your lenten journey?



Monday, April 6 to Easter Sunday, April 12

Jesus eats a very special meal with his disciples before going to pray. Things quickly shift and Jesus is arrested and is soon sentenced by the political and religious leaders to die. Jesus is crucified by the authorities and after he dies he is put into a tomb by those who love him. Why do you think the people wanted him to go away? How do these stories make you feel?

Three days later everything changes. Jesus comes back to life. Jesus returns to his friends.

Dear Jesus, this week is hard. These are stories we don't want to read. Be close to us as we read today's story. We know the ending is amazing, but we're not there quite yet. Help us to understand each story through this week and help us to be ready for Easter day. Amen.

Weekly Scripture Readings

Monday, April 6 - Mark 14:1-11

Tuesday, April 7 - Mark 14:12-31

Wednesday, April 8 - Mark 14:32-52

Maunday Thursday, April 9 - Mark 14:53-72

Good Friday, April 10 - Mark 15:1-41

Saturday, April 11 - Mark 15:42-47

Easter Sunday, April 12 - Mark 16:1-8 Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! Let us worship God.

Spark Story Bible Stories

Monday - # 444 - Mary Anoints Jesus

Tuesday - # 462 - The Last Supper

Wednesday - # 468 - Jesus is Betrayed

Maunday Thursday - # 474 - Christ the King

Good Friday - # 476 - The Day Jesus Died

Easter Sunday - # 482 - The Empty Tomb

Growing in God's Love Stories

234 - The Thankful Woman

Maunday Thursday # 272 - A Passover Meal

Good Friday # 274 Jesus Dies

Easter Sunday # 276 Women at the Tomb

The Season of Lent

Lent is one of the most special seasons of the church year. It follows the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany during which we anticipated and prepared for the birth of Jesus and welcomed him as God come to earth to be with us. In the season of Lent we travel with Jesus through his adult life as he teaches and reveals to us who God is and how much God loves us. As our journey of Lent progresses we will travel with the Jesus through the final days of his life on earth, his final teachings to his followers, his arrest, trial and crucifixion. Our Lenten journey will conclude in dark times. And then we will wait...we will wait for what happens next.

The name for the season of Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'lencten' which means 'spring' and refers especially to the lengthening of the days that happen as winter comes to an end and the spring is upon us. Lent lasts 40 days, not counting the Sundays, which are always considered 'little Easters' each week. The number 40 reminds us of the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness after his baptism and before his ministry began. In the wilderness Jesus experienced a harsh time of trial and preparation. In the early church Lent was aside especially for the preparation of new converts for baptism on Easter. For everyone it was a time of self-examination, penitence, humility and fasting.

Through time the harsh demands of Lent have softened and people today look upon Lent as a time for growing, learning and reflecting on the meaning and experience of Jesus' ministry and his death on the cross. During Lent many people focus their time on prayer and meditation while others are concerned with sharing God's love by helping others. Some people 'give up' something for Lent and others 'add something more' to remember this season and the love of God expressed in the ministry of Jesus.

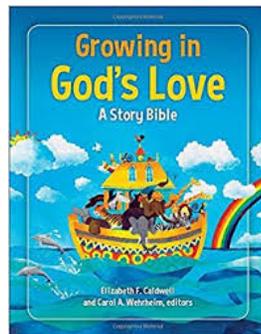
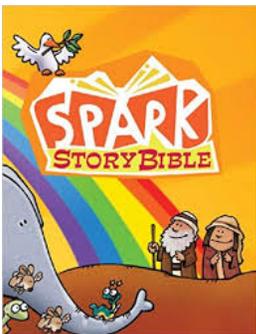
This booklet is one of the many ways you and your family can journey through Lent and prepare together for Easter.

How To Use This Booklet

In this booklet you will find bible readings, prayers and journal activities for individuals, and/or families of all ages to use as you journey through Lent. You will have the choice of reading from the bible or using a children's bible story book if your family includes younger children. Either way we will all be reading the Gospel of Mark. In this we will hear the story of Jesus' ministry from its beginning to Jesus' resurrection.

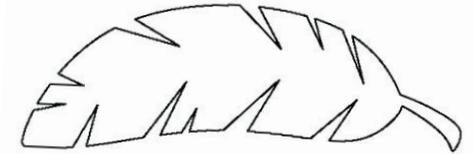
Set aside some time each day to read. You might choose a time early in the morning, over a family meal, or before bed. Make it a time that is consistent and allows you the best opportunity to reflect and pray without feeling rushed. Begin your devotions with the prayer written for that week and then read the daily scripture or story for that day. Take time to reflect on what you have read. There are no 'right' answers. Use the theme prompts to help you dig deeper into the story and discover new learnings. Add questions of your own too. Complete your time by giving thanks to God for the opportunity to learn, grow and discover the good news of Jesus and how this good news transforms us.

Each week there are either 6 scripture readings, or 3 (or so) bible stories to be read. Use a version of the scripture that you are comfortable reading. If you have grade school children at home you may wish to use the Good News Bible. If your family is older you might choose the Revised Standard Version. We recommend using either the *Spark Story Bible* published by Sparkhouse, or *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible* edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol H. Wehrheim for families with young children. This booklet references both of these books.



Colour and Journal

Write a song of praise this week. Find something to wave while you sing your song.



Monday, March 30 to Palm Sunday, April 5

Our journey takes us to Jerusalem. Our week begins with the wonderful story of Jesus being welcomed by everyone as he enters the city. People spread their cloaks on the road and wave palms branches to celebrate Jesus' entry.

Once he enters the city Jesus begins to tell his followers that these are the dark days he was telling them about. This is where he will be challenged by the people in authority who want him arrested. The scribes and chief priests keep trying to catch him in an argument about who he is and what he is doing. Through stories and speaking clearly Jesus tells them how they are so very wrong. He tells his followers to keep watch and be ready.

God bless the one who comes riding on a donkey. Hosanna! Hallelujah! God bless the name of the Lord! Help us Lord to keep shouting out our Hosannas through the dark days ahead. Amen.

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, March 30 - Mark 11:1-14

Tuesday, March 31 - Mark 11:15-33

Wednesday, April 1 - Mark 12:1-27

Thursday, April 2 - Mark 12:28-44

Friday, April 3 - Mark 13:1-23

Saturday, April 4 - Mark 13:24-37

Sunday April 5 - Raise your palms and fill the streets with shouts of Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest!

Spark Story Bible Stories

308 - The Greatest Commandment

454 - Palm Sunday

346 - Be Ready

Growing in God's Love Stories

344 - Remember to Love

270 - Jesus Visits Jerusalem

222 - Who Was Invited? Who Came?

Planting a Lenten Garden

As a growing visual symbol of Lent and Easter make a mini garden for your home. To make this garden you will need the following:

- a mini terra cotta pot (approx. 2" wide)
- a shallow and wide saucer/pot (approx. 6" deep & at least 10" wide)
- well-drained potting soil mix
- paper white bulbs (or multi-coloured lettuce, or herb seeds)
- a large river rock (a bit wider than the mouth of the mini pot), and smaller flat rocks if you wish
- a 6" cross you have made by gluing or wrapping string around two tree twigs to place in your garden on Good Friday
- small silk butterflies to decorate your garden with on Easter Sunday

1. Place the mini pot on its side in the center of the wider saucer/pot. Place the large river rock over the mouth of the mini pot. This will be the tomb in the garden.
2. Fill the larger pot with potting mix to 1/3 the depth of the pot. Plant the paper white bulbs in the soil with their tips up. Pack them tightly beside each other, but leave a pathway to the mouth of the smaller pot. You may wish to mark this path with smaller river rocks if you'd like.
3. Cover the bulbs with more soil so the bulb tips are just barely peeking above the soil. Water until the soil is about as moist as a wrung out sponge.
4. Place your garden in a well lit place. You can move the garden to your coffee or dining table once it blooms, but right now it needs strong, bright sunlight to begin to grow.
5. Keep your garden watered so that it is always slightly moist. Your garden should bloom in 30-45 days in time for Easter.
6. Place your twig cross in your garden on Good Friday.
7. On Easter morning remove the large river rock from the mouth of the small pot and place your butterflies throughout your garden.

Wednesday, February 26 to Sunday, March 1

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Some people go to church on Ash Wednesday and the minister makes a sign of a cross on their forehead with ashes to help them remember that they belong to God. On this first day of our Lenten journey we begin by remembering that we belong to God.

Baptism reminds us that we belong to God. This week we hear that John baptized many people who wanted to repent of their sins and also be marked as belonging to God. John did this over and over again, but he never expected to baptize Jesus. When Jesus came and asked to be baptized, John didn't want to baptize him. But Jesus insisted. This occasion marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

Let's begin our journey each day with a prayer.

Dear God, We are so thankful that you love us. Remind us as we read our story today that this is not just any story; this is our story; that the bible holds stories of our belonging to you. We thank you that Jesus came to live in the world with us so we could know you the best way possible. Help us always to remember that we belong to you. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Wednesday, February 26 - Mark 1:1-11

Thursday, February 27 - Mark 1:12-20

Friday, February 28 - Mark 1:21-34

Saturday, February 29 - Mark 1:35-45

Sunday, March 1 - Join your church family in worship and walk together through these first days of Lent

Spark Story Bible Stories

234 - John the Baptist

242 - Jesus' Baptism

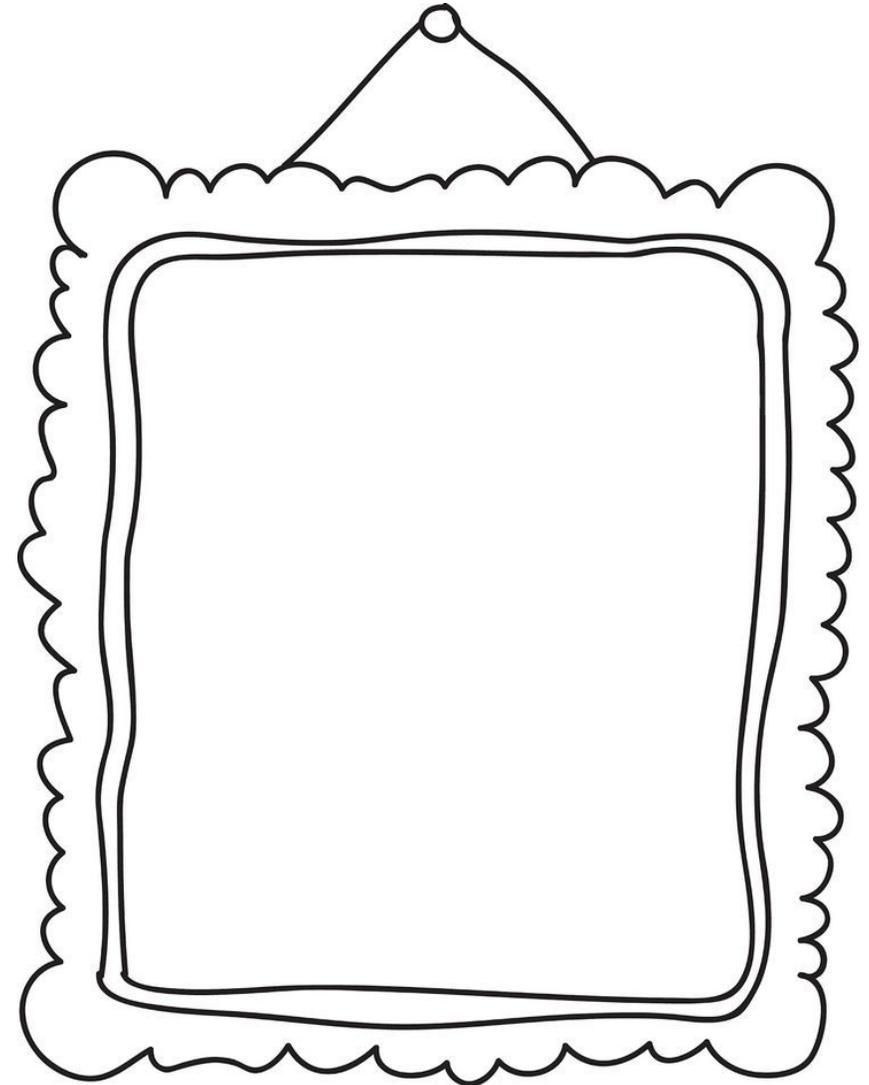
Growing in God's Love Stories

200 - Shhh, Listen

202 - An Awesome Day

Colour or Journal

In our stories we hear that sometimes walking with Jesus is difficult, and sometimes we get things wrong. This doesn't mean we stop our journey. It just means we keep walking close to Jesus so we learn and grow in our faith. Jesus tells the disciples that they need to let the children and everyone get close to him. Draw a picture or write about being with Jesus even when we mess up.



Monday, March 23 to Sunday, March 29

Things are getting confusing and people are getting confused. The disciples love and follow Jesus, but sometimes they mess up. They begin to argue amongst themselves who Jesus' favourite is, they stop children from seeing Jesus because they think children aren't important for Jesus to see. They don't mean to get things wrong, but still they do.

Other people also hope things will be easier than Jesus says. A rich man is challenged to do more than he is already doing, but really he is being asked to begin to think more as Jesus does.

Jesus begins to tell his follows on the this lenten journey that things aren't going to be easy going forward. Jesus lets them know that he is going to be arrested and be killed. But this won't be the end of the story. No, the story will have a great ending, and Jesus will be live again and be with them..

Tell Jesus how you mess up, and ask that Jesus forgive you and keep teaching you how to follow him.

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, March 23 - Mark 9:1-13

Tuesday, March 24 - Mark 9:14-29

Wednesday, March 25 - Mark 9:30-50

Thursday, March 26 - Mark 10:1-16

Friday, March 27 - Mark 10:17-34

Saturday, March 28 - Mark 10:35-52

Sunday, March 29 - Adults, children and all ages in-between are welcomed by Jesus

Spark Story Bible Stories

#324 - Who Is the Greatest?

328 - Jesus Blesses the Children

334 - A Rich Man's Questions

Growing in God's Love Stories

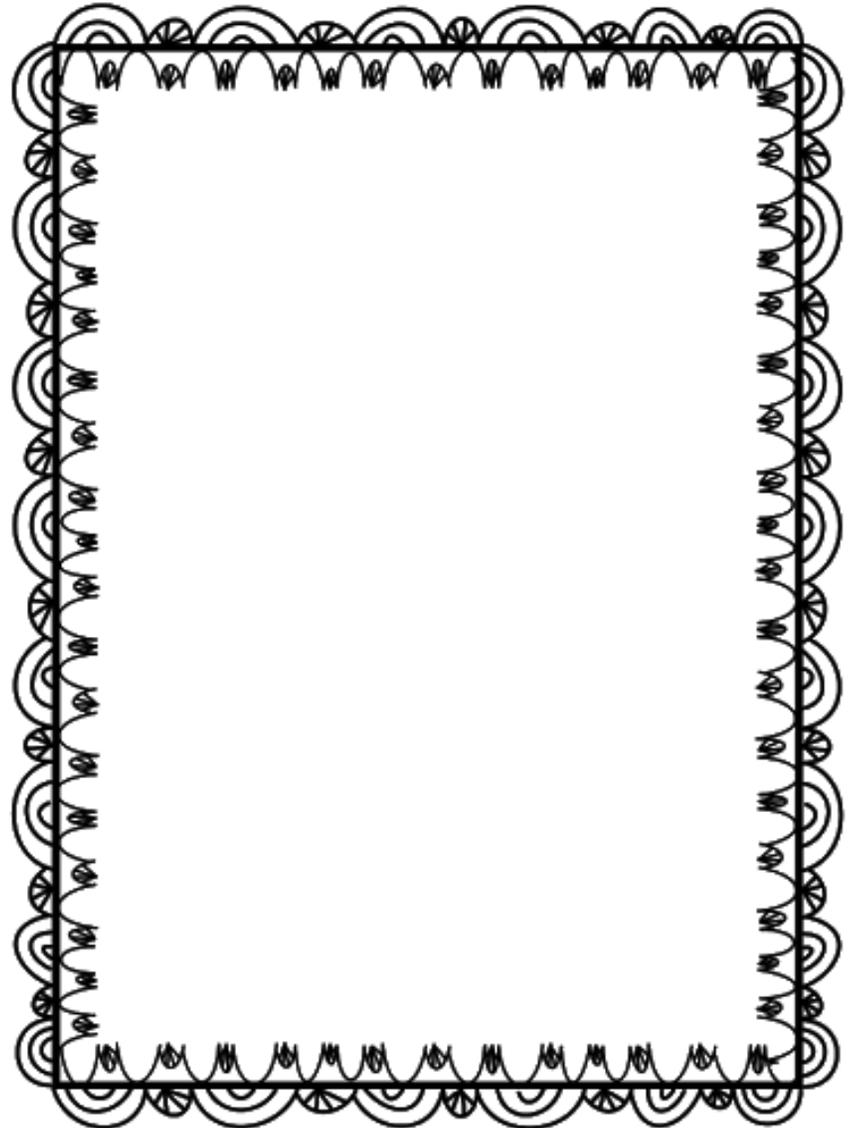
250 - Friends Who Help

340 - Jesus Blesses the Children

246 - The Rich Man

Colour or Journal

Tell and hear stories this week of your baptism. When were you baptized? Who baptized you? Who was there? What happened when you were baptized? How do you know that you belong to God? What does belonging to God mean to you? How do others know that you



Monday, March 2 to Sunday, March 8

As we travel through the readings this week Jesus gathers people around he to follow him and be his disciples. As Jesus travelled his twelve disciples travelled with and saw and heard all that he had to say about God's love for all people. People began to hear about Jesus and as his reputation grew throughout the land many began to travel long distances to have Jesus heal them.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark Jesus stops to care for people; to get to know them, and to invite them to follow him. Relationships matter to Jesus. Some people choose to follow, while others accuse Jesus of breaking the rules. Even this early in our lenten journey there is a glimmer of the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Dear Jesus, we are thankful that you call us to you, offering us teaching and healing. Open our eyes to seek you each day and to answer your call to follow you. Help us to see your love in every day and to learn from you about God. Amen

Scripture Readings

Monday, March 2 - Mark 2:1-12

Tuesday, March 3 - Mark 2:13-17

Wednesday, March 4 - Mark 2:18-28

Thursday, March 5 - Mark 3:1-12

Friday, March 6 - Mark 3:13-19a

Saturday, March 7 - Mark 3:19b-35

Sunday, March 8 - Come to worship today as a disciple, watching and listening and doing.

Spark Story Bible Stories

248 - Tempted

258 - The Disciples

256 - Jesus Heals

Growing in God's Love Stories

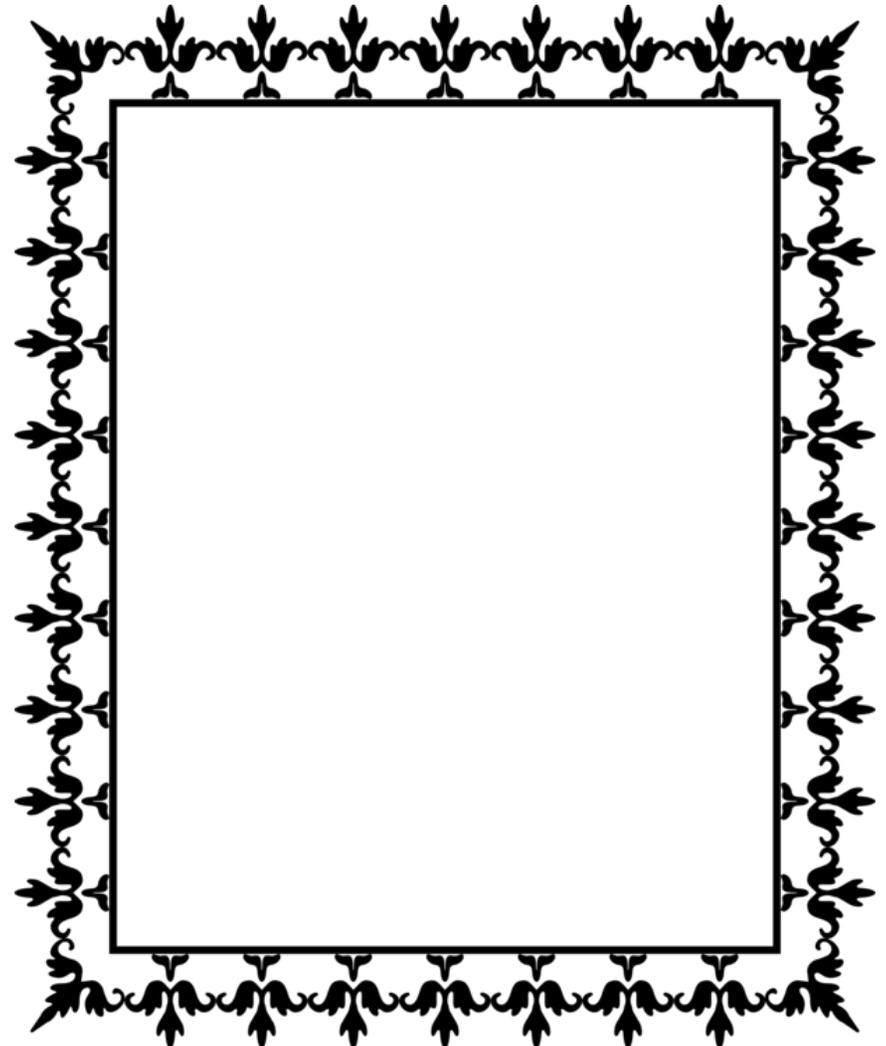
204 - A Wild Test

206 - Follow me!

250 - Friends Who Help

Colour or Journal

Jesus sent out his disciples to also tell stories, heal the sick, and feed the hungry. When they came back from their journeys they immediately told Jesus what they done and what they had taught. Who might you help this week? What do you need to do to be helpful? How can you plan to be prepared to help others? What will you tell people if they ask why you are helping them?



Monday, March 16 to Sunday, March 22

As we keep on journeying we get to witness so spectacular miracles. Jesus feeds huge crowds of follows because they are hungry. He continues to heal and rescue people, even walking on top of stormy waters to comfort his disciples caught in their boat tossed about on the sea.

Over and over again the question is asked, “Who is Jesus?” Eventually Jesus asks Peter to answer that very question for himself. How does Peter answer Jesus’ question?

After these few weeks of our lenten journey who do you think Jesus is?

Lord Jesus, you have showed yourself to be a friend, a person who cares for everyone, wanting each to be made whole. Calm our hearts just as you calmed the storms for the disciples that we would not be afraid. Help us to know who you are and through you to know God. Amen,

Scripture Readings

Monday, March 16 - Mark 6:1-29

Tuesday, March 17 - Mark 6:30-56

Wednesday, March 18 - Mark 7:1-23

Thursday, March 19 - Mark 7:24-37

Friday, March 20 - Mark 8:1-26

Saturday, March 21 - Mark 8:27-38

Sunday, March 22 - Come sing praises to God for all you have seen and heard

Spark Story Bible Stories

426 - Jesus Feeds 5000

294 - Walking on Water

322 - Peter’s Faith

Growing in God’s Love Stories

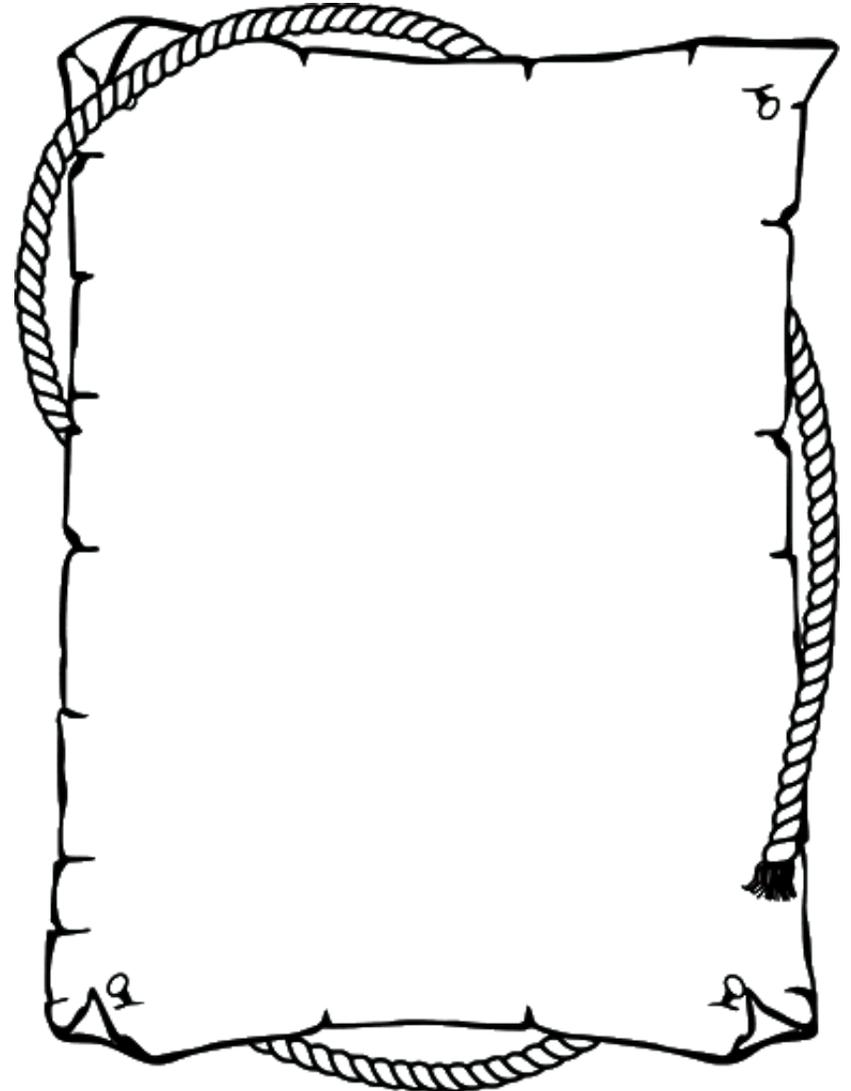
264 - A Boy and His Lunch

260 - A Canaanite Woman Does Not Give Up

258 - Jesus Touches People

Colour or Journal

So many people follow Jesus and every person wants something; to be healed, to be fed, to be taught, to be loved. Jesus makes time for everyone. What would you want from Jesus? Where would your stand in the crowds; pushing your way to the front or hanging back hoping to be seen by Jesus? When has someone been a good friend to you to get you close to Jesus? When have you brought others to see Jesus?



Monday, March 9 to Sunday, March 15

Jesus helped people know God by telling them special stories that describe how God loves and cares for them. These special stories are called parables. Often Jesus starts a parable with the words, “The kingdom of God is like...” When you read or hear a parable you often try and figure it out. Ask yourself over and over again what does today’s story reveal to me about the kingdom of God? As you collect each of the stories build a picture for yourself of what the kingdom of God is like. Think of the words you would use to describe God to someone else.

Perhaps the stories of healings which follow our parables also help us understand what the kingdom of God is like. Keep building your ideas about God’s kingdom.

Thank you Jesus for seeds and fields, lamps and lamp stands. As we read today’s story, help us to grow in our love for you. Help us to know you better and tell stories of your kingdom to others. Amen.

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, March 9 - Mark 4:1-20

Tuesday, March 10 - Mark 4:21-34

Wednesday, March 11 - Mark 4:35-41

Thursday, March 12 - Mark 5:1-20

Friday, March 13 - Mark 5:21-34

Saturday, March 14 - Mark 5:35-43

Sunday, March 15 - What stories of good news will you bring to worship today to share with others?

Spark Story Bible Stories

292 - The Sower

320 - Parable of the Mustard Seed

286 - A Storm

Growing in God’s Love Stories

210 - The Sower

224 - Something Big From Something Small

266 - Calming the Storm

Colour or Journal

As we continue to travel through Lent remember that Jesus is not just teach us about a kingdom that is yet to be, he is also describing God’s kingdom in the here and now. What stories would you tell so others would know what God is like? What good seeds will you plant this week? How will you tend and water seeds of God’s love for others? Can you point out to someone where God is doing great things in this world?

