

FAITH @ HOME

Week of March 1, 2020

First Sunday in Lent

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Matthew 4:1-11

REFLECT: Imagine this: your little brother is turning one year old. You are at his birthday party. All the people who love him (and you) are there. In the middle of the dining room table is a tower of cupcakes! Some are chocolate and some are vanilla. They are covered in tasty frosting and colorful sprinkles. Your mouth is watering as you imagine how yummy they must taste. But your dad said that you can have one, after Happy Birthday is sung to your brother. But they look so yummy and you are tall enough to grab one off the table. Everyone is busy. No one would know. But your dad said to wait. If you take one now, then your dad will be sad you didn't wait for your brother's birthday song. You won't be part of the birthday celebration. Waiting is the grown-up choice. It shows that you can be trusted when an adult asks you to do something hard. Jesus had to make a hard choice as well. He had to trust that waiting was the right choice.

RESPOND: Jesus was so hungry in our story. He was tempted to turn rocks into bread. Instead, he knew that he needed more than just bread to live. He needed God. Let's turn rocks into a way to talk to God. Gather 5-8 clean flat river stones, either from outside or the store. Write on draw on them one thing you regularly pray for. Perhaps family members' names, or a skill like listening or kindness. Then, find a special place to keep them. In the morning, look through your rocks and choose the one that you want to pray throughout the day. Maybe keep that stone in your pocket during the day to help remind you to keep praying.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: HANNAH GRAHAM



For nearly 15 years, Hannah has served in a variety of Christian Formation roles. Hannah utilizes her knowledge of child and adolescent faith development in the classroom and in executing big picture planning to enhance the shaping of Christian community. She has led the Education for Ministry Program as a trained mentor and regularly contributes to Diocesan events, camps, retreats, and committee work. In addition to her ministry at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Glenwood, Maryland, Hannah devotes herself to growing in faith as a beloved child of God, wife and mother of three boys, ages 10 months-5 years old.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Psalm 32

REFLECT: When was the last time you had a boo boo or an accident? How did it happen? Were you running too fast and tripped? Or, maybe you hit your knee on dirt and rock or scrapped it on the street and your skin was made red from blood? Whatever it was, you got hurt. So much that maybe you screamed out. Maybe you cried. But as much as you were hurt, it is also probably true that someone came to help you. It may have been someone in your family, a friend or even a stranger. They probably helped you wipe away the blood, the dirt, the germs, and the tears. They probably got a band aid or a bandage and put it on for you. They probably even gave you hug and held you and told you it was all okay. It would all be alright. And either soon after you were hurt, or a little later, or even a long time after, it probably was okay and alright, or at least better. In those moments, our family, friends and strangers are being like Jesus. They are helping God help us. Because God always promises to be with us and to come quickly to help us when we get hurt or need God for whatever reason.

RESPOND: The next time someone helps you when you are hurt, be sure to thank them, and say a prayer to thank God for showing up for you through that person. And whenever you see someone hurt and you believe you can, help. Think about it as an opportunity for you to be like Jesus and to help God show up for that hurt person.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PATRICK KANGRGA



Patrick Christopher Kangrga is the Associate for Youth Ministries at Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, California. Originally from Arkansas, he left home to participate in two years of the Episcopal Service Corps in Maryland and in Massachusetts. After this came the beginning of his lay-professional journey with positions at parish and diocesan levels in New York and New Jersey. He has primarily served youth, with a foray into children's ministry.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Matthew 4:1-11

REFLECT: Temptation shows up a lot in the Bible, from Adam and Eve in Genesis to the Book of Revelation. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is tempted by the devil during his forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. The devil tests Jesus to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and Jesus repeatedly shows his reliance in his relationship with God. We are often tempted to do things we shouldn't. Temptation comes at us every day in ways both big and small and it is up to each of us to resist each temptation using our own strength and faith in God. It may not seem like all temptations we encounter in our daily lives are created equal. However, when we give into temptation we are intentionally choosing to do something we know goes against the wishes of those who love us most – God, our families, our friends, and ourselves. We are placing our own wishes and desires above all else. While this may be more fun at the time, in the end, temptations have a way of catching back up with us. Jesus reminds us in this reading that we can't avoid temptation but it is our job to put temptation in its place and remember to rely on our relationships with others and on our own intuition and faith.

RESPOND: Gather a notebook to create a journal for Lent. In your journal, write or draw your answers to these questions: When, where, or with whom do you feel most tempted in your life? When have you given into temptation? How does embracing temptation make you feel (then and later on)? What makes it difficult to avoid temptation? What are some strategies you and others can use to avoid temptation? Where do you see God when you resist temptation?

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KATE HUSTON



Kate Huston serves as the Director of Young and Young Adults and the Program Director for the IONA School of Formation in the Diocese of Oklahoma. Kate has worked in formation ministry for over 15 years and currently serves on the Forma Council. Before moving into full-time formation ministry, Kate had a faculty position in Political Science and continues to teach courses as an adjunct professor. Kate has a daughter, Brigid (6), and they love to read, watch the Great British Baking Show, and walk their 90-pound furball, Sully the Great Pyrenees.

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First Sunday in Lent

ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Psalm 32

REFLECT: Former Prime Minister William Gladstone served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and was responsible for economic and financial matters in England. On one occasion, he asked for statistics from a clerk who was always very precise, so he did not verify the numbers. Unfortunately, the clerk made a horrible mistake that made the entire budget wrong. Gladstone was made to look like a fool. He sent for the clerk. The clerk was terrified, certain that he would be fired. Instead, Mr. Gladstone complimented the clerk on years of good work. He did not focus on the mistake, but covered it with encouragement.

God is greater than any human, but this story shows us that forgiveness is about more than absolution. The psalmist reminds us that God not only forgives sin; God also covers it and imputes no iniquity. We cry out to God in our sin and pray that God will come quickly to help us. God answers by granting forgiveness, covering our sin with Christ's righteousness, and then forgets. By God's grace we are set free from the burden of our sin.

RESPOND: Are you burdened by something you've done; are you terrified by the reality of sin in your life? Write whatever burdens you on a piece of paper; fold it until it is small enough to fit into your pocket and carry it for a day. How does it feel to know you are carrying it with you? At the end of the day, take the paper and offer it to God. Cry out to God for forgiveness and trust that God will forgive, cover you with Christ's righteousness, and forget. Throw the paper away. Repeat whenever you feel burdened by sin in your life.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PEGGY HOPPES



Peggy Hoppes is a writer, artist, photographer and crafter; her creativity reflects her faith. She is married with two grown children. She began writing "A WORD FOR TODAY," a devotional, in August 1999 which can be found at www.awordfortoday.org. Peggy teaches a Bible class at her church and has led workshops. She has published several books. Peggy shares her gifts to build up the church, to help Christians grow as disciples with living faith, and to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

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