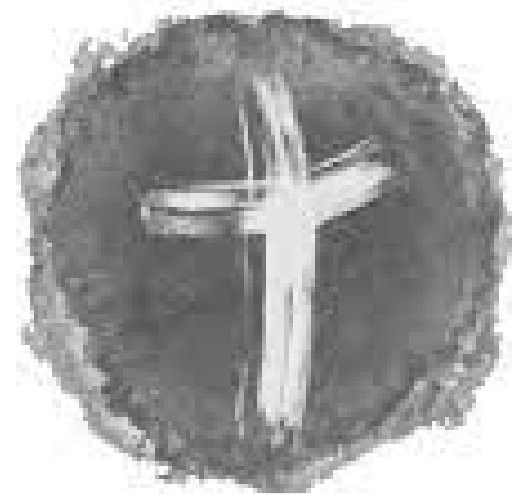
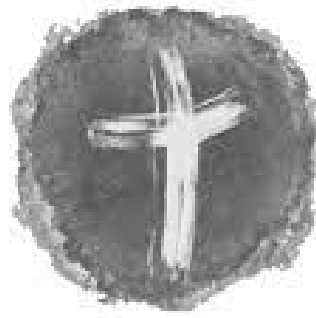




Lent
IN A BAG



Lent
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Lent IN A BAG

Families & Children

What is "Lent?"

Lent is the season before Easter where we try to walk with Jesus. His life, ministry and death are remembered during this season. It's also a time to think about how God is with us all the time. You may do this through prayer, reading the Bible, helping others or something else. Anything that connects you to God is a great practice. Even walking the dog, seeing the green grass or hearing chirping birds might be a way to be with God.

What is "Lent in a Bag?"

"Lent in a Bag" equips you with symbols of the season of Lent to help you have prayer or conversation at home, and draw close to God.

Choose one night or time of the week to gather at a table. As a family, let one person pick one of the symbols to talk about. The order doesn't matter and how often you pick an item but do make sure to cover all the objects during Lent.

Have someone read the reflection (words in purple) aloud.

Sand

Hold the bag of sand in your hand. Read and reflect:

Jesus went into the desert for 40 days to be "tested." The desert is a dangerous place and Jesus was hungry, cold and tired. He was also tempted and tormented, but he didn't give up. When things get tough, how do we remember God is there for us?

Rock

Take the rock out of the bag. Read and reflect:

While in the wilderness, Jesus was invited to transform stone into bread. He knew he was not called to do this by God. He didn't change the rock into food. Later, Jesus became known for doing amazing things. He fed the hungry, offered encouragement and healed people. When you are angry or sad, it may feel like your heart has become a rock. How does that feel? How can you help someone who has a "rock" in their heart? How does it feel to help others? Think about a time where you helped someone.

Human Figure

Find the wooden peg doll. Read and reflect:

Jesus was human and God. This is a hard thing to understand. But, Jesus knew that we could do good things on earth, just like he did. In Lent, we are counting down 40 Days until Easter. What can you do to be more like Jesus at home? At school? Everywhere you go?

Candle

Light the candle Read and reflect:

Winter can be cold and dark. Spring is a time where we think of sunshine and flowers blooming. Jesus is called the "light of the world." Jesus told his disciples to be a light in the world too and make a difference. So where do you shine? What do you think you are good at? What is your talent? How do you shine bright? How can you encourage someone to see the good in themselves?

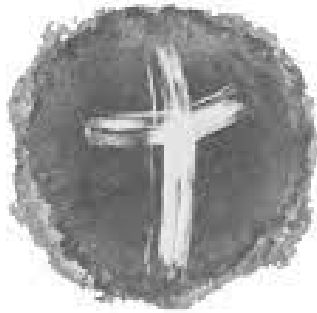
You might like to read the story of Jesus in the Desert in a Children's Bible. If you want a version contact Lynn.

Or

Sand Tray Extension Activity - Exploring the Desert

The children took part in this activity in their groups the first Sunday in Lent. If you have some more play sand you could use this activity also. A seed tray works well.





Lent
IN A BAG

Adults and Teens

What is "Lent?"

Lent is the season before Easter where we try to "journey" with Jesus. His life, ministry and death are remembered during this season. It's also a time to look at our own lives and draw closer to God. You may do this through prayer, meditation, reading, outreach or something else. Anything that connects you to God is a great practice.

What is "Lent in a Bag?"

"Lent in a Bag" equips you with symbols of the season of Lent to help you have prayer or conversation at home.

For your own devotion, daily or weekly, choose one of the symbols to reflect on as you make your way through the season of Lent. Invite those around your table or gathering to pick one of the symbols as a starting point for conversation for the whole group.

- Sand

Hold the bag of sand in your hand. Read and reflect:

Just between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness, crossing the desert and rocky earth for 40 days, "to be tested."

What constitutes wilderness in your life?

What have you learned there?

How do you know you have left the desert or wilderness for a new life in Christ?

- Rock

Take the rock out of the bag. Read and reflect:

While in the wilderness, Jesus was invited to transform stone into bread. Though he resisted the temptation there and then, he became justly renowned for feeding people who were hungry for food, or for love, or for a word of encouragement, or simple acceptance.

Might there be a stony place in you that needs transforming? Some attitude or habit that, with a little attention, might even become a gift for you and others?

- **Human Figure**

Find the wooden clothespin figure. Read and reflect:

Because Jesus was, as we confess, fully human, he gets us, understands us from inside our skin, and knows from experience that we're each capable of great things, Godly things. And no matter what we do, he keeps on inviting us to join in his work, which has become our own work.

This Lent, what might you plan to do over these 40 days? When Easter arrives, will you reflect Christ who lives in and through you?

- **Candle**

Light the votive candle. Read and reflect:

Lent begins in the dimness of late winter and ends with the burst of bright spring. Jesus is, according to John's gospel, the "light of the world." That light, shone bright in the disciples, who chose to follow Jesus. Jesus insists to us that we are the light of the world.

So where do you shine? How do you keep your light lit? How can you help "light" others "candles?"



Sand Tray Activity - Exploring the Desert

The children took part in this activity in their groups the first Sunday in Lent. If you have some more play sand you could use this activity also. A seed tray works well.

Chat to the children while you playfully move the sand around the tray gently and slowly with your hands. (yes I know it's not exactly how you might imagine children being playful with the sand but it will hopefully slow them down, get their attention and help them to focus)

Lent is a quiet time. We think about how we live our lives. It's time to get closer to God. Let's use our sand tray to pause, pray and play a little. The sand tray reminds us of the days Jesus spent in the desert alone. Do you know what PAUSE means? Yes, it's when we stop what we are doing for a short time, sometimes it's described as a time of rest.

Let the children

- Scoop handfuls of the sand & let it run through their fingers -model it first
- 'Bury' their hands in it and ask them to notice how it feels - notice the coolness below
- Rub their hands over the top to flatten and level it
- Put their handprints in the sand



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- If you like write a message - model one yourself



Talk about

- How Jesus entered the desert by himself
- Wonder how lonely Jesus must have felt with nobody for company.
- I wonder was he scared.
- I wonder are the times when you feel scared or lonely.
- You know Jesus prayed to God in the desert and God was always with him. That's true for all of us today too.

You could also extend this activity over weeks of Lent if your children show a particular interest. Add different items to the sand each week

- leave the sand plain
- add different sized pebbles & stones
- add small sticks, dried natural items
- add selection of small desert animal play figures
- add green plants. you could then turn the desert sand tray into a play space for Holy Week.

- If you like write a message - model one yourself



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