

Sunday, February 10, 2008

First Sunday of Lent

Preparation:

Read the Gospel for the day over – Matthew 4:1-11 it can be found online at <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/ALent/aLent1.htm> Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/lenta1.htm>

<http://www.msgr.ca/msgr-7/Macdonald%20Lenten%20Poems%20list.htm>

<http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/pages.dir/fridge.htm>

<http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/child/lent/index.html>

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

Purple candle

Bible & Bookmark

Rocks of various sizes

Purple cloth (optional)

A calendar

Print up the prayer so that everyone can read it together

This is the Season of Lent – in Matthew's Gospel we here that Jesus is driven out to the wilderness to be tempted and he was there for 40 days. The first part of the gathering activity today will be to set up a worship space that will be added to for each Sunday of Lent. If at all possible put this in a place that will not be disturbed between sessions.

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the purple cloth, put it down and place the candle in the middle of it. Have the child(ren) put the rocks around the candle. While they are doing this talk about what you know about Lent – how long it is, the use of the colour purple to show that we are in a time of repentance, ask if anyone has given up anything for Lent this year, etc.

Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

Holy God,

We come to learn,

We come to grow,

We come to find Jesus,

Be with us in all we do. **Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Show the calendar to the children. Ask if they know how long a week is and show them a week on the calendar. Then ask them if they know how long 40 days is. Explain that Lent is 40 days, but that we don't count the Sundays, and that Lent started on the Wednesday before this Sunday – on Ash Wednesday. If you printed up the picture of the day from the website take a look at what is happening in it. Ask if they know who the two people are (this will be a good launch into the story).

Story Time:

Materials needed:

Comfortable place to set up a story area – around a table or on the floor with cushions

Story Characters – faces on last page, paper tubes or craft sticks

Pick up the Bible and with the children find the Gospel of Matthew and show them where the passage is that you will be looking at today. If you have readers you may want to share the story telling with them. Use the story characters to help tell the story.

Jesus walked and walked and walked. (*Move the Jesus character around as if walking*). He was beginning to feel very tired. Then Jesus walked and walked some more. He was beginning to feel hungry. He had not eaten for days and days. Jesus stopped and counted how many days he had been walking.

Jesus: “One, two, three, fourten...sixteen.....twenty-three.....thirty-seven....forty. Wow that is a lot of days.”

Jesus sat there and thought about how many things he had seen. He thought about how many good talks he had with God. He was thinking about what was going to happen next.

Suddenly, the Evil One showed up. He was looking very pleased with himself.

Evil One: “Hello Jesus. I see that you are very hungry. If you are really God's son why don't you turn these stones into bread?”

Jesus: “You will remember what is written in the Bible. We don't live by just bread, but every word that comes from God.”

The Evil One then took Jesus to Jerusalem – a place that is holy for everyone- they stood on top of the highest point of the city.

Evil One: “Jesus you will remember what was also written in the Bible. If you should dash your foot against a stone, God’s angels will take care of you. So, if you are the Son of God throw yourself off of here and the angels will come you and protect you.”

Jesus: “Remember it also says in the Bible that you are not to tempt God.”

The Evil One then took Jesus up to one of the highest places in the world. He showed Jesus all the nations of the world. He showed Jesus all the wonderful things in the world.

Evil One: “Jesus I will give you all of this if only you will bow down and worship me.”

Jesus: “Go away Evil One. Remember that it says in the Bible we are only to worship and serve God. It is time for you to go away now.”

Finally the Evil One left Jesus (*take away that character and leave the Jesus character standing alone*) all by himself.

Jesus stood there and suddenly God’s angels came to him. They gave him something to eat and took care of him.

Response:

Idea #1: Mosaic Crosses

This is an activity that will be good for marking the journey through the whole of Lent and reminds the children about how we are to act during this holy season.

Materials needed: card stock or poster board, scissors, tissue paper, small zipper plastic bags

Instructions: Ahead of time cut out cross shapes from the card stock or poster board. They should be about 6 inches high and 4 inches wide. Give each child a cross. Have them tear up lots of different colours of tissue paper into fairly small pieces (about 2 in. square) and put them into the plastic bags. Explain to the children that they are to take their crosses home and hang them up somewhere where everyone in the family can see it. As they go through Lent every time someone in the family does a good or kind thing for someone else then the person who sees them doing it is to glue a piece of tissue paper on to the cross. By the end of Lent they should have a beautiful mosaic cross that shows how much Jesus’ love is acted out in their family.

Idea #2: Bannock Making

This activity will help to remind the children that the angels came and took care of Jesus and the connection with turning stones into bread.

Materials needed: large mixing bowl, wooden spoon, oiled baking sheet, oven preheated to 350°

4 c. flour (3 cups white, 1 cup whole wheat)

5 tsp. Baking powder

1 tbsp. sugar

½ tsp. salt

½ c. lard or oil

2 c. water or milk

Instructions: Mix all dry ingredients together. Slowly mix in the lard or oil until it looks like coarse oatmeal. Make a hole in the centre of the bowl, gradually pour in the water or milk mixture. Mix all ingredients together. Knead for a few minutes but not too long as it makes the bannock tough. Pat out with hands to about ¾ inch thickness and press into an oiled pan. Prick with a fork and bake in the oven at 350 ° until golden brown (about 20 to 30 minutes).

Idea #3: Painted Stones

This activity will help to connect the children with the desert experience that Jesus had for forty days. Encourage the children to use the stones to help them pray every day during the season of Lent as they go on this journey with Jesus.

Materials needed: stones (as flat and big as you can get), tempera or water colour paints, paint brushes, containers for water and paint

Instructions: Invite the children to choose a stone from the collection that you have put out. Remind them that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness and that he would have walked over many different stones. Explain to the children that you would like to them to paint a symbol that represents Lent on their stone. If you can find some symbols (see <http://www.nvds.com/stgreg/facts.html>) of Lent that you can share with the children that would be helpful. Some possible symbols are pathways, water (for baptism), bread, praying hands. Younger children may need some help in outlining a symbol on the rock that can they then can colour in with the paint. Older children should be encouraged to think about the symbol they want before they start painting. When they are finished ask the children to put their rocks somewhere at home where they can see them everyday and remember to pray during this season.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Jesus be with us in Lent,

Jesus be near us each day,

Jesus be with our families. **Amen.**

Character Faces



Evil One



Jesus