

Planning



Sunday, March 19 – Saturday, March 25 • 2023

After Vision Shifts

Perspectives shift as Samuel calls a shepherd from the field, a psalmist sings of shepherding love, and sight is restored with mud and spit, and we ponder how ordinary elements of life point to the extraordinary.

This week...

Ecumenical prayer calendar

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiyasih and Karen L. Bloomquist. (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2018). <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle> offers valuable aids for intercessory prayers, prayer on behalf of and in solidarity with others.

Special days (commentary on p. 62)

- March 19** – St. Joseph
- March 19** – Mothering Sunday (UK)
- March 21** – Naw-Ruz (*Baha'i*)
- March 24** – Death of Oscar Romero
- March 25** – The Feast of the Annunciation

Personal reflection

God knows we live in a world that judges us based on our ability, social rank, gender identity, and skin colour.

- **What makes you feel most vulnerable or powerless?**
- **How do you respond to powerlessness? Is it considered innocence, or is it considered a failure?**
- **What accommodations do you find yourself making for others? Are these sacrifices, or do they come easily to you?**

The planning page is provided in text format for copying, adapting, and adding to your bulletin, online worship resources, website, social media (see Weekly Resources – TEXT FILES folder).

March 19, 2023

Lent 4

Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

1 Samuel 16:1–13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8–14

John 9:1–41

the focus in age-level materials

Liturgical colour purple

Notes

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Online Resources

Lection Connection

Essays and discussion prompts linking current events with this week's scriptures. Use for sermon preparation, Bible studies, and small groups or share on social media at <https://www.seasonsonline.ca/10/>.

Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home

An easy-to-share, weekly online resource supports the spiritual lives and faith formation of individuals and families at home. It is provided in the [Nurturing Faith and Spirituality at Home](#) folder.





1 Samuel 16:1–13

Psalms 23

Ephesians 5:8–14

John 9:1–41

the focus in age-level materials

God, help us to see the ways you turn the ordinary elements of life into something amazing. Shift our perspective to place you at the centre so we may be transformed as we look at the world differently. Amen.

After Vision Shifts

Change comes when we shift our perspective to see how God shepherds our whole lives. With some mud and spit, a blind person is able to see. How do the ordinary elements of our lives point to the extraordinariness that is God? Ordinary elements of life are also found in Samuel, where a shepherd is called from the field; and in the words of a psalmist, who relies on the care of a shepherd. When our vision shifts, the possibilities of what we may see become endless.

In **1 Samuel 16:1–13**, we turn to the story of Israel's kings. God calls the prophet Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse of Bethlehem as a future king. Samuel acts in faith to do as God commands. Though Jesse's seven sons come before Samuel, God has chosen David – the youngest son who is out tending the sheep. David's family had not considered him as an option. However, their perspective shifts when Samuel declares, "This is the one."

Psalms 23 describes God as the shepherd who leads the people out in a new exodus, caring for their needs and offering protection. Ordinary fields and pastures are sources of food and places of refuge and shelter.

John 9:1–41 God's restorative love is expressed in Jesus' life and ministry. Blindness and other ailments were often viewed as punishment for sin in ancient times. The disciples of Jesus and the leaders who oppose him assume this. Biblical scholar Richard Rohrbaugh speaks of an ancient custom of spitting in the presence of the blind to protect oneself from the "evil eye." Jesus transforms that act of disdain into one of healing.

Sabbath-keeping was the most visible mark of practicing Judaism. Its weekly ritual of renewal reflected the God who "rested" (translating the Hebrew *shabbath*) on the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:2). In this story, Jesus' healing on the Sabbath creates the initial controversy (verse 16). At issue is what can or cannot be done on the Sabbath, and many oral traditions developed to provide guidance.

"Kneading" was technically forbidden. Jesus' making of mud (verse 6) could be viewed as such an activity. The larger question involves Sabbath and healing. Has Jesus broken or kept the law by performing this act?

The healing creates division within the community. Neighbours divide over whether this is the same man they had known (verse 9). Pharisees divide over whether Jesus is from God or not (verse 16). The man's parents distance themselves from their son for fear of the religious leaders (verses 21–22). These divisions within the narrative hint at divisions between church and synagogue in the author's time. The threat of expulsion from the synagogue can be heard as reflecting that later state of affairs.

The transformation of the healed one is not just from blindness to sight. Initially, the blind man is a passive recipient of Jesus' actions, but he becomes more active as the story goes on. By reporting what has happened, he becomes a teacher of theology to the teachers of theology. Eventually, this healed one becomes a disciple of the one who healed.

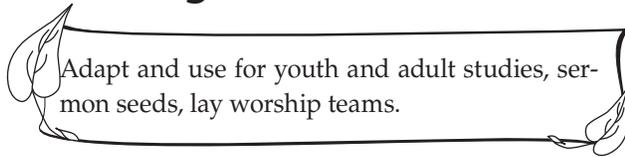
Ephesians 5:8–14 tells us to "live as children of the light." In our baptism, we have passed into the light of Christ. We are called to follow Christ and to live an open and transparent life, trusting in God's care.



With some mud and some spit, Jesus changed the life of a blind beggar. These ordinary elements were used to change not only the life of one person but also a community as the news of the miracle spread. Our shepherd offers us guidance, refuge, hope, and healing. When we see these as gifts from God rather than as gifts for us, our perspective can change. When we see those we want to cast out or ignore the way God sees them – as individuals who are valued and have worth – our entire world view can change as well.



Reflecting on the Word



Connecting with life

We live in a world that judges based on ability, social rank, gender identity, and skin colour.

- **Who are the people your community identifies as its most vulnerable or powerless?**
- **What are the communal responses to powerlessness? Is it considered innocence or is it considered a failure of some kind?**
- **What accommodations do you find yourself making for others? Are these sacrifices or do they come easily to you?**

Scripture

1 Samuel 16:1–13 God breaks the tradition within Hebrew culture by choosing the youngest son, David, to be king of Israel. Beyond the traditions, beyond a shepherd child, is the heart of a godly king.

- **How far do we need to look beyond our prejudices to see as God sees?**
- **What would encourage us to look with “the eyes of the heart”?**

Psalms 23 describes God’s complete provision and care for people. As you reflect on this, consider:

- **Where is your “green pasture”? What is your “valley”? When does your “cup overflow”? Where are you finding “God’s dwelling place” as you live Lent?**

Ephesians 5:8–14 Living a life exposed to the light of Christ also means living a life exposed to the commentary of others.

- **How careful are we about the way we live? How do we make wise choices?**

John 9:1–41 makes a series of contrasts – between physical blindness and spiritual blindness, between innocent ignorance and willful refusal to accept, between those who claim

they know and those who recognize the truth.

- **Which character in the story do you most identify with? Why?**
- **What happens to your attitude when you identify with a different character?**

Reflect on what it might have been like for the one born blind to have eyes opened, to see things in new ways.

- **If our eyes were truly opened to our community, where would we see love? Where would we see pain?**

Encounters with God move us beyond what we have previously thought. Jesus healing the one born blind did that for the religious authorities.

- **When have you been pushed beyond what you once thought so certain, both in faith and what you believed about people? What was that like? What helped you cope with the change? What did you learn?**
- **How open are you to new ways of being?**

Connecting scripture and life

One of the most photographed buildings in the world is Cinderella Castle at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. When the castle was built, height limitations forced the imagineers to keep the castle under 190 feet (to avoid putting an aircraft beacon on top). The builders used forced perspective to make the castle appear much taller than it is. The second and third stories are built to a smaller scale, and landscaping and decorating trick our brains into “seeing” the structure as being taller than it is.

David’s family did not think he was suitable to be king. Their perspective changed when Samuel called him forward? The parents of the one born blind were afraid that they would be expelled from the synagogue if they confessed Jesus was the Messiah. Might their perspective have changed by the end of the story?

The one who can now see comes with a revelation and is met with a regulation.

- **Who are the ones who bring a different perspective and challenge the church today?**
- **How do you/might you make space for a changed perspective that comes from the voices of the “outsider”?**

Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

Life in Christ is not always dazzling and brilliant. Sometimes, following Jesus means we must look at the world differently. We are called to trust God to help discern what is right, even though we do not see it, as Jesse did when Samuel anointed David as future king. God as shepherd, leads us in wilderness places. The wilderness is not always barren. It can be green pastures beside still waters as we travel the road of grief. What may look like ordinary grass and a bottle of oil are, when we shift our perspective, the care God has for us when we are despondent. Mud and spit and a swimming pool may seem fairly commonplace as we wipe our children’s faces or dive into the deep end.

For God, however, they offer healing and a way of inclusion for one who was excluded.

What do we see if we really look? In this week’s readings, we see a family who is not sure about the status of their son. We see one born blind whose first real sight is the people bickering about him. We see parents who still want to protect themselves and don’t know how. We see communities asking big questions. How can we shift our perspective when we look at the texts this week to see them through God’s eyes and not our own? What does God ask of us in these passages that we may not have noticed before?



After Vision Shifts

Prepare

NOTE: The following suggestions are mere starting points. You are invited to adapt, delete, add according to your local needs and context. If a community is gathered in person, they may speak the **bolded** lines. If worshippers are not physically present, consider having a different individual say the bolded responses. Instructions are *italicized*.

- ❑ Recruit the usual volunteers needed for worship.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing John 9:1–41. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “Seeing Something New” on p. 64. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “Every Day” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the sensory telling, prepare items for the option you choose.
- ❑ You might choose to print *Thread of Hope 3* on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Choose a song based on Psalm 23 to use for words of affirmation. Acquire the appropriate licences for printed or recorded music.
- ❑ Bring song such as “Behold, I Make All Things New” (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 6, #4 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 6*). Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.
- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 65–66.



Music Suggestions

I Feel God around Me

Bruce K. Harding; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

Behold, I Make All Things New

John Bell; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 6*

May the God of Hope

Argentine folk melody; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 6*

All Things New

Delbert Rice & James Minchin; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 2*

Christ’s Is the World in Which We Move

John Bell and Graham Maule

God Is My Shepherd

Scottish Psalter, adapted by Lavon Baylor

I Am the Light of the World

Jim Strathdee

Open My Eyes That I Might See

Clara H. Scott

Shepherd Me, O God

Marty Haugen

The 23rd Psalm

Bobby McFerrin



A chart that shows the licence holder(s) for each song in each of the 9 *Seasons of the Spirit* Music Volumes can be found at www.seasonsonline.ca. Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

Gather

Call to worship

Come into the wild pastures,
where sheep graze, and nothing seems amiss.

This place feels so very alive.

The trees clap, the birds sing,
and the light bounces so that it feels like anything could
happen here.

We come to worship that promise and possibility.

We come to open our eyes to endless grace.

Opening prayer

Loving God,
walk beside us in this place and invite us to see what you see.
May we find more love in our gaze and more grace in our
presence as we worship you today.
Amen.

Prayer of confession

God, when we have held on to our own ways too long,
trusting in what we have come to know so well,
and believing in our own comforts,
enable us to let go of the familiar,
and trust in you.

Allow us to let go of our pride,
and trust in your companionship.

When our faith seems dry and our souls drier,
enable us to let go of the past,
and trust in your future.

Teach us to sing your hope again.

Amen.



Worship Outline • March 19, 2023

Words of affirmation

The congregation is invited to sing, as an assurance of forgiveness, the words of Psalm 23. You might invite people to find new comfort in these words set to music in “The 23rd

Psalm,” Bobby McFerrin; “God Is My Shepherd,” the Scottish Psalter; “Shepherd Me, O God,” Marty Haugen.

Engage

Opening the word

Samuel 16:1–13, God breaks the tradition within Hebrew culture by choosing the youngest son, David, to be king of Israel. God saw beyond the traditions, beyond the small shepherd boy, and saw the heart of a godly king.

■ **How can we look beyond our prejudices and see as God sees?**

John 9:1–41 *the focus scripture for age-level materials in ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

Bible story Arrange for a storyteller to present “Seeing Something New” on p. 64. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story “Every Day” (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials).

Sensory telling This gospel story speaks of one missing sense. As much of our worship relies on sight, tell the story using one of the other senses.

Option 1 – Sound: Tell the story with six voices using a contemporary version or paraphrase such as *Common English Bible*, *The Message*, *The New International Reader’s Version*, the VOICE, perhaps shortening the reading to verses 1–17 or 1–17, 30–41.

Option 2 – Touch: *Set stations with water, soil, and bowls and hand towels for hand washing.* Use touch as a guided meditation where people are invited to touch the water and play with mud in the telling.

Option 3 – Smell: *You might set stations or prepare individual trays for smell for each person or family seated in the congregation or set trays at the end of each row of seats. Use baby food jars or spice jars to hold the smells.*

Tell this story by scent beginning with the smell of dirt from walking. Allow Jesus’ answer to come in the scent most familiar to your context as night falls. You might add some sounds of water splashing. The smell of mud might come next as the sound of someone expectorating is heard. This telling might end with a smell full of joy, a floral scent or the waft of a birthday cake in the oven. As you read the gospel, there may be other scents you notice. Resist the temptation to tell people about these aromas; instead, invite them to experience them.

Preaching might require a bit more storytelling to convey the fullness of the story. As you prepare your sermon, consider the most important parts of the story to be heard.

If gathering in person, invite children, young people, and all who wish to move to the stations. Others will remain seated for proclaiming the word. For those participating at home, you might encourage them to use materials that have been sent.

Respond

Sing or listen to a song such as “Behold, I Make All Things New” as people gather again (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6, #4 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 6). Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/.

Affirmation of faith

God is like a shepherd to us:

**caring about us,
present beside us,
nourishing and restoring our worn-out lives.**

God is like light to us:

**bringing new understanding,
challenging our prejudice,
inviting our worship.**

God is our future:

**knowing our hearts,
anointing us for service,
filling us with God’s Spirit.**



Prayers of the people

Shepherding God, we are painfully aware of how imperfectly love is expressed within our world.

So, in trust, we turn once more to you.

In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference (*pause*).

Although we do see good and hopeful change, we also witness violence and dysfunction whereby the most innocent and vulnerable continue to be forgotten, abused, or treated as of no account.

In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference (*pause*).

Daily we see and read of the failures of those in principal positions of care whose treatment of patients, parishioners, clients, spouses, and children leave us feeling ashamed,

yet also mindful of our own shortcomings.

In your goodness and mercy hear the prayers of our hearts:
We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference (*pause*).

Change us, O God.

Create within us the desire and capacity for a love that can gently hold yet let go; a love that encounters all others with deep respect, and is concerned with others' well-being above personal interest.

In your goodness and mercy, hear the prayers of our hearts:

We are alive to your imaginings for a new world and ready to make a creative difference. Amen.

Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

Loving God, giver of all things, as people alive to your goodness, we offer these gifts and the talents of this community to the service of all our children within our neighbourhood and beyond, throughout our nation and our world. Amen.

Bless

Go out into the world in peace and joy, knowing that in all your turnings God will restore your soul,

and follow you with goodness and mercy each step of the way.
Amen.

Special Days Commentary

March 19 – St. Joseph

Joseph is mentioned only a few times in scripture, and all his appearances come at the beginning of Jesus' life. The last time he appears is in Luke's account of the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old, leading to traditional speculation that he died before Jesus was an adult.

Matthew's gospel depicts Joseph as a good man who trusted God in the face of a scandalous and challenging situation. Joseph's acceptance of Jesus as his own child established Jesus in the descent of David, thus fulfilling the prophecy that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David.

Joseph also models a radical kind of justice when he refuses to follow the biblical mandate to kill Mary for being pregnant with what he can only assume is another man's child (see the commandment in Deuteronomy 22:23–24). Instead, Joseph chooses not only to "allow" her to live but marries her, thus keeping her from being a disgraced member of society.

March 21 – Naw-Ruz (*Baha'i*)

Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i New Year, is a holiday for members of the Baha'i faith, and they do not go to work or to school. There is no set ritual for the holiday, but many people will observe the day with feasting and special prayers.

March 24 – Death of Oscar Romero

This day commemorates the life and witness of El Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero on behalf of the Salvadoran people. On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Romero was shot and killed while saying Mass. In many churches, this day is a time to focus on the struggles of the faith communities in Central America, to work for social justice, and to pray for the people of that region.

March 25 – The Feast of the Annunciation

Falling precisely nine months before the celebration of Christmas, since the late fourth century, the church has observed this date – officially the Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary – and recalled the angel Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1:26–38. In England, the day is known as Lady Day, and during the Middle Ages, it marked the beginning of the new year.



Psalm 23 through New Eyes

Several years ago, at a Seasons of the Spirit development event, writers and editors were invited to choose a photograph from a magazine and imagine their chosen person speaking the words of Psalm 23 through their experience and situation. Below are some of the reflections offered.

God is the guardian of my journey.
God sees me, one small person in this teeming city;
God shields me, gives me space to breathe;
Even though crowds press in on me,
God surrounds me with loving care.
Surely God will bring me safely home
and I will rest in God's presence and give thanks.

God is my Advocate.
God understands and feels my pain.
God seeks my freedom and joy.
Even though I remain shut out
God comes to my rescue.
Surely Love will be my liberation
and I will rejoin the land of the living.

God is my gardener. God plants and tends.
God places me in rich soil
and carries water to my roots.
Even though I wonder if there will be enough,
God will provide.
Surely bountiful care and grace will fill my life
and I will rejoice at the harvest.

God is my calm centre in the storm.
God covers me when all is ripped away.
God alone knows the horror I've seen.
Even though death assails me from every side
God holds me close.
Surely everything around me has changed
and I will depend upon God every hour.

God is my open door.
God brings me freedom to know.
God satisfies my thirst to understand.
Even though walls have stood locked and impassable,
God has created a way through.
Surely God will continue to break down barriers
and I will cross each new threshold all my days.

God is my carer. God feeds, shelters, embraces me.
God will guide me as I grow in life and faith.
Even though life will have bumps and bruises,
I will be OK because God holds me.
God will nurture me and protect me
even as I face bullies.
God anoints me for good things and I am content.
Surely goodness, kindness, mercy
will be with me and flow from me,
and I will be nurtured
by the people of God in this place.

God is my mother.
God looks after me and keeps me safe.
God makes sure I have enough to eat
and can go to school.
Even though my country is at war
God will surround and protect me.
Surely my world will be whole
and peaceful again soon
and I will be able to do
what I always dreamed I could do.

Share the experience of bringing new eyes to Psalm 23. Individually, or in pairs or threes, flip through assorted magazines until a person pictured in the pages calls to you. With this image, reflect on questions like, who is this person? What is their comfort? What do they fear? How might God be real to this person? Read Psalm 23 in its most familiar version and use the person from the magazine pages to inspire a personal psalm based on Psalm 23.



Seeing Something New

Based on John 9:1–41

One day, Jesus ran into someone who had been blind all their life. Jesus wanted to help the person, so he made some mud and rubbed it in their eyes. Then he said, “Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.”

Figuring they had nothing to lose, the person went to the pool – with a friend’s help – and washed their eyes. Incredibly, when the mud came off their eyes, they could see!

Some other people saw this, and they were amazed. “Isn’t this that person who used to sit and beg?” they asked.

“Yes,” said someone else. Another person said, “Nah, it just looks like him.”

But the person said, “Yes! It’s me! That Jesus fellow put some mud on my eyes, and when I washed it off, I could see!”

It so happened that the day Jesus did this was the Sabbath, and the religious leaders were upset. You weren’t supposed

to work on the Sabbath. (Although some people thought they were upset because Jesus could do something they couldn’t.)

“This Jesus can’t be from God if he heals on the Sabbath!” they said.

“I don’t know about that,” said the person who used to be blind but could now see. “All I know is that I can see now. I don’t know how he did it; all I know is that this morning I couldn’t see, and now I can!”

The religious leaders kept grumbling, pretending it hadn’t happened. “Look,” the person said, “what’s so hard to grasp here? I was blind. Jesus rubbed some mud in my eyes, I washed them, and now I can see. It’s a miracle!”

The religious leaders kept grumbling and arguing. The person quietly stepped away and said to Jesus, “I want to follow you.” And there was no mistaking that he saw the big smile that came over Jesus’ face as they walked off, leaving the others to continue their grumbling.

A recording of this story is available in MP3 format in the Audio Stories folder.



Bible story

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper or drawing pads
- Recording of today’s story, “[Seeing Something New](#)”
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story

The practice of storytelling

Directions

1. Listen to the story “Seeing Something New.”
2. Think of the most beautiful sight you have seen and use the materials provided to make a picture of it.
3. Then, without showing it, use words to describe your picture to someone else.



Living, Learning, Growing as Disciples

The following stations might be set up around your worship space, or in other places around the church, in your home, or outdoors. Choose one or more practices, depending on your space and numbers. Display the [directions](#) for all to see onscreen or in person. Adapt stations for use when physically distancing and above all, follow the safe practices of your congregation and local health officials.

For your convenience, directions are formatted for printing and available in the Stations folder.

Health and Safety Practices

Basic supplies pens, pencils, markers, crayons, white glue/glue sticks, scissors, hand sanitizer, wipes placed in a basket or bin, two containers marked “clean” and “used”

Setting the space Utilize large spaces where people can maintain a safe physical distance. Spread out chairs around a large table or use tape to mark off the space around stand alone chairs.

Keep it clean Wipe down and disinfect places used for stations. Provide enough arts and crafts supplies to reduce sharing and mark containers “clean” and “used.” Remind people to use hand sanitizer as they begin and as they end stations.

Colourful mud

Materials

- Older play dough
- Flat bottom tub or basin
- Pitcher of water
- Potato masher
- Cups
- Spoons
- Hand sanitizer or wipes

You might opt to set this station up on a large tarp where young and old are invited to take off their shoes and squish the play dough between their toes for another sensory experience. Mashers, spoons and cups could still be provided for the youngest.



The practice of play _____

Directions

In this slimy story, Jesus takes dirt, spits on it, and heals the blind man. Maybe you remember a parent spitting in their hand to clean your face or smooth your hair. Lean into your discomfort by playing with mud in this practice.

1. Pour water into the play dough.
2. Squish it between your fingers and use utensils to play.

Printing with mud

Materials

- Cups of water
- Sticks
- Water
- Dirt
- Small bowls
- Twigs, leaves, acorns, rocks, seeds, and any other natural elements
- Paper
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



The practice of creativity _____

Directions

1. Mix dirt with water in a bowl.
2. On paper, experiment with various objects to create mud prints. Dip leaves and other objects into mud and stamp them on paper. Notice the marks the mud makes on the paper.
3. You might then choose to use mud as glue and make a collage of the wilderness treasures that stick to your paper.



Looking in new ways

Materials

- Basic supplies
- Twigs, leaves, acorns, rocks, seeds, and any other natural elements
- Cardboard tubes
- Wipes



Suitable for
all ages

The practice of seeing things differently

Directions

When we look at things differently, we can be amazed by what we see that we might not have noticed when looking “normally.”

1. Take a cardboard tube and use it like a telescope. Close or cover your other eye and look around at things.
 - **What do you see?**
 - **How do things look different?**
 - **What might you see through the focus or lens of the telescope that you don't see when you look with both eyes?**
2. You might decorate your telescope and take it home. Use it in other settings to look at things, and notice what you see.

Wilderness reflection

Materials

- Wilderness elements like those in your worship space
- Small trays
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



Suitable for
ages 12–adult

The practice of wondering

Directions

Lent began with an invitation to go into the wilderness to find clarity and renewal as much as we might struggle with loneliness or emptiness. This is an invitation to consider what feels true about the wilderness now.

1. Recall what it felt like to be invited into the wilderness on the first day of Lent.
 - **What were your ideas about the wilderness?**
 - **What did you expect to find in the wilderness?**
2. As it helps your reflection, arrange the wilderness elements on the tray or table.
3. Continue your reflection to wonder:
 - **What does the wilderness feel like now? Has your sense changed?**
 - **What is the wilderness teaching you?**
 - **What clarity is the wilderness offering you?**

The article “[Connecting with the Art](#)” on page 8 provides background to this season’s posters and art engagement ideas for individuals and groups. You might add an Art station and select one of the art engagement ideas.



Story and activities for the very young to use in church or at home.

Every Day

A story based on John 9:1-41

One day Jesus and his friends saw a blind person sitting by the side of the road. A blind person is someone who cannot see.

This man could not see the green trees, the yellow sun, or the blue sky. He could feel his mother's face when she kissed him, but he could not see what she looked like. He could feel his father's prickly beard and strong arms when he hugged him, but he could not see his striped robe.

But he could hear. And one day, he heard someone walking along the road. It was Jesus, and the man could hear Jesus' friends talking to Jesus about him!

Suddenly, the man felt Jesus spread a little mud on his eyes.

The mud felt cool and wet! Then Jesus said, "Go and wash off the mud in the pool."

The man knelt at the pool and washed his eyelids until they were clean again.

When he opened his eyes, he could see! He could see the trees, sun, and his house – and Jesus!

The man could also see some surprised faces. Some people wondered why Jesus would heal someone on that day, which was a day to worship God. They thought that Jesus should heal on another day!

But Jesus said, "God's love is for today and every day!"

Action Song

Help people know that God's love is for every day by singing this song and asking them to sing with you.

God's Love Is for Every Day
(Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

God's love is for every day, every day, every day,
God's love is for every day,
today and every day!

(Clap as each day of the week is said...)

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday,
Saturday, Sunday.

(Jump up and shout...) Every day!



Imagine this person has difficulty seeing things. How might these people, objects, and actions help?
Use markers and pencils to decorate the page and add anything else that might help.

