

# Planning



Sunday, March 26 – Saturday, April 1 • 2023

## Out of the Depths

In wildernesses of grief, we hear the cries of a psalmist to the Holy, watch as dry bones are called back to life, gasp as Lazarus emerges alive and is unbound by the community, and explore the concept of hope.

### This week...

#### Ecumenical prayer calendar

Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia

As listed in *Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, edited by Ester Pudjo Widiastih 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.

#### Personal reflection

Find a quiet moment this week and light a candle. Held in this light's warmth, remember those you have loved and lost. Give thanks for their memories, that they might be a blessing to you, now and always.

**March 26, 2023**

Lent 5

#### Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Ezekiel 37:1–14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6–11

**John 11:1–45**

the focus in age-level materials

**Liturgical colour** purple

#### Notes

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*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).*

### 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.





Ezekiel 37:1–14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6–11

John 11:1–45

the focus in age-level materials

When we are overwhelmed or in despair, we turn again to you, O God, for you feel our anguish and will lift us up. Breathe your spirit into us and give us new life so that we may walk in hope. Amen.

# Out of the Depths

**H**ope is not about what we expect. It is an embrace of the essential unknowability of the world, of the breaks with the present, the surprises. Or perhaps studying the record more carefully leads us to expect miracles – not when and where we expect them, but to expect to be astonished, to expect that we don't know. And this is grounds to act," writes Rebecca Solnit in *Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power*. Ezekiel, the psalmist, and John defy our expectations. They astonish us and leave us wondering how best to respond.

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones in **Ezekiel 37:1–14** reveals God's promise to restore the house of Israel against all the apparent evidence. The community that is dried up and lifeless in exile will experience the life-giving breath of God again and be restored. To those in Ezekiel's time who grieved the separation of exile in Babylon, does the image in this account serve as a metaphor for their own struggle to find hope?

Even in the depths of wretchedness, the writer of **Psalm 130** is aware of the loving forgiveness of God and eagerly awaits redemption, knowing that God's steadfast love would never abandon God's people. The psalmist waits and hopes for God, and urges the people of Israel to do the same, trusting in God's steadfast love, even when it seems far away. The psalmist waits for God as one waits for the morning; the wait can seem long and gloomy, but there is hope in the dawn of a new day.

In **John 11:1–45**, what might seem to be a disjointed conversation between Jesus and the disciples contains complex layers of imagery and allusions to Jesus' coming anointing, death, and resurrection. The act of raising Lazarus happens right at the end of the narrative, followed by the observation that some people "believed in him."

Jewish understanding was that it took three days for a soul to leave the body completely; thus, Lazarus had been dead long enough to have nothing left other than a body decaying rapidly in the desert heat. This fact doesn't quite explain Jesus' delay. When Jesus does decide to return to

Judea, the disciples are concerned for his safety, but the need to "work while it is still light" drives Jesus on. Thomas expresses loyalty and fear but also foreshadows Jesus' self-sacrifice.

Burial took place immediately after death in the hot climate of the Middle East, and ritual mourning followed. Family, especially the women, sat in the home and were visited by friends. However, when Jesus approaches, Martha defies custom and goes to meet him. Was she impatient for his arrival, or was she protecting Jesus from a potentially hostile gathering?

Her statement, perhaps, reveals Martha's grief. She understands the Jewish teaching of resurrection at the last days but finds something hopeful in what Jesus says. She puts her faith entirely in him.

Mary's plea to Jesus is similar to Martha's, and the pathos of the situation disturbs Jesus greatly. Martha, Mary, and the assembled mourners all ask the same question – why didn't Jesus come and heal Lazarus? Jesus' prayer sums up the purpose of this final sign. God's glory will indeed be revealed, but at enormous pain and cost to both Jesus and his friends. Jesus then issues three commands. Everyone has a task to do. Jesus calls Lazarus back to life, but it is the community that rolls away the stone and unbinds Lazarus from the trappings of death and releases him.

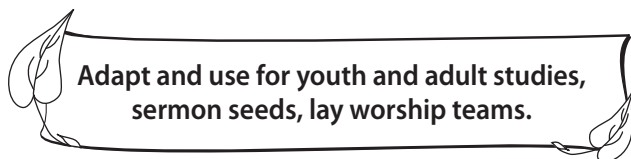
In **Romans 8:6–11**, Paul writes that to live in Christ is not to live in denial of death but to live with hope in the face of death. We are safe in the hands of God, who breathes into us the same Spirit that breathed life into dry bones. Daily, we are raised to new life. In that hope are our life and peace.

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Hope can feel impossible in a world overpowered by racism, xenophobia, terrorism, war, and death. And yet it is precisely in the face of these challenges that God invites us to read the stories of new life and new hope. How can we give in, when God is so loudly proclaiming life in the midst of chaos? How can we share with others the hope that oozes from passages like these?



## Reflecting on the Word



### Connecting with life

How do you react when you are out of your depth, when the world seems to overwhelm you or the situation seems to be hopeless?

- **Who do you blame?**
- **Where do you turn?**
- **What gives you hope?**

### Scripture

**Ezekiel 37:1–14**, The prophet Ezekiel stands at the edge of a desolate valley of dry and brittle bones.

- **Who might be at the edge of such a valley within your community?**

Ezekiel is writing to a community in exile, still reeling from the unimaginable disaster of the loss of both homeland and temple. Their identity and their religion were both shattered.

- **How can the “dry bones” in the life of your community be brought to life?**

**Psalms 130** is a lament.

- **What words would you use to describe the psalmist’s feelings?**
- **In what ways is lamenting part of your tradition or culture? In what ways is it not?**
- **How have you cried out to God? Did you feel heard?**
- **Who is crying out to God in your church? your community? the world?**

**Romans 8:6–11** Paul contrasts the “life of the flesh” with the “life of the Spirit.”

- **How do you understand the terms “flesh” and “spirit”?**
- **What do you identify as things “of the flesh” in your everyday living?**

**John 11:1–45** Mary and Martha call for Jesus to come, but he takes a long time getting to Lazarus.

- **Which do you think is harder: being with someone when they are sick or dying, or being far away from someone who is sick or dying? Why?**

When he gets to Mary’s and Martha’s house, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). But when the women begin to weep for their brother Lazarus, Jesus also weeps.

- **What does it mean to believe in resurrection but also to weep?**
- **How do you think these two things might be connected?**

Lazarus is only free when the community unbinds him (v. 44).

- **What does this tell us about the role of community in liberation, renewal, and resurrection?**
- **Though he is the only one not to speak, what might Lazarus say?**

In John 12, we learn that Jesus returns to Lazarus’ house, where Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume.

- **What do you imagine it would be like for these two men to have dinner together, one having been raised from the dead, the other knowing that his death was drawing near?**

### Connecting scripture and life

There are places in our world that are in desperate need of new life or resurrection.

- **What are some of those places?**
- **What are we called to do so that new life might come to those places?**

God calls Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones and bring them back to life.

- **Where are you called to prophesy, to speak God’s truth about new possibilities?**

Jesus weeps for Lazarus even as the community unbinds him.

- **Which is easier for you? How are you called to do both of these things right now?**

Mary and Martha suggest that if Jesus had arrived earlier, Lazarus would not have died.

- **Where is God calling you with that kind of urgency? And where do you think you might move at a more deliberate pace?**

## Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

For many people, a sense of hopelessness is real. We can readily relate to finding a valley filled with dry bones and devoid of any sense of life. We experience collective grief at the loss of vast amounts of innocence, understanding, and camaraderie. Like Mary and Martha, we may want to confront God with anger: if you had been here, such and such would not have happened.

When confronted with these realities, it is vital to explore the concept of hope. Hope that is transformative

and lasting may need to come slowly. It is also far more important than getting bogged down in arguments over whether things related in scripture actually “happened” or not. That is virtually never the point; the point that runs through all the readings this week is about God bringing us hope when that seems gone for us. We celebrate that even in despair, even when the world seems to be plotting against God, still God says, “will bring life.”



# Out of the Depths

## 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 volunteers needed for worship: a few people to lead the body movements in the reading of Psalm 130.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing John 11:1–45. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “Lazarus” on p. 76. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “Jesus Cries” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the reading in four sections, arrange for four readers and (option 1) three individuals to be the voices of “Martha, Mary, and Lazarus” or (option 2) four individuals to intersperse the sections with their own stories.
- ❑ Option: For the reading from Ezekiel 37:1–14 prepare to play a recording of Linnea Good’s tone poem “Dry Bones.” It can be found on her album *The Sunday Sessions* and is also available as a download at <https://www.linneagood.com/sundaysessions> for a minimal cost.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space: pillar candle, sand prayer box and small taper candles or tealights.
- ❑ You might choose to print *Thread of Hope 3* on or in your bulletin (in the Images to Project and Images for Print). See “Connecting with the Art” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring song such as “Comfort, Comfort” (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 4, #12 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 4. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)).
- ❑ Set stations as described on pp. 77–78.

## Music Suggestions

### Hold Us in Your Grace

Keri Wehlender; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 9

### I Want Jesus to Go with Me

African-American spiritual; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### Justice Cry

Trisha Watts; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 6

### Comfort, Comfort

Robin Mann; *Seasons Songbook*, vol. 4

### Lay Our Broken World


Anna Briggs; Wild Goose

### Out of the Depths O God, We Call to You

Ruth C. Duck

### When Human Voices Cannot Sing

Shirley Murray

 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](http://www.seasonsonline.ca). Click on Library; Seasons Music Information. Please contact a licence holder for permission to duplicate.

## Gather

### Call to worship

*Inspired by Psalm 130*

Come out of the depths of the wilderness of all that has been lost.

Push away the stone and wonder what glory could be.

**We believe that there is more than this sorrow.**

Come out into the morning light and find others waiting and hoping for love to mend hearts again.

**Our souls come together to watch and wait.**

Come, let us worship.

### Opening prayer

*Light the candle on the worship table after the spoken prayer.*

Gracious God, we gather in love of Jesus the Christ and open ourselves to your Spirit.

We open ourselves to your life in the midst of death.

We open ourselves to your hope in the midst of despair.

In the midst of confusion and uncertainty, we open ourselves to a new way of seeing things,

a new way of understanding things in your love.

Stir us in our depths and call us out beyond every resistance. Amen.



## Worship Outline • March 26, 2023

### Prayer of confession

New life confronts us, O God.

We notice signs of spring and the profusion of summer growth,  
the abundance of autumn and the tenacity of life in winter.  
We praise you for a world so full of beauty.  
Your creative love and energy surround us,  
renewing and regenerating a planet that continues to evolve.

Yet we are also confronted by death:  
accidents and disease separate us from loved ones,  
forest life and farmland are destroyed by industry and development;

cultures and languages disappear, and people lose their sense of identity.

We wrestle with unanswered questions and feelings of despair, and we're not always sure how to find our way through this wilderness. Too often, we feel buried by what we will never understand.

### Words of affirmation

God does not abandon us to death and despair.

Whatever has happened, whatever our fears for the future, God's compassion and steadfast love surround us.

We are forgiven. We are loved, and God invites us again to live fully.

## Engage

### Opening the word

#### Ezekiel 37:1–14

Either in place of the reading or as a complement to it, play a recording of Linnea Good's tone poem "Dry Bones." It can be found on her album "The Sunday Sessions" and is also available as a download at <https://www.linneagood.com/sundaysessions> for a minimal cost.

#### Psalm 130

*Have one person or a few people perform the suggested movements. You might introduce this reading with the reminder that grief often disconnects us from our bodies. Our sadness overwhelms us so that we don't know where to find our centre.*

Out of our weary depths  
*(touch toes and slowly rise)*  
we cry to you, O God  
*(place hands in front of face).*  
Hear us, we pray  
*(sweep hands to the side and cup behind ears).*

Our souls wait for you  
*(cross arms, one at a time, over heart)*  
more than those who watch for the morning  
*(step out slightly with one foot and rock slowly back and forth)*  
more than those who watch for the morning  
*(continue rocking back and forth).*

Everlasting is your wondrous love  
*(extend right arm out, palm up)*

and it is our great hope  
*(slide left hand, palm down, down right arm)*  
that you will revive us once again  
*(left hand remains on top of the right hand as both arms extend up slightly).*

**John 11:1–45** the focus scripture for age-level materials in **ENCORE**

Choose from the following.

**Bible story** Arrange for a storyteller to present "Lazarus" on p. 76. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story "Jesus Cries" (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week's materials).

**Reading in four sections** You may wish to divide the reading into more manageable portions. Have a different voice reading each section from another part of the worship area.

**Option 1:** Arrange for three individuals to be the voices of "Martha, Mary, and Lazarus" (see page 75) and present their story between each section of the scripture reading. Martha presents after section 2, Mary presents after section 3, Lazarus presents after section 4.

**Option 2:** Arrange for four volunteers to share a brief personal short story in response to each section – journey with grief, recognizing Jesus, meeting Jesus, new life.

Section 1: verses 1–16 (journey with grief)

Section 2: verses 17–27 (recognizing Jesus)

Section 3: verses 28–37 (meeting Jesus)

Section 4: verses 38–45 (new life)

**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 “Comfort, Comfort” as people gather again. (*Seasons Songbook*, vol. 4, #12 on *Seasons Music CD*, vol. 4. Printed music and recording are also available for purchase and download at [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/)).

**Affirmation of faith**

We affirm our faith together.

**We believe in the steadfast love of God,  
whose willingness to hear is greater than our despair;  
whose power to forgive is greater than our sin;  
we trust in this God to save us.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,  
who wept in anger and grief;  
who faced life with hope and death with courage;  
at his command, the bonds of death are untied/  
unloosed/broken;  
in him, we find life and resurrection.  
We believe in the Spirit of God,  
who breathes new life into dead bones;  
who dwells in us and brings us hope;  
who forms us into the people of God,  
always alive to new possibilities;  
this is the Spirit who dwells in us.**

**Prayers of the people**

Grief may feel fresh, or it may be remembered. It may even be possible that worship will invite new awareness of loss. With these prayers, on the worship table, prepare a sand prayer box with small taper candles or tealights where individuals might come forward to share their prayers. Offer simple instructions inviting individuals to come forward, light a candle, place it in the sand, and share the prayer on their hearts. Silent prayers are more than welcome and may be heard with the same refrain, “**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer,**” spoken by the whole congregation.

Conclude this prayer time with a song such as “Jesus, Remember Me” from the Taizé Community or the prayer that Jesus taught.

**Prayer of dedication or offering prayer**

God of life, you invite us to share life. We offer these gifts of [food and] money and pray that they may bring life and hope to those who receive them. Amen.

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**Bless**

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We cried to God from the depths, and God heard our voice.  
We came with our burdens, bound by our fears.  
We leave this place with hope released to serve a living God.  
Go in the strength of God who shows steadfast love,  
in the courage of Christ who shares our humanity,  
and in the companionship of the Spirit who gives life.



# Martha, Mary, and Lazarus

## Martha

I could not understand why Jesus did not come. We had sent him a message: "Your dear friend Lazarus is sick," we told him.

"Please come at once, so he does not die," we also meant but did not say.

Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days when Jesus came. I went out to meet him and could not hide my grief and disappointment. "If only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now, I know that God will give you what you ask."

Jesus insisted: Lazarus would rise again. Yes, I knew that.

"I am the resurrection and the life," Jesus declared. "Those who believe in me will live and never die. Do you believe this?"

I did, but it was more than that. "Yes, I believe that you are Christ, the Son of God, the one who comes into the world!" There – I'd said it. Now I had told him what was dawning on me about him and seemed more important than anything else.

Then I remembered Mary – how was I to move her from the paralysis of grief? Who else but Jesus could give her any hope?

## Mary

I could not understand why Jesus did not come. We had sent him a message: "Your dear friend Lazarus is sick," we told him.

We should have said, "Please come at once," but I didn't think we would need to. I couldn't understand it. I loved them both, Lazarus, my brother and Jesus, my teacher. Lazarus had died; Jesus had not come. It was not until four days after we'd buried Lazarus that Jesus came. I didn't know if I even wanted to see Jesus again.

"The Teacher is here!" Martha told me. "He's calling for you!" I rushed out in a mix of grief, disappointment, and

unanswered questions to where Jesus was. I could not stand to look him in the eye or greet him face to face but simply clung to his feet. Then I told him what had been on my mind for the last five days: "If only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

I watched my tears mix with the dust on Jesus' feet, and then I felt his tears on my hands as he wept. We took him to the tomb as he asked of us. "Take away the stone!" he said. Martha, ever practical, argued, "Lord, it will smell terrible! He's been dead four days!"

"Didn't I tell you," Jesus replied, "that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

They moved the stone, and Jesus prayed in thanks to God out loud for our sake. Then he shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" We waited and watched.

## Lazarus

The air is cold, but that's better than the heat of fever burning me up.

It is dark, but that's better than the mind-piercing glare of the light.

All around is silence, but that's better than hushed voices I can't understand.

Bands of cloth wrap me tightly, but that's better than sheets drenched with sweat.

My tongue is dry, and my breath is stale; how can that be better than death?

The air is becoming warmer.

The gloom is dispersing.

"Lazarus, come out!"

They...are...unbinding...me!

I am alive!



# Lazarus

Based on John 11:1–45

Where is he? Where can he be? Why hasn't he come?"

Martha and Mary stood in their doorway, looking anxiously down the road. They had sent a message to Jesus from their home in Bethany, telling him how sick their brother Lazarus was. They had sat by their brother's bedside, watching him grow weaker and weaker, but still they waited for Jesus.

Why didn't he come?

Jesus had visited some people who lived east of the Jordan, and when the messenger came from the sisters, he sent him back saying he would come later. When the messenger returned by himself, the sisters were both sad and angry. "Why hasn't he come? He's healed other people. We thought Jesus was our friend." They sat by Lazarus' side and watched him get sicker and sicker and eventually stop breathing and die.

Mary cried and cried, and Martha comforted her. "Jesus let our brother die," cried Mary. "He should have been here. We have buried Lazarus. He is gone forever."

Four days later, Martha and Mary were sitting outside their house when they saw Jesus coming down the road. "Where have you been? Lazarus is dead. You are too late to save him." They were both speaking at once. "Martha, Mary," said Jesus, "Show me where he is." They took him to where they had laid Lazarus. "Take the stone away and open up the grave," Jesus said.

Martha didn't want them to do that, but some of the men moved the stone.

Jesus started to pray, and some of the people prayed with him. Then he called out, "Lazarus, come to me." Everyone was amazed when Lazarus walked out of the tomb. "Find him some clean clothes, and give him some water to drink," Jesus said.

Lazarus was alive!

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, "[Lazarus](#)"
- Alternatively, arrange for a storyteller to present the story

## The practice of storytelling

### Directions

1. Listen to the story "Lazarus."
2. Wilderness times can feel like they did for Martha and Mary when they didn't know where their friend Jesus was. It can feel lonely and a little scary.
3. Choose one or two colours for that wilderness and draw what it must have felt like for Mary and Martha to feel so alone.





## 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.

### Endings and beginnings

#### Materials

- Basic supplies
- Paper
- Dried flowers
- Bones
- Herbs



Suitable for  
ages 12–adult

#### The practice of welcoming the circle of life

##### Directions

Plants, animals, and all living things transform when they can no longer breathe air or take in water. This can bring sadness or trigger our imaginations to notice new uses and see new beauty in everyday items.

1. Use your senses to observe the dried flowers, bones, and herbs.
3. If you are moved to draw, create a still life drawing that traces their lines and shows their faded colours. Or you might write down words that describe these items, recipes that use these items, or memories that come to mind when you see them.

### Feeding the birds

#### Materials

- Pinecones
- Peanut butter
- Birdseed
- Yarn
- Dull knives or spoons
- Small trays
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



Suitable for  
all ages

#### The practice of caring

##### Directions

We rely on each other for support and care, just as Mary and Martha lean on Jesus in the tenderness of their grief. We are called to care for each other and all Creation, including small birds.

1. Take your pinecone and tie yarn in a loop as a hanger.
2. Using knives or spoons, cover the pinecone in peanut butter.
3. After pouring birdseed into a small tray, carefully roll the peanut butter covered pine cone in birdseed until completely covered. Use spoons, as needed, to be sure it sticks.
4. Say a prayer for the birds that will feast on this seed.



## Being present

### Materials

- Flower
- Vase
- Water



Suitable for  
all ages

## The practice of beholding

### Directions

We tend to think that we have to do something for the grieving, and so we bring food and prayer shawls and other tokens of our care, but sometimes the greatest gift we can offer to the grieving is our presence. You'll practice this attention by beholding a flower.

1. Here is a flower. Notice how delicate it is and your instinct to do something. Do you find yourself wondering if it needs more water or sun?
2. Consider that perhaps all the flower needs is for you to appreciate its beauty.
3. Take all the wonders of its petals, stamen, stem, and even its scent. Appreciate each of these things as you notice more and more about the flower.
4. Give thanks for the flower.

**Note:** You might choose another delicate natural object for this meditation if a flower is not desired.

## Twig binding and unbinding

### Materials

- Twigs
- Twine
- Yarn or cloth strips
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



Suitable for  
all ages

## The practice of connecting

### Directions

Binding a body can be seen as the final act of respect and thanksgiving for a life that has reached its physical end; unbinding /releasing life with potential is an act of hope and promise.

1. Begin by assembling a triangle with three twigs.
2. Secure your triangle with twine in three corners.
3. Respond to your understanding of the story of Lazarus, binding the yarn or cloth strips to the twig triangle. You may wish to write words on the cloth strips.
4. You might then choose to unbind the yarn or cloth strips from the twig triangle.
5. This binding and unbinding can be repeated again and again in your ongoing reflection.

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.

## Jesus Cries

A story based on John 11:1–45

Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, were special friends of Jesus. One day, Lazarus became very, very sick. Mary and Martha sent a message for their dear friend Jesus to come and help. They waited and waited. They wondered where Jesus was. "Why is Jesus taking so long?"

Lazarus got sicker, and then he died.

Everyone cried.

They wrapped Lazarus in a clean white cloth and placed him in a cave.

Finally, Jesus arrived.

When Jesus heard the news, he was very sad, too. He put his arms around Martha and Mary and cried with them.

Then Jesus did a surprising thing.

Jesus went to the cave where Lazarus was buried. Jesus prayed, "Please, God, hear me." Then Jesus called out, "Lazarus, come out!"

Suddenly, surprisingly, Lazarus was alive again!

Everyone cried again. This time it was happy tears. Martha said to everyone, "I knew Jesus would help us!"

## Tissue Holder

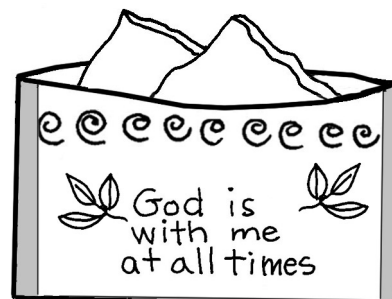
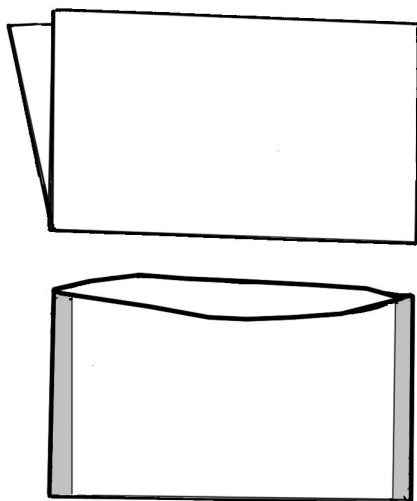
Sometimes, when we are sad, we cry and use tissues to wipe away the tears. Make a tissue holder as a reminder that God is with us in those sad times. For this craft,

### you will need:

- rectangles 18 x 28 cm/7 x 11 in cut from card stock
- coloured tape
- disposable tissues
- a variety of art materials for decorating, such as stickers, sequins, ribbons, and inked stamps

### Directions

1. Fold the rectangle of card stock in half, lengthways. Place the fold at the bottom and tape the sides together to make a pocket with an opening at the top.
2. Have an adult help you print the words "God is with me at all times" on one side of the pocket.
3. Use the art materials to decorate the holder as desired. Fold some tissues and tuck them into the pocket.
4. You might choose to share this tissue box with someone you know is sad.



Jesus was sad when he heard about Lazarus. In the box below, draw how they might have looked when Lazarus came out of the tomb.

