

Hungering for Hope

Lenten Guided Prayer 2024

Sample Prayer Guide

Embodying Trust

For the week beginning February 18, 2024

Scripture Texts: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10;
Mark 1:9-15; 1 Peter 3: 18-22



Invitation

A covenant is a promise, pledge, oath, or vow that connects us in relationship to another. This week we explore our covenant with God and reflect on what keeps it strong and healthy and what causes it to fray. We are called to trust in the promise of God's steadfast love for us.

Opening Prayer

In Genesis 9 God makes a covenant with "every living creature" that "never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth" (v. 10-11). This is a promise of life and love for all generations. In Mark 1 Jesus faces difficult temptations. When we face destructive forces and life-denying systems, God has got our back with the power of steadfast love.

You call me into a relationship with you. You promise that your power is loving and life-affirming. Help me to trust in your steadfast love. Help me to resist harmful choices, and stand strong in your faithful care.

Meditative Reading

Read Mark 1:9-15. Imagine yourself in this scene at the Jordan River. What do you notice? Witness Jesus' baptism. What catches your attention now? Move into the water yourself. Receive baptism. What are you feeling? Dripping wet, come up out of the water and hear these words from God, "you are my child, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." What is it like to hear those words?

Reflection

Put some water into your bowl. Dip your fingers in it. Can you trust that you are God's beloved child? If not, share with God what gets in the way. Ask God to transform your heart and mind so that you can trust this promise. Let God know how you intend to live into your beloved-ness. Using the water, mark your hands or forehead with the sign of the cross or the rainbow as a symbol of the covenant you want to make with God, and the kind of life you want to lead.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, pour your transforming love over me. Refresh me. Renew your Spirit in me. Help me to trust the promise that I am your beloved child. May I learn to treat others as your beloved children, and our planet as holy ground that is worth preserving for all generations.

Additional Prayer Options

Select a prayer suggestion from the list below that attracts you, challenges you or causes you to question. You may stay with the one way of praying throughout the week or try several options.

Praying With Scripture

Read Psalm 25: 1-10. In this passage God is described as one who leads, guides, teaches, directs, shows and instructs. Think of your life as a path or road. You may want to go for a walk while you ponder. Reflect on the past year (month, week). When and where did you encounter God along the way? How did God lead and guide you? When did you get off the path? Why? When has it been difficult to find hope and trust in God? Ask God for guidance now, and for trust in the way God wants you to go. You may want to illustrate this image of your life as a path in some way. Find a way to represent meaningful encounters with God and barriers that got in the way. Do this outdoors with materials you find there or use art supplies and paper.

Praying Through Your Life

In Mark 1:12-15, Jesus spends time in the wilderness. We tend to see the Judean wilderness as a scary, lonely and barren place, and Jesus' time there as being all about endurance, grit and perseverance. But notice also, that in Jesus' experience in the wilderness "wild animals were his companions and angels took care of him" (v. 13, The Message). If possible, get out into a park or natural area. Look around and take time to observe the creatures, plants and other natural features and forces in that place. What might they have to teach you about hope and trust? How might they minister to you?

Praying With Music

Find these contemporary songs on YouTube or on the *Hungering for Hope* playlist. Listen to "Who Am I" by Need to Breathe, and/or "You Say" by Lauren Daigle, as you ponder God's unconditional love for you. Does anything make it hard to trust this love? Among other things, baptism can symbolize experiencing forgiveness and the washing away of sin or pain. Listen to "Grace" by Rose Cousins. For what might you seek forgiveness from God or from others? To whom might you offer forgiveness? Let God's mercy and love wash over you, renew and refresh you. Use the bowl of water from the Reflection time (see above) to anoint yourself with water to symbolize this transformation.

Praying for Our Earth

In Genesis 9:8-17 God makes a covenant not to destroy the earth and all its creatures. Consider making a covenant of your own during Lent (or longer) that will limit or decrease your negative impact on the Earth and its creatures. You could fast from buying anything new during Lent. You could explore your choices around food, clothing, transportation, water use or the amount of waste you produce, to see how you could reduce any harmful impact on the Earth. Also, prayerfully consider how you could increase your knowledge, appreciation and advocacy for the natural world and its resources in your area.

Review what you have experienced during your prayer times. Decide what is meant for you alone, and what you are comfortable sharing if you are meeting with a group.