



Household Devotions

(Especially for Families)

Lent 2021



REpent/REthink

Lent is traditionally a time to REPENT, a time to turn back to God in renewed faith. The Church encourages this work of repentance by offering worship opportunities like Immanuel's Wednesday night Holden Evening Prayer Worship. We also encourage people to take time repenting, or turning to God, through devotions and prayer. This year we are encouraging one another to RETHINK Lent, to take to heart the work of repentance in new and renewing ways.

In this year of pandemic we have been forced to rethink so much of life, how we work, how we connect with family, how we renew our friendships with one another and renew our faith in God. As repentance invites us to renew our relationship with our Lord, rethinking that work of repentance help make this work new and fresh just as we need that creative renewal.

Use the items in this bag to help you think about God this season of Lent.

These REpent devotions are for all households, but especially appropriate for families, that include items or symbols of reflection that can help in the work of repentance.

Word of the Week

Each Wednesday, beginning with Ash Wednesday, we invite you to post an image on your social media with the hashtag #REthinkILC (or email us a copy) that helps you connect or unpack the meaning of that word of the week. The words are: *Dust, Reflect, Broken, Costly, Beloved, Cry, Love*. This is an opportunity to connect and engage with our Lenten themes via a visual medium and help others to also contemplate (rethink) these themes during Lent.

How this will work:

- Post your photos on your social media channel with the hashtag, #REthinkILC, or send your photos to kelly@immanuel.us.
- Please submit them by noon on Saturday (so Kelly has time to create a collage of images that will be shared in worship on Sunday). The collages will also be shared on Immanuel's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Ash Wednesday

February 17

Here are several different ways to have your own Ash Wednesday at home:



1) The Ash Wednesday Backyard Fire is a practice that can be done around a small fire pit in any backyard or in front of a fireplace.

2) Toasting Marshmallows

Everyone loves to make S'mores and toast marshmallows over an open fire, but have you ever watched a marshmallow burn to a crisp? A marshmallow that has been burned on the outside is still soft and white on the inside, so much softer than it was before. This is a great tactile example of how God uses the "refining fires" of life (various forms of pain, loss, change, love, etc., to soften our hearts and loosen our grip on the illusion of control. Consider roasting marshmallows to a crisp, explaining this illustration to your kids as you do so, and then enjoy some S'mores!

3) Burning of Confessions

With pencil and paper have each person write down (or draw in the case of young children) things they would like to confess. Have markers or crayons available for children.

Have each person crumple up their paper and throw it in the fire and pray: "God, make a fresh start in me, and renew your Spirit within me." Psalm 51:10. When the paper confessions have burned say to one another, "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Light



Week of February 21-27

Element: Candle

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 to make a difference.

- ◆ *Where and how do you let your light shine?*
- ◆ *What do you think you are good at?*
- ◆ *What is your talent?*
- ◆ *How can you share that talent for the good of others?*
- ◆ *In what ways can you encourage someone to see their good talents?*

Light the candle and read Matthew 5:14-16 and then sing "This Little Light of Mine."

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Wilderness



Week of February 28 – March 6

Element: Sand

Between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness 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?
- ◆ In what times and places do you experience wilderness in your life?
- ◆ What have you learned there?
- ◆ What might you learn there?

Read the story of Jesus wandering in the desert in Matthew 4: 1-11, then open the sand and touch it, letting it run through your fingers.

Temptation



Week of March 7 – 19

Element: Rock

While in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by the devil 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.

Read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10. Jesus transforms Zacchaeus. Jesus transforms us and helps us make better choices. Is there a place in your life where you could make better choices, with Jesus' help?

Human Being



Week of March 14 – 20

Element: Wooden figure

Because Jesus was *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. No matter what we do, he keeps on inviting us to join us in his work which has become our own. Jesus knows that we can 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?

At work?

In your neighborhood?

At church?

Everywhere?

Read the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in John 13:1-20. How can we live like Jesus?

Prayer



Week of March 21 – 27

Element: Skittles

Read Matthew 6:5-14

Open the package of Skittles and hand them out to everyone in the household, or if you are by yourself, take them in your hand. Then say a prayer triggered by the color of each candy as follows:

Red – a sorry prayer (something you are sorry for)

Purple – prayer for someone who is sick

Green – prayer for the world

Orange – a thank you prayer

Yellow – pray for anything you would like!

Giving



Week of March 29 – April 3

Element: Penny

Another way to make Lent a special time is to practice almsgiving; which is the practice of giving money or food to those in need. Read the story of the Widow's Offering in Mark 12:41-44 and consider how you can help those in need.

Donating to PROP, or a food shelf in your city, is one way you can help those in need, with either non-perishable food items or cash donations.

Mark 12:41-44

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow had put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

What do you learn about giving from the story of the poor widow?

New Life



Easter Sunday, April 4

Elements: Flower bulb and pea gravel

Christ has risen! Easter brings us joy and hope!

Place the bulb in a shallow container and use the little stones to hold the bulbs in place. Add water, and they'll start growing in a few days to a week, and usually bloom just four weeks after "planting". The water should cover no more than the bottom quarter to third of the bulb.

Where is there hope in your life?

Where is there joy?

Where is there mystery?

Praying with a Finger Labyrinth



- ◆ Sit comfortably, be still and gently pray: *I place myself in your presence O Lord, my God.*
- ◆ When you are ready slowly trace the labyrinth path with a finger; use a finger on the hand that you do not write with. Just let your thoughts come to the surface and let them flow...Jesus is with you every step of the way, you are never alone. You are always loved by God.
- ◆ When you reach the center... consider your thoughts...
- ◆ Stay in the center for a while and spend some time in prayer and reflection receiving God's love and blessing.
- ◆ When you are ready return along the same path. Return gratefully, prayerfully. You might like to sing or say aloud a line from the Psalms or a favorite hymn.
- ◆ As you exit the labyrinth give thanks and praise to God: *Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen*

Finger Labyrinth and Prayer Guide

...did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road... Luke 24:32

- ◆ Labyrinths are ancient pathways found across the world. The winding path helps us to “unwind”, to let go and rest in God. Members of the early church as well as Medieval pilgrims have used them as a support for prayer.
- ◆ Today, labyrinths are being created in churches, retreat centers, schools, hospices and cathedrals to offer a spiritual space for prayer and reflection providing a still space in a busy world.
- ◆ A labyrinth is different from a maze. A maze is full of dead ends and designed to get you lost. A labyrinth has only one path that always lead to the center .. If you stay on the path you cannot get lost.
- ◆ There is no right or wrong way to a labyrinth no set pace.. just follow the path in your own time.
- ◆ Finger labyrinths can be used for prayerful reflection when it is not possible to walk a full-sized labyrinth.

Your labyrinth prayer time can be as open or as focused as you would like it to be. You might want to simply enter the labyrinth and be with the Lord... or, before you enter the labyrinth, you might like to take time to:

- ◆ Read and reflect on a line or two from Scripture and ponder those words in the labyrinth.
- ◆ Hold a memory or a photo of a loved one you wish to remember or pray for while you are in the labyrinth.
- ◆ Consider an experience in your life where you are seeking healing or forgiveness and talk to God in the labyrinth.
- ◆ Think about a key celebration in your life and walk a prayer of thanksgiving in the labyrinth.

... you will reveal the path of life to me, give me unbounded joy in Your presence.... Psalm 16:1