

# Planning



Sunday, March 5 – Saturday, March 11 • 2023

## Through the Night

As Abram and Sarai go into their future, and Nicodemus' faith questions take him into the deep of night, we are challenged to figure out what really matters.

### This week...

#### Ecumenical prayer calendar

United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales; and Ireland

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

Like wilderness, the concept of night can have negative associations and connotations. This week, spend some time reflecting on your relationship with the hours of the day that come after sunset.

- **What does the night have to teach you?**
- **What spaces do you find in the night?**

**March 5, 2023**

Lent 2

#### Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Genesis 12:1–4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1–5, 13–17

**John 3:1–17**

the focus in age-level materials

or Matthew 17:1–9

**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.





**Genesis 12:1–4a**  
**Psalm 121**  
**Romans 4:1–5, 13–17**  
**John 3:1–17 or Matthew 17:1–9**  
 the focus in age-level materials

**Spirit, you lead us into the night. Sometimes the darkness is scary; sometimes it brings peace. In the stillness of the night, help us come to you. Let us experience you in ways we have not before. As we wrestle with the questions of our lives, help us know what really matters. Amen.**

# Through the Night

**L**ord, it is night. Let us be still in the presence of God.” These words from “Night Prayer” (*A New Zealand Prayer Book/He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 184) echo the essence of our texts for today. In the stillness of the night, we ask questions about God’s plans for us and our plans with God. In the night, the Lord keeps watch and does not slumber. In the deep of night, we bring our questions to God that we may not wish to ask during the day.

**Genesis 12:1–4a** The story of the people of Israel begins with a call and a promise, with Abram and Sarai blessed boldly by God. That story includes their family, then a whole people, and finally the world. Called by God, Abram and Sarai step into the wilderness. There may have been many long nights as they wondered if they had done the right thing and what their place in history might be. For a culture that, in many ways, defined success by descendants, they were not the ones to have been chosen. What is essential is their faith, not their fertility.

The words of **Psalm 121** offer comfort to those who are awake and asking questions of God in the middle of the night. Are the hills our eyes look to a wilderness? Where might we find God providing shelter and peace?

In **John 3:1–17**, we meet Nicodemus. The introduction to this story of Nicodemus begins at John 2:23–25, with the crowd’s reaction to Jesus’ miracles and signs. Jesus distrusts them. Compared to the depths and meaningfulness of Jesus’ teachings, their interest is shallow. Then Nicodemus comes to find out more about Jesus.

Nicodemus is a Pharisee, a pious Jew, a teacher, and probably a member of the Sanhedrin. An important man with disciples of his own, he would represent the authority of both the temple and the governing council. Nicodemus comes at night, which is a good time for scholars to debate,

and possibly with his disciples as Jesus addresses him using the plural form of “you.” However, Nicodemus was also still “in the dark” about life in the Spirit. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus is about what matters and what is at the heart of Jesus’ ministry. While the night was an acceptable time for scholars to debate, the imagery also raises questions for modern-day readers. What questions do we think about most in the middle of the night? Jesus draws some concrete lines between saved and unsaved, heaven and earth, those born of the Spirit and those who have not. It is a very binary view and one we may struggle with today. How do we know what we know? How did we come to believe what we believe? In the modern day, we can ask how the Holy Spirit may be calling us to reconsider binaries. The Spirit can be seen to call us to question assumptions and move to different understandings.

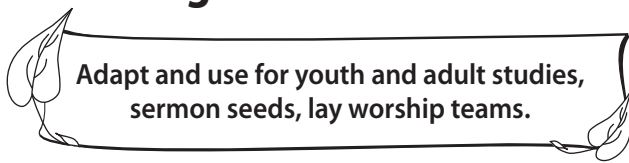
In **Romans 4:1–5, 13–17**, Paul writes that it was Abraham’s faith – his steady trust and dependence on God – that marks him as a righteous person. It is not anything he has done. Faith nurtured through many long nights of asking big questions. The true descendants of Abraham are those who rely on God’s grace, not their own achievements.

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God created both darkness and light, both day and night. God also created daybreak and twilight. As we consider these texts, we look at them from the standpoint of those who were in both a physical and spiritual wilderness. As Abram, Sarai, the psalmist, and Nicodemus moved through the deep of night, we might imagine them pondering, questioning what matters most about life and faith, and relying on the presence and guidance of God as they venture forth.



## Reflecting on the Word



### Connecting with life

Wilderness can be a wild place filled with brambles, tangled branches, and wild animals. It can also be a desert, endless sand seemingly devoid of life. "Wilderness" can also happen in the middle of the ocean.

- **Imagine for a moment that you are a boat. Would you like to stay, or would you want to head for shore?**
- **If you were heading for shore, what might help guide you?**
- **What if the navigational tools you are used to using were not available to you – what else might you use? If it is in the middle of the night, would you use the stars in the sky? a lighthouse on the shore?**

Depending on the horizon, often land can be seen at night before it can be seen during the day. The darkness of the night allows the lights from shore to be seen across the water. Without the darkness, the light will not be seen.

### Scripture

**John 3:1–17**

In all this week's readings, people seem to get glimpses of grace, but only by venturing forth. Nicodemus goes out at night to meet with Jesus.

- **What do you think is the reason Nicodemus went out at night?**
- **What might Nicodemus want to learn?**
- **How do you think Jesus' answers might have sat with Nicodemus?**

We encounter God's love and grace through Jesus. Faith invites us to make that affirmation our own. Place yourself in the shoes of Nicodemus.

- **What questions or affirmations would you bring to Jesus?**
- **How have you experienced birthing to new life or life from above?**

During the great depression in America, millions of people travelled from the dustbowl in the midwest and southern plains states to California, seeking a better life. It was not uncommon for travellers to wait and drive across the desert until nighttime when temperatures were cooler, and there was less risk of engines overheating and dehydration.

- **How can night be a time of comfort rather than a time of fear?**
- **When have you or your family travelled at night? Why did you make that choice?**

Sometimes, in those moments when we are most timid, God reveals new insights to us. When we dare to open ourselves to uncertainty, God provides answers.

- **What does it feel like to admit that you do not have all the answers?**
- **What does it feel like to step out into the unknown, wondering what God might have in store for you?**

**Genesis 12:1–4a and Romans 4:1–5, 13–17** Our faith ancestors responded to God's call to venture into the unknown.

- **What might have drawn them to leave the old and venture into the new?**
- **What helps you to trust in God's promises and grace and respond to the call to embrace new opportunities?**
- **What does "righteous through faith" look like to you?**

### Connecting scripture and life

- **Are glimpses enough for you, or do you need more?**
- **How can mere glimpses sustain us in the world in which we live?**
- **As individuals and as a church, how can we help glimpses of grace to grow?**

## Focus for Worship, Learning, and Serving

How can we be still in the presence of God? What can help us get through the day? What can help us get through the night? What helps us in the deep questions that arise in the night?

The nighttime questions of those who gather to worship this week will differ. Some of our questions come out of fear, worry, and anxiety. Some questions emerge from seeking a closeness with God. Whatever is our experience, we are assured that God's deep care

and self-giving love, God's grace, sustains us through the physical or metaphorical night.

This week's scriptures help us see that sometimes answers are incomplete and sometimes instructions are incomplete, sometimes we do not get all the information we might like. Yet it can be enough, at least, to start out, and to grow in trust that God will continue to support us on our journey. However great or small, glimpses of grace can lead us to ever more grace.



# Through the Night

## 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 group to perform the motions for the psalm.
- ❑ Choose an option for hearing John 3:1–17. For the Bible story, arrange for a storyteller to present “[Nicodemus, the Night Visitor](#)” on p. 40. Alternatively, for younger children, arrange for a storyteller to present “[A Night-time Visit](#)” in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials. For the “Wilderness of questions at night,” arrange for four voices. If possible, project an image of a dark sky lit with stars.
- ❑ Bring items for setting the worship space.
- ❑ You might choose to print [Thread of Hope 3](#) on or in your bulletin (Images to Project and Images for Printing folders). See “[Connecting with the Art](#)” on p. 8 for background to the art and artist.
- ❑ Bring songs such as “Strength for the Journey” (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 9, #9 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 9*) or “Behold, I Make All Things New” (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 6, #4 on Seasons Music CD, vol. 6*). Printed music and recordings 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. 41–42.



## Music Suggestions

### Stay Awake

Robin Mann; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

### Still, I Search for My God

Francisco F. Feliciano; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

### Strength for the Journey

Michael John Poirier; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*

### Spirit Blowing through All Creation

Marty Haugen; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 8*

### The Wind Blows

Trisha Watts; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 7*

### I Will Be Your God

Roddy Hamilton; *Seasons Songbook, vol. 4*

### Behold the Night

Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan

### De Noche

Taizé Community

### Wind Who Makes All Winds that Blow

Thomas Troeger



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

Come into the wilderness.

Step into the unknown possibility that is here in this place with all of our questions.

**The sun might be shining but it still feels bleak.**

We step into the wilderness because we have questions and it is here that it feels safe to ask what we long to know.

**We come together to a find deeper understanding of God’s love.**

### Opening prayer

God of night and of day,

we dare to venture out into the unknown – to the edge of the wilderness where you will guide us.

We come to be led and encouraged.

We come to find answers to questions we didn’t even know we had.

We come to find you, steadfast and true.

Amen.

### Prayer of confession

Looking out into the wild possibility of this moment, O God, it feels like an impassable mountain or a vast, deepening sea hindering our way forward.

We feel discouraged and overwhelmed.

We don’t move from where we are.



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## Worship Outline • March 5, 2023

You know our hearts, O God, and the disbelief that has come to live there.

You know how the bleakness of this night immobilizes us.  
We are timid. We fear failure.

We confess fear of dying even if it is for the sake of truly living.  
Amen.

**Option:** Use the song “Hold Us in Your Grace” (*Seasons Song-*

*book, vol. 9*) or “Strength for the Journey” (*Seasons Songbook, vol. 9*) as a response to this confession.

### Words of affirmation

Beloved, the God who calls us to take bold steps outward, is the One who journeys closely within.  
In God, there is companionship and renewed strength through the wilderness of every night.  
**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

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## Engage

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### Opening the word

#### Psalm 121

*Read the psalm with a liturgical group performing the motions.*

I lift my eyes to the hills.  
From whence comes my help?  
**My help comes from the Holy One  
Creator of heaven and earth**

The Holy One will not allow your foot to stumble;  
you Guardian will never sleep.  
No! Israel’s Guardian will neither  
slumber nor sleep.  
The Holy One is indeed your Guardian,  
your shade at your right hand,  
**so that the sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

The Holy One will guide you from every evil  
and protect your very being  
**The Holy One will guard your going out and your coming in  
from this time forth, forevermore.**

*(bring hand to brow as if looking into the distance).  
(shrug shoulders)  
(raise palms upwards),  
(roll hands over each other and then open out in welcoming gesture).*

*(stamp feet).  
(bend head to the side as if sleeping).*

*(stretch arms out).  
(hold hands together tightly),  
(place open hand upwards on right),  
(hold both hands over the head like shade),  
(hands in the same place but close eyes).*

*(hands out, palms facing front).  
(hands like a cradle).  
(gesture going out and coming in movements)  
(hold hands out as if embracing everything).*

*Text from Songs for the Holy One by Thomas Barnett and Donald Patriquin.  
Copyright © 2004 Thomas Barnett and Donald Patriquin. Used by permission.*

**John 3:1–17** *the focus scripture for age-level materials in  
ENCORE*

Choose from the following.

**Bible story** Have a storyteller present the story “[Nicodemus, the Night Visitor](#)” on page 40. Alternatively, for younger children, tell the story “[A Nighttime Visit](#)” (in Exploring Our Faith at the end of this week’s materials).

**Wilderness of questions at night** *Arrange for four voices, one for the introduction, one to bring Nicodemus’ questions, one to bring Jesus’ questions, and one to bring Jesus’ statements as paraphrased below. Include the titles of the three sections. If possible, project an image of a dark sky that is lit with stars.*

**Introduction** Nicodemus approaches Jesus under the protection of night. Perhaps he is cautious about his reputation

but determined to get some answers to his questions, or he comes at night as was an acceptable time for scholars to debate. He knows the world and the history of his faith.

Nicodemus is intrigued by Jesus’ teaching. However, Jesus’ teaching doesn’t answer Nicodemus’ questions, per se; it simply inspires Nicodemus to ask more questions. Jesus invites Nicodemus to think of all the knowledge he already possesses as nothing more than a first attempt to experience God’s love. A conversation between two deeply inquisitive teachers who deeply love their followers ensues.

#### Nicodemus’ questions to Jesus

- **How can we experience a rebirth after growing old?**
- **Are you asking us to return to our earthly mother and our childhood experiences?**
- **What does it mean to be born of water and Spirit?**
- **How can any of this be real?**





To the gathered community

- **When has the wilderness felt like this to you?**
- **How might this wilderness of doubt and worry feel real now?**

#### Jesus' questions to Nicodemus

Consider Jesus asking these questions out of love:

- **Do you understand me?**
- **How can you believe what I teach you about heavenly things if you don't believe what I tell you about earthly things?**

#### Jesus' statements

- **Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above."**
- **The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the spirit.**
- **We speak of what we know...yet you do not receive our testimony.**
- **God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him.**

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 [https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order\\_products/](https://www.seasonsonline.ca/order_products/).

### Affirmation of faith

Look to the wildness of the hills!  
From where does our help come?

**Our help comes from God,  
who made heaven and Earth;  
who sustains the universe, keeping the sun in place and  
the moon on track;  
who provides sunshine and shade to nurture and protect  
life, day and night.**

Look to the skies!

From where does our help come?

**Our help comes from God,  
who showed such immense love for us in the person of  
Jesus Christ;  
who came not to judge or condemn anyone but to give  
eternal life.**

Look around!

From where does our help come?

**Our help comes from God,  
whose Spirit is always at our side;  
whose presence is like the wind,  
powerful, unpredictable, yet personal,  
stirring us into new possibilities and bringing about  
new birth.**

### Prayers of the people

We come to you, O God, in the bleakness of our doubt,

when questions arise,  
and we are sure where to find our strength.

We pray for your blessing in our boldness to dare to give  
voice to so many questions.

We want to know so much,  
and it is hard to challenge the voices that deride, put down,  
and condemn our wondering.

We listen for the wind to blow,  
to hear its sound howling through our souls with under-  
standing and grace.

O God, we are newborns in our hope and confusion.

Hear the deep yearnings of our heart, O God!

Open in us the ways of genuine compassion.

We live in a world of stark and confusing contrasts:  
beauty and ugliness, generosity and impoverishment,  
hope and despair, honesty and deception.

We turn to you, seeking in the stillness – the refuge and gift  
of silence –  
your presence, calm, beckoning voice and renewing  
perspective.

Guide us in our prayer, strengthen us in our action for this  
our community, nation and world  
(silence).

In the faith, hope, and love of Christ, we pray, Amen.

### Prayer of dedication or offering prayer

We bring you gifts, O God, with all our questions.

We know that you will work wonders with all we offer to  
renew the bleakness with new wonders.

Amen.

## Bless

The wildness of night can feel endless and so lonely,  
but the wind blows, and the Spirit moves again.

Know that the sun will not hurt you by day, nor the moon  
by night,  
for God will protect you and watch over you, this day and  
always.



# Books to Explore during Lent

When stepping into unfamiliar wildernesses, we reach first for maps to orient us on our way. In the life of faith, we often find companions and guides to support us on the way through wilderness times in books and films. Choose a book – or a series of books – to share in making a map together through this Lent.

Many of these titles offer discussion guides by the author or publisher that can be found through a simple Internet search. You might choose to use the questions and activ-

ities offered for weekly intergenerational conversation in the [Multi-generational Wilderness Book Study](#) on page 12.

If these titles are not available, seek out the wisdom of a librarian in your community for additional recommendations that might enrich this conversation of the wilderness. Another option might be to explore a series of films together around the wilderness theme that might include titles like *Wild* (2014), *Into the Wild* (2007), and *Life of Pi* (2012). Choose titles that might be screened at home to devote more time to intergenerational interaction in your gatherings.

## Book options for adults

*An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*  
by Barbara Brown Taylor

*Wilderness Blessings: How Down Syndrome Reconstructed Our Life and Faith*  
by Jeffrey Gallagher

*The Electricity of Every Living Thing: A Woman's Walk in The Wild To Find Her Way Home*  
by Katherine May

*This Is God's Table: Finding Church beyond the Walls*  
by Anna Woofenden

*Life Unsettled: A Scriptural Journey for Wilderness Times*  
by Cory Driver

*Journeying in the Wilderness: Forming Faith in the 21st Century*  
by Terri Martinson Elton

*Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*  
by Brené Brown

*The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*  
by Belden C. Lane

*When the Trees Say Nothing: Writings on Nature*  
by Thomas Merton

*Walking in the Wilderness: Seeking God During Lent*  
by Beth A. Richardson

## Book options for youth

*The Barefoot Way: A Faith Guide for Youth, Young Adults, and the People Who Walk with Them*

by Dori Grinenko Baker

*This Thing Called Life: A Youth Devotional on Finding Direction*  
by Ramona Cramer Tucker and Jeff Tucker

*Enjoy the Silence: A 30-Day Experiment in Listening to God*  
by Maggie Robbins and Duffy Robbins

## Book options for children

*A New Kind of Wild*  
by Zara Gonzalez Hoang

*All the Places to Love*  
by Patricia MacLachlan

*Daniel Finds a Poem*  
by Micha Archer

*Wonder Walkers*  
by Micha Archer

*You're Missing It!*  
by Brady Smith and Tiffani Thiessen

*Finding Wild*  
by Megan Wagner Lloyd

*Wonder Awaits!*  
by Caroline Hamilton-Arnold



# Nicodemus, the Night Visitor

Based on John 3:1–17

**N**icodemus had always been a confident man: sure of God, sure of his faith, sure of himself, and sure of the answers – after all, wasn't he a great teacher?

But now, he was confused: unsure of God, unsure of his faith, and unsure of himself; and he wasn't even sure of the questions, let alone the answers.

It started when he met Jesus, a young man from Nazareth. Jesus had caused a bit of a scene in the temple, upsetting the money changers' tables and upsetting the religious leaders. The ordinary people seemed to hang on his words, listening to his teaching and believing that he was someone special because of the way he helped and healed people. Nicodemus hung around at the back, listening out of curiosity, then out of genuine interest, and now in confusion.

So, Nicodemus decided to visit Jesus and find out more. He waited until it was night, for when else was there time and quiet to engage in good conversation? That way, fewer people would see him, too.

Nicodemus wasn't quite sure what question he would ask as he knocked on the door. So, when he sat down with Jesus, he thought of a statement instead.

"Teacher, we know you must be from God. No one could do the wonderful things you do unless God was with him."

Jesus smiled. "I tell you honestly, no one can see God at work without being born from above."

Nicodemus was still confused – maybe it was time for a question!

"I'm becoming old! How could I possibly be born a

second time?"

"Really," replied Jesus, "to be part of God's realm, you need to be born of the Spirit and flesh! It's a bit like the wind, blowing here and there. You don't know where it comes from or where it is going, but you hear it and see it all right. The realm of God is like that: you can't see where it starts or where it will end, but you can know you are part of it."

"How can it be?" Nicodemus puzzled.

Jesus responded with a twinkle in his eye. "Is this one of Israel's great teachers without an answer to these questions? Truly, I can only tell you what I have known and seen. You, teachers, find it so hard to accept. What if I tried to tell you about the God-life beyond? Only the Son of Man has been there. That's where he has come from and where he is going. Our stories of faith are models for life, encouraging you to trust in the Son of Man. Do you know how much God loves the world and its people? So very, very much. So much as to give what is most precious, to share the very God-life with those who have faith. God didn't send the Son of Man to put people down but to give them life and wholeness! God's right in front of you! Have faith!"

Nicodemus felt overwhelmed as he listened to Jesus. He couldn't think of a question or an answer. But his heart was filled with a surge of hope and peace, trust and wonder; he realized how little he knew about God and how much he wanted to know. He felt like a beginner, as if he was starting all over again. Then everything seemed to click into place – was this what Jesus meant by being born anew?

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

## The practice of storytelling

### Directions

1. Listen to the story "Nicodemus, the Night Visitor."
2. When do you find comfort in being in the wilderness or a quiet space?
3. Write or draw a favourite place that is like the wilderness for you.





## 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.

### Wilderness night lights

#### Materials

- Air-dry clay
- Tealights
- Twigs, leaves, acorns, seeds, and any other natural elements
- Water
- Small bowls
- Clean-up supplies
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



#### The practice of creativity \_\_\_\_\_

##### Directions

1. Grab a handful of clay and roll it into a ball.
2. Take a tealight and press it firmly into the clay ball.
3. Wiggle tealight so that it is easy to remove and replace.
4. Decorate your tealight candle holder by pressing any natural elements into the clay.
5. Dip your finger in water and smooth out any cracks in the clay.
6. Leave to dry.

### Listening with the Spirit



#### The practice of contemplation \_\_\_\_\_

##### Directions

1. Listen to some music played by a wind instrument. Doodle as the Spirit moves you.
2. Think about these questions:
  - **What tune is the Spirit creating through your life?**
  - **Who else could help you make harmony in life?**
  - **What do your doodles reveal about the Spirit's movements?**

**Young children** might do some free form art as they listen to the music.



## Dancing with the Spirit

### Materials

- Sticks of varying length
- Assorted ribbons
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



### The practice of movement \_\_\_\_\_

#### Directions

1. Choose a stick.
2. Tie ribbons of your choice to the top. Choose as many or as few ribbons as you like.
3. Mindful of others around you, twirl and spin your stick in the air.
4. Watch the ribbons dance as you move and wonder how the Spirit might be moving you.

## Bubbles with the Spirit

### Materials

- Prepare bubble liquid
  - 6 cups of water
  - 1 cup of washing liquid
  - ½ tablespoon of glycerine
- Wide brim tub or a series of tubs
- Bubble wands
- Hand sanitizer or wipes



### The practice of play \_\_\_\_\_

#### Directions

1. Dip your bubble wand into the bubble mix and waft it around to make giant bubbles.

*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.

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# A Nighttime Visit

## A story based on John 3:1-17

Nicodemus stepped outside.

It was getting dark, and people were lighting lamps in their homes all over the village. Some were beginning to climb the steps outside their homes to the roofs where they could sleep in the cool night air.

The sun was setting, and stars began to glimmer in the velvety sky.

Nicodemus began to walk. He walked and walked and walked.

Soon Nicodemus could see the house where Jesus was staying. Nicodemus' steps slowed down as he walked around the corner. What would Jesus say, he wondered? Would Jesus be surprised to see him? As Nicodemus reached the door, he could see Jesus sitting inside.

"Nicodemus, my friend," said Jesus, "please come in and sit down."

Nicodemus hurried to sit by Jesus' side. "Jesus," Nicodemus said, "I have so many questions to ask you! I know

that you are a teacher of God's love. I would like to learn more about what it means to live in God's way."

Jesus smiled. "Then let's start, Nicodemus. What do you want to know?"

Nicodemus took a deep breath.

Then Nicodemus began to ask Jesus about the things that he wanted to know. There were so many things to learn! And Jesus answered every question. Sometimes Jesus asked Nicodemus questions, too.

Jesus and Nicodemus talked and talked and talked. And then Jesus said to Nicodemus, "I have come to show God's love to everyone. You can show God's love to everyone, too!"

Soon it was time to return home. There would always be so much more to learn about God's love and this wonderful teacher, Jesus. But, for now, Nicodemus knew that he wanted to show God's love every day, every way, and to everyone!

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## Question Box

Nicodemus came to Jesus with lots and lots of questions. You probably have lots of questions too. Make this question box, and when you have a question about God, or Jesus, or the way things are, write your question and pop it in your question box. Invite people to dip in, take one of your questions, and find answers.

To make your box, you will need a box with a lid, such as a shoebox or a gift box, pieces of colourful paper, glue, scissors, a writing pad, pen/pencil.

### Directions

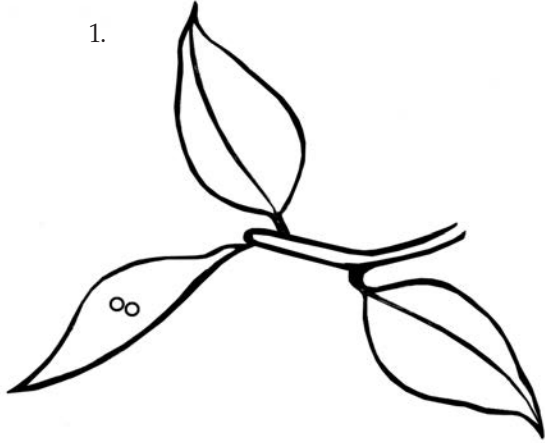
1. Tear the paper into different shapes and sizes and glue them over the box and lid in a mosaic pattern.
2. Ask a grownup to cut a hole in the lid.
3. Place the lid on your box and place a pad and pencil next to the box.
4. Write your questions and "post" them in the box.
5. Set aside special time during Lent to talk with others about your questions.



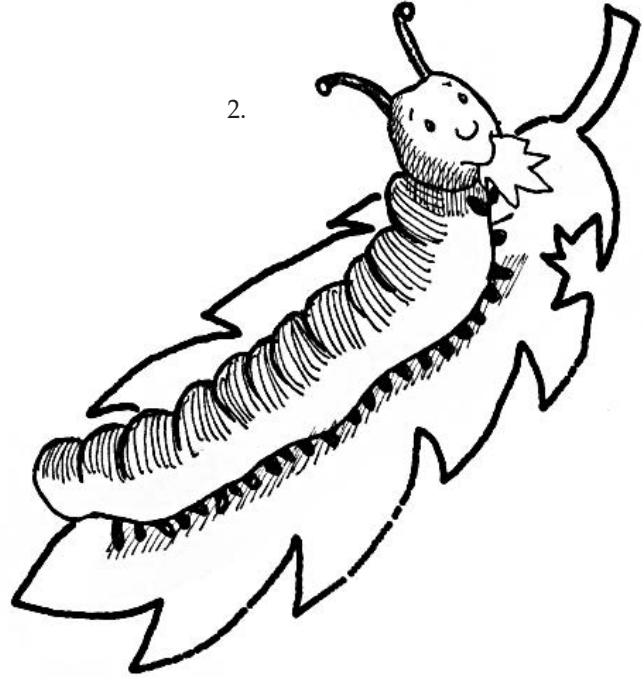
Nicodemus learned about becoming a new person.  
A caterpillar becomes something new.

Using markers, pencils, or crayons, decorate the stages  
of a butterfly's life.

1.



2.



3.



4.

