

Lent in a Bag



This bag contains seven small items to be used as symbols to focus individual, family, or group meditations and conversations during the Season of Lent. There is no assigned order, although if you want to see your seeds sprout by Easter, plan on using “week #2” earlier in the season. Ideas for experiential moments, along with Scripture verses or Story Bible suggestions are noted.

Suggestions for Using the Contents of This Bag:

- Choose one night of the week and invite those around your table to pick one of the symbols as a starting point for whole table conversation.
- For individual devotion, choose one of the symbols for reflection as you make your way through the season of Lent. How does your interpretation of the symbol change over time?
- Use each symbol as a conversation starter during a simple supper with friends, as an opening devotions for a meeting, or any small group gathering.

Week 1: Mirror

Supplies: Mirror* - *watch the edges!* (provided), alcohol wipes (provided), marker, Bible

Read: Exodus 20:1 - 17 or Deuteronomy 6:4-6 or a Story Bible version of the Ten Commandments

To Think About:

- As you read or hear about the Ten Best Ways to Live, how do you feel?
- What may Jesus say to you or be inviting you to be and do?

A mirror is something that reflects your image. Sometimes we notice that our face needs washing or there's a stain on our shirt. The mirror may help us deal with things that need changing! In the same way, the law of God is like a mirror. When we read God's Word, we see the changes that need to take place in our lives. Sometimes we don't like what we see. The Law tells us and shows us the best ways that we should live, and we soon realize that we just can't be good enough.

To Do: Take any kind of marker. On the mirror, write a word or draw a picture that symbolizes something in your life that you wish you could change or a word or action you need to confess to God.

Closing: Wipe your word or picture off the mirror with the wipe. Close with this prayer or a prayer of your own:

Dear Jesus, thank you so much for giving us the Bible to teach us how to live and follow you. We try very hard, but we know we are not perfect. Thank you for forgiving us and loving us so that we too can forgive and love ourselves, others, and you. Amen.

*Save the mirrors for another week's activity!

Week 2: Seeds

Supplies: Seeded paper cross (provided), Bible or Story Bible

Read: Genesis 9: 8 - 15 or a version of Noah and the Ark from a Story Bible

To Think About: Throughout the Bible, God changes or transforms all that is death and darkness, and breathes new life and light into it. The rainbow is God's everlasting reminder that points to the faithfulness and power of God to make all things new.

To Do: These special paper crosses have seeds embedded in them! Soak the seed cross overnight in water. The next day, tear it up and plant under a thin layer of soil. Water gently every day until the seedlings sprout in 1 - 3 weeks. If all goes to plan, you will have a variety of colorful wildflowers!

To Talk About or Reflect on Your Own:

Watching seeds grow reminds us of the miracle of hope and transformation that is the promise of Easter. What makes you feel hopeful in your life or in the world? Where do you experience mystery? What transformation or new thing do you hope for this year?

Week 3: Rock

Supplies: Rock (provided), Bible or Story bible

Read: *Luke 4:1-13* or Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness from a Story Bible

To Think About: While in the wilderness for 40 days and nights, Jesus was really hungry. Imagine how hungry you would be if you didn't eat for that long? The tempter tried to trick Jesus and told him to use "super powers" to make rocks turn into bread so he wouldn't be hungry anymore. But Jesus said, "No!" When Jesus left the desert, his ministry began. He went about feeding others who were hungry for food, or for love, or for healing, or for a word of encouragement. Jesus is called, "The Bread of Life."

Closing Prayer and Activity: Hold the rock and, if you are with others, pass it around so everyone has a turn. In the silence of your heart or out loud, ask Jesus to feed you and to give you exactly what you need so that you, too, can share the nourishing and life-giving love of Jesus with others.

Week 4: Shell

Supplies: Shell (provided), Bible, paper, markers/crayons, pen/pencil

Read: Jesus' baptism in Matthew 3:13-17 or in a Story Bible.

To Think About: A shell reminds us of baptism because thousands of years ago, the early church used a shell to dip into the water for baptism. In baptism, God claims us a member of God's family. Some people are baptized when they are a baby, while others as an adult. Think or talk about baptisms you have experienced. If possible, find a picture or memento of your baptism.

To Do: When a person is baptized, the entire community makes promises to nurture the baptized person in the faith. Who has made a difference in your faith life? Write a letter, send a card, or draw a picture to say thank you to someone who has fulfilled their baptismal vows by praying or teaching or helping you know Jesus and what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Closing: Hold the shell in your hand as you say, "I am a beloved child of God."

Week 5: Remember

Supplies: Wristband (provided) or clothespin (provided), pen/pencil or markers, Bible

Read: Luke 15:11-32, The Parable of the Lost Son and the Loving Father.

To Think About: Sometimes we forget about God's promises. We may be very busy. Sometimes bad things happen, and it's hard to see God is with us. Sometimes life is great, so it's easy to forget to thank God for that. What promises do you need to remember most?

To Do: To help you remember God's promises this week, write one on an armband or on a clothes pin. Attach the armband to your wrist or ankle or even a bag. If you prefer, clip the clothespin to your backpack, purse, or mirror. Whether you write down your favorite Bible verse or simply "Jesus loves me," remember God's promise that you are forgiven and a member of God's family!

Close with this prayer from Psalm 32:7

O God... You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. Amen.

Week 6: Candle

Supplies: Mirror (provided), candle (provided), lighter/matches, Bible or Story Bible

Read: Matthew 5:14-16.

To Think About: Lent begins in the dimness of late winter and ends with the burst of bright spring. Jesus is called the Light of the world. Jesus told his disciples to be a light in the world. As Jesus' disciples, Jesus speaks to us too: "**You** are the light of the world. Don't hide under a bushel basket." Where do you shine? How do you keep your light lit?

To Do: Light the candle. As you do, say "This light reminds us of the light of Jesus." Now hold up a mirror to the candle, allowing it to reflect the light onto the ceiling and other places. Think and talk about how we too can reflect or shine the light of Jesus in how we love others and love the world.

Closing: Sing "This little light of mine."

Holy Week or Easter

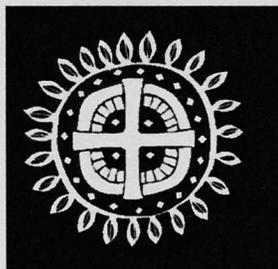
Supplies: Black sketch paper (provided), toothpick/sketch pencil, Bible or Story Bible

Read: Luke 24:1-12 or the story of the Women at the Empty Tomb from a Story Bible

To Think or Talk About: Sometimes things in our lives or in the world look really dark. It feels like there is no hope. Yet, remember God's promises. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. Jesus is alive!

To Do: Use a toothpick to create art that is bright and beautiful. You might draw a picture, a word of hope, or a promise onto the black paper. Reveal the light and color underneath!

Close with these words: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again! Alleluia!



Based on <https://abidaheartsonfire.com/2019/03/01/lent-in-a-bag/> as well as ideas from BuildFaith.org