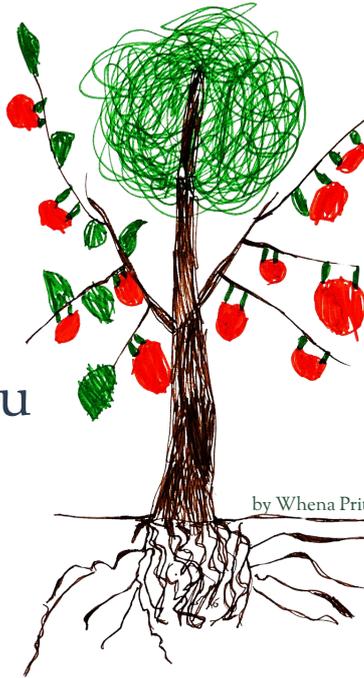


Whānau
Lent
Journal
2026



by Whena Pritchard

*Look for God while He can be found.
Scooch close to him while He is near.
Isaiah 55:6 (adapted)*

*Rapua a Ihowa i tona kitenga ai;
karangatia atu kei tata ana ia.
Ikaia 55:6*

IF YOU ARE NEW TO LENT AS A SEASON, NAU MAI!
THIS IS FOR YOU.

IF YOU ARE A LENT PRO, NAU MAI, MAY THIS
LITTLE JOURNAL REFRESH YOU.

THE HOPE HERE IS THAT YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD
WILL BE DRAWN DEEPER INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR
AMAZING GOD THIS LENT SEASON.

THIS JOURNAL OFFERS SOME SIMPLE WORDS AND
PRACTICES THAT MIGHT HELP YOU DO THAT.

SOMETHING THAT HAS ASTONISHED ME AS I PULLED
THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURES AND WORDS OF THESE
CREATIVE HUMANS TOGETHER WAS THE CONSISTENT
THEME OF GOD'S DESIRE
TO BE WITH US.

SO, WHEREVER YOU ARE, AND WHATEVER HOME LOOKS
LIKE RIGHT NOW
MAY GOD MEET YOU IN YOUR SEARCHING,
MAY YOU SCOOSH CLOSE TO HIM,
LIKE HE'S READING YOU A
THE BEST BEDTIME STORY EVER,
HIS STORY.

RACHEL

CREATED BY:



AND THE MAD SKILLS OF OUR MANY CONTRIBUTORS

MANY THANKS TO THE INCREDIBLE
CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS:

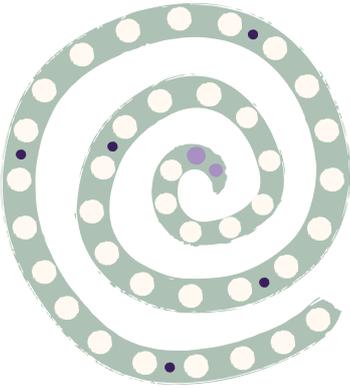
WHENA PRITCHARD
SCOTTIE AND LUNA REEVE
ROWAN, LAURYN AND ANNIE MILLER
CINDY, ANDY AND AUDREY NEWPORT
REBECCA AND ROLAND WILCOX
VINCE AND T KILPATRICK
SOPHIE FASI-MOHENOA AND OLIVE
THE WIGGINS WHĀNAU
STEVI PHIPPS
SPANKY, VICTOR AND FRED MOORE
+ANA AND EILIDH FLETCHER
ALLIE AND SIMEON COLP
DIANA LANGDON
MATT PICKERING
RACHEL, ARDEN AND REUBEN THORPE



Try the recipe to create your own salt dough koru or use the printable poster on our dio website instead.



A simple practice to enjoy together each day.



Salt Dough Koru Recipe

250g plain flour

125g table salt

125ml water

A small candle

Preheat oven to 50C

Line a baking sheet with baking paper.

Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl.

Add the water and stir until it comes together into a ball.

Transfer the dough to a floured work surface.

Place on baking paper and shape into a koru spiral.

Press the bottom of the candle into your koru and wiggle, making 41 evenly spaced holes, ever so slightly bigger than your candle.

Add essential oils, herbs any other bits to make it your own.

Bake for 3 hrs or until solid.

Leave to cool

Paint.



our whānau



Lent Intention

What are your hopes for this Lent season?
Write them here so we can come back to
them at Easter.



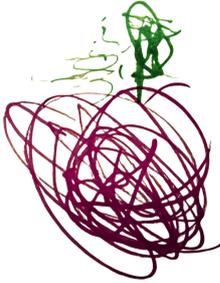
Joel 2:12-13

“Return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart
and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

Loving God,
Give us a fresh vision of your never ending, never giving up love.
May that be what we cling on to during Lent.
Amen.



What's in the Garden?

By Arden and Rachel Thorpe

What is Lent? Lent is about turning away from anything that's getting in the way of God's Way in our life. It's about taking some time to think about what's going on in our hearts and minds.

Here in New Zealand it's hauhake, harvest time. Our gardens are overflowing with the fruit of plants that we planted long ago. It's easy to look at our garden and see how much work we put in over spring, what sort of seeds we planted, and if we've taken time to pull out the weeds. As you can see from Arden's picture on the previous page, our garden at home has gone wild!

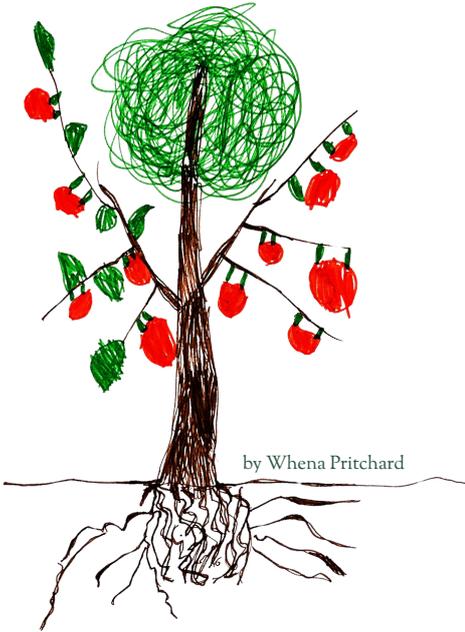
Just like harvest, Lent is a great time to step back and look at what's fruiting in our lives, where our energy has gone, and think about what we want to start planting next. It's also a good time to pull out any weeds we've let take root.

But!

The focus of Lent isn't actually us, in fact when we make it all about us, it becomes a bit sad and isolating.

The focus of Lent is on God.

The verses from Joel tell us what God is really like, not angry, or threatening or terrifying. Joel reminds us that all these things about God, they are what will keep us returning to God's loving arms, with any mistakes we've made and apologies we've got.



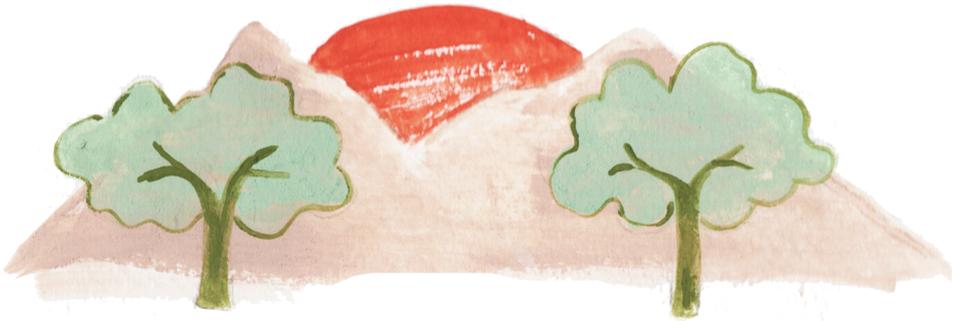
Close your eyes.
Have someone read these verses out loud.
What smells or sounds or sights or feelings
come into your mind while you listen?

Psalm 1:1-3 says:
Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees
 planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.

I wonder what you saw when your eyes were closed?

E te Atua,
thank you for your words in the Bible.
Make us like healthy happy fruiting trees as we learn more about You
through Your Word, the Bible, on this Lent journey.
Āmine.

Matthew 9: 14-15 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.'





Fasting means going without something on purpose, to help you focus on God instead of the thing you've given up. Throughout history, people have celebrated Lent by going without lots of different things.

I wonder if there is anything you could go without for a period of time over Lent that would help you focus on God?

Wero/Challenge: How many things you can think of as a family that might be things that distract you from God?

What might it look like to give one of those up?

Kids, what do you think are the big things that distract your adults?

Thanks God that you want to hang out with us!

That you really like us and love us. Help our hearts to be hungry for hang out time with You and please show us the things that keep distracting us from that.

Āmine



Psalm 86:5-6

*For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.*

*Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.*

*In this psalm, it seems like the writer is having a really hard time. And they REALLY
want God's help!*

I wonder if you've ever felt like you needed God to really come through for you?

I wonder if there are some things you are STILL waiting for God to sort out?

*Wero/Challenge: Pray for the person on your left, for any BIG prayers they might be
crying out to God for.*



Busy Bees

by Reuben and Rachel Thorpe

Reuben and I have been learning about bees lately and noticing all the thirsty tired bees on our whenua. They've been busy. Their pollination is done and now thanks to them we are in a harvesting season.

Did you know bees make 1/12th of teaspoon of honey in their short lives?

Did you know they fly over 800 kilometres in their 4-6 week lives?

Our Lent journey is about the same length of time as a bee's life, and we're just getting started!

What are the things that help keep you focused on big goals or long journeys?

Today's Psalm tells us God's words are like honey, precious. It's taken a lot of people a lot of hard work and in some cases, their lives to get the precious words of the Bible to us.

When Jesus was being tempted by the Accuser in the desert, he said that God's words were His food. Instead of bread, Jesus said God and His words would sustain Him, keep Him alive.

I wonder which parts of the Bible sustain you when you are tired?

I wonder who needs food in our community today?

Or maybe something else to sustain them?

I wonder if tasty food or busy work ever distracts you from noticing what you REALLY need?

Ihu Karaiti,

Thank you for giving us what we need. Sometimes we get distracted by things we THINK we need and miss the needs of others OR forget how much we need You and Your words to sustain us.

Remind us to rest and remember You and Your tasty words today.

Āmine.

So one day, Jesus taught people how to pray.

He said:

“When you pray, don’t pray like those Extra-Super-Holy People. They think if they say lots of words, God will hear them, But it’s not because you’re so clever, or good, or so important, that God will listen to you. God listens to you because he loves you.

“Did you know that God is always listening to you? Did you know that God can hear the quietest whisper deep inside your heart, even before you’ve started to say it? Because God knows exactly what you need before you ask Him.”
Jesus told them.

“You see, God just can’t wait to give you all that you need. So you don’t need to use long words or special words. You don’t have to use a special voice. You just have to talk.

“So when you pray, pray in your normal voice, just like when you’re talking to someone you love very much.

Like this.....



Hi Dad,

We want to know you.

And be close to you.

Please show us how.

Make everything in the world right again.

And in our hearts too.

Do what is best, just like you do in heaven.

And please do it down here too.

Please give us everything we need today.

Forgive us for doing wrong, for hurting You.

Forgive us just as we forgive other people when
they hurt us.

Rescue us! We need You.

We don't want to keep running away and hiding
from You.

Keep us safe from our enemies

You're strong God.

You can do whatever you want. You are in charge.

Now and forever and for always!

We think you're great!

Amen!

Yes we do!

FROM THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE
BY SALLY LLYOD JONES



Psalm 51:1-2

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.*

New and Clean

by Luna and Scottie Reeve

Luna adores clothes. She has lots of outfits she loves. Specifically, her K-Pop Demon Hunters shirts, her flower girl dress from our wedding, and her unicorn shoes, which have little silver horns and faces on them. Sometimes, if she can't choose, she will wear several outfits all at once!

Some of our saddest mornings are when Luna has chosen a special outfit and then spills some breakfast on it. When Luna goes to sleep later that day, I stand over a sink with some stain remover and make it clean so she can wear it again. That's what mums and dads do for their kids.

Our Psalm for today talks about God as this kind of dad. Except instead of cleaning our clothes, he cleans our hearts. We get stains on our souls through the mistakes we make and the times we are unkind to others. But every night he is making everything like new again. As it says in Lamentations 3:22-23, "God's mercies are new every morning."

I wonder if you've ever spilled something or made a big stain.

I wonder who cleaned it?

I wonder if you've ever made a mistake? How did you feel?

God isn't just cleaning little things, but all of us and the whole world.
Making it bright and new.

I wonder how we could be part of making everything new and clean today.

Loving God,

Thank you that there are no mistakes we can make that you can't clean.

You are a good Dad who loves to make everything new again.

And your love for us is brand new every morning.

Amen.

Get close

by Annie, Lauryn and Rowan Miller

“Seek the Lord while He is near...” Isaiah 55:6-9

Long ago, when these words were written, most of God’s people didn’t get the chance to be close with God. Did you know that God sent his Spirit to be with us? When God’s Spirit came, everything changed. God is with you right here, right now.

If God is with us all the time, why do we feel far away sometimes? We find it so easy to get distracted. We become busy with all the things we want to do and the jobs we have to do.

God thinks and acts differently to us. God knows exactly what we need! We get stuck on what we want- and it’s probably ice cream. We are not always good at knowing what we need. Sometimes it’s ice cream, but usually it’s something else. When we are close with God, it’s easier to realise what we need and what people around us need. It’s easier to make good choices. It’s easier to love others and to care about what’s right and fair.

If we feel far from God, what can we do? It is different for everyone, but some good places to start are in nature (Romans 1:20), when we worship (Psalm 100:2), in friendships with other people close to God (Proverbs 27:17), reading scripture (Hebrews 4:12) and when we share Eucharist (John 6:56).

Do you feel close to God today?

What makes you feel close to God?



Karakia:

Lord Jesus, you are right here.

Help me remember that you are close to me this week.

You see things so differently.

Teach me how to be joyful, loving and peaceful.

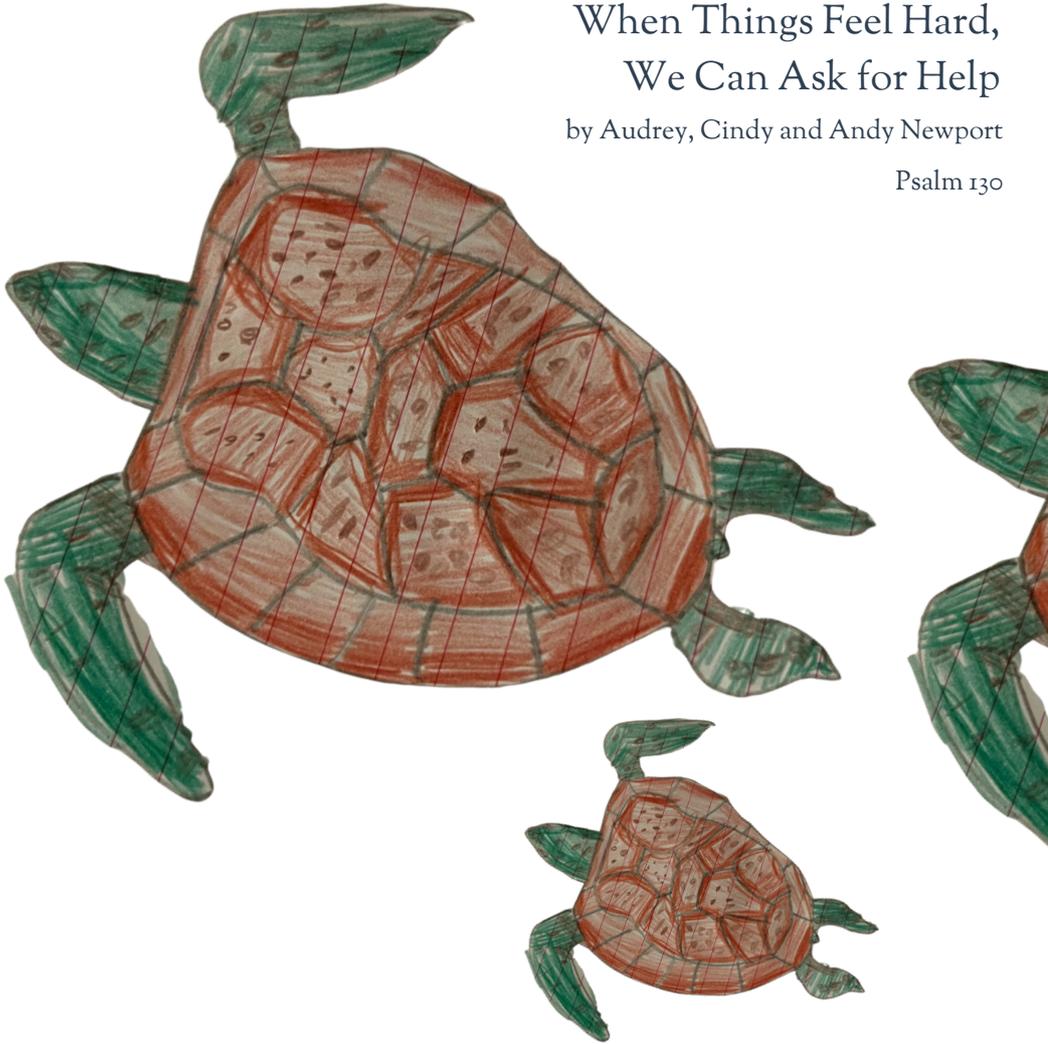
Teach me how to care for what is right and fair.

Amen.

When Things Feel Hard, We Can Ask for Help

by Audrey, Cindy and Andy Newport

Psalm 130



In our house, we love the ocean!
We can see it from where we live. We love going for walks on the beach, splashing in
the waves, and exploring rock pools to see what little creatures are hiding there.
The ocean is part of God's amazing creation, and it fills us with wonder.

Did you know there are seven kinds of sea turtles in the whole world?
And guess what? Five of them swim in the waters around Aotearoa! Isn't that amazing?

Because we spend so much time by the sea, we also know that the ocean needs help.

Not very much of the ocean in Aotearoa is protected. In fact, only a tiny part, just 0.38%. That means the ocean needs lots of love, care, and help.

Being kaitiaki of the moana is such a huge responsibility and task that it's easy to feel overwhelmed, but we can ask for help; we're not meant to do it alone.

In today's psalm, the writer is asking God to hear their prayer and to help them. Just like that, we can ask God for help too, when the world feels big, when things feel tricky, and when we're not sure what to do next.

- I wonder what your favourite sea creature is?
- I wonder how you might show your love for God's creation and help care for the ocean?
- I wonder if there might be something in your life that feels hard where you could ask God for help?

Jesus,
Thank you for loving us.
Thank you for always being with us.
Thank you that we can ask you for help.
Thank you for the beautiful ocean,
for the creatures big and small,
and for all the fun we have
swimming, surfing, and playing.
Help us care for this special gift.
Help us keep it safe for the future.
Amen



“But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”
- Matthew 5:44

The word “persecute” can be swapped out for “chased after” or “pursued”.

I wonder if people have ever chased after you, or not left you alone when you wanted space?

I wonder how that felt?

God,

It takes really strong hearts to choose to be kind to people who are not kind to us. Thank You Jesus that You show us how to do this. You were kind to people that were REALLY mean to you.

Help us to do the same.

Amen.



Wero/Challenge: Think of someone you find it hard to be around. What might they need prayer for today?



Dishes & Praise

by Vince and T Kilpatrick

Psalm 79:8-9,11,13

*Verse 8a: God! Don't hold against us the
bad things our ancestors did!*

I asked my two year old, T:

"Do you think it's fair if you were to get in trouble for something Pāpā's done wrong?"

T: "Uhhhm....[8 second pause]... Yes."

This surprised me. I expected her to say "no" of course. And it doesn't sound very fair does it?

But, the reality is that we are affected by the decisions people make around us. My life is affected by my Dad and his choices, and what I do affects T.

I wonder which people in your life are most affected by your choices?

Verse 8b : Let your compassion come quickly to meet us.

I wonder how you could show someone today a glimpse of God's compassion that "comes quickly to meet us"?

Verse 13: Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will thank you forever and ever, praising your greatness from generation to generation.

I asked T another question:

"What do you think it means to praise God?"

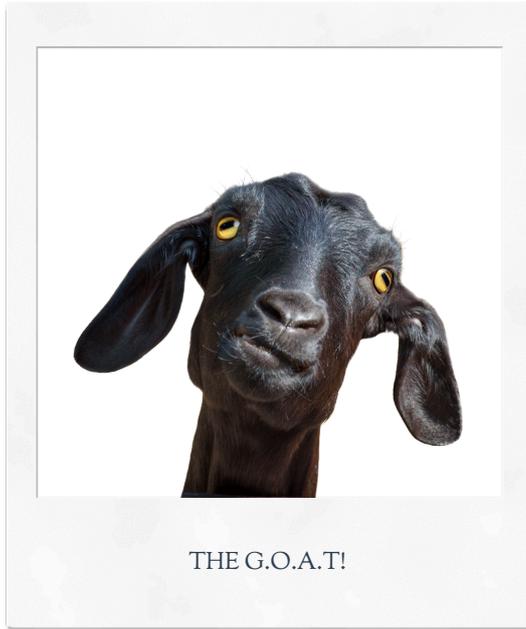
T: "Uhhh... Do dishes. Go to work."

Praising God isn't just singing or praying.

It's also all the normal things we do every day.

I wonder how your relationships might change if you thought of chores or work as praising God?

O GOD OF SALVATION,
MAY I/WE GROW FROM
GENERATION TO
GENERATION,
IN COMPASSION FOR ONE
ANOTHER,
AND IN PRAISE FOR YOU.
AMEN.



Tuesday 3rd March

“The greatest among you will be your servant”. Matthew 23:11

I wonder what makes someone great?
I wonder why Jesus would say being a servant makes someone great?

God,

help us to find a way to serve today. Help us spot the ways we are tempted to chase things that seem great but actually lead us away from Your Way of being someone who serves.

Amen

Monday 4th March
The Wilderness

by The Wiggins Whānau

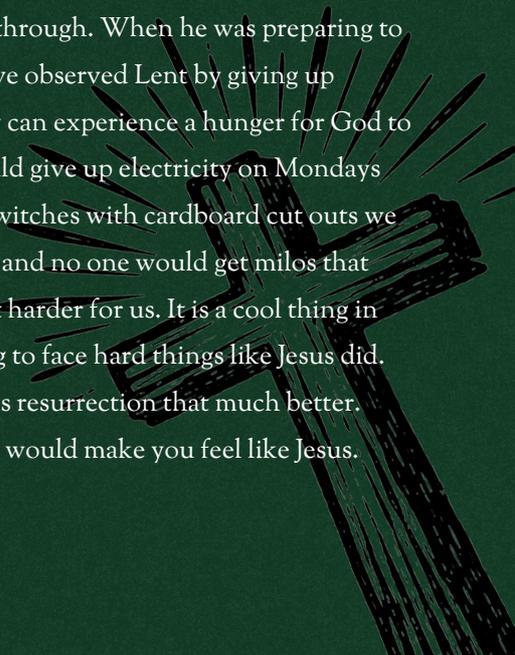
Luke 4:24-30

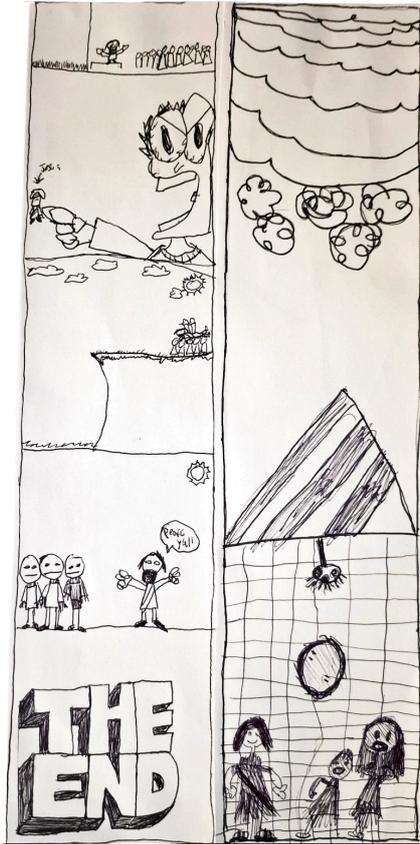
In the story we just read Jesus had been having an awesome time teaching people about all the wonderful things God can do in the world. Then he says something the people didn't like and all of a sudden they want to push him off a cliff! Oush! Imagine!

I've been pushed off a bridge into the river when we were doing manu's but I've never had people so angry at me they wanted to push me off a cliff. Have you?

This story sounds like it's a hard time for Jesus. He tells the people that the prophets of old were there for all people, that God loves everyone. But then they just got mean! They must have been seriously yelling at him to drive him out of the town. I wonder how Jesus stayed calm through all that?

This story makes me think about the time of Lent and how we go through it imagining the wilderness time Jesus went through. When he was preparing to be used by God. Over the years people have observed Lent by giving up something that is precious to them so they can experience a hunger for God to fill the gap. For a few years our family would give up electricity on Mondays through Lent. We would cover the light switches with cardboard cut outs we made and light candles if we needed them and no one would get milos that night. It was fun but also made things a bit harder for us. It is a cool thing in Lent practicing being like Jesus and having to face hard things like Jesus did. And when we do it makes celebrating Jesus resurrection that much better. I wonder if going through something hard would make you feel like Jesus. What do you reckon?





Ihu Kariti,

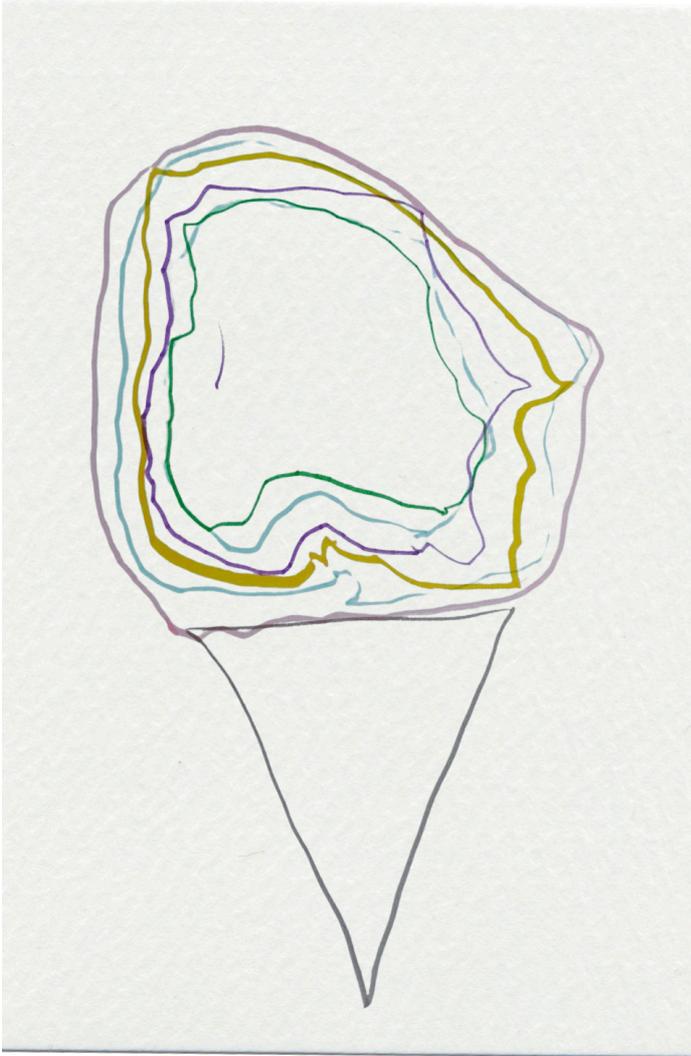
Thank you for showing us how to be calm and brave even when people are mean.

Thank you for showing us how to go through hard stuff.

*Thank you for your resurrection that means
we can celebrate so much more after we've been through the hard things
because you make all things good.*

You are awesome.

Āmine



Psalm 34

'Taste and see that the Lord is good.'

So Sweet

by Sophie Fasi - Mohenoa and Olive

One of my favourite pocket-sized memories from summer was a hot, sunny afternoon that began by sitting on the roadside with my niece, bored, waiting to be picked up by our family to go and get ice-creams. While we waited, trying to think of something to fill time, I taught my 4-year-old niece, Olive, the classic game “sweet or sour”. The game is simple; as a car drives past, give them a wave and a smile, and see if their response is “sweet” with a friendly wave back, or “sour” where you get ignored.

The game began, and Oli started giving little waves which swelled and swelled as each car responded with a wave and a grin or a chuckle back. After about 40 cars and a multitude of toots, we’d had a 100% hit-rate, all “sweet”. Oli was ecstatic.

Our ride arrived and we finished the afternoon sitting contentedly in the cool shade of a tree with chocolate ice creams running down our chins (and literally all over our entire face, neck, puku and arms if you were Oli’s 2-year-old brother).

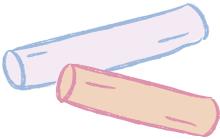
Taste and see that the Lord is good. I love the simple, un-extraordinary moments like these that can become spaces to experience God’s presence and, consequently, deep joy. “Everyday Holiness” as author, priest and theologian Tish Harrison Warren calls it, that true, lasting joy comes from recognising God’s grace in the “dull bits” of life as we notice the warmth of a neighbour, the delight of a child at play, the all-encompassing experience of ice cream. As the psalmist writes, even in times of trouble and trial, “those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy.” Amen!

I wonder what good gifts God’s given you today?

I wonder how God is helping you in this season of life you’re in?

I wonder how you’ve seen Jesus reflected in others recently?

TODAY IS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER!
HERE ARE SOME CREATIVE IDEAS TO GET YOUR
FAMILY THINKING ABOUT HOW TO INCLUDE
PRAYER IN YOUR DAY. CHOOSE ONE FROM THE
LIST OR MAKE UP ONE OF YOUR OWN!



take some chalk for a walk and
write a prayer on the footpath



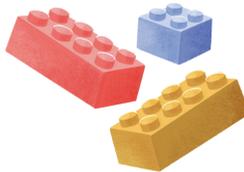
write a family prayer and post it on
the fridge to say when you see it



write a letter or do a drawing
for God and post it in the mail



pick a chore; each time you do it,
thank God for things on your mind



write a prayer prompt word on
duplo blocks, stack your prayers



take a nature walk and let God's
creation inspire your prayers

Trace your finger around this race car track while you say this prayer



Psalm 103:17

*Ever and Always
By Reuben Thorpe*

psalm 42:1-2

Thirsty souls

*As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living
God.*

When can I go and meet with God?



I wonder, when your soul is sending messages that you need God, what might you mistake those messages for?



Did you know that the “thirsty” message and the “hungry” message come from the same area of your brain? Because of this, it’s really common to confuse the two; particularly to think you need food, when you actually need water.



God,
We need air and food and water and safety and love but we also really need You.
Time to meet with You.
Help us to hear the thirsty messages of our soul, and not confuse them for something else.
Amen.

*In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from human plots;
you hold them safe under your shelter
from contentious tongues.*

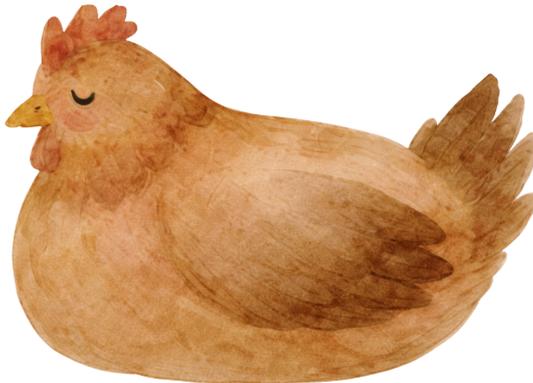
Psalm 31:20

I wonder if you've ever had to deal with people saying not nice things about you?

I wonder how God can be our safe place to hide from the nasty words and deeds of others who might want bad things for us?

The Bible sometimes describes God like a Mama hen, tucking Her children safely under Her wings.

Draw yourself hiding under this chicken's wing.



God,
Help us to remember, we are safe with You.

Amen

Getting Ready

By Stevi Phipps

I always enjoy Lent.

It's preparation for what's about to come.
It reminds me of when babies are about to be born,
the waiting and the preparing and thinking ahead.

In preparing for the feast of Easter
people often think of giving up something
just like Jesus in the desert.
But there's more to it than just giving up chocolate.
Jesus was getting ready.

Lent is a time to think deeply,
look inside ourselves,
check in on what's going on inside us,
so that we are made ready to serve God and others again

I wonder what your Lent challenge might be?
Maybe it's a habit you want to start
maybe it's a new way of looking at the world
maybe it's a time for you and God to walk more closely together.

Matthew 4v4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"



Coming Home

by Spanky, Victor and Fred Moore

Psalm 91

Over the past year my boys Victor (6) and Fred (9) have gotten into a strange new hobby with me; Pigeon racing! You've probably heard of Homing Pigeons. For hundreds of years people have partnered with pigeons to send messages to each other - before the internet, phones, or even sending a letter was a thing.

God made Homing Pigeons with the most amazing ability to find their way back home. Some of my friends have pigeons who have traveled all the way from Stewart Island to Nelson - that's 1000 kilometers! Scientists don't know how they find their way home - but God knows, because he created them with this amazing internal GPS system. Pigeons also fly really fast, and can go 100km an hour, which is as fast as a car on the motorway.

Most days my kids help me feed the pigeons, and sometimes we go on trips and let them go so they can practice getting home. Right now I have 24 birds in my "youth group" who are training for race day. My kids also help me name them. Their favourite bird is a silver one with checkers called "Pudding".



Everyday I open the door of my pigeon loft - and out they race keen to go for their morning fly. Their wings make an excited “crack” sound as they all take off, and they fly in one big group around and around and around the city, before they come back home to land at our house. My pigeons love to go out on these adventures, but they always return home - to the safety of the loft they live in - where they know they’ll get good food, and kept safe. They even have a special little door that is pigeon sized that they all pop into when they’re ready to come inside.

When my birds come home each day it reminds me of Psalm 91 - and the way that God is our refuge, our safe place, and that after a big day we can always rest in him and trust him to care for us. Sometimes after a big day at kindy or at school, it feels great to come home and feel the safety of our own house and being back with mum or dad. And it’s the same with God! He’s always there to comfort us, care for us and protect us after a big day.

I wonder what you love most about getting home after kindy or school each day?

I wonder when you feel closest to God?

Have you ever felt like God is giving you a big hug and looking after you, like Psalm 91 talks about?

I wonder who you know in your life who gives you the best hugs?

How does that person remind you of what God is like?



*Dear God,
Thank you for caring for us so much - and for always being there for us.
Thank you that just like Homing Pigeons, we can always return home to you
and that you will look after us and protect us.
Help us to feel your love more and more each day.
And thank you for making Homing Pigeons and all the other birds.
Thank you for all the clever things you've created them to do that blow our minds.
You are an amazing Creator!
Amen.*

Ouch!

by +Ana and *Eilidh* Fletcher

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?..." Psalm 22:1

This morning's Psalm begins with the cry of someone in pain, who is suffering, who feels like God has abandoned them and is not answering their prayers. We felt really sad reading these words.

There are times when we have been hurting and we have felt like God isn't there. And we know lots of people are suffering and it doesn't feel like God is helping them. Sometimes it feels like the world is dark and we can't see God at work. How can we still be hopeful? We talked about remembering all the times that we've seen God at work before. We talked about how the same sky full of stars is always there, but sometimes clouds and even other lights stop us from seeing them. We talked about God's promise to always be with us and to make everything sad come untrue. We talked about how we need God to give us night vision goggles to help us see in the dark until then.



I wonder what helps you be hopeful when
you're hurting?

I wonder how you can offer hope to others
who are hurting?

E te Atua aroha, thank you that you are
always with us.

Help us to remember all the times that we
have experienced your love and goodness.

Fill us with your hope.

Help us give your hope to others.

Amen.



You might like to hold a little stone today,
take a moment to see if there is anything heavy on your heart,
anything that might be getting between you and God
or you and others.

You can say those things aloud,
in your mind
or whisper them onto the rock.

Then
put the rock down.
And imagine God taking the weight of these things away
as you say this prayer.

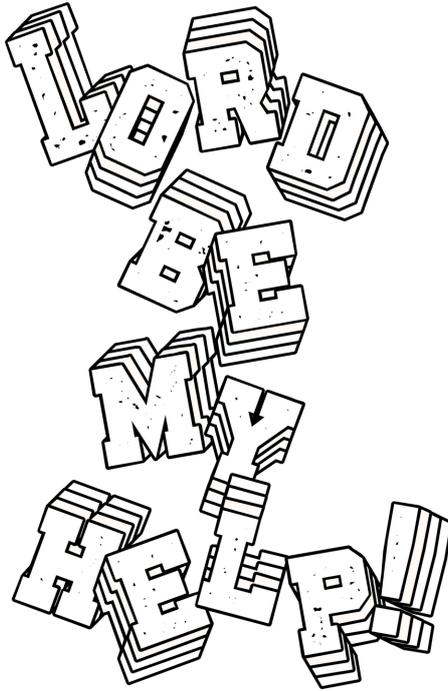
God,
Sorry for the mistakes I've made.
Thanks that I can always come to you with these icky things
and be cleaned and forgiven by You.
Amen

WELL PLAYED JESUS.....



LUKE 18: 9-14

THE TAX COLLECTOR AND THE PHARISEE
BY TOMICS COMICS



Psalm 30:10b

Colour in the verse above.

Share something you might
need help with today.

Write or draw one thing
in the box here



I WONDER WHAT YOU MIGHT
NEED GOD'S HELP WITH TODAY?

Psalm 46:1

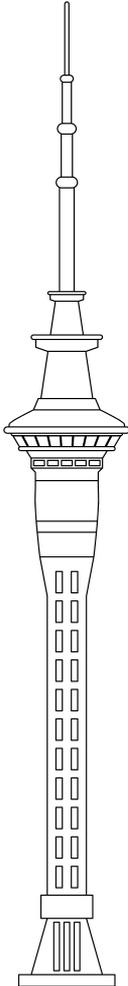
God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in trouble.

Draw your whānau safe up high in this tower.

Write all the things you would like help

or protection from

at the bottom of the tower.





God, is that You?

by Allie and Simeon Colp

Psalm 71:1-14

I wonder, if God was an animal, what animal do you think God would be?

I (Allie, a grown up!) think God might be like a platypus, they are so interesting and mysterious and very, very surprising. Simeon (who is six) thinks that God would be an axolotl, because he loves them, they are so neat, and his friends think that they are cool.

Because none of us have seen God in the way that we see our friends or our family or the people who live in our community, sometimes we make comparisons to talk about what God is like, so that we can understand God a little bit better.

Today's Psalm is all about the ways that God is big and strong, it says that God has protected each one of us since before we were born, and asks God to keep doing that for our whole life long. It talks about God as a rock and a fortress.

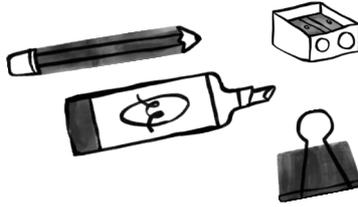
I wonder if God feels like a rock or a fortress to you?

I wonder what other things you might say that God is like?

Dear God,

Thank you for being so real in our lives, and thank you for all the ways that you help us to understand you and your love for us. Help us to remember that you are our Rock and a Fortress to protect us for our whole life long, and help us to always look for new ways to understand who you are.

Amen



Psalm 119:64
The earth, O Lord, is full of your steadfast love;
teach me your statutes.

○ I wonder where you see
God's love on the Earth?

○

○

○

○

○

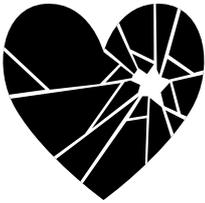
○

○

○

○ Thank you God for these signs of your
never stopping,
never giving up,
always there love.

○ Amen.



Psalm 34:18

*The Lord is near to the broken hearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.*

I wonder if you have ever felt broken hearted, disappointed, or down.

I wonder if you felt God close during those times

I wonder if there is anyone you know who is feeling these things today?

I wonder if you could show God's care for this person and be close to them in some way today?

Kind God,

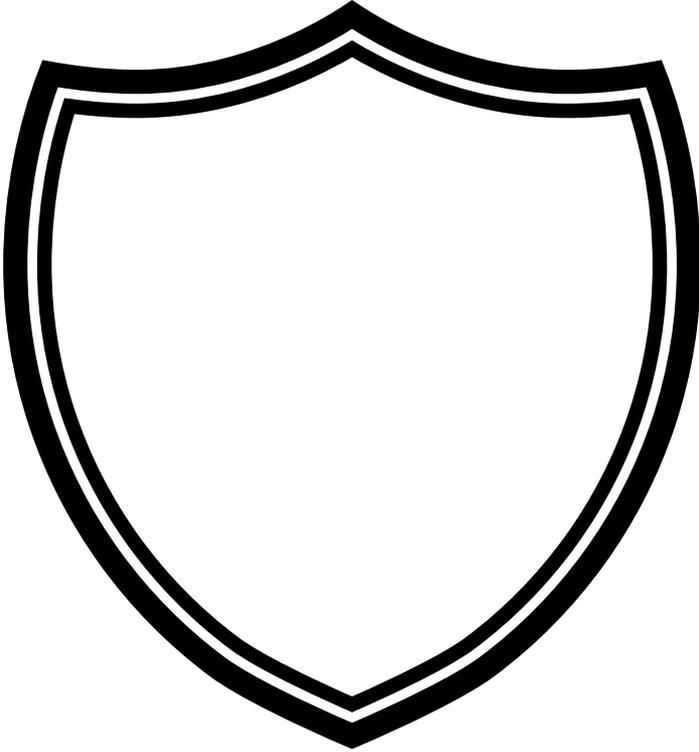
Show us who needs the comfort of Your closeness today. Make us your hands and feet to care for this person.

Amen.

*God is my shield,
who saves the upright in heart.*

Psalm 7:10

I wonder what it means to be upright in heart?



Colour in this shield,
Draw or write some things that help your heart to be upright.

Thank you God that you are a shield to us,
help our heart to grow to be more like Yours,
full of love for others and You.

Amen.



“Pray Mum!”

by Rebecca and Roland Wilcox

Lamentations 3:55-66

It started with ambulances zooming past with their sirens blasting. From the back seat my son would call out “Pray mum!” Sometimes the sirens were so far away I could barely hear them, but still the small voice from the back seat would call - Pray.

It started as a simple practice to show my small son what it looked like to pray for the world. And out loud we would bless the paramedics and pray for those they were helping.

After a while fire engines were included, not by my addition I might add. Then police cars. Whenever a siren blared past or whirred in the distance, without fail the words “Pray mum” called out.

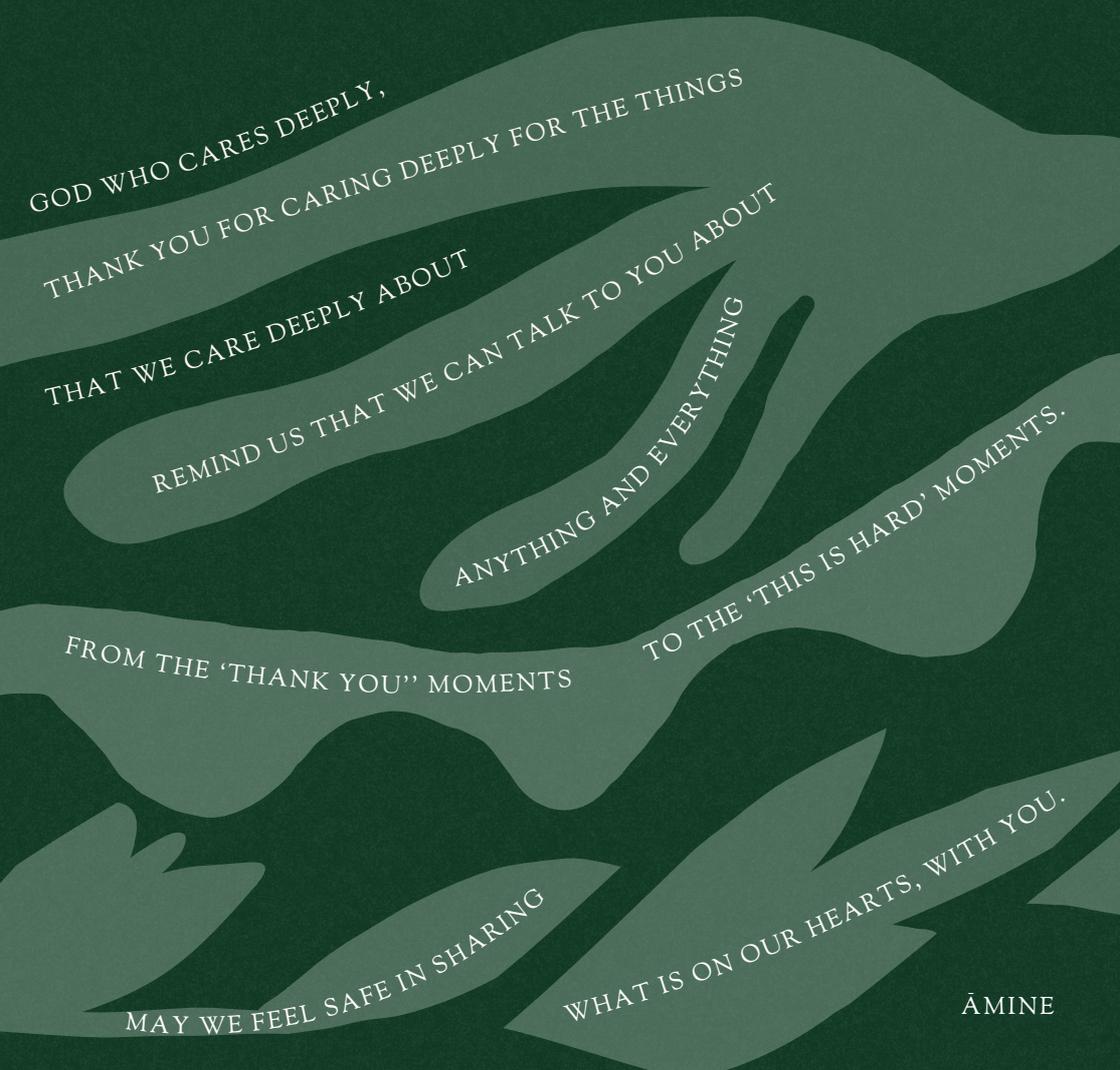
Then, it became something that no longer just happened in the car! But now it is walking down busy streets, or while playing at the playground with friends. Pray mum. And we’d stop and pray with all the other ears around to hear. This wasn’t something I’d envisioned when we first began to pray like this. But here we are, praying for the world, one emergency vehicle at a time.

How beautiful is it that God wants to hear our prayers, from the emergency vehicles that whiz past, to those deeper things we carry on our hearts. God is not just here for the good times, the thank you’s and the warm fuzzy prayers. God cares about what we care about, God cares about what makes us sad or angry or worried too.

In our house (or should I say car) we pray for emergency vehicles to practice praying for the world, and to practice praying about things that might not be so happy or nice.

I wonder what is on your heart that you deeply care about that you could tell to God?

I wonder if there is a way you can practice praying for the world, or practice praying hard prayers?.



GOD WHO CARES DEEPLY,

THANK YOU FOR CARING DEEPLY FOR THE THINGS

THAT WE CARE DEEPLY ABOUT

REMINDE US THAT WE CAN TALK TO YOU ABOUT

ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING

FROM THE 'THANK YOU' MOMENTS

TO THE 'THIS IS HARD' MOMENTS.

MAY WE FEEL SAFE IN SHARING

WHAT IS ON OUR HEARTS, WITH YOU.

AMINE

Today's Psalm (102) is a very long HELP prayer.

The psalmist is having a really hard time and begging God to rescue him, wondering how long God's going to take to answer!

In the middle of his hard time he does something amazing though....

Verse 12

*But you, O Lord, are enthroned for ever;
your name endures to all generations.*

The psalmist remembers God is God forever. And that gives them hope that in spite of the hard time they are having, they still believe God will work everything out for good in the end.

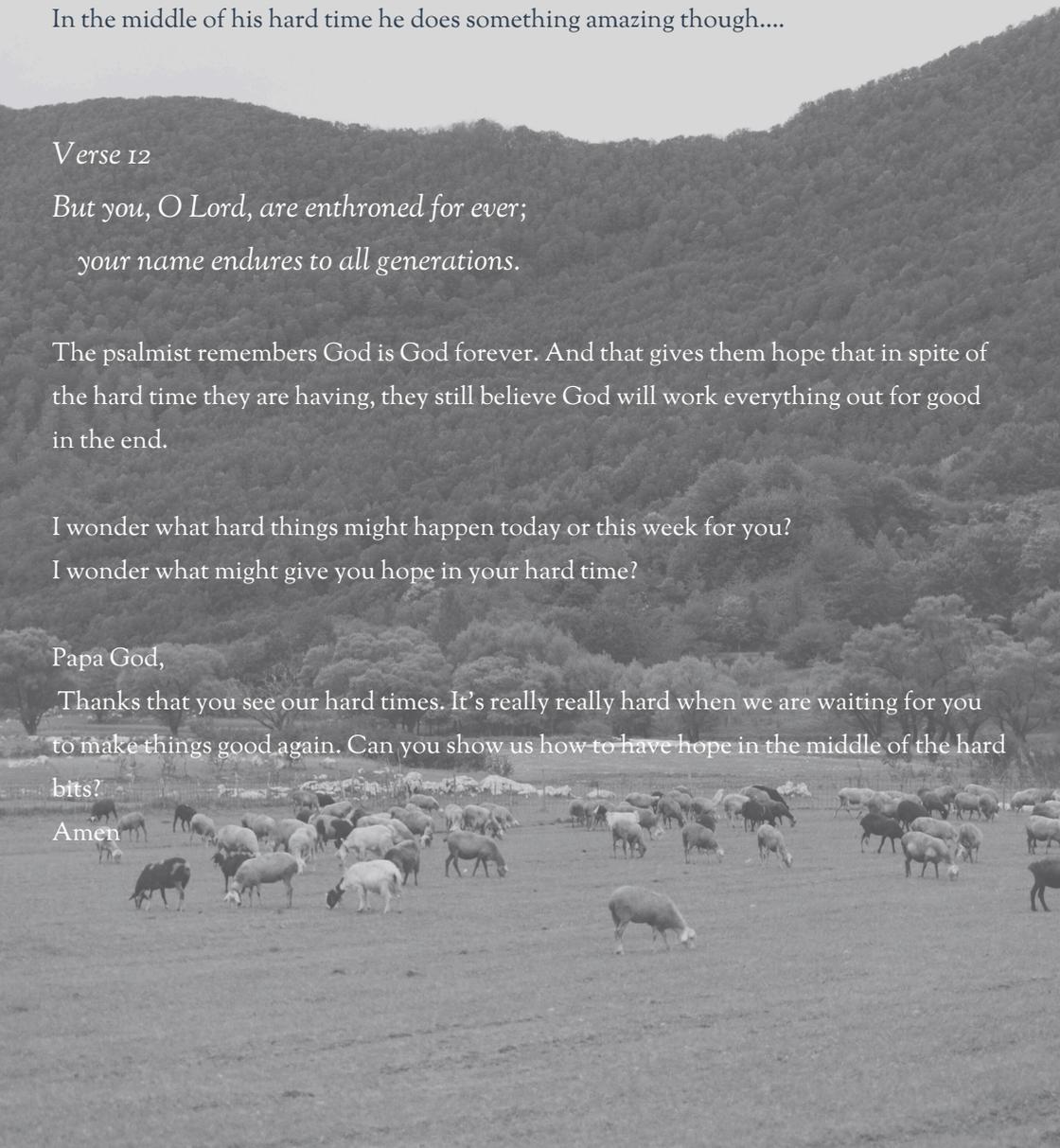
I wonder what hard things might happen today or this week for you?

I wonder what might give you hope in your hard time?

Papa God,

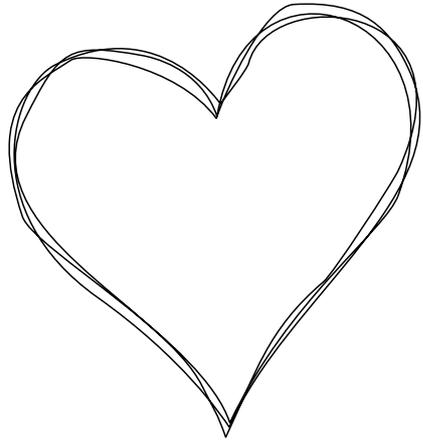
Thanks that you see our hard times. It's really really hard when we are waiting for you to make things good again. Can you show us how to have hope in the middle of the hard bits?

Amen





*Psalm 40:8
I delight to do your
will, O my God
Your law is within
my heart.*



I wonder how laws get
inside a heart?
I wonder what happens
when you have laws in your
heart?

Write or draw some of
God's ways inside this heart

E te Atua,

Make us people delighted to
follow Your Way. Show us
Your Way today. Speak to
our hearts.

Āmine.



*Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.*

Psalm 105:4



I wonder what it looks like for you to seek God?

I wonder where might you look for Him and get close to Him today?

God, let's play hide and seek today. Help me find you in places I don't expect. You want to be close to me and I want to be close to You.

Amen.

Psalm 18:1

***I love you,
O Lord,
My strength***

Take turns saying today's verse.

I wonder which word stands out to you?

Colour it in!

In this psalm, the psalmist loves that God is strong

I wonder what you love about God today?.

Dear God

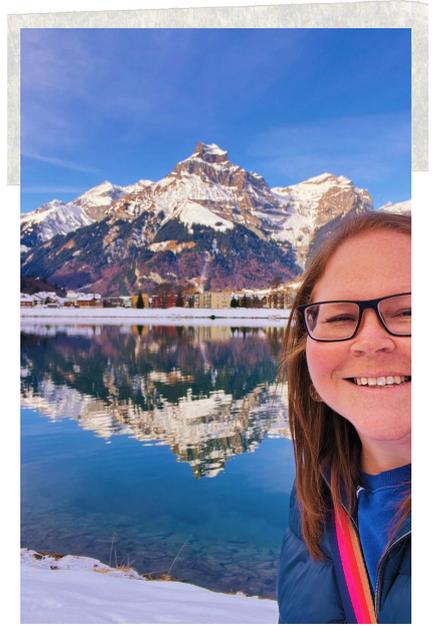
Here's some things I love about You....

Hopping, Dancing, Skipping, Running.

by Diana Langdon

Psalm 121

This year I spent my summer holidays in the snowy Swiss alps. I swapped walking barefoot on sandy New Zealand beaches with stomping through 30cm of deep, crisp, white snow in heavy snow boots!



Our Psalm today reminds me of those mountains:

*"I lift up my eyes to the mountains
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth."*

When I am standing in the Swiss valley, with snowcapped mountains all around me, I am filled with a deep peace. The mountains remind me of the One who created them. Are there any special places, beaches, mountains, or rivers that remind you of an amazing Creator God?



The fluffy snow was perfect for making a snowman and snow angels, but as the snow began to melt along the pavements and paths in the town, it would freeze overnight as thick, thick ice. Walking became a little perilous, and I worried that I would slip on the ice and hurt myself.

He will not let your foot slip, he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Our God loves and cares for us, and for every step we take, even when we're fearful or afraid. Whether we're running, dancing, skipping, stomping in the snow or walking, God watches over us in love.

I wonder what part of creation makes your heart sing?

I wonder how you have seen God's care for you this week?

As our Lent journey nears the end, I wonder who we can encourage and support this week?

Loving God,

From the mountain tops to the sea, your creation sings your praise, and we join in! Thank you for loving us, for knowing everything about us, and for caring for us. We pray for those who need a reminder of your love today. Thank you for watching over every step we take, as we stomp, skip, and run through this week.

Āmine.

The Week Before....

We're getting really close to Easter now and we're going to start telling the story of Jesus life, as he got ready for Easter. Sometimes we call this Passion week.

John 11: 56 They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?'

Jesus had been doing and saying a lot of amazing things, healing sick people, telling the bullies of Israel to stop it, and telling people that God's kingdom; where all the outcasts and misfits would be on top, was arriving. God was coming to make all things good and new.

The people who already were on top, did NOT like this. Who was Jesus to say these things? They thought He was just a random. But there were some people who saw the truth. They were excited about the good news he was sharing. They were wondering if Jesus was going to come back to the big city for a big celebration. Surely not, it was dangerous, with all those bullies out to get Him....

But guess what happened next....
I wonder what Jesus is going to do?

Dear Jesus,

Thanks that you know how it feels to have people say and do bad things to You. Thanks for being willing to experience life as a human, the ones You designed and created. That's a pretty incredible thing for God to do.

Amen



Julia Stankova, The Anointing of Christ, (Mary's Perfume)

We've read a lot of psalms about people really wanting to be close to God, wanting God to come right away and be there, with them, to help them. Imagine that, imagine God right there next to you right now.

I wonder what you would do?
I wonder how you would feel?

Today's part of the Bible tells us the story of what one person did when she could be close to God, skin to skin close!

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

John 21:1-9

Wow! Mary really took this opportunity to be close to Jesus, and to show Jesus how much she loved and cared for Him.

I wonder why Mary chose to use her money for perfume for Jesus' feet?
I wonder how to feels to use your hair like a cloth, for someone's feet?
Jesus is also giving us some clues about what is going to happen to him next.... Did you spot those clues?
I wonder what's going to happen next....

Jesus,

May our hearts grow to love You so much, that we are creative and extravagant with our love for You.

Amen

Children of the Light

by Allie and Simeon Colp

John 12:20-36

When I read the gospel reading for this day with my son Simeon (he's six!), we thought that it was sort of scary and sad. Jesus is talking to his friends about how he is going to die. That's a scary and sad thing to talk about, but we both thought that it was good that he was able to talk about it with his friends. Scary and sad things are easier when we have people to share them with and at the end of the reading, Jesus reminds us that we are children of the light, which is a reminder that God is always with us. That helps us feel even less alone, which we are always happy for, but especially when we are scared or sad.

Our family has a special altar at home, and sometimes we light a candle there to remind us of the light of God, and that God is always with us.



We wonder who you talk to when you are scared or sad?

We wonder how you can be there for other people who are scared or sad?

We wonder how God can help you when you are scared or sad?

We wonder how it makes you feel when you hear that you live in the light of God?

Dear God,

We know that Jesus is the light of the world, and we are so glad that we get to live in that light. Help us to still see and feel that light in our lives, even when we are scared and sad, and help us to turn to you and to the people we love, to help carry us through.

Amen



John 13:21

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, 'Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.' The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.

Ouch. Being betrayed by a close friend is really painful. Have you ever played a game of hide and seek and had someone tell others about your great hiding spot? How frustrating!

I wonder if anyone has ever betrayed you?

In the Easter story, we learn that Jesus' friend Judas is the one who showed the people who wanted to kill Jesus, exactly where he was.

I wonder what you would do if that happened to you?

I wonder what Jesus is going to say to Judas next time He sees him?

I wonder if you have ever been tempted to betray a friend?

I wonder if you've ever been tempted to use Jesus or God to get what you want, maybe even money like Judas did?

Jesus,

We're sorry for the times we have not been a good friend to others or to You.

Thank You that You forgive us, always, every time.

Help us to follow your example of forgiving people who do wrong things to us.

Amen.



Stinky Feet

Imagine knowing you don't have much time left to spend with your friends or family.

What would you do to show them you really really loved and cared about them?

Would you choose to do a gross stinky job?

Today we read about what Jesus did when he knew He wasn't going to have much hang out time with His best friends anymore. He didn't give a long sermon, a long list of rules. Instead he did something that looked kind of gross.

John 13: 3-5, 14

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.



Now, these feet weren't just sweaty. Imagine feet, that have been in jandals all day walking through hot, sticky, dusty streets, where animals like cows, goats and donkeys also walked.... and pooped. I wonder why Jesus would wash stinky feet?

He gives some clues after the foot washing....

vi4 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

Jesus is saying, be like me, this is how I want you to look after each other when I'm gone. If you want to be the greatest (Jesus knows we always love to be the best), be the servant!

Jesus,

Our hearts love to be the best. You showed us that serving people, even doing the stinkiest jobs is the way to be a leader instead of pushing others aside to get in front.

Help us to follow you by doing what you did, serving others.

Amen.

Finding the Good

by Matt Pickering

Sometimes hard things happen.

When they do, maybe someone will say these words:

“You didn’t want that to happen.”

No we certainly did not. We expected one thing and something quite different happened. But if you hear those words, take heart; someone understands you, and you’re not alone.

Now imagine this.

A surprise maths test.

Your stomach drops. That was today?

You guessed it: “You didn’t want that to happen.”

Too right. So you do what you can: you take a breath and try something brave.

Maybe a bit strange. You say: “Good.”

Good, because now you’ll know exactly what maths you know and what you don’t.

Good, because you can ask for help.

Good, because you can learn from the mistakes you make.



Or imagine not getting picked for the cricket team. You waited for your name to be called out, and it wasn’t. Ouch.

That really hurts.

“You didn’t want that to happen.”

Of course you didn’t.

But you say that word again: “Good.”

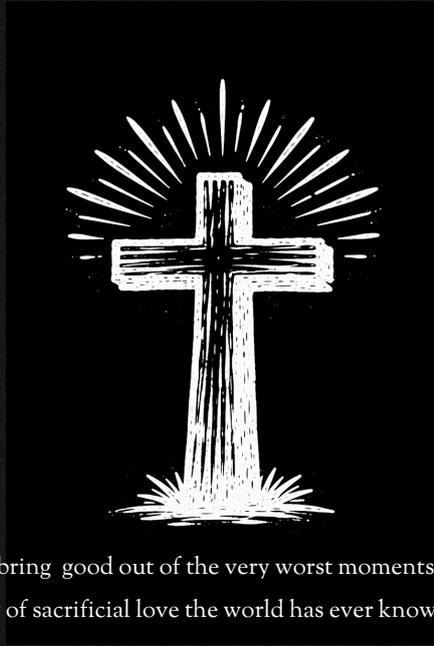
Good, because it will be even sweeter when you make the team the next time.

Good, because you’re learning resilience.

On Good Friday,
something truly terrible happened.
Jesus was nailed to a cross and died.
He didn't want that to happen.
It was painful.
It was unfair.
It looked like the end.

And yet, good came from it.

Good Friday reminds us that God can bring good out of the very worst moments.
Jesus' suffering became the greatest act of sacrificial love the world has ever known.



Love that forgives.
Love that heals.
Love that never gives up on us.

So when something hard happens, remember this:
It's okay to say,
"I didn't want that to happen."

And when you're ready, maybe you'll have a go saying the brave word too:
"Good."

Because even on the darkest day, God is still at work.

Jesus,
It's a sad day. We remember that You died. That at times it seems like the bad stuff of this world had won, had overwhelmed the good. It still feels like that sometimes.
Help us to hold onto hope for good. Even in the middle of the dark.
Amen.

No spoilers

John 19:38-42

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The unthinkable had happened.

In spite of all the clues and warnings, the disciples, Jesus closest friends couldn't believe it.

Jesus was dead.

Some of you have heard this story before, some of you know what's coming next and GOSH it's so tempting to skip ahead to the happy ending isn't it!

But on this day Holy Saturday, the church around the world sets aside a day to remember that Jesus, God with skin on, the Light of the World, was killed by people just like us, for people, for us.

You might like to say a prayer to Jesus telling Him how you feel about today's part of the Bible story.





“But Jesus was not like most people.”

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