

REFLECTIONS on PRAYER

an illustrated
LENT
FOR FAMILIES





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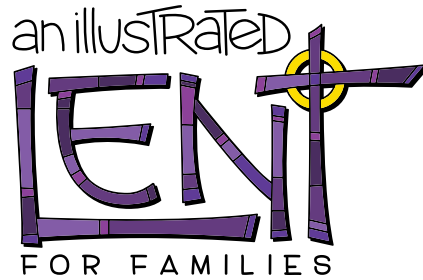
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AN ILLUSTRATED LENT FOR FAMILIES: REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER

We are thrilled to be able to provide families with a resource for engaging their children in faith formation at home during Lent. Our Illustrated Lent for Families and Illustrated Advent for Families have been used by thousands of families around the world, and we're excited to share another edition with you.

The theme for this edition of An Illustrated Lent for Families is Reflections on Prayer. As we journey through this season of Lent together, families are invited to focus intentionally on the spiritual discipline of prayer. By exploring Gospel passages about prayer, families are encouraged to learn new ways to expand and enrich their experiences of prayer, individually, as a family and in community. Starting with Ash Wednesday and going through Easter, each weekly session will have a scripture, reflection and discussion questions, activity, coloring sheets, and prayer.

Our Lent devotionals are written to be used by children and adults of all ages. We believe you'll find questions and discussion topics in each devotional that will work for your children, no matter the age. At the same time, we invite you to feel free to tweak the content and questions to work for your family. Please don't feel like you need to do all the activities for it to be a meaningful experience for your family or community. Take a look at the devotionals, see what you think will work best for your family's schedule and find time each week to gather together as a family.

Each devotional consists of the elements below:

Scripture: The scripture passages are selected Gospel passages about prayer.

Reflection: A brief reflection is offered for each of the scripture texts. It might make sense for you to read this section to your family, or you may want to read it for yourself and see what questions or themes will resonate best for your family.

Discussion and Coloring Page: This is a chance for some discussion for your family. Since we love coloring here at Illustrated Ministry, we find that some of the best conversations often happen while coloring and doing something creative together.

We suggest discussing the questions offered while coloring the week's coloring page, which ties in with both the weekly scripture and activity.

Family Activity: The activity provided each week invites your family to experience prayer together. As with all our suggestions for spiritual formation, please adjust or customize the activity for your family. We hope you find something that works in your context and opens you up to participate in an opportunity for spiritual formation.

Prayer: Finally, each week's devotional ends with a short prayer that you can say, or invite your children to repeat after you. This is a simple ritual that can end your family's weekly devotional time and can also be used as a prayer throughout the week.

As you use these resources, we would love to hear what was helpful and what suggestions or comments you have. We desire to create quality resources for your family's faith formation, and we appreciate your feedback.

You can always reach us at info@illustratedministry.com or find us online:

Facebook Page: facebook.com/Illustratedmin

Pinterest: pinterest.com/Illustratedmin

Twitter: twitter.com/Illustratedmin

Instagram: instagram.com/Illustratedmin

Our Facebook Group is a growing community of our customers and friends. If you're looking for ideas and suggestions for using this resource or any other product suggestions, request to join here: facebook.com/groups/Illustratedmin

We also love to see photos and hear stories about how you are using our products. When you are posting photos or comments online, please use the hashtag #anillustratedlent or tag us in the photos so we can see them. That allows us to be part of the conversation and you to be part of our online community. Additionally, checking the hashtag on various social networks is also a great way to get to see how other families and churches are creatively using our resources.

Blessings on your Lenten journeys!

The Illustrated Ministry Team

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Email: Depending on the size of your congregation, you could email the PDF to people who are interested in it. Another option is to put an announcement in your bulletin for people interested in receiving the files to email the person with access to the files.

Note: Do not include links to download or attachments of our files in any emails/newsletters that are posted publicly online.

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Note: Do not post the password in your bulletin or newsletter that gets posted publicly online.

Print: Most congregations who purchase our digital files choose to print out the materials for their families. You can put the documents in folders, use a staple, or have them bound. Making a hard copy for the people in your congregation is a popular method.

We appreciate your support!

The Illustrated Ministry Team

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The word 'LENTEN' is rendered in a large, stylized font where each letter is composed of multiple overlapping, slightly offset purple and blue segments, giving it a textured, three-dimensional appearance. A yellow circle with a black outline is positioned behind the letter 'N', partially overlapping it. Below 'LENTEN', the word 'DEVOTIONS' is written in a simple, black, sans-serif, all-caps font with wide letter spacing.

LENTEN
DEVOTIONS

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BACKGROUND

Ash Wednesday is the day in the church year where we mark the beginning of the season of Lent. During this season, we are all invited to reflect on the things in our lives that may be causing us to be distant from God and distant from others. Beginning around the 11th century, the Ash Wednesday service became a way for Christians to physically mark and remember the beginning of the season.

Historically, during the service, ashes are prepared from the palm fronds used during the Palm Sunday of the prior year as a way to point toward the Gospel message of the upcoming Easter. The ashes are mixed with oil and placed with the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the service participants and the words, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return," are shared with each person. This can be a startling statement to hear. However, the purpose is not to alarm but to remind us that we have been created by God and that it is God who holds us in life and in death.



Perhaps it is because of our increasingly virtual world, Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent become powerful opportunities to reconnect with our families, friends, our faith communities, and most importantly our Creator. The scent of the oil, the scratch of the ashes, and the sound of song and Word all provide us with different ways to feel and understand the significance of the season.

ASH WEDNESDAY ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: Labyrinth sheet, ashes or black paint, and the scripture reading listed below

For this activity, we will be using a labyrinth you can find on the page following the prayer. Christians have used labyrinths as a means to have a multi-sensory expression of prayer and contemplation. Labyrinths look like a maze but are different from a maze in the sense that it is not meant to be confusing, but rather to provide space and time to reflect and pray while traveling the path. We will be using our labyrinth as a way for families of all ages to participate in this activity.

Please gather around a table or other flat surface in your home. Place the labyrinth in the middle of the table or surface. Near to the paper, have prepared ashes or black paint available for use.

Designate one or more readers of the scripture passage Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. Invite each person in your group to use their finger to “journey through the labyrinth.” If your group has more than 4, invite two participants to journey the labyrinth together. Start by placing one finger at the beginning of the labyrinth and when the reader begins to read the scripture, trace your finger slowly through.

When each participant reaches the center of the labyrinth, the participant will then dip their thumb into the ashes or paint and make the sign of the cross in the middle of the labyrinth. Together all will say the refrain: From dust you came and to dust you will return. Pause between each of the four breaks after the refrains as the participant finishes tracing their finger through the rest of the labyrinth. When you finish your journeys, you may complete the activity with the prayer following the scripture passage.

SCRIPTURE & LABYRINTH REFRAIN: MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

Concerning Almsgiving

Reader: Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Concerning Prayer

Reader: And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Concerning Fasting

Reader: And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

Concerning Treasures

Reader: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Refrain

Together: From dust you came and to dust you will return.

PRAVER

Dear God of our whole selves,
As we journey through this season of Lent,
teach us how to give,
so that we can joyfully respond when you call us to serve.
Teach us how to pray,
so that we can be closer to you in all that we do throughout the day.
Teach us how to let go,
so nothing can stand in the way of our connection with you.
Teach us how to prepare,
so we can be ready to receive your love, wisdom, and blessing.
Help us to remember that in all ways we belong to you,
Amen.

Journey through the
LABYRINTH



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• WEEK 1 •
JESUS PRAYED ALONE

SCRIPTURE: MARK 1:35

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

REFLECTION

As we explore and deepen our practice of prayer during this season of Lent, we begin our journey by discovering that Jesus often prayed by himself. Each of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, include stories of Jesus taking time to be alone to pray with God.

From the time he was baptized through his resurrection, Jesus was surrounded by people of all walks of life, people wanting to be with him, and people wanting something from him. He didn't have a home, so wherever he went and wherever he stayed, he was with different people daily. Our passage in Mark reminds us that Jesus made it a priority to spend time alone with God in prayer, especially in the busiest times of his life. By connecting with God in this way, Jesus shows us one way to pray.

It can be difficult to find time alone. Whether it is cleaning the dishes, doing the laundry, attending after-school activities, or volunteering in your faith community, each activity, while important, can make it challenging to make quiet time with God. When we spend time alone with God in prayer, we create a unique space to connect with the Creator. This time allows us to reflect on the very real things of our lives, such as the joy of learning something new at school, sadness when someone doesn't want to be our friend, anger when you have a fight with a brother or sister, or fear about a big decision you might need to make. By making time to be alone with God, we learn to love God and others just as Jesus did.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Do you enjoy spending time alone? What about it is nice? What about it is difficult?
- Have you prayed to God silently or out loud by yourself? If you have, what is it like? If you never have before, what do you think it would be like?
- What does being alone with God look like for you? What does it feel like?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity pages, markers/crayons/pencils, possible household items (chair, blanket, light source)

This week we invite you to create a prayer space in your home. No matter the size of your home, we encourage you to take a look around and find a room, a corner, or a spot that you can designate as a solitary place. If you don't have a separate room, use a blanket, curtain, or screen (be creative) to create a specific area.

Use the activity pages and markers/crayons/pencils to decorate your two signs. The first sign says "Prayer Space." The second sign says "Available" and on the backside says "In Use." When you are finished, fold this sheet in half and have the "Available" side up when you are finished using the space, and place the "In Use" side up when someone is spending time in the space.

Beginning this week, discuss with your family when each of you might find time to use the prayer space. Grown-ups with young children, you can model how this is a special place you can go to talk with God by praying together with them in this space.

When you finish creating your prayer space, consider taking a photo and sharing your prayer space with us at info@illustratedministry.com and on social media using the hashtag #anillustratedlent so we can share ideas from our amazing community during Lent.

PRAYER

This week, we invite you to pray this prayer out loud or silently in the prayer space you created.

Dear God,

Thank you for your son, Jesus.

Thank you for his life.

Thank you that he shows us how to be connected to you.

Help me to learn how to be alone with you

To talk with you

To laugh with you

To cry with you

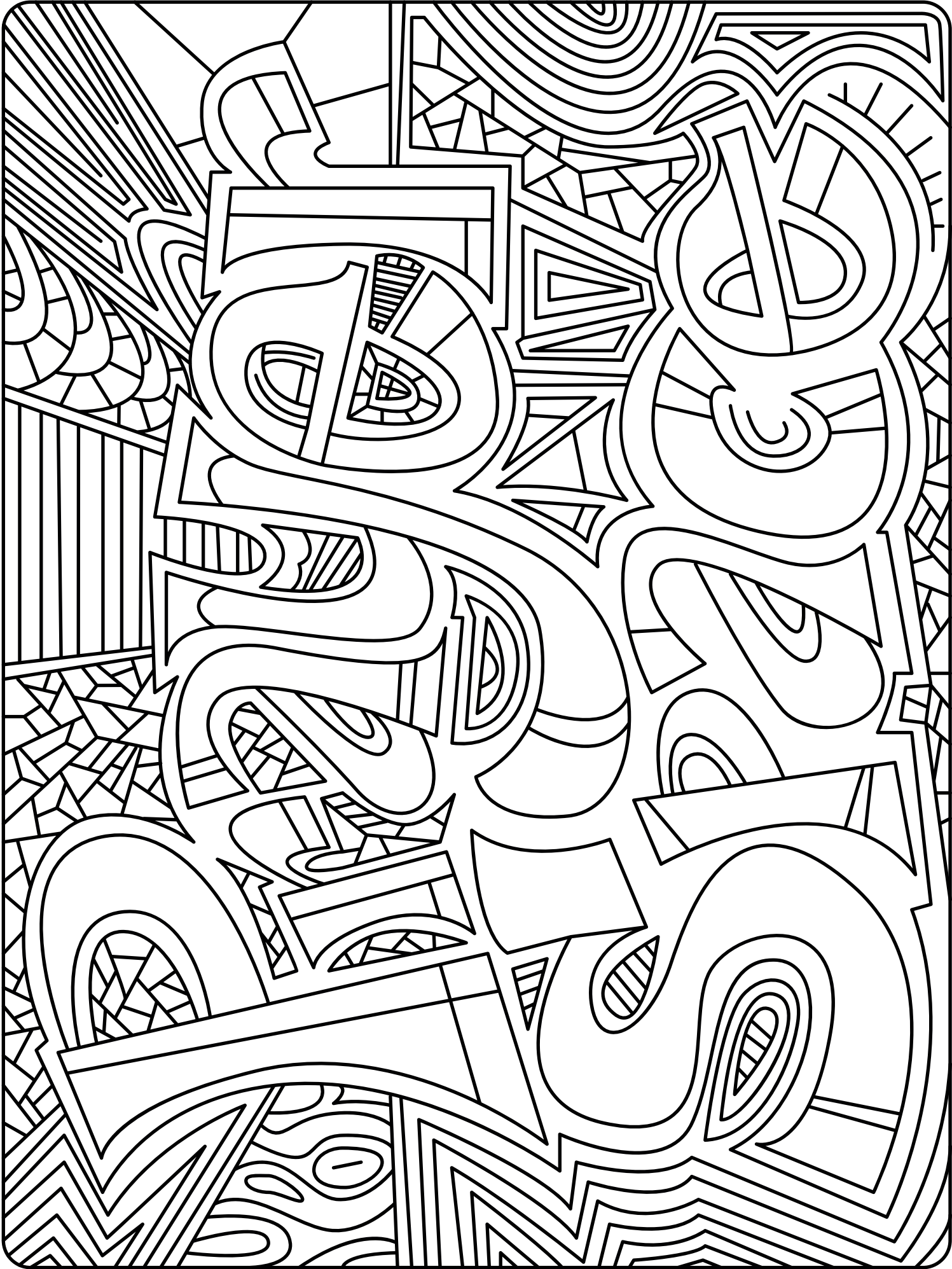
To question with you

To grow with you.

Bless me with time, space, and ability
to meet with you one-on-one this week
and every week.

Amen.

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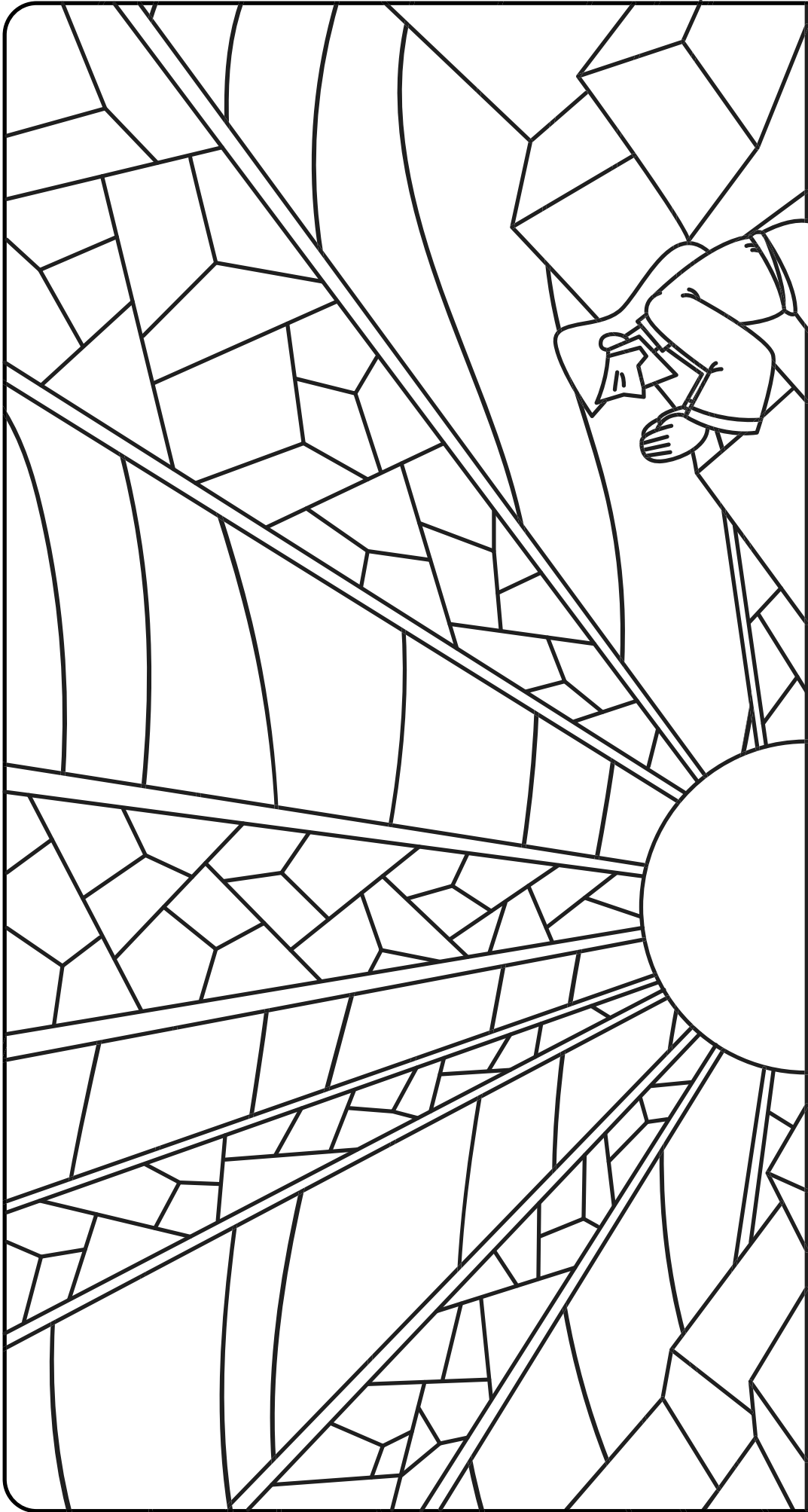


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“and there
He prayed.”

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LENTEN DEVOTIONS

• WEEK 2 •

JESUS PRAYED DURING
SPECIAL TIMES

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 3:21-22

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

REFLECTION

When we read the story of Jesus' life through this season of Lent, we find that Jesus lived his life in ways that are very familiar to us. He ate, slept, and traveled. He was happy, sad, tired, excited, and sometimes cranky. He worshiped God with other people. He talked to God in everyday moments, and he prayed during specific and special times.

Our scripture passage this week comes from the Gospel of Luke. John (who we know as John the Baptist) is baptizing people in a river. Baptism is a practice that happened even before it became a sacrament (or an important event) in the Christian faith. In Luke, the people are going into the water to be cleaned and forgiven. So why was Jesus being baptized if he didn't need forgiveness? By being baptized, Jesus participates in this human event with us and shows us that baptism is a way to connect with God. Jesus prayed during his baptism, and we see that God spoke to let everyone know God was listening.

Why is it important for us to pray during special times? Think of some significant times in your life. Maybe it was the birth of a child or sibling. Maybe it was your very first day of school. Maybe it was learning a new skill that took a long time to practice. What are some of the emotions or big feelings that you felt? Did you want to share them with others? Through the story of Jesus' baptism, Jesus shows us that God hears us and wants to connect with us during special times as well.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Have you attended or participated in a baptism service? What did you like about it? What do you remember about it (images, sounds, words)?
- What are some special times or events in your life where people pray? Why do you think prayer happens during these times?
- Brainstorm with your family special times that you could pray together. You will select one of these in this week's activity to create a prayer to mark a special event in your family.

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity page and markers/crayons/pencils

This week, you and your family are invited to create a prayer to mark a special time or event in your family's life. Perhaps it is a milestone birthday, or anticipating the start of a new school, or something as simple as a prayer that blesses the beginning of each week. Think of images, words, feelings, or phrases that are special to your family and incorporate them into the prayer you can write on the "A Prayer For..." activity page.

If you are comfortable, please share them with our wider Illustrated Ministry community by emailing them to info@illustratedministry.com or sharing them on social media using the hashtag [#anillustratedlent](https://twitter.com/anillustratedlent) so we can share ideas from our amazing community during Lent.

PRAYER

Dear Lord,

We thank you for each chapter of our lives.

We thank you for the everyday happenings
and we thank you for the big moments.

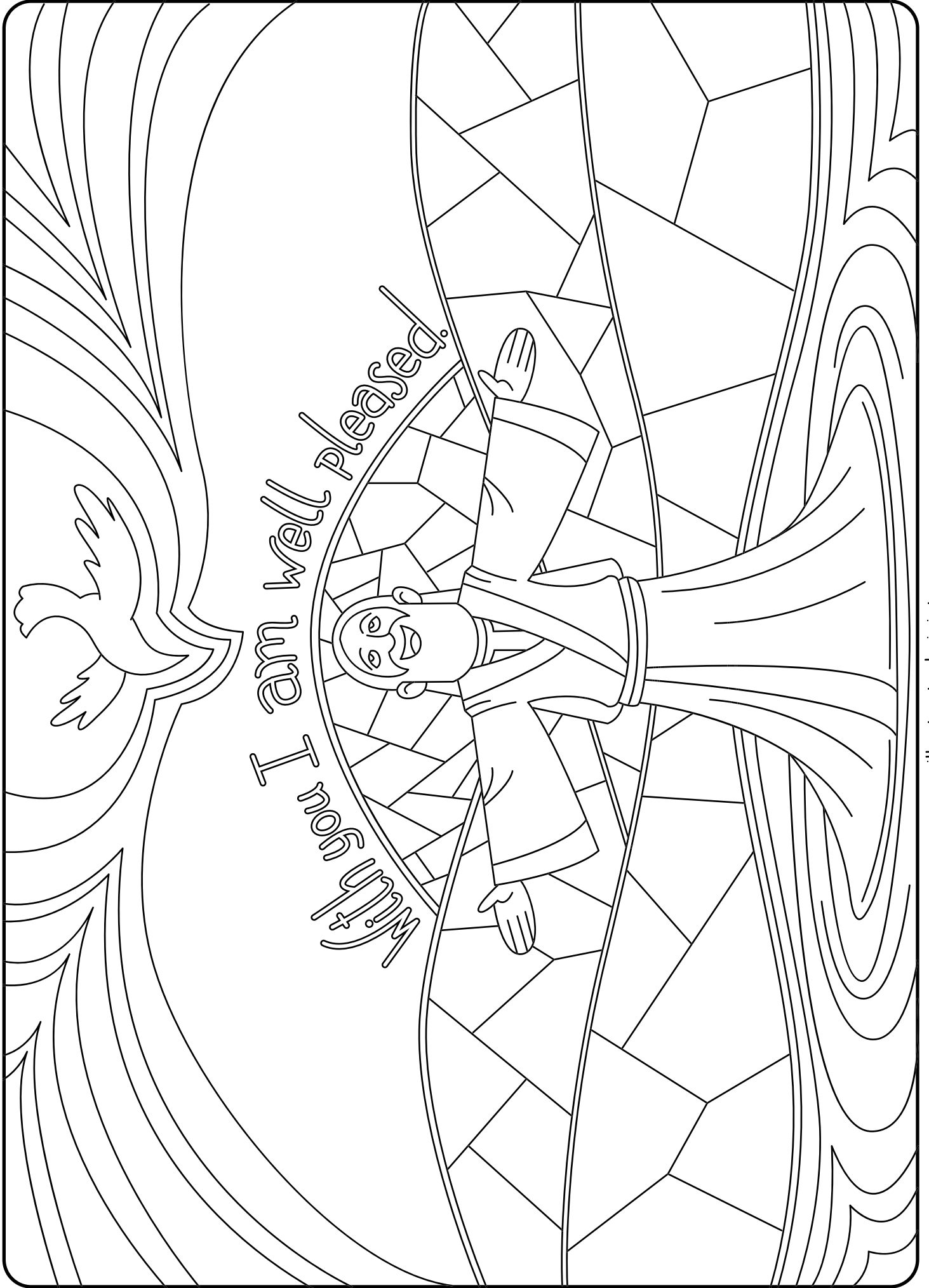
Thank you for giving us language
to speak words of connection, thanks, and love to you
that we can remember our whole lives.

Amen.



A Prayer for...

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With you I am well pleased.

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• WEEK 3 •

JESUS PRAYED WHEN HE
NEEDED HELP

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 6:12-13

Now during those days Jesus went to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles.

REFLECTION

Jesus, like all of us, made many decisions during his life. Some of them were easy and some were difficult. The Bible has many stories that show us that with decisions big and small, Jesus spent a lot of his time in prayer with God.

In our passage this week, we learn one place Jesus prayed was in the mountains. This time, he spent the whole evening in the mountains, praying to God. The writer wants us to know that Jesus was about to do something really important and before he could do that important thing, he needed to talk to God about it. That important thing was choosing twelve people who would join him while he taught and healed people.

Why do you think this was a big decision? One reason is the disciples became important parts of Jesus' story and were the first Christians who spread Jesus' message of love and hope to others in the world. Prayer like this gives us time to think about big choices, ask God for wisdom, and help guide us to a decision.

Just as Jesus asked for God's guidance while making decisions, Jesus invites us to do the same. Think of all the decisions we need to make in one day, one week, or one year. Some of these decisions like wearing shoes outside or looking both ways before we cross the street are decisions that eventually don't require a lot of thought. But there are many others that take up a lot of space in our brains. Some decisions we make are difficult or complicated or maybe even scary. Jesus teaches us that God wants to hear from us and wants to guide us as we face the important moments of our lives.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- How do you make decisions? Do you make them quickly or does it take you a lot of time to make up your mind?
- What are some things that are difficult for you? Do you ask others for help? Why or why not?
- Think of a decision or a choice you need to make in the near future. Do you feel comfortable talking to God about it? What would help you talk to God about it?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity page, shoe box, wooden box, or cardboard box, markers/crayons/pencils, fabric, glue

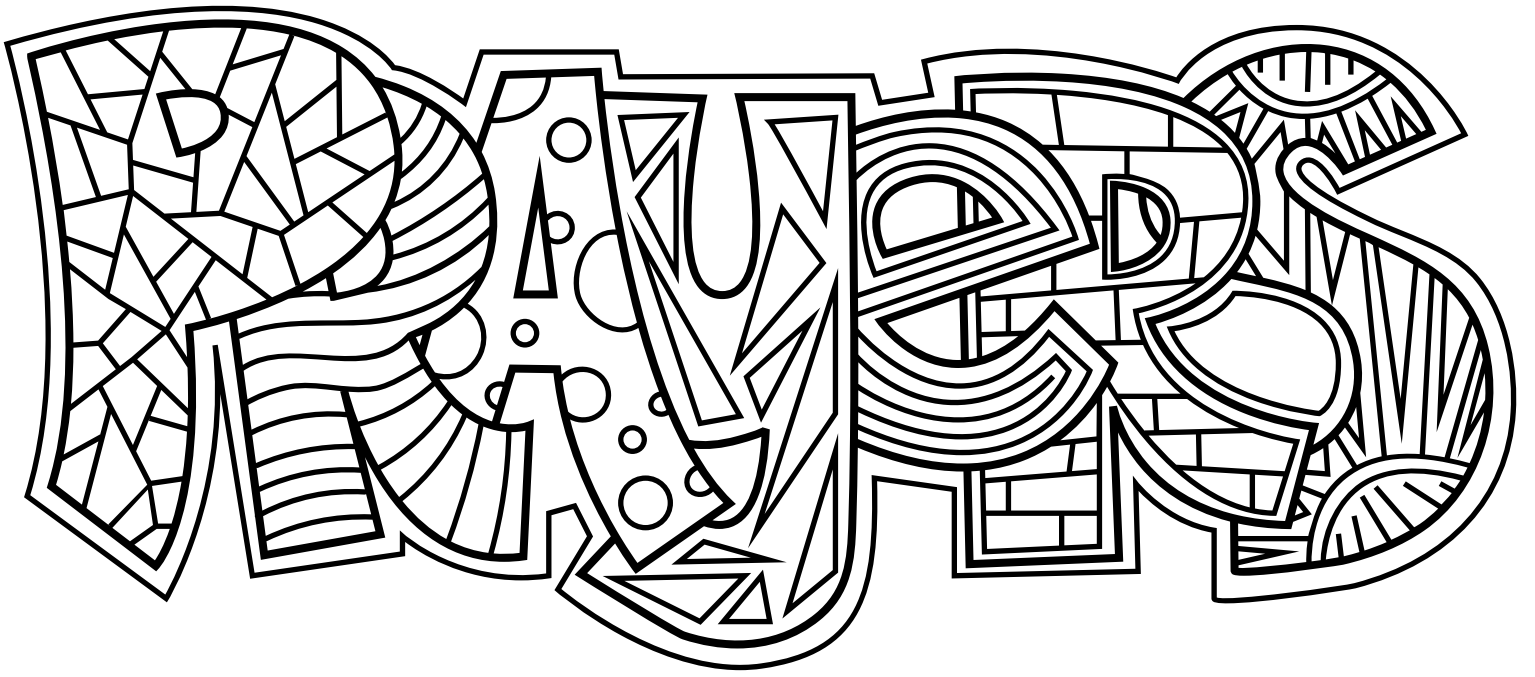
This week, take some time as a family to create a prayer box. If you enjoy working with wood or other material, consider crafting your own box. Or you can purchase a box or repurpose a shoe or other small shipping box in your home. Decorate the box with your family and color in the "Prayers" sign, cut out and glue onto the box and maybe include your family name on the box, too.

For the rest of the season of Lent, write or draw prayers on pieces of paper. Four squares are included on the activity page. Specifically, write prayers that involve a decision or difficulty you are facing. Keep those prayers in the box. After Easter, open up the box and look at the prayers and reflect on how God guided you during the season of Lent.

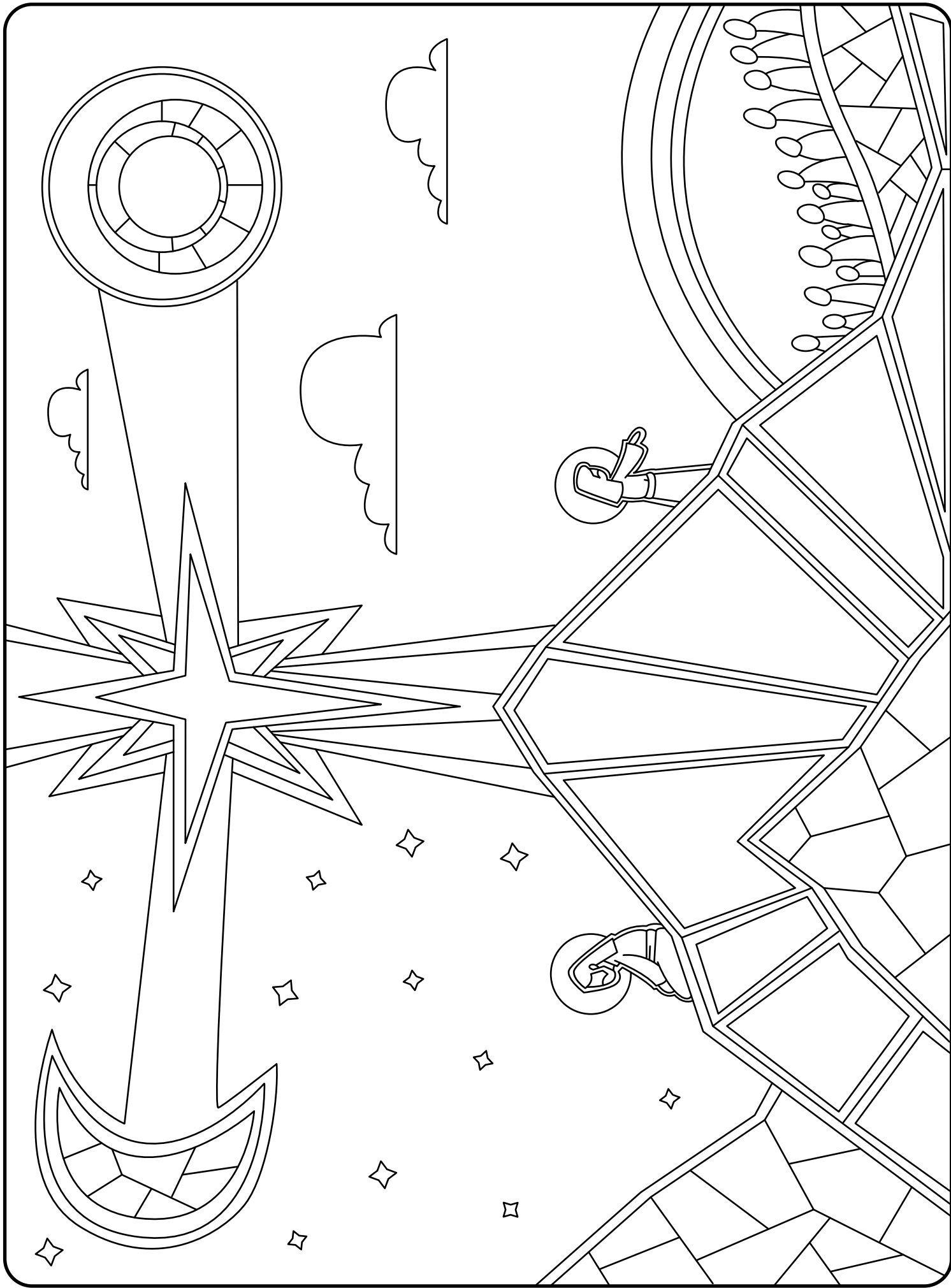
PRAYER

Dear Guiding One,
You are one who walks with us
And remains with us
You help us with the everyday
And with the unexpected.
Help us learn to turn to you
To lean on you
To draw wisdom from you
So we can grow in faith and confidence each day.
Amen.

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• WEEK 4 •

JESUS PRAYED WITH A
THANKFUL HEART

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 14:19-21

Then Jesus ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

REFLECTION

During the years that Jesus traveled and taught on earth, he spent time with many people. Thousands and thousands of people. Sometimes he met with people in their homes or in the street or in the temple. And other times Jesus was with large groups of people. In our Matthew passage today, we see a powerful example of Jesus caring for and teaching many people.

At the beginning of this story, Jesus is with a large crowd. This crowd had been learning from and listening to Jesus for most of the day, and it was dinner time. But there was a problem. They were far away from any town, and there definitely wasn't a fast food restaurant on the road or a delivery person who could come to the rescue. The only food available included five loaves of bread and two fish. Certainly not enough food to feed Jesus and his disciples, let alone many people. How did Jesus respond to this situation? He didn't complain or try to find a quick fix. Instead, Jesus takes the meal and blesses it (in other words, he thanks God for the food). And what happens? After thanking God, God provides more than enough food for all the people. What a miracle!

What was Jesus trying to teach the crowd then and teach us today? Perhaps it is the lesson of approaching God in prayer with a spirit of thankfulness. Sometimes we forget to remember and be thankful for others and to God. When we remember to be thankful and live a thankful life, thankfulness can grow in our lives and be in the lives

of others. This week, Jesus reminds us of the importance of giving thanks to God and remembering how thankfulness can spread to people around us.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Imagine you were one of the people in the crowd with Jesus that day and it was dinner time. What are some things you would have thought or said? How would you respond to Jesus after he thanked God for the food?
- Do you say thank you to God when you pray? If yes, what are some things you're thankful for? If no, what are some things for which you could offer thanks?
- Take a little time to think about last week. Who were some people who were helpful to you? What is one moment when you felt thankful?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity page, markers/crayons/pencils, envelopes, stamps

This week, we invite your family to practice thankfulness together. Take some time together to pick someone or a group of people to be thankful for each day this week. As a family, use the "Thank You" activity page provided to write or draw words of thankfulness for that person or group and then either mail that person the completed "Thank You" activity page or share it with them in some way (photo, social media, in person).

PRAAYER

Dear Jesus,

This week we want to simply say:

Thank you.

Thank you for leading us

Teaching us

Blessing us

Bearing with us

Forgiving us

Loving us.

Help us to practice thankfulness

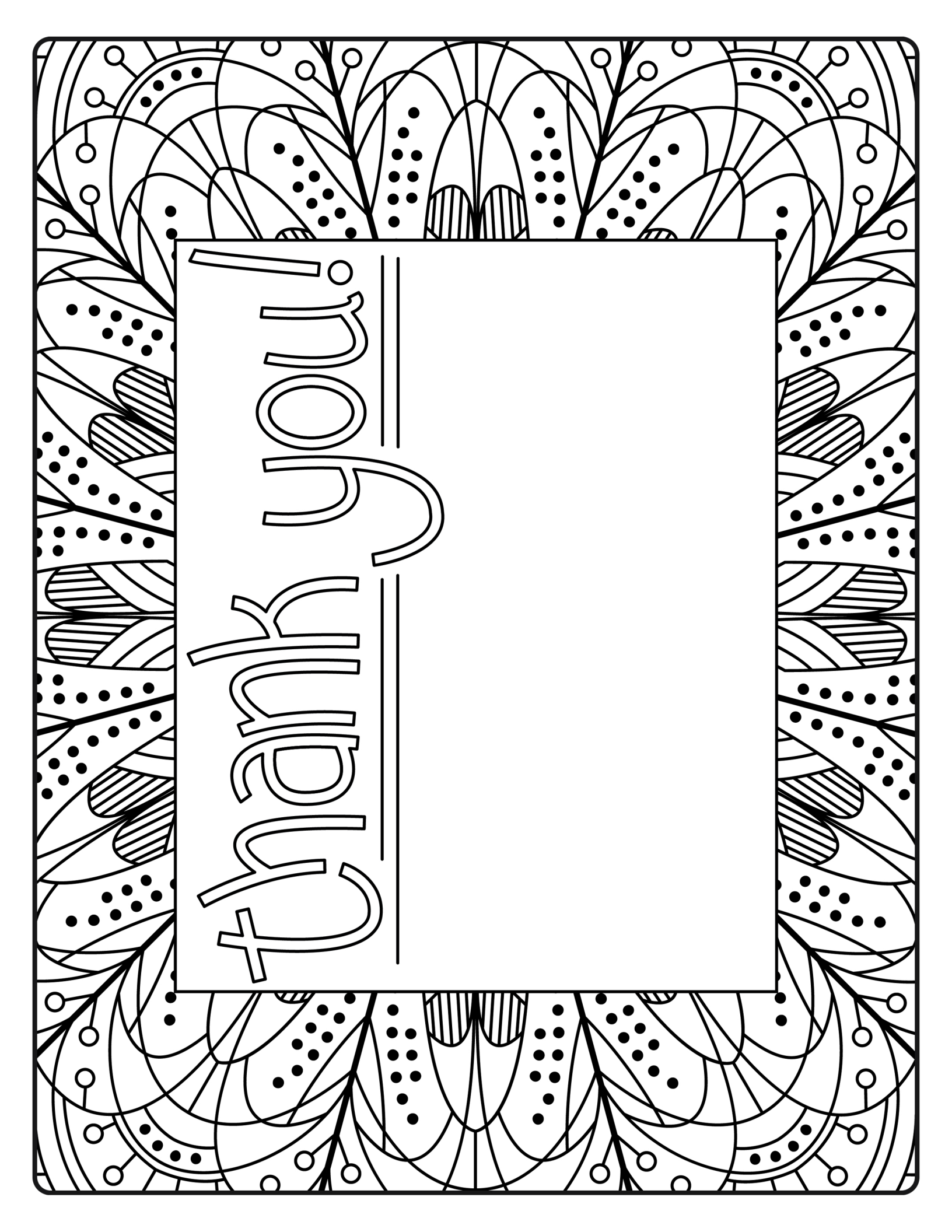
Toward you and others today, this week, this month,

Until it becomes as natural to us as our breath.

With thankful hearts, we pray,

Amen.

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thank you

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• WEEK 5 •

JESUS TAUGHT OTHERS
TO PRAY

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 11:1-4

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial."

REFLECTION

What is your first memory of prayer? Maybe it was hearing people pray in a church. Maybe you first remember praying at home. Wherever it was, it probably felt a little odd talking to someone who you couldn't even see. More likely than not, your first experience with prayer involved at least one other person; a parent, grandparent, pastor, or friend. When we pray with the caring people in our lives, together we learn ways to connect with God.

In our story from Luke this week, Jesus was praying. This time, the Bible tells us that Jesus' disciples must have been watching him pray. What they saw got their attention because when he finished praying, the disciples asked Jesus to help them learn to pray. They wanted to know how to pray in a way that God would feel near to them.

Jesus responds by teaching them what we now know as "The Lord's Prayer." What does the prayer include? This prayer teaches us to say happy and joyful things to God (called praise) and to say out loud that we know that God takes care of us. The prayer also teaches us to ask God to give us the things we need, teaches us to say sorry for our mistakes and to forgive others who might do mean things to us. Finally, the prayer teaches us to ask God to be with us in good and hard times.

Why do you think the Lord's Prayer continues to be important for us today? Think of the many things we learn to do over the course of our lives. We learn how to walk, talk, dress ourselves, read, play games, and so much more. With any of these activities, we had others help us learn how to do each thing. The same is true with prayer. Jesus provided us with one way to pray. After learning the basics from our family of faith, we are able to find new ways to pray to God through music, art, song, dance, poetry, and ways we haven't even discovered yet. And through that growth, we have the opportunity to share our prayers with others as Jesus did with us.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- How did you learn to pray? When was the first time you prayed out loud? When was the first time you prayed by yourself?
- Is prayer something that was easy for you to learn? Why or why not?
- Who are some people in your life who help you pray?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity page, paper, markers/crayons/pencils, craft supplies, scissors, staples or other fasteners

This week we invite you to make a Lord's Prayer booklet and try to memorize the Lord's Prayer by the end of the week.

First, take several pieces of paper. Color and cut out each phrase of the prayer from the activity page. Then take one phrase and glue it onto one of your papers. Repeat until you have glued all the phrases to the different pages. Then as a family, use your creativity to draw/paste/cut/craft a visual picture of what you think the phrase looks like and means to you. When you are done with all of the pages, take a stapler or other kind of fastener (like string) and make the pages into a booklet. Each evening read and pray the booklet together.

PRAYER

This week, practice The Lord's Prayer as a family, committing it to memory if time allows.

Loving God,
Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.

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LOVING GOD
who art in
Heaven
hallowed
be thy
Name.

thy
Kingdom
come
THY WILL BE DONE
on EARTH as
it is in
Heaven

Give Us
this
DAY OUR
DAILY BREAD

and
FORGIVE US
our debts
AS WE
FORGIVE
our debtors

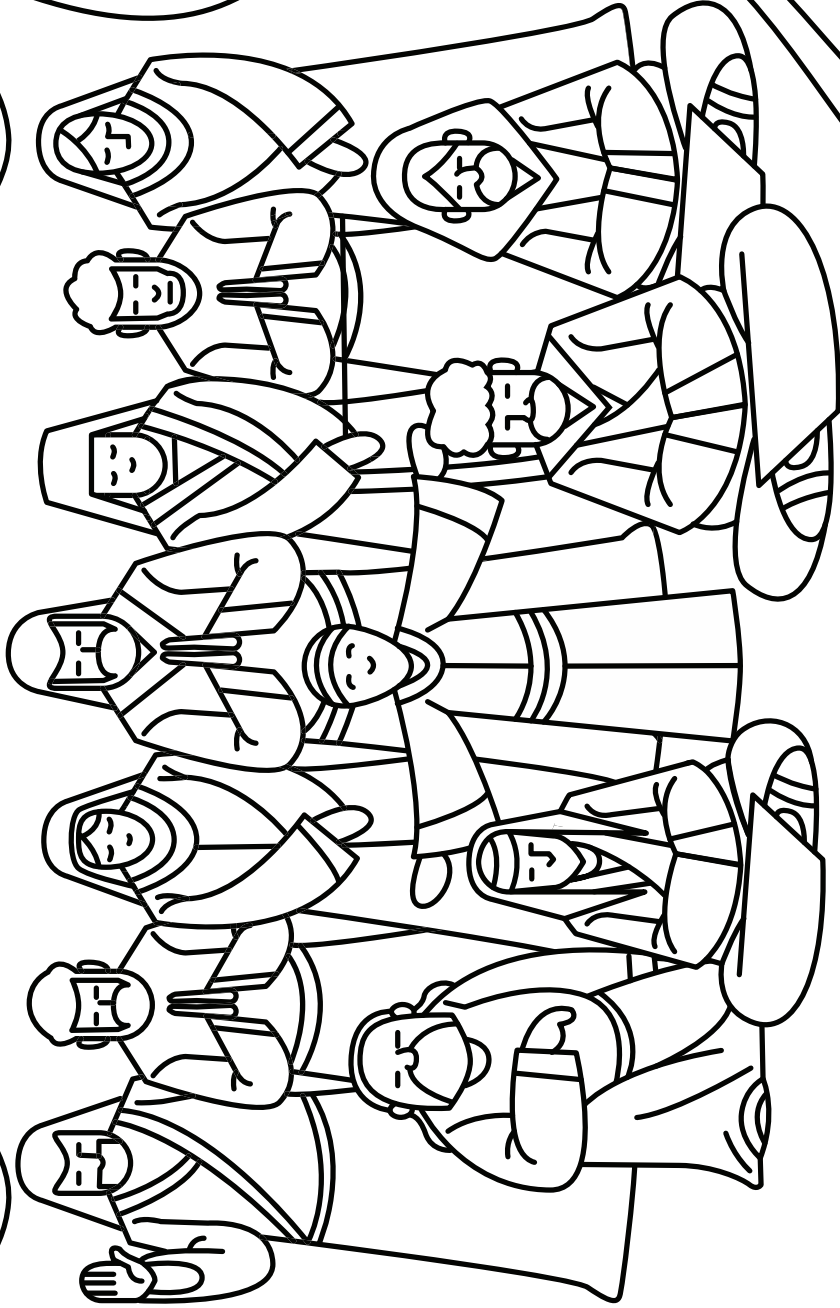
and
LEAD US
not into
temptation

but
DELIVER
us from
evil

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LORD, teach us to

FRAID



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SCRIPTURE: LUKE 19:37-38

As Jesus was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king, who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!"

REFLECTION

This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week in the Christian faith. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and includes the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples, Jesus' death on Friday and his resurrection on Easter Sunday. Many Christian traditions have several special services during this time including Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Each service shares the story of what happened to Jesus during his final week.

Palm Sunday is a special Sunday where we tell the story of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem. Crowds of people welcomed and celebrated Jesus and shouted, "Hosanna!" They laid palm leaves and clothes on the path as Jesus passed by. Many congregations act out this event by inviting people to carry palms and walk into and around the sanctuary. This story might surprise us after learning over the past couple of weeks that Jesus liked to pray to God in small groups or by himself. Palm Sunday is different. It is a great example of Jesus in the mix of things, surrounded by many people praying joyfully out loud.

What makes this passage especially helpful for our lives is that it is a vivid picture of what prayer can be like in a large group. Sometimes, we might think that prayer is something we can only do quietly, with our heads bowed and eyes closed. Our Palm Sunday story tells us something very different. Palm Sunday is a parade of prayer, with bright colors, sounds, and smells. This story invites us to think of ways that we can approach God together as God's family, filled with joy and energy, in a way that encourages and lifts each of us up in our own faith journeys.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Does your faith community recognize Palm Sunday? Maundy Thursday? Good Friday? Holy Saturday? What are some of your memories from these services?
- Do you find it easy or challenging to pray out loud around other people? What could help you feel more comfortable praying around friends and your family?
- What are some of your family's traditions during Holy Week? If your family does not have traditions surrounding this week, what could be one that you create together?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity page (or wood), cardboard or plastic strips, colored paper or sticky notes, glue, markers/crayons/pencils

To prepare for Holy Week and Easter, we invite you to make a Prayer Cross.

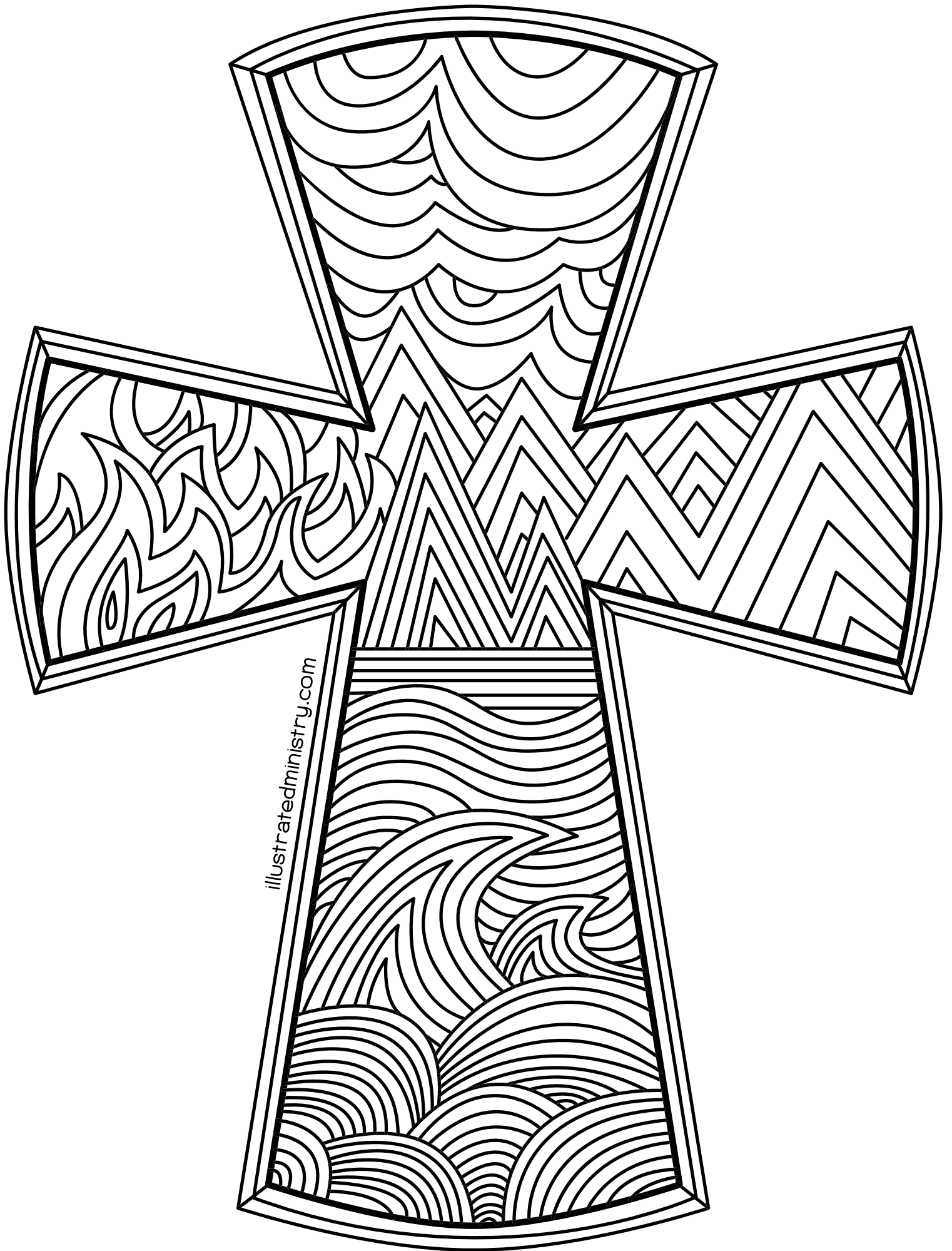
Depending on your preference and level of craftiness, take two pieces of wood or cardboard or plastic strips and fashion them into a cross or color and cut out the paper cross we created for you, that you can lay on your kitchen table or another common area. During the week, gather as a family, write prayers on sticky notes, and then fill the cross with your sticky-note prayers. Prayers of praise, prayers of lament, prayers for yourself, prayers for others. Make it a goal to fill the entire surface of the cross with prayers. We will return to this cross on Easter Sunday.

PRAYER

Dearest Jesus,
Your Holy Week is filled with so many emotions.
From the pure joy of a Sunday celebration
To the loneliness of your final Friday,
We take this journey with you,
remembering to be mindful of the seriousness of your choice
and recognizing the boundlessness of your grace and love.
Help us to be prepared and present for all you will reveal
To us this week.

Amen.

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Glory in the Highest Heaven!



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LENTEN

DEVOTIONS

• WEEK 7 •

CHRIST IS RISEN!
PEACE BE WITH YOU!

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20: 18-22

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jewish authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them "Receive the Holy Spirit."

REFLECTION

At long last, Easter Sunday is here! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! The Gospel of John tells us that Mary Magdalene saw and spoke with Jesus on Easter morning. She was so excited that she rushed to the disciples to deliver the good news. But what do we learn? Even after sharing that good news, the disciples are still hidden away in a locked room, afraid. Have you ever had this happen to you? You are excited about a new discovery or happy event in your life, and you want to share it with everyone? But when you do, others aren't excited with you, or it doesn't change their mood or mind.

This is what we see in today's story. Mary excitedly shared her good news, but the disciples just couldn't believe it. Jesus recognized this and met them where they were at. Now, Jesus could have scolded them or been disappointed with the disciples. Hadn't they learned anything? But instead, Jesus said, "Peace." He let them see him, his wounds, his whole self. And again, he said, "Peace be with you." Jesus wanted the disciples to know that they could come to him when they felt bad and alone and that he would help them.

Isn't this what Christ offers us today? Through his resurrection, he offers us help, hope, peace, and purpose. Jesus gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the one who helps us in our daily lives and our big events. We can celebrate like Mary and doubt like the disciples and Jesus will meet us where we are and work with us there. This is the good news that Jesus gives to us.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Imagine you are in the room with the disciples and Mary comes to share the good news about Jesus? How do you think you would react?
- What does peace mean for you? What does peace look like?
- The Gospel of John says that Jesus gave the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Jesus, how do you see the Holy Spirit helping you?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: Fresh or artificial flowers or activity page, tape or hot glue

One tradition in many congregations is the flowering of the cross on Easter Sunday. Congregations take the plain wooden cross that has been on display during Lent and fill it with fresh flowers on Easter morning. It is a beautiful visual picture of new life that emerges from death.

We invite you to take the cross you created last week and gather the prayers that cover it together. Replace the sticky notes with fresh flowers, artificial flowers or your colored and cut out flowers from the activity page to cover the cross and join in the celebration of Jesus' resurrection and a new life in Christ.

Please share your crosses by emailing them to info@illustratedministry.com or sharing them on social media using the hashtag [#anillustratedlent](https://twitter.com/anillustratedlent) so we can share ideas from our amazing community on this joyous Easter day!

**Also remember to open your prayer boxes that you made earlier in the season and celebrate how Christ has journeyed with you to Easter Sunday.*

PRAVER

Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Thank you, God, for your son.

For the new life found in him.

For the new hope found in him.

For the gift of the Holy Spirit,

Who guides us and encourages us

To be a people of Peace and Purpose

To each other and all whom you love in this world.

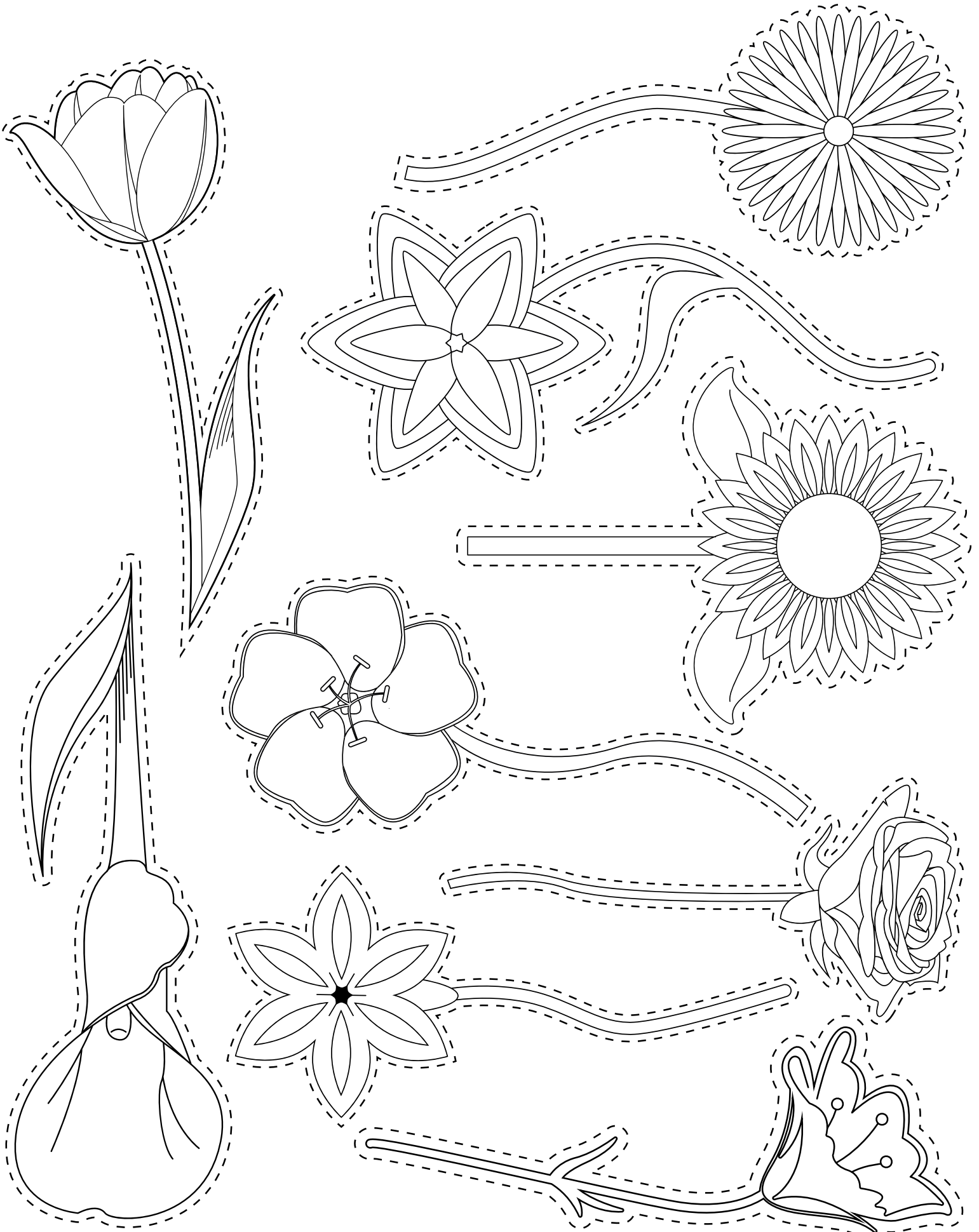
Christ is Risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Alleluia!

Amen!

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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REBEKAH LOWE, a local of Kansas City, Southern California, and Austin, TX, earned a B.A. in Biblical Studies with a minor in Leadership Studies and a minor in Hebrew at Azusa Pacific University and served as the Director of Children's Ministry at Brentwood Presbyterian Church (USA) in Los Angeles, California, for over five years. She resides in Austin, TX with her husband and their two daughters.

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ADAM WALKER CLEVELAND is an artist, pastor, pastor's spouse, and father of four (two living). Adam graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Youth Ministry. As an ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), Adam has served churches in Idaho, California, Oregon and Illinois. After doing youth ministry for over 15 years, Adam founded Illustrated Ministry, LLC in 2015. Adam lives with his family in southeastern Wisconsin.