

The Season of Lent is a period of 40 days, begins on Ash Wednesday, and is a period of introspection and reflection on the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus. Episcopal author and theologian Barbara Brown Taylor says that Lent is a “springtime for the soul...Forty days to cleanse the system and open the eyes to what remains when all comfort is gone. Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves.”



Scripture

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—my adversaries and foes—they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in God’s temple.

For God will hide me in God’s shelter in the day of trouble; God will conceal me under the cover of God’s tent; God will set me high on a rock. Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in God’s tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! “Come,” my heart says, “seek God’s face!” Your face, Lord, do I seek. Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up. Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord.



Questions

- Share some ways God takes care of the writer of this psalm?
- What feelings do you notice in this psalm?
- The writer of this psalm knows God is always with them both in times of fear and in times of joy. When have you felt God with you when you were afraid? What about when you were joyful?
- This psalm talks about feeling safe and protected. What things and people make you feel safe and protected?
- The psalm asks us to, “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage.” What can we do to help us feel brave when we might feel nervous or scared?

Look it Up!

Look up the concept of sanctuary.

Older than the Christian church, “sanctuary” is when a religious institution offers protection to a person in need. It’s even in the Bible, with “cities of refuge” mentioned in Numbers and Deuteronomy.





Activity

Materials:

Paper
 Coloring utensils

Format Psalm 27 from your favorite Bible website so that each stanza is separate. Cut out each stanza and number them on the back so they can easily be put in order.

Read through the first stanza together. It begins: "The Lord is my light" and ends "of whom shall I be afraid?" Discuss the meaning of difficult words such as salvation (safety, saving force) or stronghold (safe place). Together, identify the primary emotion in this stanza, which could be hope, courage, or trust.

Who would be praying this prayer? Maybe people who are persecuted for their faith or people who are afraid of a situation they can't control, such as deportation or illness. When would you need this prayer? Could you pray this when you need to be brave to help someone or to stand up for someone?

Finally, come up with a symbol or logo to represent the stanza. For instance, you could use a light bulb or a strong castle. Demonstrate drawing the logo on a piece of paper.

With the remaining nine stanzas, break your group up into smaller groups or partners. If working virtually, use breakout rooms in line with your Safe Church policies. Distribute the stanzas between the groups. Have each group identify the emotions in their stanzas, a situation where the stanza would be applicable, and a logo or symbol for the stanza. Make sure to check in on each group early to define words or ideas so they can interpret the stanza successfully.

Let each group present to the whole, first reading their stanza, defining words, and then sharing their audience and logo.

Alternate Activity

Read through the provided Bible Story Booklet and define any words your audience may not understand. After each page, discuss what feelings the participants noticed in the story.

Then together develop hand motions and facial expressions to act out the psalm. Point out the emotions and help the participants respond. The first two pages of the Bible Story Booklet have been done below as an example.

1. God is my light (*hands flashing to show light*) and a strong (*muscle arm*) presence who looks after me (*hands on heart*), so why (*arms up in a shrug*) should I be afraid (*scared face*)? When people are mean, (*mean face*) or things feel scary (*arms wrapped around yourself, scared face*), I stay calm and confident (*peaceful face*) by thinking of God (*praying hands*).
2. I ask God (*point up*) for one (*one finger*) thing: to live and be with God forever (*hug yourself, happy face*). I want to see (*hand binoculars*) how beautiful God is and learn (*tap your head*) all about God. When I feel troubled (*worried face*), God gives me a calming place (*calm and happy face*) to feel safe.



Micropractice

What makes you feel safe in your home? Perhaps you lock your doors, close your curtains, or bring in your animals. When you are doing these actions, imagine turning your home into a sanctuary and thank God for dwelling in your castle.



Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illstrtdm.in/minirevCLent2



Prayer

Dear God, who comforts us when we are afraid, help us be brave and bold as we wait for the day when you will make all things right. Empower us to be part of your work. Amen.

the LORD

is my

LIGHT

&

my

SALVATION;

WHOM SHALL I FEAR?

the

LORD

is

the

STRONGHOLD

OF MY

LIFE

of whom shall I

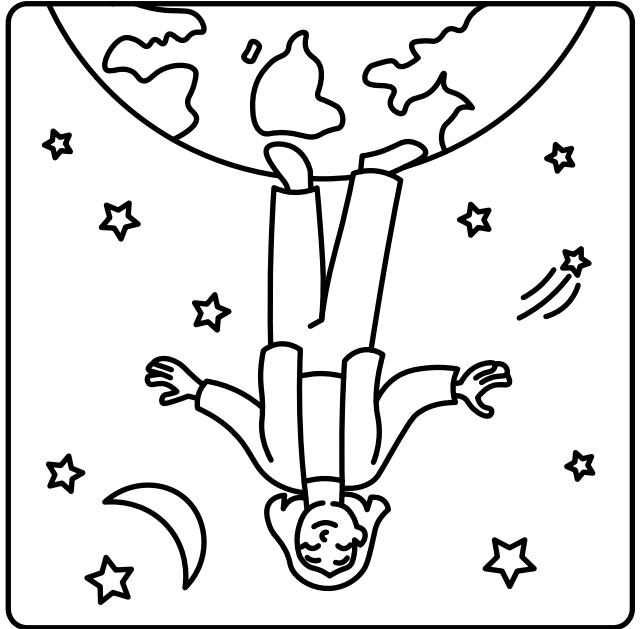
BE AFRAID?

1. God is my light and a strong presence who looks after me, so why should I be afraid? When people are mean, or things feel scary, I stay calm and confident by thinking of God.



2. I ask God for one thing: to live and be with God forever. I want to see how beautiful God is and learn all about God. God gives me a calming place to feel safe when I feel troubled.

4. I know I will see God's goodness all over the Earth. If you're reading this, remember: Wait for God! Even if you get nervous, be strong, have courage in your heart, and wait for God!



3. I sing songs and shout with joy because God protects me. I say to God: You have been with me and supported me for so long! Please stay with me and teach me your way!