

2. READ

Back in Bible times, when people had done the wrong thing or grown far away from God, they returned to God with fasting, weeping and mourning to show that they were sorry. Sometimes they even ripped their clothes and made them sooty.

But God says, "Rend your heart and not your clothes. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love..."

Joel 2:13

1. SHARE

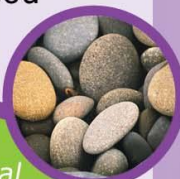
Prepare: Place an unlit candle on a dish under a cloth. Set aside a stone for each person.

Sometimes the things that happen to us, or the things we do, can make us feel angry or sad.

It can feel like we are far from God, and everything is dark and black.

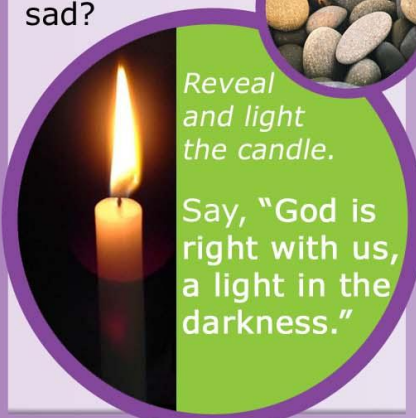
Darken the room.

But where is God when we feel angry or sad?



Reveal and light the candle.

Say, "God is right with us, a light in the darkness."



God wants us to change on the inside not just the outside. When we open our hearts God's love can shine in.

Give each person a stone.

Have you ever had a stone in your shoe? How did it feel?

Hold your stone and think of something that you've done or that happened to you that made you feel angry or sad. Share what happened.

How are angry feelings a bit like a stone in your shoe?

Imagine your stone holds your hurt or angry feelings. One at a time, place your stone next to the candle as you say the prayer below.

3. TALK

Dear God,

We give You...
[this situation]

As we open our hearts
shine in Your love.

Bring healing and
forgiveness.

Amen

PRAY

5. BLESS

After you have finished, take time to bless each other.

- One at a time, place your hand on the head of the person to your left and bless them saying,
- "[Name...], God loves you. His light shines for you."



2. READ

When Noah came out of the Ark, God said to him, "I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth" Gen 9:11

God put the rainbow in the sky as a sign of the new covenant, saying, "Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind..."

Gen 9:14-15a

1. SHARE

Prepare: a large sheet of card/paper to be a Treaty. Permanent marker, scrap paper, coloured pens/pencils.

A covenant is an agreement or written promise between two or more people.

God makes a covenant with us through Jesus: He will take away all the wrong things we have done, so we can become God's friends and live with Him forever. This is what Easter is about.



How do you feel when you know that God wants to be your friend?



In permanent marker at the top of your card write, "[NAME...] FAMILY TREATY"

Explain: "Today we are going to make a Family Treaty on how we want to be as a family during the next 6 weeks of Lent leading to Easter. A family treaty is a bit like a covenant, where we make promises to each other about what we will agree to do."

Using the scrap piece of paper, brainstorm all possible ideas for your family treaty. Write down every idea.

Discuss and choose the top 5 ideas you all agree to as a family. Write these in permanent marker on the Family Treaty, and decorate it as a family. What will be the "sign" of your treaty?

3. TALK

Dear God,
We thank you for our family. Help us to love each other and live in peace together.
Help us to keep this covenant we have made as a family, just like you keep your covenant with Noah and his descendants.

Amen

5. BLESS

- One at a time, place your hand on the head of the person to your left and bless them saying,
- "[Name...], you are important to this family."
- Join your hands in a stack. All say together, "We choose to live in peace." Then raise your hands into the air as you shout "A...men!"

4. PRAY



Family Devotion

SUN 4: STRUGGLING TO STAY ON TRACK

2. READ

The Bible reminds us that God is always listening to us, even when things are going wrong.

"[God] does not ignore those who need help...He does not turn away from them. He listens when they cry for help."

Psalm 22:24

1. SHARE

Prepare: Put a balloon under a cloth. Keep a second balloon aside.

When something exciting happens to you, who do you want to tell?

Sometimes when we are struggling we don't want to tell anyone what we've done or what is happening to us. Or we can feel like no one listens or cares.

But when we bottle things up inside us it can cause problems.

Reveal the first balloon.



What things make you upset? Blow those things into the balloon. What will happen if we keep blowing bad feelings inside the balloon? (Let it pop!)

God always hears when we are upset or in trouble. We can tell Him anything. What is the special name for when we talk to God?

Blow up the second balloon.

What happens when we pray and share our troubles with God?

Pass the balloon to one of the children and tell them to let it go...

When we share our troubles with God they get smaller, and instead of exploding we can feel at peace in our spirits again.

Blow up the balloon and let each of the children have a turn at letting it go.

3. TALK

Dear God,
Thank you that you always hear us whenever we talk to you.

Help us to remember to talk to you when we have troubles, and to be good listeners to others.

Amen

5. BLESS

- One at a time, take the hand of the person to your right, look into their eyes and bless them saying,
- "[Name...], God hears you, and cares for you."

4. PRAY



2. READ

God gave some special rules called the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, when they were in the desert:

1. God alone is your god
2. Worship only God
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
5. Respect your parents
6. Don't murder
7. Be faithful in marriage
8. Don't steal
9. Don't lie
10. Don't envy

From Exodus 20:1-17

1. SHARE

Prepare: Set aside a board game your family enjoys under a cloth.

Today we are thinking about rules.

Why do we need them?

Reveal the board game.

What are some of the rules of this game?

How do you feel if someone breaks the rules?



What would happen if the game didn't have any rules?

Put the game aside to play at the end.



Jesus said God's commandments could be divided into two big rules (Mathew 22:37-40):

Love God with all your heart, soul and mind and Love others as you love yourself.

From the 10 commandments, which are about loving God? Which are about loving other people?

What happens when we break God's rules?

How does it feel when other people break God's rules and it affects us?

Can we forgive those people?

Does God forgive us?

3. TALK

Dear God,
 Thank you that you love us.
 We love you too.
 Forgive us when we break your rules,
 and help us to forgive others when they do.
 We want to shine your love to the world.

Amen

5. BLESS

- One at a time, give the person on your left a high-five and bless them saying,
- "[Name...], God loves you. You're on His team."
- Play the board game together and have some family fun!

4. PRAY



2. READ

"Everyone who does evil... will not come to the light, because the light will show all the bad things they have done. But anyone who follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that whatever they have done was done through God."

John 3:20-21

1. SHARE


Prepare: Lemon juice/ vinegar, a slip of paper and cotton bud stick for each person, access to a light bulb (or iron).

Slugs are animals that don't like light. They hide away amongst the dark leafy places, coming out to eat at night.

Baby turtles are drawn to light. When they hatch they push up through the sand from their nest and follow the moonlight to the sea.

What else likes the light?

What hides from light?



Hand out the paper and cotton buds. Using "invisible ink" (lemon/vinegar) write or draw a nice word or message. Let it dry.



Most of us are happy to share the good things we do with others, but we prefer to keep quiet about the bad things.

God gives us each a conscience, to help us know right from wrong. Have you ever felt God's Holy Spirit in your conscience telling you it's best not to do something?

Exchange your invisible messages and bring them "into the light" next to a hot light bulb (or use an iron for heat).

How did you feel when your good message was revealed? What if you had written something bad?

Why is it important to live in the light?

3 TALK

Dear God,
Please help us to make wise choices and know right from wrong.

We want to live in the light of Your love, and shine it so others can know You too.

Amen

5. BLESS

- All hold hands in a circle.
- Then one at a time, in a chain, squeeze the hand of the person to your right saying,
- "[Name...], you are living in God's light."

PRAY



2. READ

Remember the 10 Commandments? The people had trouble keeping them. So God said He would make a new covenant with people:

"...I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... I will forgive their wickedness, and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:33-34

1. SHARE

Prepare: Foil covered chocolate heart for each person (hidden aside), plus one extra heart on a dish under a cloth, a rolling pin and small plastic bag.

Have you ever had a pair of jeans that wore out at the knees?

How did you feel when you first noticed the hole?

Did you try to fix it?

Even if you could patch the jeans – would they ever be as good as new?



Some-times our hearts get a bit broken and torn too by things that happen to us. *Reveal single heart. Place in bag and smash with the rolling pin.*

When we do the wrong thing and get angry, how is it like having a hole torn in your jeans?

Point to the crushed heart.

It is like our heart starts to get broken, raggedy and torn.

Is there any way we can fix it?

God has the best way. He promises, through what Jesus did at Easter time, to forgive all our sins and make our hearts new again.

Bring out the plate of new chocolate hearts – but don't give them out yet.

Compare the two sorts of hearts. Which heart would you rather have?

3. TALK

Dear God,
Thank you that You made a way for us to be new and put right with You.

You are our God and we are your people. Help us to know You in our hearts.

Amen

4. PRAY

5. BLESS

- One at a time take one of the hearts and give it to the person on your left saying,
- "[Name...], God's love makes you shiny and new."
- *Eat your chocolate hearts together.*



2. READ

"The attitude
you should have
is the one
Christ Jesus had"

Philippians 2:5

1. SHARE

Prepare: Set aside a bowl and towel (things you will need for foot washing) under a cloth.

Have you ever wanted to be the most important person at your school or in your church or family?

What do you think things would be like for you if you were the most important person in the COUNTRY, such as the Prime Minister, or the King or Queen?

Jesus taught a new way.



Reveal
the basin of
water and
towel.
Take time for
the adults to
wash the
children's
feet.

What was the attitude that Jesus had?

Do you think it is surprising that He chose to serve people when He was God's Son – the most important person who has ever lived?

How did it make you feel when you had your feet washed?

After He washed the disciples' feet, Jesus said, **"I have done this as an example for you. You should serve each other just as I have served you"** John 13:15

What can you do to show you have the same attitude as Jesus?

Allow the children to wash the adults' feet and each other's feet.

3. TALK

Dear God,

Thank You that You give us an example of how we should be.

Help us to always look for ways to love and serve other people. We want to be just like You.

Amen

5. PRAY

5. BLESS

- One at a time, make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person on your right saying,
- "[Name...], you are important to God. Go and be just like Him."

