

IN ALL TIMES

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Uncooked eggs, newspapers, tape
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: CRASH TEST EGGS

This can be a bit messy, so if weather permits, you may want to go outside for the ice breaker.

Each teen or small group receives an uncooked egg, newspaper and tape. Set a time limit of a few minutes, and explain that their task is to develop their own method of insulation for the egg, using the materials at hand. The goal is to make it “crash test proof”. When time is up, have teens pass their egg to the teen on their left. (If you have groups, then each group assigns one “smasher”.) The next step is for the eggs to be thrown to the ground and then unwrapped/inspected to see which (if any) survived. *You may want to have a small prize for any teens who managed to insulate their egg well enough to survive.*

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson (below) by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: HANDLING VALUABLES

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What is the most valuable – or fragile – thing you’ve ever handled or been responsible for?
How did you feel about it? Did you have any scares?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *Handling or being responsible for something – or someone – can be awe-inspiring or even frightening. Perhaps a mother has allowed you to hold her newborn. Or perhaps your parents allowed you to drive their car. Maybe a friend told you a secret that was yours to keep. Hopefully the story ended well – with you being able to assure the person who gave you their trust, that you had not been careless!*

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THE LESSON: PSALM 23

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

*In all times of tribulation; in all times of prosperity; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgement,
Good Lord, deliver us.*

About halfway through the Litany we find this wonderful petition that reminds us that life is made up of many seasons: and we need God in all of them.

Jesus, when he faced the first temptation in the wilderness, quoted from the Old Testament scriptures, saying: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). What was this passage of scripture that Jesus was calling to mind in that moment: hungry, alone in the wilderness, and confronted by the enemy? It’s found in Deuteronomy 8, in the middle of a passage in which God is calling his people to remember how he led them in the wilderness for 40 years, teaching them, feeding them with manna, disciplining them, and through this journey, bringing them to the Promised Land.

Later in his ministry, Jesus taught his disciples to pray: “Give us this day our daily bread”. He wasn’t just talking about physical needs; he was teaching us to trust God to provide for *whatever* we need. So in this final unit for the year, we’ll be reflecting on that trust we have in God to sustain us every day along the long and winding journey of life.

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Psalm 23, written by King David, is probably not new to you. It’s one of the most well known parts of the Bible, and for good reason. Imagine David, reflecting at the close of a long life during which he had known triumphs and joys, but also great sin and sorrow. Through all those twists and bends – for him and for us – there is consolation in knowing that we are in the care of the Good Shepherd.

Refer to Psalm 23.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE OR PRAYER BOOK).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What does this psalm teach us about how God cares for us?
(*Encourage them to go through it line by line*)
- Which part of this psalm speaks to you most right now? Why?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *God provides for our needs (“I shall not want”, v1). He gives us peace (“still waters”, v2). He restores or heals us (“He restores my soul”, v3). He is righteous and he leads us to be righteous (v3). He is present with us in every situation (v4). He disciplines and guides us (v4). He gives us abundant life (v5). All of his care for us is good and merciful (v6). He is bringing us home to heaven (v6).*
- *This is a very personal question, but hopefully one that some of your teens will be up for. During times of need, we can hold on to the knowledge that God provides; during times of darkness, we can hold onto the knowledge that he is present with us, and so on. If your teens bring up a situation that requires prayer, pause to do that.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

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PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Spend some time praying with the phrase “*Give us today our daily bread*”. What are the needs that you have right now? Offer them to God, and ask him to help you trust him to provide for your every need. Read Philippians 4:19: “*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*” Conclude with a time of thanksgiving.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer.

O merciful God, at whose bidding the earth withholdeth her increase, or rendereth her fruits in their season: Give us grace that we may learn, both from thy mercies and thy judgements, our entire dependence upon thee for the supply of our daily bread; and grant that we, remembering that thy blessings are for our trial as well as for our comfort, may with thankful hearts give unto thee of thine own, ministering gladly to the maintenance of thy Church, and the relief of the poor and the afflicted, the widow and the orphan, to the glory of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PRAYER FROM A FORM OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE BLESSINGS OF HARVEST, BCP PAGE 618)

CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

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PSALM 23: **IN HIS KEEPING**

¹The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

³He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.