

## Top Tips on Family Worship at Home

Whilst our usual pattern of Sunday service and Junior Church is put on hold, we hope to resource households to continue to worship and pray together and be a place of Christ's light in our world during these uncertain days.

Here are some top tips to get started:

- 1) Find a time in the day that works for you.
- 2) Don't expect it to be silent - it will be messy! Go with the flow.
- 3) Encourage everyone to contribute, both adults and children.
- 4) Be flexible on timing and ready to adapt or shorten the session if your children get restless - there's no point in making this a battle!
- 5) Use the events of the past few days to explore where you've each met God or seen him at work.
- 6) Involve your children and young people with what the church is doing during this CV-19 crises – suggestions can be found in the **Action** section.

### A Junior Church session for the Seniors for Lent 5 (29 March)

**You will need:** Bibles, a rock or similar small object that will fit in your pocket, pens or paints, a small box with a lid, paper

**Big Idea:** Jesus is with us always, even when things go wrong.

**Starter activity:** Talk about how it feels when you unwrap the layers of a present you have received. How would you feel if there was nothing inside? This Bible passage is about when a family felt let down, because Jesus was missing at an important moment.



**Bible Story:** The death of Lazarus: Gospel according to St John Chapter 11, verses 1 – 45 (John 11:1-45).

If there are a few of you at home, you might like to take on different characters, as you read it. You will need a narrator, a messenger, Jesus, disciples, Thomas, Martha, Mary, mourners. One person could take on more than one character.

#### Discussion:

Choose a few of these questions to get a discussion flowing:



**I wonder...?**

What do you like best about this story?

What's the most important part of this story?

Is there any part of this story we could leave out and have all that we need?

How might Martha and Mary have been feeling towards Jesus when he finally arrived?

Why didn't Jesus rush to Bethany?

What might help us to know that Jesus is with us even when we feel sad?



### **Rock Reminder Activity:**

The rock or similar solid object is a physical reminder that God is our rock, our ever-present help in times of trouble. Decorate the rock or object with pens or paints and keep it as a reminder that God is here with us, present when things go wrong. Keep it in your pocket or by your bed to touch when you need to know God is here with you.



### **Pray** Reflect that Jesus is with us in prayer

You will need the small box with a lid, a piece of paper with the word 'Jesus' written on it placed upside-down in the box, paper and pens.

- Remember that Mary and Martha felt let down because Jesus had not been able to help them as he was not beside them when Lazarus was ill. Sometimes it feels that Jesus is not around to help us. But Jesus promised he would always be with us when we pray.
- At this difficult time, think of people or places where you would like Jesus to be present in some way.
- Write down the names or situations on pieces of paper and place them in the box and put on the lid.
- Have a brief time of silence. Then open the box, take out all the pieces of paper and turn them over so that the word 'Jesus' is visible. Say: "Help us to know that Jesus is with us and in all the situations where people need him. Amen".



Keep the rock or similar object in your pocket or by your bed this week, to remind you of God's constant presence with us.

## **Bible notes**

- Jesus' humanity is shown in this story. He is anxious about whether he should travel to Bethany. He is worried about his own and his disciples' safety. He is deeply moved by the sisters' disappointment, anger and grief. And he is touched by the presence of those from the village who console them.
- As well as losing their brother, Lazarus' death would have been a big problem for Martha and Mary. He was the source of income and status for the family. They were losing their reputation and status in society as well as their closest relative. They were losing their hope.
- This passage can be read as a parable by those who want to know where Jesus is when life falls apart. It suggests that he is present even in his absence. We can imagine him carrying his concern for the Bethany family from the moment he hears about his dear friend's illness. Jesus' faith carries him through the dangers of the journey to Bethany and into the place of loss and death, where he brings life even from the tomb through the resurrection power of his word. How often do we struggle to see Jesus' presence when things go wrong?