

Seeds

Watching the growth of flower seeds reminds us of the miracle of hope and transformation that is coming in the promise of Easter. The seeds change; they decay as they transform into a new life – a new life that we can't really imagine when we plant it. Where is there hope in your life? Where is there mystery? What transformation do you hope for during the season of Lent?

Read the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32 or Luke 13:18-19) and the Parable of the Leavened Bread (Matthew 13:33 or Luke 13:20-21) and talk about change. What things can you think of that change?



Source:
Modified from the idea of Shawn Schreiner
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Lent in a Bag



Lent is a season when many people make a special focus on enhancing their ever-growing and loving relationship with God. Christ's life, ministry, and death are remembered during this season. It's also a time to think about how God is with us all the time. You may do this through prayer, reading the Bible, helping others, or something else. Anything that connects you to God is a great practice. Even walking the dog, seeing the green grass, or hearing chirping birds can be a way to commune with God.

Here are two suggestions for using the contents of this bag:

- Choose one night of the week and invite those around your table to pick one of the symbols as a starting point for conversation for the whole group, including children.
- For your own devotion, daily or weekly, choose one of the symbols for reflection as you make your way through the season of Lent.



Sand

Between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days 'to be tested'. The desert is a dangerous place and Jesus was hungry, cold, and tired. He was also tempted and tormented, but he didn't give up. When things get tough, how do we remember God is there for us? What constitutes wilderness in your life? What have you learned there? What might you learn there?

Read the story of Jesus wandering in the desert, then open the sand and touch it. (Matthew 4, Mark 1, or Luke 4.)

Rock

While in the wilderness, Jesus was tempted by the devil to transform stone into bread. He knew he was not called to do this by God. He didn't change the rock into food. Later, Jesus became known for doing amazing things. He fed the hungry, offered encouragement, and healed people. When you are angry or sad, it may feel like your heart has become a rock. How does that feel? How can you help someone who has a "rock" in their heart? How does it feel to help others? Think about a time where you helped someone.

Read the story of Zacchaeus. (Luke 19) Jesus transforms Zacchaeus. Jesus transforms us and helps us make better choices. Is there a place in your life where you could make better choices, with Jesus' help?

Human Figure

Because Jesus was *fully human*, he gets us, understands us from inside our skin, and knows from experience that we're each capable of great things, Godly things. No matter what we do, he keeps on inviting us to join us in his work which has become our own. Jesus knows that we can do good things on earth, just like he did. In Lent, we are counting down 40 days until Easter. What can you do to be more like Jesus at home? At school? Everywhere?

Read the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. (John 13) How can we live like Jesus?

Candle

Winter can be cold and dark. Spring is a time where we think of sunshine and flowers blooming. Jesus is called the Light of the World. Jesus told his disciples to be a light in the world too and make a difference. So where do you shine? What do you think you are good at? What is your talent? How can you encourage someone to see the good in themselves?

Read Matthew 5:14-16 and sing the song *This Little Light of Mine*. How do you let your light shine?

Shell

Historically, the season of Lent was when new Christians were prepared for baptism. Jesus began his ministry after his baptism. As someone who has been (or will be baptized) what is your ministry? How are you living out the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant? Read through the Baptismal Covenant on page 304-305 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Read the story of Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3, Mark 1, or Luke 3) and look at photos of baptisms of family members.

