

Lent in six objects – six weeks of reflections

Lent is a time to pay more attention to the inner life, which affects our outer life in the world around us. Christ's life, ministry and death are remembered during this season. Also, it can be a time to think about our own journey of faith as we prepare ourselves for Holy Week and Easter.

This envelope contains a palm cross and a stone painted with an ash cross, which are used in some of the reflections. Other reflections need an object from around your home. The ash cross marks the start of Lent (Ash Wednesday is 17 February) and the palm cross marks its end (Palm Sunday is 28 March).

Week 1 (17-20 February): In the wilderness. Object – a stone

Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. Matthew 4. 1

From baptism we are called to follow Jesus: to 'walk in the dust of the rabbi.' In Jewish culture, in the days of Jesus, young boys were taught by a rabbi – a teacher – who they often walked and talked with, and listened to. The boys were told to stay so close to their teacher that they would be walking in the dust from the road that the rabbi kicked up behind him.



Hold the stone. Notice it has a cross on it – painted in ash, a symbol of sorrow and grief. I wonder... when have you walked on hard, barren or stony ground?

Prayer: Holy God, help us to 'walk in the dust of the rabbi' through the difficult places in our lives, and to know that the closer we walk to you, the closer you will be to us. Amen.

Week 2 (21-27 February): Questions from Nicodemus. Object - a shoe

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus... he came to Jesus by night... and said to him 'How can these things be?' John 3. 1; 9

Nicodemus, a religious leader, comes to Jesus to ask his questions. Lent is a good time to try to be open about our questions. Maybe we can even 'cherish the questions' and 'have patience with all that is unsolved' (Rainer Maria Rilke).

Look at the bottom of a worn shoe, or draw a footprint. Imagine you are walking towards Jesus – what question would you like to ask when you meet him? What do you think he might say in answer?



*Prayer: Walk among us, grace of God, teaching us the questions of the kingdom.
(based on Thom Shuman)*

Week 3 (28 February – 6 March): Woman at Well. Object – a glass of water

A Samaritan woman came [to the well] to draw water and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. John 4. 7



The Samaritan woman gives Jesus a drink of water. They speak together for a long time. He tells her about living water – to revive the spirit and bring hope. She believes, and others believe, because of her.

Look at your glass of water. Give thanks for those who continue to help you believe, who help your thirst. Why not get in touch with someone who needs to know they matter, and be living water to them.

*Prayer: O God, may we thirst for your waters of justice, and learn to deny no one the water of life.
(Janet Morley)*

Week 4 (7-13 March): Mothering Love. Object – the image below



Simeon said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul." Luke 2. 33b-35

This week the Church remembers the mothering love of God.

In the middle of Lent we give thanks for all who show us this mothering love – a strong love, a challenging love, an encouraging love, a healing love. If you have a picture (or just a memory) of someone who gave you a mother's love, or of Mary the mother of Jesus, spend some time remembering and giving thanks for that love. If that relationship was more complicated, perhaps give yourself a treat, and remember that you are an adult who can care for themselves now.

Prayer: Dear Mother and Father God, we give thanks for your unconditional love for all of your children, even me. We remember those who have mothered us and ask you to bless all those we 'mother'. Amen

(image by kind permission of Rev Dr Ally Barrett)

Week 5 (14–20 March): Being Light. Object – a candle or even a light bulb

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'

John 8. 12

*Jesus went up the mountain... and began to teach them:
'You are the light of the world' Matthew 5. 14*

Lent begins in the dimness of late winter and ends with the burst of bright spring. Jesus is, according to John's gospel, 'The Light of the world' and that Light insists: 'You are the light of the world. Don't be hiding under some bushel basket.'

So where do you shine? How do you keep your light lit?



*Prayer: Light of the world, walk among us, illuminating God in our midst.
(Thom Shuman)*

Week 6 (21- 28 March): It is finished. Object – the palm cross

Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said: 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'. Luke 23. 46



Hold the cross in your hand. Trace its shape and feel the texture of the rough palm leaf. How can the cross remind us to trust in the way of love and know that we are not forgotten? How can we dare ourselves to follow the way of love – the whole way?

Prayer: In the silence may we hear your cry of abandonment; in the shattering of your soul may our brokenness be healed. (Thom Shuman)