

FaithTrek

Sunday Morning Christian Education for 3 Year Olds through 5th Grade

March 2020



LISTEN is the Word of the Month

In February we learned how to FIGHT for what we believe, FIGHT for others and FIGHT for what is right. We learned a big piece of fighting is listening. In fact, we can't FIGHT if we have not taken the time to listen to other's ideas, concerns and stories. So, this month we will focus on listening skills. The March word is LISTEN. Our lessons will include scriptures that use the word LISTEN and others that incorporate the art of listening. We are going to pay special attention to the Psalms and incorporate Psalms in our take home projects. Listening activities will include practicing our listening skills in triad groups, learning tips on paying attention and sharing our own stories. Families are encouraged to look for ways to strengthen your listening skills by finding time to listen to your child's questions about God and where they see God at work in the world. We want to learn to listen with our heart, our minds and our souls.



God Calls Us to Listen

Listen is an important discipleship skill and a concept talked about in the Bible over and over again.

Use a Concordance to find "listen" verses in the Bible. Ask the "So What?" question. So what are the people doing? What is God/Jesus/Holy Spirit up to? What do you think God want us to learn from this lesson? So what should I do based on the story?

Here are a few "listen" verses to get you started:

- Jeremiah 2:12
- Matthew 7:24
- Psalm 5:31
- James 1:19

Coming Up

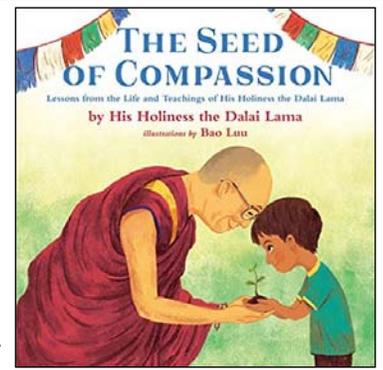
No FaithTrek on March 8 since Lincoln Public Schools are on break. We will gather again on March 15.

Wednesdays during Lent we gather at Noon (followed by lunch) and 6:30 pm (with dinner at 5:30 pm) for conversation about where God is calling us as a congregation. Easter worship will be at 6:00, 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 am.

New Book—Coming Out March 24

The Seed of Compassion: Lessons from the Life and Teachings

For the first time ever, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, addresses children directly, sharing lessons of peace and compassion, told through stories of his own childhood. In everyday moments from his childhood, young readers begin to see that important lessons are all around us and that they, too, can grow to truly understand them. The Dalai Lama shares the universalist teachings of treating one another with compassion which Bao Luu illustrates beautifully in vibrant color. In an increasingly confusing world, *The Seed of Compassion* offers guidance and encouragement on how we all might bring more kindness to it. God calls us to be compassionate disciples. Available in Kindle, hardcover and audio format.



Look Both Ways

In his Ash Wednesday homily, Pastor Dan shared with us an overview of the book, *Look Both Ways*, by Jason Reynolds. Pastor Dan challenged us to take the time to listen and be observant, looking back and forward. In the book, Reynolds conjures ten tales (one per block) about what happens after the dismissal bell rings and brilliantly weaves them into one wickedly funny, piercingly poignant look at the detours we face on the walk home and in life. The book is available through the Lincoln Public Library and from your favorite book distributor. It is available for Kindle, in hardcover and paperback and as an audio CD.

A Daily Prayer Routine

When Pastor Dan met with the FaithTrek kids to talk about Lent he said some people give up something for Lent, such as chocolate or coffee. He shared he always gives up Brussel sprouts. [I'm not sure the kids caught his humor.] He also said some people add something to their daily routine, such as prayer. Encourage your kids to pray for First Lutheran and listen for God's advice on what we should do to share love and kindness. As a family, discuss the idea of God calling us and asking us to do something important as a congregation. Send your ideas to Pastor Dan. You can draw pictures, make a video or send a family prayer.

Prayer Paper Chain

To help you call focus on Lenten prayers consider making a prayer chain. Lent has 40 days (we don't count Sundays) but it might be easier to make a chain with 46 loops. You could start by writing prayer ideas on the loops, stringing them together and each day removing one loop and using that as your prayer focus for the day. Or do the reverse. Each day, after discussing what you hear God calling you to do as a family of disciples, you can add a loop to the chain. All you will need are paper strips, markers and a stapler!



Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Storytelling During Lent

Lent is a great time to gather with others for a storytelling session. Make a list of people who you think have interesting stories to share about their faith journey. Think of people who you can talk to face-to-face or by Skype or Facetime. Narrow the list down to six – one each week during the season of Lent. Arrange a time for conversation and prepare a couple of interview questions to get the conversation started. Pick the best time of day and day of the week to allow everyone to do their best listening. Invite your storyteller to share photos or other items that are important parts of their story, such as a confirmation Bible. Consider videotaping the conversation or taking time for a follow-up project, such as drawing pictures about what you heard. Be sure you thank the person!

Rub Your Ears to Listen

Last year Miss Erin (Erin Pfister) told the kids to get their ears warmed up so they could listen. What a great idea! Just take your finger and gently rub your ear. Rubbing your ears sends happy feelings into your body by triggering the release of brain endorphins. The simple act of touch alone is very healing. It boosts the immune cells in your body, reduces feelings of stress or anxiety and helps you relax. The simple act of rubbing your ear is a great hands-to-yourself action and it gets everyone's attention. Give it a try. It will help kids listen to your instructions, to each other and to listen during prayer.



Bury the Alleluia

“Hallelujah” comes from Hebrew via Greek translations and closer to the original Hebrew. “Alleluia” is from Hebrew via the Latin. You can decide which word you want to use for this activity. Both words mean a shout of rejoicing. Since Lent is a season of personal reflection and repentance we do not use the word “Alleluia” in worship or sing songs of Hallelujah. We save our rejoicing for Easter morning. Bury the “Alleluia” – literally – bury it. Write the word on paper, make pictures of people rejoicing, use clay to make letters for spelling “Alleluia” and then bury them all in a box. Leave the closed box in an obvious place during Lent. On Easter morning open your box and retrieve the “Alleluia” and celebrate with a happy dance and Easter eggs.



Snap, Crackle & Pop

It may get crazy so get ready for an interesting meal focused on listening. Plan a meal that includes sounds such as crunchy celery, ice cubes clanking against the side of the glass, the soft sound of cutting a piece of bread, the swish of a soda opening and the snap of a pea pod. If you dare – try imitating the sounds. The goal is to help us learn to listen for unexpected sounds. Move from the dinner table to a walk around the block listening for sounds you may have missed in past walks around the block.

Use Music as a Listening Tool

We use music to wake us up, help us relax, get us dancing and tell our stories. Explore the impact of music with your child by using music as a Lenten devotion. Use a variety of composers, artists, styles and origin. Some suggestions include, Israel Amakawiwo'ole's "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", Yo-Yo Ma's "Dona nobis pacem", "This is Me" sung by Keala Settle, "You're a Grand Old Flag" by the US Air Force Band, "Jesus Loves the Little Children" from Veggie Tales or "A Sky Full of Stars" by The Piano Guys.

Use these three questions as conversation starters:

How did the music make you feel? Happy? Sad? Calm? Excited?

What is the song about? Why do you think the creator or singer decided to write or sing this song?

Who do you think would really like this music? Why?

You can add to your devotion time by drawing pictures that reflect your reaction to the music.

Create Your Own Storm—The Rain Game

By rubbing your palms, clapping your hands and stamping your feet you can create a rain storm. It will sound like a rainstorm starting soft, getting louder and louder until it is pouring, with lightning and thunder, and then the calm after the storm when it is quiet again. You will be amazed. It works really well with a large group so be ready to teach it to friends at work, a school group or the family gathered for a family meal.

1. First, you silently rub your fingers together, and the students do the same.
2. Then, you rub your two hands together, making a very soft sound, and the students follow.
3. Next, you very softly clap your hands together while the students follow, it should still be quiet.
4. Then, snap your fingers.
5. Now, go back to clapping and clap a little louder than you were snapping.
6. Then, a little louder.
7. Then, clap loudly.
8. Then, stomp your feet and clap, making a lot of noise.
9. Now, do it in reverse until it is silent again.

