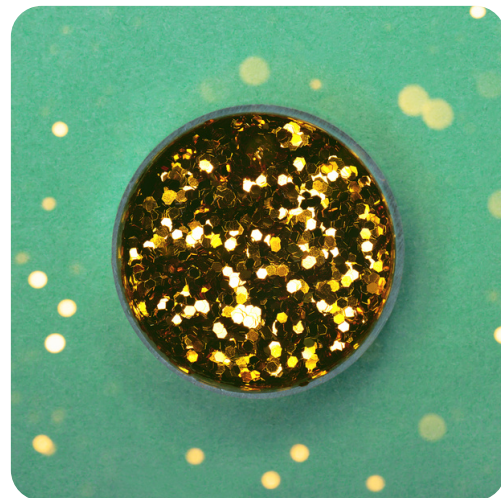




A LENTEN JOURNEY

Prayer practices, rituals and activities for
faith formation, wherever you may be



For additional resources
and playlists to engage in
these prayer practices, visit
the Michigan UMC
Conference website:
michiganumc.org/resources/childrens-ministry-tool-box/faith-family-playlists/2021-lent-at-home-playlists/

DIY ASHES RITUAL

Set the tone by playing soft and meaningful music. Invite participants to write down things that make them feel sad, broken, or hopeless on strips of paper. Spend the necessary amount of time to do this. Place the strips of paper in the large fireproof container outside in a well-ventilated area.

Pray: God, we give to you all that makes us feel broken, afraid, sad, and hopeless. You are God, we are not, and we remember that today.

Set the paper on fire, and watch the paper burn into ash. As the ashes cool, mix in a few drops of olive oil and mix with a fork.

Pray: God, we thank you for these ashes. May they remind us that from dust we came, and to dust we will return.

Impose ashes upon foreheads or hands.

Say together: *In Jesus' name, we are forgiven. Amen.*

YOU WILL NEED:

- Strips of paper
- Pen
- Large fireproof container
- Lighter or match
- Olive oil



WEEK ONE

5 Finger Prayer

Using the handout as a guide, pray for different groups of people as you touch each finger.

- Thumb: pray for those closest to you, your family and friends.
- Index finger: pray for people who give direction like teachers, coaches, health care workers, therapists, first responders, etc.
- Middle finger: pray for leaders in governments, businesses, the church, etc.
- Ring finger: pray for those who are sick, vulnerable, and most in need
- Pinky finger: pray for yourself and your own needs

Finger Labyrinth

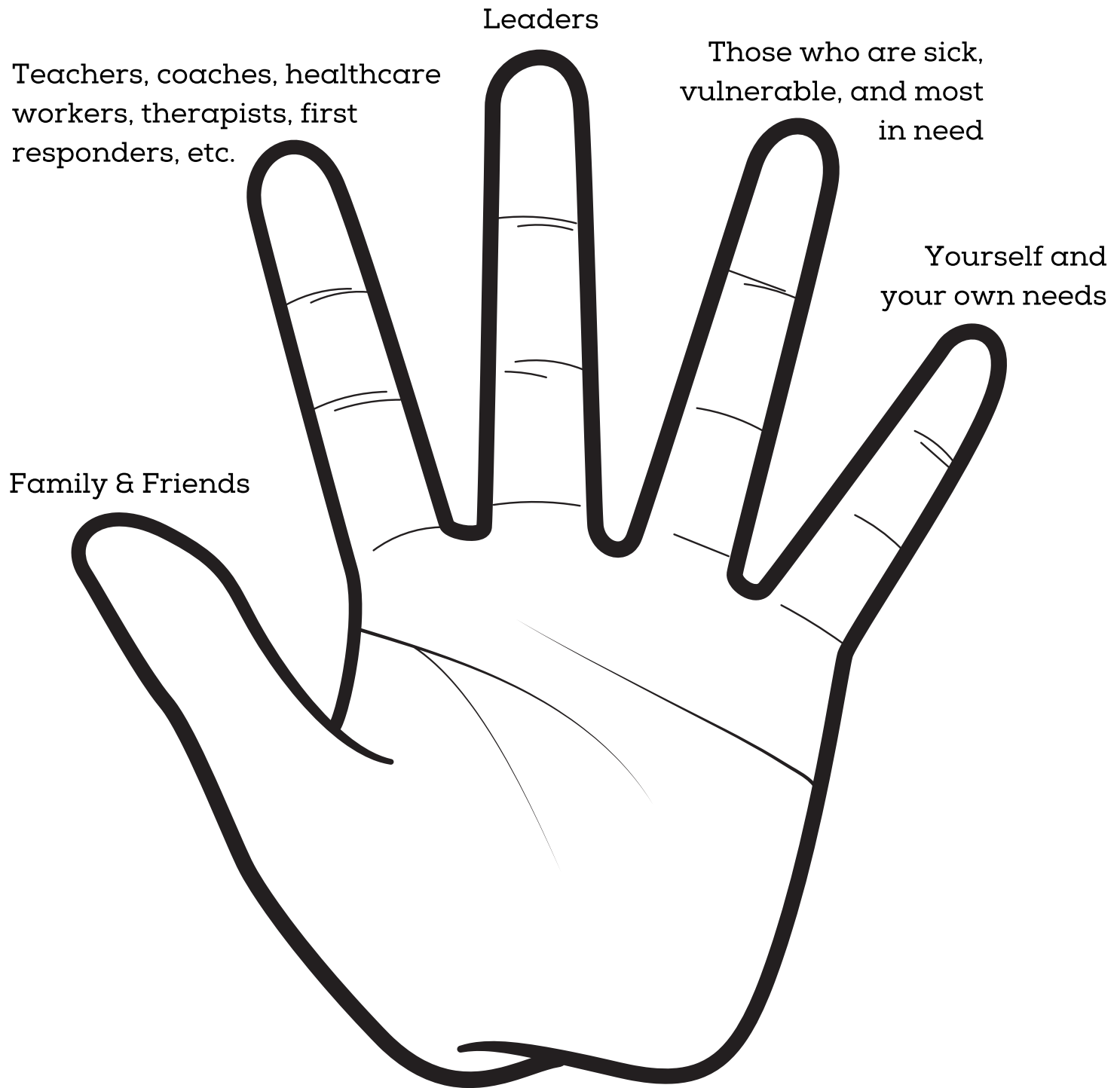
Using the handout as a guide, print the finger labyrinth. If you want to make it more tactile, print it on heavy paper or cardstock. Glue yarn or string or use puffy paint and allow it to dry. Use your finger to trace the path slowly and pray quietly or out loud as you go. You can pray for others or yourself. You can pray with words or without words.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 5 Finger Prayer Handout
- Finger Labyrinth Handout
- Optional: crayons, cardstock, glue, yarn, puffy paint



5 Finger Prayer



Hold out your hand, and follow the prompts to pray using each finger.

Finger Labyrinth



image from buildfaith.org

Use your finger to trace the path slowly. Pray quietly or out loud as you go. You can pray for others or yourself. You can pray with words or without words.

WEEK TWO

Coloring Prayer

Warm up by drawing some doodles, squiggles, lines, circles, dots, etc. on a piece of blank paper.

When ready follow these directions:

- Take a deep breath and slowly exhale. Repeat a few times. You may want to light a candle (or turn on a battery candle) as a visual reminder to be quiet and in prayer.
- Write God or a favorite name for God (i.e. Gracious God, Loving God, Creator, etc) somewhere on the paper and doodle around the name.
- Take turns sharing a prayer request or praise. Set a timer for about 3 minutes (you can adjust the amount of time depending on age or attention span).
- Write down the praise/prayer either with words or a picture and then doodle around it while praying or praising God for the request.
- Repeat step 3 as many times as desired.
- When you are ready to end, write Amen or your favorite prayer closing somewhere on your paper.
- To learn more about Praying in Color, visit prayingincolor.com

Praying with Photos

View the Photos Handout and choose one to look at while you listen to Psalm 23. Wonder together.

- I wonder what part of the Psalm you can relate with.
- How does your image relate to the scripture?
- How do you see God in your image?
- If you could choose a different image, what would it be?
- What do you learn about yourself in this scripture?
- What do you learn about God in this scripture?

YOU WILL NEED:

- *Coloring Prayer Handout*
- *Crayons, markers, colored pencils*
- *Timer*
- *Photos Handout*



Prayer: Dear God, thank you for Psalms that remind us that you are close to us no matter what is happening in life. Thank you for photographs that capture different emotions and scenes. Help us remember that you are close when we are feeling happy, sad, or afraid. Thank you for your goodness and faithful love. Amen.



WEEK THREE

Meditation Jar

To make a meditation jar: Pour an entire 6 oz container of glitter glue into a clear jar. Add any additional glitter, confetti, beads, or other waterproof craft supplies. Fill jar with hot water (not boiling, just hot). Twist the lid on tight (you might consider adding hot glue around the perimeter). While water is still hot, shake the jar vigorously until glue is dissolved.

To use the meditation jar: Shake it up! You can do this for as long as you need to shake out any extra energy, anxiety, frustration, or jitters. When you're ready, set the jar down and breathe deeply as you watch the glitter settle. Imagine that the glitter represents your thoughts, words, and actions, and remember that, just like Jesus calmed the storm, Jesus can calm our hearts.

Breath Prayer

Choose a word or brief phrase to repeat in one breath. If it is a phrase, say one part as you inhale and the rest as you exhale. You can say breath prayers out loud, in a whisper, or silently. Breath prayers are wonderful as a calming, meditative practice. See the prayer practice page for breath prayer cards that you can cut out and use.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Clear jar with lid
- Hot water
- Glitter Glue
- Optional: more glitter, confetti, beads, etc.
- Breath Prayer Handout
- Scissors



Breath Prayers

Psalm 23

Inhale: I will not be afraid
Exhale: for You are
with me

2 Corinthians 12:9

Inhale: Your grace
Exhale: is enough for me

Psalm 46:10

Inhale: Be still
Exhale: and know that
you are God

Psalm 46:1

Inhale: You are
our refuge
Exhale: and our strength

Psalm 56:3

Inhale: When I am afraid
Exhale: I will trust you

Inhale: Come
Exhale: Lord Jesus

Romans 8:38-39

Inhale: Nothing can
separate me
Exhale: from God's love

Philippians 4:7

Inhale: Peace of Christ
Exhale: guard my heart
and mind

WEEK FOUR

Nature Prayer Walk

There are many ways you can go on a nature prayer walk - choose one that works for you. As you begin your walk, say a prayer. Ask God to show you the unique and ordinary in creation.

Quiet Walk - ask everyone to walk in silence, saying their own quiet prayer as they walk.

Pray As You Go - Walk together, when you come to something that catches your eye, say a prayer. It could be as simple as "Thank you God for this thing" or "Thank you God for this thing because it reminds me of _____."

Finding Objects - Use the Prayer Walk Handout to pray for specific things upon finding objects in nature. For younger ones, collect leaves, sticks, and other nature objects by sticking them on a piece of tape around their wrist. Instant prayer bracelet!

Can't go outside? Check out one of these virtual hikes in nature: buzzfeed.com/laurenkeary/virtual-hikes-visit-national-parks-online-quarantine

Shouting Prayer!

We often associate prayer with being quiet, but we can use our big voices too! You can Shout for Joy! You can Shout a Praise! You can Shout a Sadness. You may want to use instruments like a tambourine or shakers or drum. Example: Thank you, God! I love you, God! You could shout a Psalm: "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth" Psalm 98:4, NIV

For more examples: <https://buildfaith.org/a-prayer-you-must-try-the-shouting-prayer>

YOU WILL NEED:

- *Nature Prayer Walk Handout*
- *Optional: loud instruments of any kind*



Nature Prayer Walk



Bird: Pray for someone important to you



Flower: Pray for those who care for others



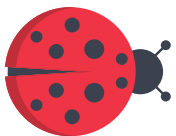
Evergreen Tree: Pray for leaders



Grass/Snow/Sand: Pray for teachers



Leaves: For your family



Bug: Pray for whatever - you choose!

What else can you find in nature?

WEEK FIVE

Pretzel Prayer

Make pretzels (or purchase the frozen pre-made ones that you just bake). Refer to the handout for recipe.

To learn more about the connection between Lent and pretzels, read *Pretzels by the Dozen* by Angela Elwell Hunt!

Building Block Prayer

Use building blocks (like Lego or wood blocks) to build a prayer. Each brick or block represents a prayer request or praise.

Body Prayer

Take 3 deep breaths.

God, you are above (*reach toward the sky*),

below (*touch your toes*),

inside (*hands to heart*),

and all around (*big arm circles*).

I worship you (*reach toward the sky*),

and give my life to you (*touch your toes*).

And I love you (*hands to heart*)

with all that I am (*big arm circles*).

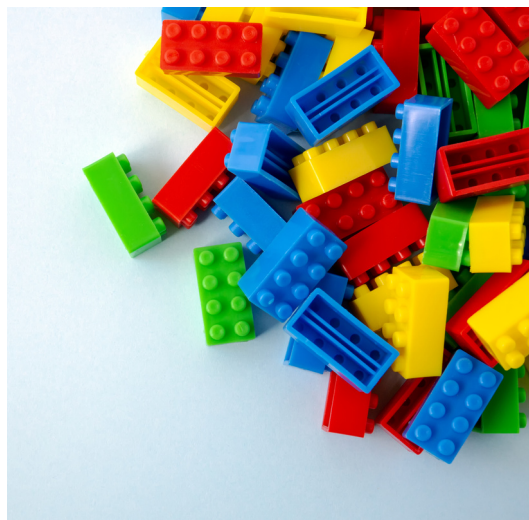
Take 3 deep breaths.

From

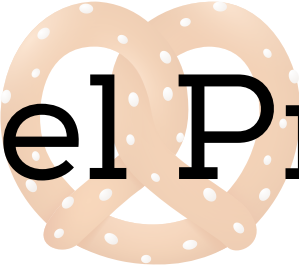
www.illustratedministry.com/2017/ways-to-pray-with-kids/

YOU WILL NEED:

- *Pretzel Prayer Handout*
- *Ingredients listed on handout*
- *Building Blocks*



Pretzel Prayer



"A young monk baked the first pretzel - making a Lenten bread of water, flour, and salt, forming the dough into the prayer position of the day and baking it as a soft bread. These little breads were shaped in the form of arms crossed in prayer and were called braccellae (Latin, 'little arms'). Among the Germans the word became 'bretzel.' These pretzels were a common Lenten food throughout the Middle Ages in Europe, and became an all year round snack, in its original shape only in the last (19th) century."

(from bustedhalo.com/life-culture/pretzels-and-lent)

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Make Pretzels!

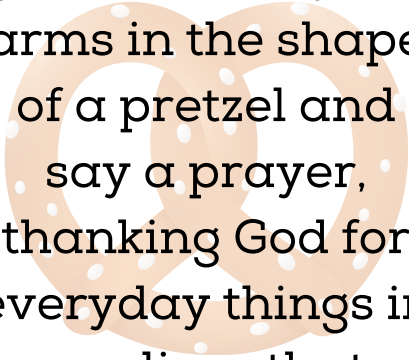
Make your own pretzels or purchase them pre-made

Ingredients:

1 package of yeast
1 ½ cups of warm water
1 Tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon salt
about 4 cups of flour
1 egg (optional)
Extra salt for the tops - large salt works best

Steps:

Mix the yeast, water, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Stir in the flour and knead the dough until it is smooth. Shape into the form of arms crossed in prayer and place on a baking sheet. Brush the dough with a beaten egg to give it a shiny finish (optional). Sprinkle the top with salt and bake in a 425 degree preheated oven for 15 minutes.
(recipe from catholicicing.com/pretzels-for-lent/)



As you enjoy your
pretzels, fold your
arms in the shape
of a pretzel and
say a prayer,
thanking God for
everyday things in
our lives that
remind us of God!