

SEEKING
Shapes
FOR LIVING

Faith at home ideas
for Lent 2019

Life

Through the five weeks of Lent, the Diocese of Gloucester is inviting everyone to explore how faith influences what we do every day.

This resource pack is for families and follows the Shapes for Living materials offered to our church schools.

‘Shapes for Living’ is an idea inspired by St Benedict, a Christian living in Italy in the Dark Ages, who wrote some simple and practical guidelines to help people develop the nurturing, securing and sustaining shapes for living that the dark times sorely needed. Benedict’s Rule of Life has been used by communities and individuals around the world ever since. Benedict’s Rule is associated with the life and work of Benedictine monks but was originally written for ordinary people seeking to be faithful disciples of Christ in the midst of the challenges and dilemmas of daily living.

Each week will have a different theme - relating, praying, working, playing and growing. There are fun activities, reflections and prayers for every week.

You will need:

- WEEK 1** Paper and crayons and a downloadable welcome sign*
- WEEK 2** A teaspoon for each child (wooden teaspoons, widely available, are good for decorating) or you may prefer to download a spoon picture to colour*
- WEEK 3** Paper and scissors, glue stick and paper chains templates*
- WEEK 4** Wind spinner templates*
- WEEK 5** Red, yellow and green bricks or paints, crayons, play dough etc for each child



* All downloads available on the diocesan website, gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living

Relating

Opening Prayer

It is very good to be here together with God;
 God who is with us in each other,
 God who listens to us in prayer,
 God whose playful creativity is good,
 God whose Spirit works through us,
 God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love.
 Amen

Introduction

Where would you go if you needed help? If you needed somewhere to stay or a hot dinner?

Back in medieval times everyone knew that if they ran into problems and had nowhere to stay or nothing to eat, they could go to the monks at the monastery who would always give them food and shelter for a day and night.

It was part of the shape of their life that they wouldn't turn anyone away and said, 'Let everyone be welcomed as Christ'. They would bow their heads to people as a sign that they recognised the presence of God in them.

How would you like to be welcomed, especially somewhere new?

How do you welcome people to your home, school, Beavers, Rainbows, Brownies or Cubs group?

Are there ways you can think of helping people who need somewhere to stay or some food, to feel welcome?

Activity

Download from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living, and print the welcome sign and decorate it or create your own welcome sign.

You might like to use these words:

You are as welcome as Christ

Where would you like to put it?



Prayer for the week

God who is with us in each other
 Thank you for the joy of our relationships
 For our families and friends
 For new opportunities to welcome people
 Help us to remember, all are welcome as Christ,
 Which means we are welcome too. Amen

Blessing

Go into this day/night as the welcome people of God,
 valued by each other and by many people.
 In your growing and playing,
 your working and praying,
 may the God of Love hold you,
 Jesus walk beside you,
 and the Holy Spirit inspire you.
 Amen

Praying

Opening Prayer

It is very good to be here together with God;
 God who is with us in each other,
 God who listens to us in prayer,
 God whose playful creativity is good,
 God whose Spirit works through us,
 God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love.
 Amen

Introduction

Praying is sharing our thoughts and feelings with God. Sometimes Christians might speak and use words, or sometimes they might be quietly listening.

Sometimes people use different gifts and skills to pray, like playing music, running fast, walking slowly or painting and drawing.

The monks we heard about last week did three things - pray, learn and work. As a sign that they were praying and didn't want to be disturbed they would put up their hoods. They would often walk and as they noticed things or people around them, they would pray for them. People still go on 'prayer walks' today.

How do you like to pray?

It might be different depending on how you feel.

If you want to give thanks, say sorry or ask for God's help you might pray in some of those different ways - playing music, running fast, walking slowly or painting and drawing.

Activity

A teaspoon reminds us that a little bit of something can make a big difference - medicine, spices, a hug or a smile.

If you have a wooden spoon you could decorate it with the letters **T,S,P** which stands for **Thank you, Sorry, Please**.

Every time you see a spoon, it can remind you that a little bit of prayer goes a long way and makes a big difference.

Downloadable template of a teaspoon available from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living



Prayer for the week

God be in our minds, and in our wondering
 God be in our eyes, and in our noticing
 God be in our hands, and in our creating
 God be in our mouths, and in our singing
 God be in our hearts, and in our feelings
 God be in our feet, and in our moving.
 Amen

Blessing

Go into this day/night as the welcome people of God,
 valued by each other and by many people.
 In your growing and playing,
 your working and praying,
 may the God of Love hold you
 Jesus walk beside you,
 and the Holy Spirit inspire you
 Amen

Working

Opening Prayer

It is very good to be here together with God;
 God who is with us in each other,
 God who listens to us in prayer,
 God whose playful creativity is good,
 God whose Spirit works through us,
 God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love.
 Amen

Introduction

What kind of work would you like to do when you are older?
 What do you like about these kinds of work?

Work was important to monks. They understood that how they worked was as meaningful as the work itself. If they were gardening, cleaning out the animals or cooking, they did it for God and for each other. They believed they should do everything well and cheerfully even if it was something they didn't like doing. It was also important for them that the monks who were not as strong or able to work didn't get tired or ill through their work.

Activity

Make some paper chains (template available on gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living) and think of some good words to write on them about the kind of worker you would like to be. We can't always change the things we have to do but we can change how we do them.

Here are some words you might use - thankful, kind, cooperative, positive, generous, careful. What other words can you think of?

Join the paper chains together as a reminder that we always work as a team - for God, each other, and ourselves.

Prayer for the week

God whose Spirit sparks in us,
 in all we do and all we say,
 God whose Spirit shines through us,
 in our work and in our play,
 help us do it all for God
 and in a kind and thankful way.
 Amen

Blessing

Go into this day/night as the welcome people of God,
 valued by each other and by many people.
 In your growing and playing,
 your working and praying,
 may the God of Love hold you,
 Jesus walk beside you,
 and the Holy Spirit inspire you.
 Amen

Playing

Opening Prayer

It is very good to be here together with God;
 God who is with us in each other,
 God who listens to us in prayer,
 God whose playful creativity is good,
 God whose Spirit works through us,
 God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love.
 Amen

Introduction

Have you ever noticed how many different ways people play?

Play is a different kind of resting where our minds and bodies can be free for a time. We might like ball games, cycling, computer games, imaginary games, space to run or just a quiet space to be.

In the Christian story of creation it mentions that play or rest or holy days (holidays) are very important:

"By the seventh day God had finished his work.
 On the seventh day he rested from all his work.
 God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day
 because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God
 had done."

Genesis 2:3 The Message

Activity

Kites, streamers and wind spinners all need the wind to lift them to be free and play. Download the template from gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living or cut a spiral from a circle of card or paper plate to make a simple wind spinner.

If your kite or spinner just sits on a table it is flat and lifeless.
 What can you do to make it live?



Prayer for the week

Read these verses from Isaiah several times. You might like to take turns to read a line.

God has said that...

Those who hope in the Lord

Will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;

They will run and not grow weary,

They will walk and not be faint.

Share your thoughts on what it would be like to never feel tired and to soar like an eagle. How does God help us do that?

Blessing

Go into this day/night as the welcome people of God,
 valued by each other and by many people.

In your growing and playing,
 your working and praying,
 may the God of Love hold you,
 Jesus walk beside you,
 and the Holy Spirit inspire you.
 Amen

Growing

Opening Prayer

It is very good to be here together with God;
 God who is with us in each other,
 God who listens to us in prayer,
 God whose playful creativity is good,
 God whose Spirit works through us,
 God whose Son Jesus shows us how to grow in love.
 Amen

Introduction

When a monk joined the monastery, he had a year to decide if he wanted to stay for the rest of his life. Once someone had made their decision to stay, they made three big promises; to obey God and the leader of the monastery, to stay in the monastery and never go anywhere else, and to grow a little bit more like Jesus every day.

The monks studied the Bible to learn about Jesus and they tried to copy him in how they lived their lives. For example when Jesus met people or someone asked a question he would stop, think about the person or situation and then respond. They learned from stories like;

- Blind Bartimaeus (watch it here <https://vimeo.com/56266790> or read it in Mark's Gospel, Chapter 10 verses 46 – 52) and
- Zacchaeus (watch here <https://vimeo.com/57088533> or read in Luke's Gospel Chapter 19 verses 1-10).

There are lots of other Bible stories where we can learn how to be more like Jesus. Do you have a family favourite?

Activity

Use the colours red, yellow and green to build, draw, paint or model some traffic lights. You can use them to remind you how Jesus stopped, thought, and responded to people and situations. When you see these colours in different places ask God to help you grow a little more like Jesus every day.



Prayer for the week

Imagine what the world would be like if everyone ignored traffic lights. Who might be hurt? What might go wrong?

Let us pray...

God whose son Jesus shows us how to grow in love,
 remind us when to stop.

Help us to pause to think and prepare
 to support each other.

Inspire us to move forward
 with the right words or actions.

Amen

Blessing

Go into this day/night as the welcome people of God,
 valued by each other and by many people.

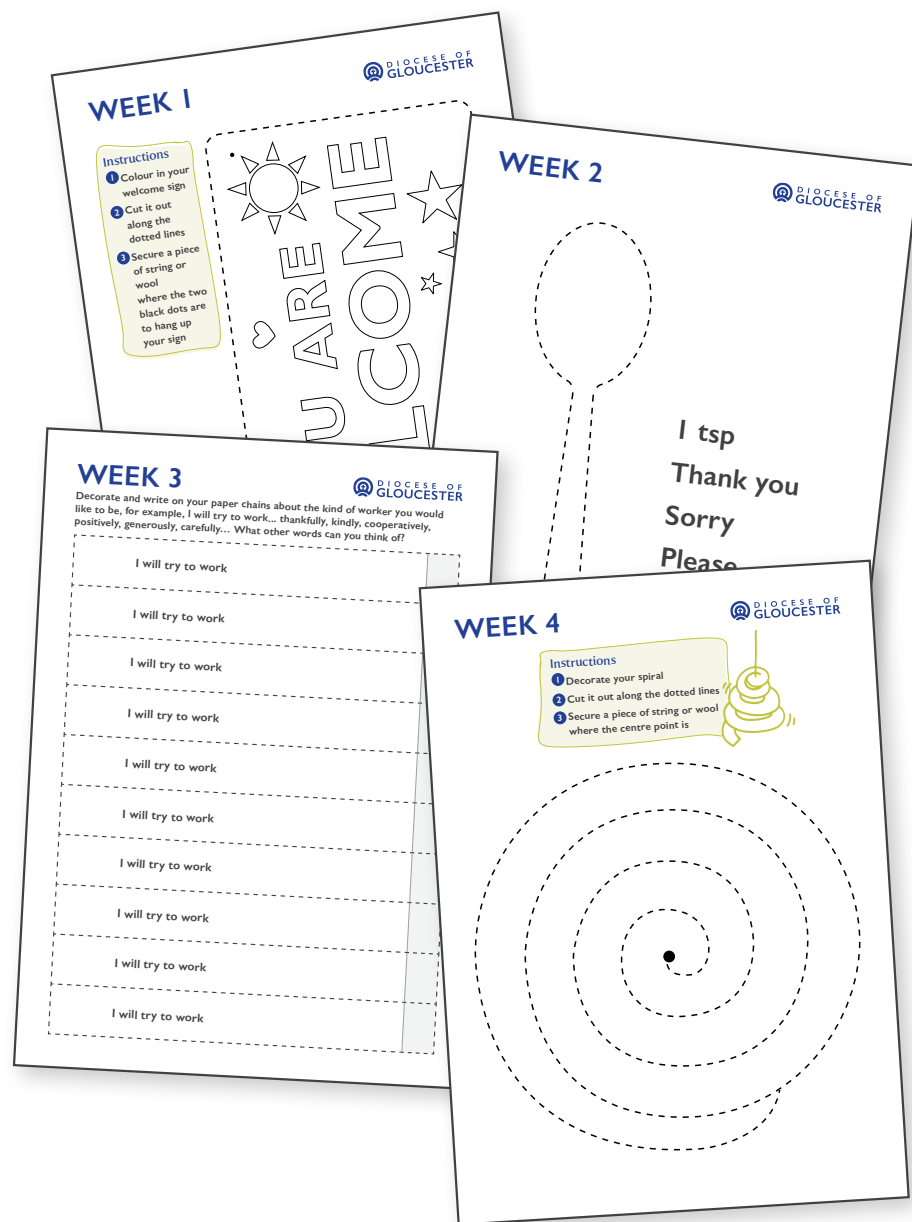
In your growing and playing,
 your working and praying,
 may the God of Love hold you,
 Jesus walk beside you,
 and the Holy Spirit inspire you.

Amen

Downloads

Templates for weeks 1-4 are available to download from

gloucester.anglican.org/2019/shapes-for-living



Reviewing our day is a spiritual practice many Christians use, based on the Examen tradition of St Ignatius.

The purpose of the Examen is not to appraise children on their behaviour. The purpose is to provide a safe, encouraging space, for each person in the household to look carefully at their day and recognise where they have experienced the life of God in others and in themselves.

It is also a time to receive God's mercy and love for times when we have not shown love, been kind, compassionate, or shared with others.

There is a series of simple questions to help develop this practice.

- 1 What was the best thing about today? (You could help younger children by reminding them of some of the events of the day or people they have seen.)
- 2 What was the worst thing about today?
- 3 How did you show love today? (At first, you could help very young children by asking them – "Who did you share with today? Who did you help today? After a time they will understand the question and reflect and respond without help.)
- 4 Was there a time your actions or behaviour were unhelpful, or a time that you said an unkind word or did not help?
- 5 Give thanks to God for this time of reflection, sharing and learning how to be more loving.

