

# "I will arise and go to Jesus!"

2004 At-Home Lent Resource

By Elsie Rempel

Lectionary Cycle C

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**2004 At-Home Lent Resource**

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# Introduction

Lent 2004 AT HOME (Lectionary Cycle C)

## **“I will arise and go to Jesus”**

When Sunday’s worship experience and instruction for journeying to Jesus are supported by experience and instruction in our homes throughout the week, this faith journey can impact and transform our daily lives. As a result, both our faith and the connections between our homes and congregations are nurtured. Our relationship with God becomes a constant melody rather than a weekly refrain.

During the season of Lent, God’s children reflect on the life and death of Christ in ways that help us see and confess the ways we drift away from our identity in Christ. Our reflections also help us embrace the good news of God and help us repent and live as participants in the Reign of God which is and is to come. Such participation will prepare us for Good Friday and Easter in ways that strengthen our anticipation of Christ’s second coming.

This resource for the home is adapted from the congregational resource for Lent, which is available in the Mennonite Church Resource: *Leader: Equipping the Missional Congregation* – Winter 2003/04.

Use this resource however it fits into your home’s routines and life stage realities, but try to build it into a regular routine or discipline. If your family has younger children, feel free to simplify, shorten and paraphrase the prayers and pondering thoughts. To use this booklet for daily worship times, repeat the litaney for each day of the week, but change the scripture passages to the passages listed in #1 of the activities section.

## **Pondering Questions:**

The pondering questions are designed to allow God to speak to household members in a personal way. They have been created to appeal to different ages and types. Enjoy an appropriate time of silence after each question you choose. Feel free to share or to ponder these thoughts in your hearts. Older users may want to keep a journal about them.

The recommended worship symbols can enhance a worship corner in your home. Preparing an outward 'holy space' for God in your home can help you prepare an inward 'holy space' for God in your lives. Feel free to adapt the suggestions listed below.

## **Worship items:**

### **1. Cloth:**

Cover the worship area with a purple cloth to reflect both the royalty of Christ, our Lord, and the attitude of repentance, which dominates the Lenten season.

### **2. A labyrinth design:**

You may want to enlarge the one at the back of this booklet.

### **3. Candles:**

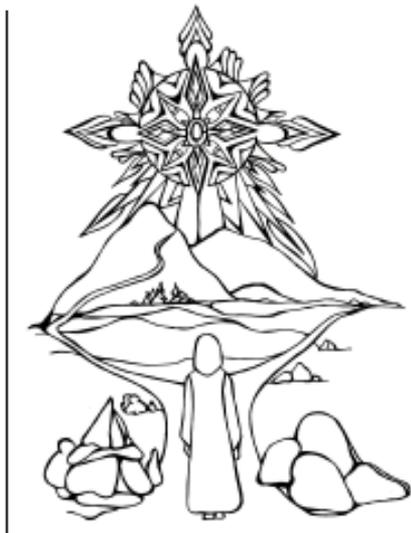
Set one large Christ candle in the centre and place six candles around it. Purple candles represent our repentant preparation for Easter but you can also use tea lights in little jars that are in purple cloth or tissue paper sleeves.

### **4. A Bible and this booklet:**

For families with younger children, you may want to read from the International Children's Bible, the New International Reader's Version, the Adventure Bible, or the NIV Beginner's Bible.

### **5. *Hymnal: a Worship Book***

Songs from this hymnal are suggested for each week's devotions.



Week One

# Journey toward Jesus

## Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** The Most High God is our safe place, God is the one we trust. We are called to journey toward God's son, Jesus.

**Candle lighter:** We want to trust and journey toward you, God. As we light this first candle of Lent, help it brighten our journey toward you, our place of safety and wholeness.

## Listening to God's Word:

Deuteronomy 26: 1-4, 11

## Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. How does it feel to start a journey that leads toward a warm hug?
2. What 'stones', or distractions and fears, are there on your path toward a warm embrace with our Saviour, Jesus?
3. What are "the good things that the Lord has given to you and your household?" (Deut. 26:11)

## Song of the week:

Sing the refrain of the folk hymn *HWB #139 Far, far away from my loving father*, *#546 Guide my feet*, or *HSS (packet 8) #990 Hamba nathi/Come walk with me*.

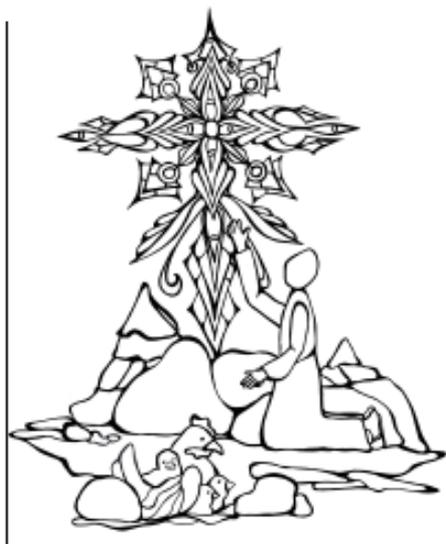
## Prayer

**Leader:** The Lord hears our cries when we get lost. No matter where we have wandered, God offers us salvation. Thank-you, God. You are truly the Most High God.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out this candle, we ask God's light to keep shining and helping us on our journey toward Jesus.

## Activities to choose from:

1. Read Psalm 91: 1-2, Luke 4: 1-13, Romans 10: 8b-13, Psalm 31: 19-20, Proverbs 3: 1-6, Acts 10: 34-38.
2. Consider planning a family labyrinth. Is there a place in your yard or home where you could make a maze to walk on while you think and pray about your journey to Jesus? It could be as simple as a rope or garden hose laid out on the floor or yard. Check out the websites [www.labyrinthociety.org](http://www.labyrinthociety.org), [www.labyrinthcompany.com](http://www.labyrinthcompany.com), or [www.gracecathedral.org](http://www.gracecathedral.org) for design possibilities.
3. Trace a labyrinth design at the end of this book. Then write the words of this Celtic prayer on the path lines until you arrive at the centre: "I on your path, O God; you, O God, on my way." Younger children could just follow the line to the center where they would find a symbol for Jesus and then out again where they would find a symbol of themselves.
4. Talk about journeys that you have been on and remember the enjoyable and the difficult times on them.
5. Take a walk around your neighbourhood and look for reminders of God's love and fairness. Do you notice God calling you to share some of your blessings with someone in your neighbourhood?
6. Enjoy someone's journey pictures. Think about all the different people and places that God loves.
7. Read picture books about journeys and think about which parts of those journeys would make God smile.
8. Join Mennonite Central Committee's *Earth Care Trek for Christians* at [www.mcc.org/7days](http://www.mcc.org/7days).



Week two

## Gathered by Jesus

### Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** God is our light and safety. God longs to gather and lead us on a safe, level path in front of our enemies.

**Candle lighter:** We want to trust and journey toward you, God. As we light this second candle of Lent, help us respond obediently to your gathering call.

### Listening to God's Word:

Read Philippians 3:17 - 4:1.

### Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. What images come to mind when you think about being gathered into safety?
2. Why do we sometimes resist God's gathering call?
3. What dangers does God want to protect us from?
4. Whose are we?

## Song of the week:

Sing the refrain of the folk hymn *HWB #139 Far, far away from my loving father*, or *HWB #558 When the storms of life are raging*.

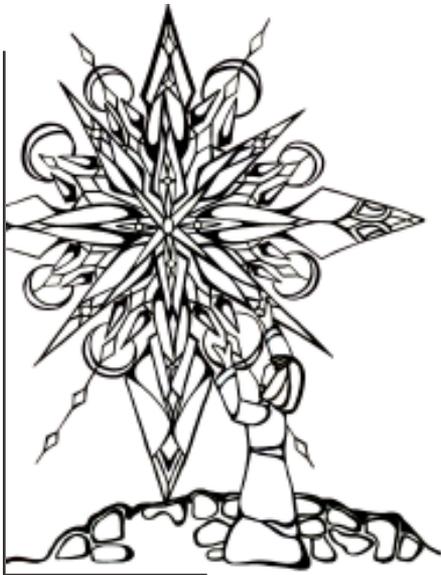
## Prayer

**Leader:** Merciful, protecting God, sometimes we forget whose we are and insist on working out our problems apart from you. Thank you that you are willing to protect us; that you guide us toward better solutions than we can arrive at on our own.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out these candles, we ask God's light to keep shining and inviting us to God for protection and guidance.

## Activities to choose from:

1. Read Philippians 4:2-7, Philippians 4: 8-9, Genesis 15: 1-12, Genesis 15: 17-18, Psalm 27, Luke 13: 31-35.
2. Talk about the dangers or enemies from which God wants to protect your family.
3. Make a list of ways that God helps us stay safe in dangerous times.
4. Add pictures, toys or other symbols of danger around your labyrinth design. Then trace the path slowly, telling God about the dangers in your life as you move toward the center and listening for how God wants to protect you from those dangers on your way out from the center.
5. God has entrusted us with protecting the earth. Choose and follow one way of protecting our endangered environment this week.
6. Enjoy a hiking or bicycle path. Look for ways this path protects its users.
7. Review and renew your household's emergency response or fire safety plans.
8. If you have a pet or care for animals on a farm, do something that protects them from danger.



Week three

## Longing for Jesus

### Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** God invites all who are thirsty and hungry: “Come near to me. Eat and drink that which truly satisfies.”

**Candle lighter:** God, please help us choose you and choose what is truly good. As we light this third candle of Lent, help us see clearly, so we can choose wisely.

### Listening to God’s Word:

Isaiah 55: 1-5.

### Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. What poor choices are tempting for you?
2. How can we help each other “watch out” for those tempting poor choices?
3. Wonder about God’s deepest longings and your own.

## Song of the week:

Sing the refrain and the first 2 verses of the folk hymn *HWB #139 Far, far away from my loving father*, or *#151 Marvelous grace of our loving Lord*.

## Prayer

**Leader:** God of abundant grace, we often choose what is not good for us. Forgive us and help us choose those things that satisfy our deepest longings, because our deepest longings are really for you.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out these candles, we ask for the flame of our longing for God and the truly good to keep shining in our hearts.

## Activities to choose from:

1. Read Isaiah 55: 6-9, Psalm 63: 1-5, Psalm 63: 6-8, 1. Corinthians 10: 1-5, 11-13, Luke 13: 6-9, Isaiah 5: 1-6.
2. Cut out all the poor choices from a food or toy flyer and destroy them in a safe way. Then look for choices that would make God smile.
3. Think about a time when you were really missing and longing for someone you loved. What helped you deal with your longing?
4. Write a letter or call someone who is missing you.
5. Befriend someone who is longing for friendship and remember the way God longs for us and our friendship.
6. Place pictures or other symbols of poor choices around the labyrinth you made or around one from the end of this book. Tell God about these temptations as you retrace your way to the center and then pray for God's strength to choose wisely on your way out from the center.
7. Keep a chart of good choices you see people in your household making this week.
8. Choose a good game to play outside instead of watching a TV show that tempts you.



Week four

## Coming Home to Jesus

### Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** When we realize our poor choices and are sorry for them, Jesus welcomes us warmly and helps us be peacemakers.

**Candle lighter:** We know you are our helper, our teacher, our counselor, and leader, God. As we light this fourth candle of Lent, help us trust and obey on our journey to Jesus.

### Listening to God's Word:

Luke15: 1-3, 11b-32.

### Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. Why do people turn away from God and choose their own way?
2. How did the Father in this story feel when he was hugging his son who had come home again?
3. How will we “elder sons/daughters” respond to Jesus’ gracious welcome?

## Song of the week:

Sing the folk hymn *HWB #139 Far, far away from my loving father*, or *HWB #145 There's a wideness in God's mercy*.

## Prayer

**Leader:** Gracious, forgiving God, sometimes we try to hide our sinfulness. Help us hide nothing from you. Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us. Your ways are better than ours because they lead to forgiveness, and the making of peace in our world.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out these candles, we ask God's light to keep shining in us, helping us to see, to talk and to walk God's way.

## Activities to choose from:

1. Read Psalm 32: 1-7, Psalm 32: 8-11, Joshua 5: 9-12, 2 Cor. 5: 16-21, Luke 15: 1-7, Luke 15: 1-3 and 8-10.
2. Remember times when you made bad choices, then were sorry, and returned to family- and God-pleasing choices. Share these, if you can.
3. Write a skit or a story about a person who runs away and then comes back to a forgiving home.
4. Create or adapt a map to show the dangers of wandering away from God's way and the joys of finding the way back.
5. Hide ten real or chocolate coins. Then invite your friends to come and help you find them. Celebrate when they have all been found and tell them the story Jesus told.
6. Think of wilderness surrounding your labyrinth. As you walk or trace it this week, think of choices that lead you away from God as you find your way to the center. Then pray about God guiding your choices as you find your way out.



Week five

## Finding Ourselves in Jesus

### Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** Through suffering love, Jesus shows us the promise of new life. We come to worship, to have our eyes opened and to quench our thirst at God's life-giving springs.

**Candle lighter:** We praise and thank our Lord for showing us the way to new life. As we light this fifth candle, help us see the new life that comes through suffering love.

### Listening to God's Word:

Psalm 126

### Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. Wonder how God replaces weeping and tears with joy.
2. What good things was God preparing Jesus for as he suffered?
3. What new life and joy is on the other side of our sadness and suffering?

## Song of the week:

Sing the hymn *HWB #20 Come and see* or *#87 Great is the Lord*.

## Prayer

**Leader:** God of new life, our faith is not always fresh and strong. We are often afraid of suffering and forget that you are watching over us. We long to know the power of your new life in us. Help us to trust and embrace the new life you offer.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out these candles, we ask for the possibilities of God's promises of new life to keep shining within us.

## Activities to choose from:

1. Read John 12: 1-8, Isaiah 43:16-21, Philippians 3: 4b-11, Philippians 3: 12-14, 2 Cor. 5: 14-19, Revelation 21: 1-5.
2. Make a list of ways that people have to look and act to be popular. Compare that to the way God accepts everyone.
3. Think about the things that really matter the most as you find the way into the center of your labyrinth this week. On the way out ask God's help in seeing which things only seem to matter.
4. Create a skit about the surprising new ways God helps us through problems.
5. Create an obstacle course with the prize of a butterfly or other new life symbol at the end. Invite your friends to go through it with you.
6. Look for signs of new life in each other and tell your family how you see God's new life growing in them.



Week six

## Worshiping Jesus

### Call to Worship:

(Leader can speak this in phrases that the others echo.)

**Leader:** As Jesus rides to his destiny in suffering love, the One who would not silence the “Hosannas” invites us to proclaim, “God’s steadfast love endures forever.”

**Candle lighter:** Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! As we light this sixth candle, we ask you to help us follow the One who shines forever.

### Listening to God’s Word:

Luke 19: 28-44.

### Pondering thoughts to choose from:

1. What would it feel like to be part of that first Palm Sunday parade?
2. What was Jesus thinking, feeling and praying this week?
3. How can a Labyrinth help you think about Jesus’ difficult journey during the passion week?

## Songs of the week:

Sing the hymn *HWB #115 Jesus, thou mighty Lord* or pick a newer worship song based on Psalm 118:1. Pick *HWB* songs from #237 - #283 to suit each day's readings.

## Prayer

**Prayer:** God of lasting love, you call us to follow Jesus who came and still comes in your name. Forgive us when we turn away from you in times of suffering. Thank you for the offer of salvation.

**Candle snuffer:** As we blow out these candles, we ask for God's peace and lasting love. We will arise and go with Jesus.

## Activities to choose from:

1. This week read these passages from God's word: Monday: Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29, Tuesday: Luke 22: 1-34, Wednesday: Luke 22: 47-62, Thursday: Luke 22: 66-23:25, Friday: Luke 23: 26-49, Saturday: Luke 23: 50-56 and Philippians 2: 5-11, Sunday: Luke 24: 1-12.
2. Bake pretzels in the traditional shape of arms crossed in prayer and remember Jesus' prayers. Share with a neighbour or friend.
3. Act out a Palm Sunday parade in your house or in your neighbourhood.
4. As you use your Labyrinth this week, think of Jesus' journey to the cross as you find your way in, and think of God's power raising Jesus forever as you find your way out.
5. Dry your Palm Branches in a safe place or make some out of construction paper, to help you remember the "Hosannas" during the sad parts of this week.
6. On Maundy Thursday or on Good Friday, use your lent candles and the Maundy Thursday litany on the following page to help you understand why Jesus had to die and why God raised Jesus back to life.
7. When you decorate your Easter eggs, think about the new life that God gave Jesus and offers us.

# Maundy Thursday

**April 8, 2004**

1. Write personal confessions on slips of paper before beginning the litany. (*Keep them for the middle of the litany*).
2. Make a copy of the litany page for each reading participant.
3. Prepare for this service with some quiet worship music and silence.
4. Light all the Lent candles and the Christ candle.
5. Add a metal bowl in which you can burn up your confession slips.
6. Have family or household members take turns snuffing out the candles.
7. Have family or household members take turns reading the “One” parts (depending on their ages).

## Litany

**One:** When we hate or are unkind to each other, the world becomes a darker place. (*Snuff out candle #1*)

**All: *Jesus taught us to love each other.***

**One:** When we are grabby and want everything for ourselves, the world becomes a darker place.

(*Snuff out candle #2*)

**All: *Jesus taught us to share with others.***

**One:** When we are afraid, the world seems dark and frightening.

(*Snuff out candle #3*)

**All: *Jesus’ love is stronger than our fears. He is the light of the world.***

**One:** When we are jealous of others, and are angry because they have things we want for ourselves, the world becomes a darker place.

*(Snuff out candle #4)*

**All: Jesus taught us to be content with what we have and to look out for the good of others.**

**One:** When we are deceitful and don't tell the truth, the world becomes a darker place.

*(Snuff out candle #5)*

**All: Jesus said, "Let your yes be yes and your no be no." He expects us to be honest.**

**One:** Because of people's hatred, greed, selfishness, jealousy and dishonesty, Jesus died on the cross.

*(Snuff out candle #6)*

**All: To Jesus' friends the world seemed like a very dark place.**

**One:** Before he died, Jesus said, "Forgive them Father, for they don't know what they are doing."

*Sing "Were you there" while you burn up your confessions, lighting them with the still-burning Christ candle.*

**One:** When Jesus died the world seemed like such a dark place.

Today we know that Jesus is no longer dead.

We know that God's love is stronger than all our sins, and that on that first Easter, God raised Jesus from the dead.

Because Jesus loved people enough to suffer and die and still forgive, we can be forgiven too.

Jesus' death has the power to free us from the bad things we have done.

It can give us the strength to forgive others when they hurt us.

Because Jesus is no longer dead, but lives and wants to live in our hearts, God's light and love can shine through us and brighten a dark world.

When we are kind and loving to each other, the world becomes a brighter place.

*(Relight candle #1)*

**All: Jesus' love shines through our loving deeds and words.**

**One:** When we share and find joy in sharing with those who have less, the world becomes a brighter place.

*(Relight candle #2)*

**One:** When we trust in God's care for us and are freed from fear, the world becomes a brighter place.

*(Relight candle #3)*

**All: Jesus wants us to trust him with our fears and worries so we can live freely.**

**One:** When we are content with what we have, and are happy for others when they get something special, the world becomes a brighter place.

*(Relight candle #4)*

**All: Jesus wants us to trust him to supply us with what we need.**

**One:** When we are honest with ourselves and others, the world becomes a safer and brighter place.

*(Relight candle #5)*

**All: Jesus said, "I am the truth." He will help us be truthful, too.**

**One:** When we are loving, unselfish, trusting, content and honest, Jesus lives in our lives and the world becomes a brighter place.

*(Relight candle #6)*

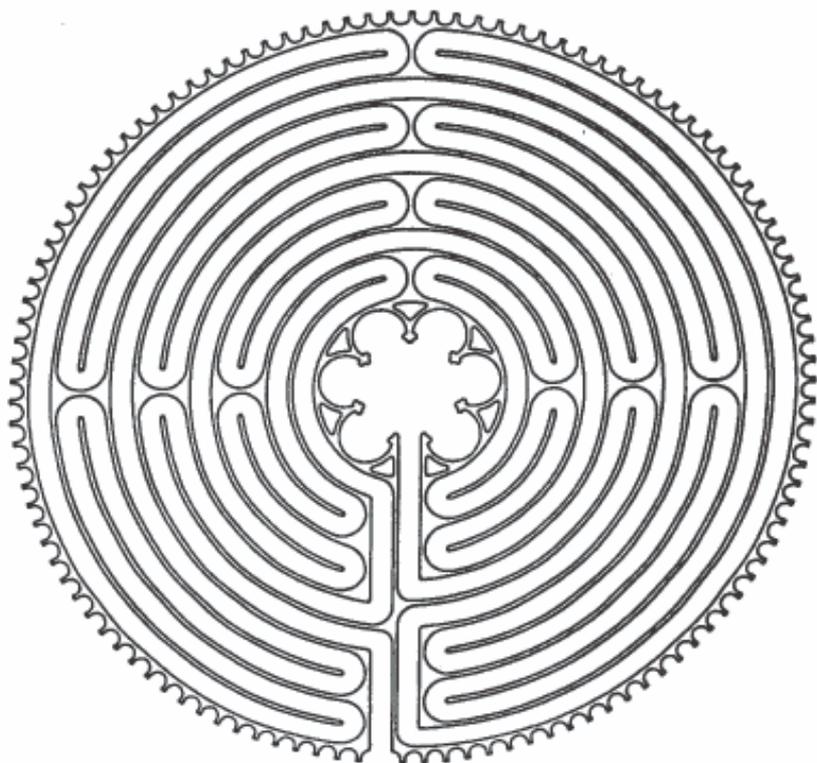
**All: Because Jesus is no longer dead, but lives in our hearts, God's light and love can shine through us and brighten a dark world.**

**We thank God for the wonderful gifts of forgiveness and love, gifts we can enjoy and share because Jesus died for us all. Amen.**

*(You may want to add your own spontaneous prayers here.)*

*Sing your favourite Easter Carol before you disperse.*

Labyrinth to help you reflect  
on your Journey to Jesus



*You may wish to enlarge the labyrinths on a photocopier.  
Make enough copies so that going through the labyrinth  
can be a daily activity.*

Labyrinth to help you reflect  
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