



## Lenten Devotional: Week 3 15 – 21 March

This week's devotional activities use water as our prompt for reflection. You will need a mug (*if you have a "favorite" mug, use that one*) and water.

### Scripture:

*Jesus said to [the Samaritan woman], "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14)*

During Sunday's worship, we focused on the encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at the well. It is a rich and complex conversation, where Jesus refers to the gift of God as living water. (*The full text of the encounter is found in John 4:5-42*).

Water is essential for life. Water makes up about two-thirds of a person's body, and it is crucial for every system in the body to function appropriately. When one is on a journey, having access to fresh water is even more important than food. While resting at Jacob's well on his own journey, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that when one drinks of the living water of God's spirit, we will never thirst again.

- How would I describe my spiritual journey at this point? (*flourishing? struggling? full? empty?*)
- In what ways am I thirsting for God's presence and assurance in my life?

Take your mug in your hand. Examine it for a moment and consider why this is your favorite mug. Notice how it feels in your hands, the colors, any wear and tear, etc. Consider this as a metaphor for your current spiritual journey.

At times, our cups are full – running over, even. At times they are empty – maybe we feel parched and longing for more. Those cups may have chips in them, maybe they're stained, scuffed up, showing signs of wear and tear – maybe the luster of newness has been rubbed off... At times our cups might be full of the wrong things... At times, maybe we are being asked to empty our cups (what we want to put into them) in order to make room for what God wants to fill them with.

Now fill your mug with water (if you'd like, make it a cup of tea), and consider how this metaphor relates to your spiritual self: However your "cup" looks (chipped, scratched, vibrant, lopsided), it is a vessel meant for receiving and pouring out blessing from God. Your life can be a blessing cup – to be filled with blessing and to be poured out as blessing for others.

### Prayer:

*Loving Christ, fill me with the living water of your Spirit. With your grace, enable me to empty out of my life all that is unnecessary, so that there is room to be filled by your renewing love. May my life be a blessing to be poured out for others in your name. Amen.*

### **Going Deeper:**

- See the family activities on next page for **Holy Hand Washing** and **Lenten Pretzels!**
- For further reflection on this metaphor of our spiritual journey, refer to Joyce Rupp's *The Cup of Our Life*.
- Water is a precious resource, though in many regions around the world, access to clean water is dangerously limited. Learn more about how you can be part of the solution. One good starting point is the "Seven Weeks for Water" event sponsored by the Ecumenical Water Network: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/seven-weeks-for-water>, or other Christian ministries committed to justice for all God's people.

## Lenten Devotional – Week 3

*For Families with children*

This week's devotional activities use water as our prompt for reflection. Pour a glass of water to drink.

### Scripture:

*Jesus said to [the Samaritan woman], "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." (John 4:13-14)*

During Sunday's worship, we focused on the encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman at the well. It is a rich and complex conversation, where Jesus refers to the gift of God as living water. The symbolism of "living water" can be quite complex for children to understand. You may choose to summarize for your child the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

Discuss these points:

- We all need food and water for our bodies to survive and grow. *Discuss together the many ways we need and use water every day.* We all have known the feeling of being thirsty. When we are thirsty, how good does it feel to drink a glass of cold water! *Enjoy a sip now, if you wish.*
- Jesus says that God's love is "living water." Much like we need food and water to survive, we also need God's love and care in our life to bring true joy and happiness. With God's love we feel truly "alive" and fulfilled.

Not only do we need water to drink. We also need water to wash our bodies and to help keep us healthy. One of the ways we are caring for ourselves and for other people right now is by washing our hands frequently during the day. Good hand washing practice means washing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. Although 20 seconds might seem like a long time, when we use that time to pray or sing to God, it goes by quickly! And we feel closer to God!

- Let's get in the habit of "holy hand washing" (see "*Additional Lenten Activities for the Week*")

### Prayer:

*Jesus, your word and your love are as important to our lives as food and water. Thank you for giving us your love, which gives us life and true joy. Help us to share your refreshing love with others through our words and our actions. Amen.*

## Additional Lenten Activities for the Week

### **Holy Hand Washing!**

One of the important practices for minimizing the spread of the COVID-19 virus (and other germs) is frequent hand washing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. Let's use those 20-second intervals throughout the day as an additional Lenten practice to turn our hearts toward God. Suggestions to fill up 20 seconds include:

- Pray the Lord's Prayer (in any language)
- Sing a verse and/or chorus of one of our beloved worship songs! Here are 2 options to consider:

#### **"For Everyone Born, a Place at the Table"**

*For everyone born, a place at the table.  
For everyone born, clean water and bread.  
A shelter a space, a safe place for growing.  
For everyone born, a star overhead.  
... And God will delight when we are creators of justice  
and joy, compassion and peace.  
Yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice...  
justice and joy!*

#### **"Bendice Señor Nuestro Pan"**

*(in English or Spanish – or both!)*  
*Bendice Señor, nuestro pan  
Y da pan a los que tienen hambre,  
Y hambre de justicia a los que tienen pan.  
Bendice, Señor nuestro pan.*

*Lord, bless this bread you have given.  
Give bread to those who are hungry.  
Give a hunger for justice to those with bread.  
Lord, bless this bread you have given.*

## Lenten Pretzels

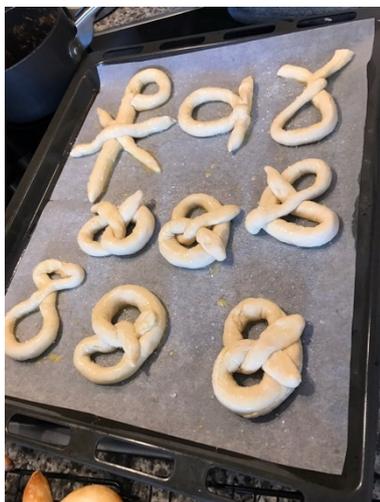
The pretzel has its origin as a food eaten during the season of Lent. In the early Church, simple breads, including pretzels, were among the foods eaten while fasting from meats and other foods was being observed. The tradition tells of a young Italian monk in the early 600's who was preparing bread for his brother monks. As a reminder to them of the importance of prayer, the young monk rolled the bread dough in strips, and then shaped each strip in the form of arms crossed in prayer. These breads shaped as arms crossed in prayer were called *bracellae* (Latin for "little arms"). From this word, the Germans derived the term *bretzel* (close to our English term *pretzel*). There are additional accounts of pretzels being used to hand out to beggars, as rewards for children to learn their prayers, and so on.

Soft pretzels are not difficult to make, and they can be a fun family activity for Lent. (*Instructions are on the back.*)

A few helpful comments, based on the worship committee's experience:

- Although the recipe calls for a baking time of 20 minutes, we found 15 minutes to be more than enough!
- This recipe suggests separating the dough into 20 pieces – for some kids (and some families) that may be too much for one activity. This dough can be frozen and used at a later time. You might consider using half the dough and saving the rest for another afternoon.
- The pretzels are best eaten fresh (and warm!). They are great for sharing with others during Lent, as a reminder of this season of prayer.
- To add a bit more creativity, you can shape dough into other symbols of Lent and Easter, such as a cross, alpha/omega, a chi-rho, a fish, and so on.
- The characteristic brown color of pretzels is achieved by dipping the shaped dough in a boiling water bath with baking soda prior to baking. This step has been eliminated to keep this activity child-friendly.

*(On L, pretzels ready to bake; On R, pretzels ready to enjoy!)*



## Pretzels from Germany

### Ingredients

1 ½ c lukewarm water  
1 package (2 ¼ tsp) yeast  
4 cups + all purpose flour, divided  
1 Tbs sugar  
2 tsp salt

1 egg  
1 Tbs water  
⅓ c coarse salt

### Equipment

Large mixing bowl  
Measuring cups, dry & liquid  
Measuring spoons  
Small mixing bowl  
Wooden board to knead the dough  
2 cookie sheets  
Parchment paper or cooking spray  
Pastry brush  
Small bowl  
Wire racks

### How to Make:

1. In the large mixing bowl, place the lukewarm water and pour in the yeast. Let mixture sit for about 5 minutes until bubbly.
2. In the small mixing bowl combine 3 cups of flour, sugar, and salt. Add to the yeast mixture. Stir until the ingredients are blended and form a ball.
3. Place the dough on a lightly floured board or tabletop.
4. Dust your hands with flour and begin kneading the dough. Slowly knead in the fourth cup of flour. After about 5 minutes the dough should be smooth and not sticky. It is ready when it is no longer sticky!
5. Pull the dough into 20 pieces. Roll each into a long snake about ½-inch thick and 15" long. Shape pretzel into a loop, crossing the ends and fastening the ends to opposite side of the loop - the image of arms at prayer.
6. Preheat the oven to 425
7. Place pretzels on cookie sheets covered with parchment paper (or lightly sprayed with oil), allowing several inches of space between each pretzel.
8. In the small bowl gently beat the egg and combine with 1 Tbsp water. Paint the mixture on each pretzel and sprinkle with coarse salt.
9. Bake the pretzels for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and cook on wire racks.

Cooper, Terry, and Marilyn Ratner. *Many Friends Cooking: An International Cookbook for Boys and Girls*. US Committee for UNICEF, NY, NY, 1980.