

## A Window on Lent – Devotional Activity

### Lent 2

Week of 28 Feb 2021

*“Jesus called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.” (Mark 8:34-35)*



The words of Jesus in this week’s gospel message challenge us as disciples. They warn us that we must take up our own cross in order to follow him. It is not an easy calling, as we can expect opposition as we bear witness to God’s love in our own lives and ministry. Yet, the message of the cross reminds us that there is no hardship out of the reach of God’s love, not even death. We have this hope, that beyond any burden we may face, this journey with Christ leads us to new life.

During prayer time in worship we made a cross on our own windows using our Lenten rainbows. For this week’s **devotional activity**, you are invited to re-create your rainbow window cross while reflecting on your call to discipleship. Families are encouraged to participate in this activity together, modifying as needed. Multiple prompts are provided for reflection and discussion.

The following steps are one suggested use for this activity.

#### **Step 1: Greet the day!**

At your window, greet the day and the world outside it with a rainbow wave. First with one arm, and then the other, make a sweeping arc across the sky. Repeat as often as you’d like, giving your shoulders a good stretch. You may want to open the window briefly and take in some slow, deep breaths. Give thanks to God for the day ahead with the promise it holds.

#### **Step 2: Choose a devotional prompt**

Read through one of the three suggested prompts below. Move to your window for step 3.

#### **Step 3: Create a New Rainbow**

Use your rainbow pieces to create a new rainbow on your window. Take your time and enjoy the creative process. Consider new ways to use the pieces than you have before.

*(These images offer just a few ideas to get you started, though let your imagination guide you!)*



As you create your rainbow, reflect upon the devotional prompt you chose.  
How does making this new rainbow cross help you reflect?

### **Devotional Prompts**

#### **1 – Looking forward with hope**

The month of March begins, marking a full year since the pandemic began. As Sunday's service opened, we acknowledged our yearning to rejoin with others in worship and community. We were asked the questions: "What are some of the first things on your list of wishes when the pandemic ends? What are you missing most? What presses in as if it almost can't wait?"

Reflect on those questions again now, as you re-create your rainbow cross.

Look outside through the cross you have made, and ask yourself:

- *How does the cross change my list of wants and wishes?*
- *What seems less important, what more important?*
- *How does looking at the world outside, through the cross, modify my concerns, my hopes, my sense of what beckons me?*

With the light shining in toward you through the cross, give thanks for the gift of God's grace. Remember a moment recently when you have felt powerfully embraced by love. Consider how you can be a source of grace for someone else in the day ahead.

#### **2 – The shape of the cross**

In its simplest form, the cross is seen as two intersecting lines, one vertical and the other horizontal. Consider those lines as representing relationship – the vertical line being your relationship to God, the horizontal line being your relationship to others. Both are essential to faith. Jesus tells us that the first and greatest commandment is this:

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*  
(Matthew 22:37-39)

As you create your rainbow cross today, reflect on both aspects of relationship (to God and to others) that the vertical and horizontal lines of the cross represent.

- *In what ways am I seeking to love God more fully? Which spiritual practices are helping me draw close to God this Lent? (eg, worship, prayer, group study, fasting, self-reflection, acts of service)*
- *In what ways can I be in more loving relationship with others?*

In the days ahead of you, be on the lookout for the cross symbol present around you: in the panes of your window, the intersection of the roadway, the corners of a building, the branches of a tree... As you begin to notice the presence of "crosses" in unexpected places, offer a brief prayer of thanks to God for the glimpses of hope and promise that arise in unexpected ways.

#### **3 – Our call to discipleship**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his classic book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, discusses the connection between the cross of Christ and our call to Christian discipleship by making a distinction between "cheap grace" and "costly grace":

*“Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.*

*“Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a person will gladly go and sell all that they have. It is the pearl of great price, for which the merchant will sell all their goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a person will pluck out the eye which causes them to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves their nets and follows him. Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a person must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.” (pg. 44-45).*

From Bonhoeffer’s perspective, the call to discipleship is costly, requiring self-sacrifice and commitment, as it radically shapes one’s life. What is your response to this? How do Bonhoeffer’s words challenge, inspire, encourage, or trouble you?

- *How has the call to discipleship shaped my life up to now?*
- *How is the call to discipleship speaking to me today?*

Prayer:

God of all love,

The cross which you call me to carry is also the cross by which I am healed.

By the gift of your grace, I find life,

like discovering a surprising rainbow on a stormy day,

like losing, and finding in the loss, what matters.

May the promise of the cross fill my heart with your love,

that I may share the gift of Christ with others.

Amen.

\*\* As a reminder that we are connected to each other, we invite you to take a picture of your rainbow cross creation/s and send to the church office ([office@genevalutheran.ch](mailto:office@genevalutheran.ch)). Our gallery of creative rainbow crosses will be compiled and shared with the community at Easter.