

LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 1: JESUS PRAYED ALONE

SCRIPTURE: MARK 1:35

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.

REFLECTION

As we explore and deepen our practice of prayer during this season of Lent, we begin our journey by discovering that Jesus often prayed by himself. Each of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, include stories of Jesus taking time to be alone to pray with God.

From the time he was baptized through his resurrection, Jesus was surrounded by people of all walks of life, people wanting to be with him, and people wanting something from him. He didn't have a home, so wherever he went and wherever he stayed, he was with different people daily. Our passage in Mark reminds us that Jesus made it a priority to spend time alone with God in prayer, especially in the busiest times of his life. By connecting with God in this way, Jesus shows us one way to pray.

It can be difficult to find time alone. Whether it is cleaning the dishes, doing the laundry, attending after-school activities, or volunteering in your faith community, each activity, while important, can make it challenging to make quiet time with God. When we spend time alone with God in prayer, we create a unique space to connect with the Creator. This time allows us to reflect on the very real things of our lives, such as the joy of learning something new at school, sadness when someone doesn't want to be our friend, anger when you have a fight with a brother or sister, or fear about a big decision you might need to make. By making time to be alone with God, we learn to love God and others just as Jesus did.

DISCUSSION

As you color the coloring page, ponder these questions together:

- Do you enjoy spending time alone? What about it is nice? What about it is difficult?
- Have you prayed to God silently or out loud by yourself? If you have, what is it like? If you never have before, what do you think it would be like?
- What does being alone with God look like for you? What does it feel like?

ACTIVITY

Supplies needed: This week's activity pages, markers/crayons/pencils, possible household items (chair, blanket, light source)

This week we invite you to create a prayer space in your home. No matter the size of your home, we encourage you to take a look around and find a room, a corner, or a spot that you can designate as a solitary place. If you don't have a separate room, use a blanket, curtain, or screen (be creative) to create a specific area.

Use the activity pages and markers/crayons/pencils to decorate your two signs. The first sign says "Prayer Space." The second sign says "Available" and on the backside says "In Use." When you are finished, fold this sheet in half and have the "Available" side up when you are finished using the space, and place the "In Use" side up when someone is spending time in the space.

Beginning this week, discuss with your family when each of you might find time to use the prayer space. Grown-ups with young children, you can model how this is a special place you can go to talk with God by praying together with them in this space.

When you finish creating your prayer space, consider taking a photo and sharing your prayer space with us at icm@illustratedchildrensministry.com and on social media using the hashtag #anillustratedlent so we can share ideas from our amazing community during Lent.

PRAYER

This week, we invite you to pray this prayer out loud or silently in the prayer space you created.

Dear God,

Thank you for your son, Jesus.

Thank you for his life.

Thank you that he shows us how to be connected to you.

Help me to learn how to be alone with you

To talk with you

To laugh with you

To cry with you

To question with you

To grow with you.

Bless me with time, space, and ability
to meet with you one-on-one this week
and every week.

Love,

Your Child