

# Faithful Living Together

The week, we receive ten rules for living in a loving community, and a psalmist notes that God's law is for people's well-being. Conventional wisdom and power structures are challenged, and Jesus turns over tables and invites people to consider a different way of faithfully relating to God.



**Focus scripture**  
**Psalm 19**

**Additional scriptures**  
**Exodus 20:1–7**  
**1 Corinthians 1:18–25**  
**John 2:13–22**

## Focus scripture: Psalm 19

Psalm 19 states that God's law can help people to live lives well. The psalm speaks to how God is revealed and offers an understanding of human life in God's creation. The psalm divides into three sections. Verses 1 – 6 are a creation hymn of praise. Here the psalmist uses metaphors, phrases and imagery to describe creation. Singing with creation, the psalmist declares that all creation praises God's glory.

The second section of the psalm (vv. 7–10) speaks of God's law, naming a love for the law, and that people have responsibilities under the law. It notes that God is revealed in both the scriptures and in the law.

The psalm's third section (vv. 11–14) is more of a prayer that speaks to God the creator. Verse 14, in particular, is often recited before a sermon.

At the time this psalm was written, the sun was worshipped as a god by some religious groups. The psalmist challenges conventional wisdom of the time by saying that the sun is a part of God's creation and order and that the sun joins with the rest of creation in praising God. In weaving creation and the law together, Psalm 19 may be evidence that ancient Israelites understood God's teachings in nature and law as one and the same.

**Exodus 20:1–17** The community who receives these words are a once-enslaved people now wandering in the wilderness.

The commandments are a covenant within the already-existing covenant made with Abraham and Sarah and are written for a particular time, context, and people. For example, later, Moses (in Deuteronomy

5) names the ten commandments again with one noticeable difference: in Exodus, keeping the Sabbath as holy and a day of rest is noted as a blessing. In Deuteronomy, keeping the Sabbath as a holy day is a reminder that the people were enslaved, and so keeping the Sabbath as a day of rest is a justice issue to offer rest for workers.

These are laws of love, given for the well-being of the community.

Like Psalm 19, **1 Corinthians 1:18–25** also challenges conventional wisdom. Paul writes about what will "save" people: being foolish, not wise; being weak, not strong; being low and despised, not of means. God challenges the status quo and the power of empire by turning conventions upside down.

Jesus turns things upside down in **John 2:13–22**. The temple had a marketplace where the sale of animals was for the offering of animal sacrifices. It was also a place where currency could be exchanged into a standard coinage to purchase animals for sacrifice and to pay the temple tax. Jesus, filled with righteous anger, turns over the marketplace tables and critiques the market system. He calls for a dismantling of unjust systems. Jesus challenged the way of empire and invited people into a different way of faithful living.

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The Season of Lent is an opportunity to continue to reflect on what it means to live faithfully together. God calls us to respond in faith in our daily lives. Knowing that God has offered loving rules, an invitation to praise, challenges the status quo, and is committed to justice: how then shall we live?

**Creator God, you have given us guidelines of how we can be in community together. Help us to follow your loving laws, to praise you more faithfully, and to live more justly so that we might be more faithful disciples living in a deeper relationship with you. Amen.**

**Lection Connection**  
links current events with this week's scriptures. Go to [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca) and click on the link.

## The Focus for Ages 3–5

Children in this age group often have a great appreciation and love of nature. Their fresh eyes and sense of wonder, and their willingness to get close to grass and dirt and water and gardens give them a grounding in the basic elements of nature. Young children can inspire wonder in others through their infectious interest in their surroundings. Young children are discovering the wonders of the way God's world fits together, and exploring ways in which they fit in that world. Many children in this age group instinctively sense the greatness of God in the natural world, and readily accept that the wonders of creation reflect the wonders of an awesome creator. This week's session offers an opportunity to explore how God's world shows us what God is like. If God made the

world for us to enjoy, then God must really love us.

If you live in an urban environment or have children in your group who may have a limited understanding of rural nature such as beaches, woodlands, riversides, or starry night skies without city illumination, then begin with whatever experiences are within the group. In the opening activity use items from nature that represent your environment. The planting seeds activity in Respond can help bring a small part of nature into the session. You might also consider bringing some nature books or magazines to share beautiful photographs of creation with the children. Pray that children will grow in their understanding of God and God's love through an exploration of God's wonderful world.

## Prepare

### Before the session

- ☐ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Psalm 19, and [biblical background material](#) (p. 15).
- ☐ Set a worship space with purple cloth, purple candle, matches, offering basket, Bible with the purple and blue bookmarks from past weeks and a green bookmark placed in this week's focus passage from the Psalms.
- ☐ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2), and, if possible, *Seasons Songbook* (Volume 7), *Seasons Music CD* (Volume 7), *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Songbook*, *SGF Music CD*, CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at [www.seasonsonline.ca](http://www.seasonsonline.ca).

### Gather

- ☐ Bring "Gathering Song" (on resource sheet "[Additional Songs](#)," p. 89) or song "Thank God" (p. 28, *SGF Songbook*; #18, *SGF Music CD*).
- ☐ Option: bring a puppet (see information on p. 2).
- ☐ Bring variety of items from nature in a small box.

### Engage

- ☐ Bring this week's resource sheet "[God Is Amazing!](#)"
- ☐ Bring Lenten calendar (from previous weeks) and container of stones (see p. 88 for more information about the [Lenten ritual](#)).
- ☐ Bring song "God's Promise" (on resource sheet "[Additional Songs](#)," p. 89).

### Respond

Choose from the options provided. Prepare and bring the materials.

- ☐ **Mural:** length of mural paper, pastels, crayons, washable markers
- ☐ **Seed pouches:** medium-sized resealable plastic bags, large seeds (such as bean or sunflower), self-adhesive flower stickers, paper towelling, copies of this week's resource sheet "[Growing Seeds](#)"
- ☐ **Sun streamers:** yellow poster board (cut into 15 cm/6 in circles, two per child), yellow or orange streamers, dowels, glitter; on one circle for each child print "God's world sings from sunrise to sunset."

### Bless

- ☐ Bring song "I Am Amazing" (p. 11, *SGF Songbook*; #7, *SGF Music CD*).



March 7, 2021

# Faithful Living Together

## Scripture

Psalms 19

**FOCUS** To join with creation in singing praises to God

## Gather

**Welcome** each child, saying "Hello, *(child's name)*, we're happy you're here."

### Opening ritual

**Gather** around the worship space and remind children that we are in the Season of Lent and the colour for Lent is purple. Light the candle, saying, "This candle reminds us of God's love shining in the world." Then repeat for each child, "God's love shines in *(child's name)*."

**Pray** Loving God,  
you love us all day long,  
when the sun is shining bright  
and when the stars come out at night.  
Thank you for always being with us.  
Amen.

**Sing** "Gathering Song" (p. 89) or "Thank God" (p. 28 in *Seasons Growing Faith Songbook*; #18 on *Seasons Growing Faith Music CD*).

Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

## Moving into the theme

Choose one of the following:

### ❑ Puppet conversation

**Priscilla:** Hi *(name each child)*. I've got a treasure box to show you today.

**Leader:** What's in your box, Priscilla?

**Priscilla:** These are my special things that I found outside. *(Shows children items from nature.)*

**Leader:** God has made so many beautiful things in the world. *(Encourage children to talk about what they see.)* Let's think of some other things God made.

**Priscilla:** God made trees.

**Leader:** That's right! *(Turns to children.)* What have you seen in God's amazing world this week? *(Encourage responses.)*

**Priscilla:** Wow...God's world is really great.

**Leader:** Thank you for sharing your treasures with us, Priscilla. *(Say goodbye to Priscilla.)*

❑ **Nature box** Invite children to sit in a circle and place the box of items from nature in the middle of the group. Invite children to take turns lifting the items out. Encourage them to talk about the colours, textures, sizes and shapes of the items. Invite them to name some of their favourite things in God's wonderful world.

## Engage

### Before the story

Invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and use the green bookmark to open it to the book of Psalms. Explain that the Psalms are a collection of songs and poems about God. Show

the purple and blue bookmarks from previous weeks' stories from the book of Genesis and then return to the green bookmark for this week's focus passage. Use the resource sheet "God Is Amazing!" to tell the story based on **Psalms 19**.

### After the story

Invite children to name all the different colours they see in God's world. What colour are the mountains? What colour is the ground? What colours do they see in the sky and in a rainbow? If they were going to paint a picture of God's wonderful world, what would they include?

### Body poem "God Made the Sun"

God made the sun to shine in the day. *(Make a big circle with arms.)*

God is great! God is great! *(Stamp feet.)*

God made the stars that shine in the night. *(Wiggle fingers.)*

God is great! God is great! *(Stamp feet.)*

God made the mountains. *(Make a triangle with hands.)*

God made the trees. *(Stretch arms above head.)*

God made you *(point to someone)* and God made me! *(Point to self.)*

Yay God! *(Wave hands and jump.)*

**Lenten calendar** Lent is a special time to remember God's wonderful promises to us. Invite children to gather around the Lenten calendar. Explain that we are counting the days through Lent by placing stones on the pathway and when the whole path is covered with stones it will be time to celebrate Easter. Have children place stones on numbers 11–16. Read aloud the phrase beside the illustration for March 4.

**Sing** "[God's Promise](#)" (on p. 89)

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## Respond

Choose from the following activities:

- ❑ **Mural** The Psalm reminds us of the wonderful world God made for us to enjoy. Invite children to gather around a length of mural paper and use felt markers and pastels and crayons to create a group mural of an image of creation. Encourage them to include as many parts of creation as they can, such as people, animals, trees and flowers, oceans and mountains, stars and sun.



- ❑ **Seed pouches** God's wonderful world is full of beautiful plants. Invite children to grow some seeds as reminders of God's world. Distribute plastic bags and invite children to decorate them with self-adhesive stickers. Show them

how to moisten paper towels, place them in the bags, add several seeds, and seal the bags. Distribute copies of the resource sheet "[Growing Seeds](#)" with instructions for looking after their seeds at home.

- ❑ **Sun streamers** The sun reminds us of God's wonderful world. Distribute two circles to each child and read aloud the phrase: "God's world sings from sunrise to sunset." Invite children to decorate one side of each of their circles with glitter and bright crayon drawings. Help them tape streamers and a dowel to the back of one circle and then staple the two circles together. Sing again the refrain from the story as the children wave their sun streamers around.

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## Bless

**Gather** in the worship space and light the candle again.

**Sing** if possible "I Am Amazing" (p. 11 in *Seasons Growing Faith Songbook*; #7 on *Seasons Growing Faith Music CD*).

**Pray** Dear God, thank you for our amazing world.

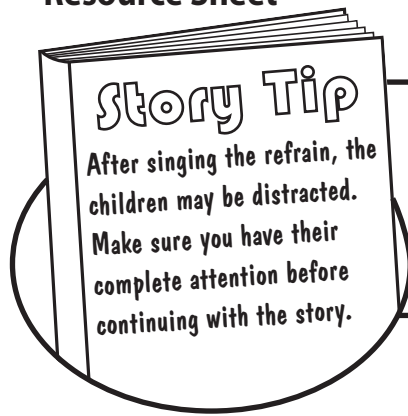
Thank you that you will always love us.  
Amen.

**Send** each child out with the words "(Child's name), God made this beautiful world for you to enjoy."

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## Reflect

In what ways do children celebrate the marvels of creation? How might you and the group continue to take opportunities to join with creation in praising God?



# God Is Amazing!

(based on Psalm 19)

*(Practice singing the refrain [tune: "London Bridge"] cued by "From sunrise to sunset God's world sings." Encourage children to clap hands to maintain a lively rhythm.)*

A long time ago some people were looking at the beautiful world God had made. "God made this wonderful world for us to enjoy," they said. "God is amazing! God is great!" We must tell God how we feel. So they wrote a song to tell about the greatness of God.

Look all around and you will see.  
The world God made for you and me.  
God's world is truly marvellous.  
And tells of God's great love for us.

**Leader:** From sunrise to sunset God's world sings...

**Children:** Let us sing that God is great,  
God is great, God is great!  
Let us sing that God is great,  
God is amazing!

The sun comes up to light the day,  
God made the sun to shine this way.  
The shining moon comes up at night,  
and dances with the stars so bright.

**Leader:** From sunrise to sunset God's world sings...

**Children:** Let us sing that God is great,  
God is great, God is great!  
Let us sing that God is great,  
God is amazing!

God made the seeds to give us food.  
God is great! God is good.  
The seeds they grow, God makes them sprout.  
God is amazing! Shout it out.

**Leader:** From sunrise to sunset God's world sings...

**Children:** Let us sing that God is great,  
God is great, God is great!  
Let us sing that God is great,  
God is amazing!

God made the birds, God made the trees.  
God made the flowers and the bees.  
They give us honey good to eat  
and show us that God's love is sweet.

Look all around and you will see.  
The world God made for you and me.  
AH-MEN!





# Growing Seeds

Dear Parents,

Today your child looked at some of the marvellous things in God's world. As part of the learning activities, the children planted seeds. We thought about how God made the seeds and helps them grow. Isn't God great?

You can help your child care for their seeds by taping their greenhouse to a window that does not receive direct sunlight. Each day check the greenhouse with your child to see if the seeds have sprouted. As the roots and shoots appear, marvel at the process of germination. Once a small root and some leaves have sprouted, the seedlings can be carefully transferred to a pot and watered frequently.

As your child cares for their plants, encourage them to praise God for the wonderful gift of seeds that grow. You may wish to use one of the worship songs that the children learned today.

## Let Us Sing

(tune: "London Bridge")

Let us sing that God is great,

God is great, God is great!

Let us sing that God is great,

God is amazing!



Thank you for your help with this project.

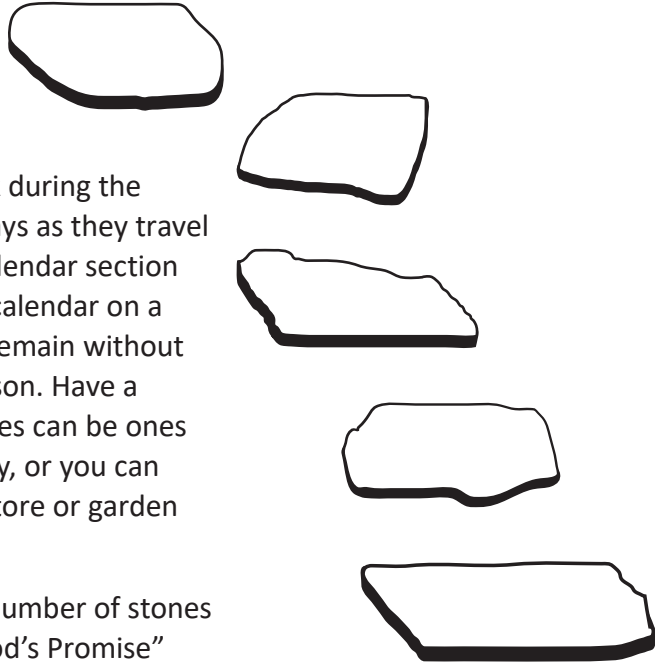
# Storytelling Resources

## Lenten calendar

The *Rainbow Path of God's Promises* is a calendar found on the poster [Storytelling Resources](#). This calendar will be used each week during the Season of Lent, to help the children mark the days as they travel through Lent towards Easter Sunday. Cut the calendar section off the [Storytelling Resources](#) poster. Place the calendar on a low table, preferably somewhere where it can remain without being disturbed during the six weeks of the season. Have a container of 40 small stones nearby. These stones can be ones collected from a beach or woodland area nearby, or you can purchase bags of polished stones from a craft store or garden centre.

Each week the children will place the required number of stones on the path for that week and sing the song "God's Promise" (on the resource sheet "[Additional Songs](#)" on p. 89). On Easter Day they will reach the empty tomb and celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

If the children will be part of an all-ages gathering on Palm/Passion Sunday and Easter Sunday, plan how you will complete the calendar activity. You might want to "look ahead" on your last day together as a group before Palm/Passion Sunday and then "look back" on the calendar on your first day together after Easter Sunday.



**Note** that the 40 days of the Lenten Season refer to the week days during this time. Each Sunday during Lent is traditionally considered a "little Easter" and is not counted as part of the 40 days.

## Easter storytelling figures

The [Storytelling Resources](#) posters include figures to use in the Bible stories during the Easter season. There are figures of Jesus, Thomas, a pair of disciples, and two figures representing Philip and the Ethiopian official. Each figure is labelled with a date but they can also be used during the telling of stories on other Sundays if desired.

Cut out the figures and mount on paper rolls or large craft sticks so that the children can hold them and move them during the storytelling times.



# Additional Songs

## Gathering Song

(tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Thank you, thank you, thank you God.  
Thank you for this day.  
God loves you and God loves me.  
We're glad we're here today.

## Gather Round

(tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

Gather round the table now,  
we gather round today.  
Time to listen, sing, and pray,  
Let's worship God today.

## God's Promise

(tune: "Frère Jacques/Are You Sleeping")

(Children repeat the bolded lines.)

Listen closely. **Listen closely.**  
To God's promise. **To God's promise.**  
God will always love us. **God will always**  
**love us.**  
We can love too. **We can love too.**

## Leaving Song

(tune: "Frère Jacques/Are You Sleeping")

(Children repeat the bolded lines.)

God is with us. **God is with us.**  
As we go. **As we go.**  
It is time to leave now. **It is time to leave**  
**now.**  
Go with God. **Go with God.**

## Follow Me

(tune: "Frère Jacques/Are You Sleeping")

(Children repeat the bolded lines.)

I'm the shepherd. **I'm the shepherd.**  
Follow me. **Follow me.**  
Listen to my voice. **Listen to my voice.**  
Share my love. **Share my love.**

## Friendship Song

(tune: "Jesus Loves Me")

Jesus loves me and you too.  
That's the good news and it's true.  
Share God's love and be a friend.  
Love's the gift that has no end.  
Friends, join together. Friends, join  
together.  
Friends, join together, and share the love  
of God!

## Hand Signs

### Jesus

Place the tip of the middle finger  
of the right open hand into the  
left palm. Repeat the  
action in reverse.



### Love

Open hands  
are crossed  
and pressed  
to the left.

