



24-7 SPACES

LENT 2012

WALK WITH US

WEEK: 1

JESUS: WALKS

use this deeper guide alone, with
family or friends or your
church small group

40 DAYS. 5 MINUTES. 1 GOSPEL.

CONTENTS

1. **Reflect**: thinking time
2. **React**: journaling or discussion
3. **Respond**: get practical

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A Bible
- Candles
- Stickers
- Film: “Dead Man Walking” (1995)

REFLECT:

Use the following Bible passage, song lyrics, poem and quotes for reflection.

Start by reading the 1st chapter of John's gospel.

Extract from Poem "Ash-Wednesday" by T S Eliot

*"If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,
The Word without a word, the Word within
The world and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled
About the centre of the silent Word"*

*"To the hustlers, killers, murderers, drug dealers even the strippers
(Jesus walks with them)
To the victims of Welfare for we living in hell here hell yeah
(Jesus walks with them)" (Lyrics from "Jesus Walks" by Kanye West)*

"Little by little, we begin to understand, or rather to feel, that this sadness is indeed 'bright,' that a mysterious transformation is about to take place in us. It is as if we were reaching a place to which the noises and the fuss of life, of the street, of all that which usually fills our days and even nights, have no access – a place where they have no power. All that which seemed so tremendously important to us as to fill our mind, that state of anxiety which has virtually become our second nature, disappear somewhere and we begin to feel free, light and happy. It is not the noisy and the superficial happiness which comes and goes twenty times a day and is so fragile and fugitive; it is a deep happiness which comes not from a single and particular reason but from our soul having, in the words of Dostoevsky, touched "another world." And that which it has touched is made up of light and peace and joy, of an inexpressible trust." (Great Lent: Journey to Pascha - Father Schmemmann)

"If Christ is not man, then God has not reached us, but has stopped short of our humanity – then God does not love us to the uttermost, for his love has stopped short of coming all the way to where we are, and becoming one of us in order to save us. But Christ's humanity means that God's love is now flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, really one of us and with us." (T.F. Torrance, Incarnation, 185)

"God came all the way to us – yet we now expect people to come so far towards us in church. Far away from their music, far away from their vernacular, far away from their visual language, their codes and symbols. God was born again – became nothing and re-emerged – in order to reach us in our own language, to live and grow up among us. As the body of Christ, we must do likewise and, just as for Christ, it will take immense courage."
(Kester Brewin)

REACT:

(1) Read Kester Brewin's quote and reflect upon how "God came all the way to us". What are the ways in which we expect people to come all the way to us in Church? Think of ways we can go all the way to others, to enter their world, their culture? How can you enter the world of those around you?

Christ incarnated into our world and completely changed humanity. Are there people or places God is calling you to? How can you be more incarnational? Maybe you could learn a language or embrace a different culture, maybe God's even calling you to move into a particular neighbourhood

(2) Read John 1:1-9, reflect on the images of light, and how His light gave light to everyone? Where can you bring this light to those around you?

(3) Reflect on the lyrics from Kanye West's song 'Jesus Walks'. During his life on earth, Jesus walked amongst the poorest and most broken with the excluded and marginalised. He invited the criminal on the cross to join Him in paradise. Who are the groups of people in your neighbourhood where Jesus would be walking today? How can you demonstrate his love to them?

(4) Consider how God became a human being and moved into our world. He was born homeless, yet was always willing to offer a home to the poor and needy who He met. Reflect on this as a picture of extravagant hospitality to our world - How can we reflect this hospitality to the poor around us?

(5) Read T S Eliot's poem, reflect on contemporary culture and how "the word" has been lost. Perhaps it's where once sacred symbols have become secularized, like the cross is now a fashion symbol. How can we reclaim the sacred in our world and reveal Jesus where he's become hidden or distorted? Think of places where Christ is revealed within our world, this maybe through a piece of art, through a simple act of kindness or where the oppressed are liberated

(6) The Eastern Orthodox Church refers to Lent as "The Bright Sadness". Read Father Schmemmann's quote, reflect on Lent as a season of "Bright Sadness", a period of "joy-making-mourning". How might God reveal Joy to you in this season of mourning and repentance?

RESPOND:

1. Personal:

The beginning of the season of Lent is marked by Ash Wednesday, a day of repentance. Traditionally, the palm crosses are taken from palm Sunday and burnt. Then the ashes are taken, mixed with oil and ash, then crosses are painted on the forehead as a sign of mourning and repentance to God. The priest or minister will traditionally say, "Remember that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return" or "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel". As we begin this journey through Lent, take some time to say sorry to God, perhaps even go to an Ash Wednesday service!

Giving something up or fasting is something many do during Lent, the forty days before Easter. This idea was taken from Jesus' forty days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness before He was crucified. Is there something you could fast during this season to help you remember Christ in his suffering?

2. Practical:

Sit in your local town centre, reflect on the 'lost word', the places where Jesus is unheard, pray for those around you that Jesus would be found.

Hold a night time prayer vigil. Write places or areas where you want His light to break through the darkness on stickers and stick them to the bottom of small candles/tea lights. Light the candle as you pray for his light to break through the darkness.

Watch the film: *Dead Man Walking* (1995) - What strikes you about the practical kindness shown to the death-row prisoner? Allow God to speak to you.

3. Prayerful:

Use the 'Jesus Prayer' throughout this season of Lent.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have mercy on me, a sinner

The prayer is often repeated continually, breathing in whilst praying; 'Have mercy on me' (breathing in His mercy), and then breathing out as you pray; 'a sinner' (breathing out our sin).

NEXT WEEK...

“JESUS: REVOLUTION”

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