

# Journeying Together

## Fourth Week of Lent: God Loved the World So Much



### OPENING RESPONSES

Reader: We gather in the name of the Father

**All: Who loved the world so much  
that he gave his only-begotten Son  
so that everyone who believes in him  
will have eternal life.**

Reader: We gather in the name of the Son

**All: Who loved the world so much  
that he came into the world,  
not to judge humanity  
but to save it.**

Reader: We gather in the name of the Holy Spirit

**All: The fount of love pouring from Father and Son  
who leads people to faith in Christ,  
to hope in salvation,  
and to ever-deeper love of God and of the world.**

Reader: We gather...

**All: (*making the Sign of the Cross*) in the name of the Father  
and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## GOSPEL READING – John 3: 14-21

*Please listen as the Gospel is read. It can help to close your eyes—or look at the person—or the image on the screen—whichever suits you best.*

## PERSONAL TIME WITH THE GOSPEL

*For a few moments, reflect quietly on some questions. They do not have a right or wrong answer but are designed to help us to go more deeply into the Word of God.*

- Why do you think Nicodemus chose to speak to Jesus in the evening – at night?
- What message is Jesus trying to get across to Nicodemus?
- Why do some people prefer to believe in a God of anger rather than the God of Love Jesus came to teach about?

## GROUP REFLECTION

*Here are some thoughts to help you to reflect together on the Gospel.*

- Why do people choose “the dark” rather than the light of faith?
- What does ‘God so loving the world that he sent his only Son’ mean to us?
- What more could God have done to show his love for humanity?

## LISTENING TOGETHER

*Here are some thoughts drawn from the Gospel. As you listen or read them, make a note of any that strike you – either because they open up a new idea – or because they challenge you – or... any other reason!*

- Jesus came into the world to draw all peoples to himself.
- Jesus took people’s doubts and fears seriously – he did not dismiss them or treat them as stupid.
- Jesus met people “where they were” and helped them to move on.

- God loves the world of today every bit as much as he loved the world when he sent Jesus into it.
- God gave his very self so that every human being can have eternal life.
- Human beings have free will – and can choose light and life or darkness and sin.
- The choices humans make do not affect God’s love for them.
- Bad choices take people away from the path God desires for them but do not stop him loving them.
- God’s desire is that humans live in the light and make choices in love and in the truth.

*Share together:*

- How does Jesus’ life and work show us the unconditional love and mercy of God?
- What are the consequences of good choices for the person making them – and for those around them?  
What about the consequences of bad choices?
- How can we help people “on the margins” to know the great love of God through our words and actions?

## REFLECTION AND ACTION POINT FOR THE WEEK

*In your journal this week, you are invited to try something called the ‘Examen’.*

*This is a very simple exercise that you can build into your everyday life. Start with a short reminder that God loves you so much that he sent his Son to show you the way to eternal life. Think about the things you have said and done that have been good and positive and drawn you closer to the light of God. Then make a mental note of where you have been tempted towards darkness – to selfishness – to things that have taken you from the path of truth and love.*

*Acknowledge these before God – in humility and trust that God will forgive you and help you to look at a way to put things right or to avoid them tomorrow. Finally, go back to the reminder of God’s love – and recommit yourself to live as a beloved son or daughter, working to be worthy of the eternal life God desires for you.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

**All: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!**

Reader: By the rivers of Babylon  
there we sat and wept,  
remembering Zion;  
on the poplars that grew there  
we hung up our harps.

**All: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!**

Reader: For it was there that they asked us,  
our captors, for songs,  
our oppressors, for joy.  
'Sing to us,' they said,  
'one of Zion's songs.'

**All: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!**

Reader: O how could we sing  
the song of the Lord  
on alien soil?  
If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
let my right hand wither!

**All: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!**

Reader: O let my tongue  
cleave to my mouth  
if I remember you not,  
if I prize not Jerusalem  
above all my joys!

**All: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not!  
Amen.**