

LAKE COUNTRY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

April 12, 2020



Easter Devotional Packet

“The Tree of Life”

Welcome to our Easter Devotional Packet for 2020!

During this time of stay-at-home church, we've had to make many adaptations to keep following the Lord in worship. With social distancing still in place, Easter is no exception. But we hope that this devotional packet will enable you to worship at home in a deep and meaningful way that glorifies our RISEN SAVIOR and truly celebrates Easter.

In this packet you will find:

- Written instructions to lead your family in Easter worship (or to complete on your own)
 - Scripture
 - Resurrection garden activity
 - Songs
 - Prayer and communion at home
 - Questions for discussion or reflection
- Additional ideas for activities with kids

Pastor Jamison will post a sermon on Facebook and the website for Easter morning that parallels this packet. You can complete this packet as an individual – just grab your Bible and a journal – or as a family. You might lead your family through the devotion or take turns reading scripture and discussing the questions that follow.

We hope you are blessed by this service and will remember this Easter for years to come in a positive way as contributing to your spiritual growth and not just as the year of Covid-19.

In Him,
The Staff of LCCC

In the pages that follow, we will trace **the theme of trees** from Genesis to Revelation. The theme of trees in the Bible shows that:

- God always had a plan
- God intends us to live in Christ not die in sin
- God uses the theme of trees in the Bible to help us understand that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the **Life**

1. Read Genesis 2:8-9 and place the first layer soil and your “tomb” (terracotta pot) in the plastic tray/base for your Resurrection Garden.

8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



2. Questions for reflection or discussion:

- What do you think are the main differences between these two trees? What do they each represent?
- What did God mean when he told Adam he would “die” if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? (Gen. 2:16-17)

In Genesis 3:1-10 we read that a serpent approached Eve and tempted her to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve then convinced Adam to eat of it.

3. Read Genesis 3:22-24 and place your large stone in front of the “tomb” to represent the separation between God and people caused by sin.

4. Question:

We chose the false tree of life and this choice separated us from the Tree of Life. What do you think about the consequences of Adam and Eve’s actions?

The rest of the Bible tells the story of the way back to the Tree of Life.

KEY POINT:

In Hebrew writing, like the Old Testament, the concept of a “tree” could apply to many things, like bushes, roots, vines, or logs. For this reason, modern readers might miss the strong tree theme running through the whole Bible.

Want to dig deeper? Read through these linking passages!

- Exodus 3 (Moses and the burning bush)
- Proverbs 23:29-35
- Esther 7:9-10 (the word for “gallows” is the same as the word for “tree” used in Genesis 3)

God does not want us to stay separated from him. He had a plan from the very beginning. From the wreckage of Eden, God started growing something new!

5. Read Isaiah 11:1-5 and plant the grass seeds in your Resurrection Garden (don't forget to water them!).

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit...

6. Questions:

- What kinds of feelings and emotions are conveyed in the literary image of a stump? How does that contrast with the new life of the shoot/branch?
- Can you think of a place in the New Testament where Jesus describes himself as a vine, tree or giver of new life?





Say WHAT?

In John 6:52-59 Jesus says some strange sounding things: “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.” It sounds weird and gross – unless you remember that Jesus is making a way for us to return to the Garden and eat from the Tree of Life.

In one week, the people of Jerusalem changed from welcoming Jesus with branches from the palm tree to hanging him on a wooden cross.

But what the enemy meant for evil, God turned for good.

7. Read the following passages describing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Circle or make a list of the tree-related imagery used. Then add crosses to your Resurrection Garden.

- Acts 5:30-32
- Acts 13:28-39
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

8. Listen to “When I Survey the Wonderful Cross” on YouTube

9. Questions:

- In Jesus, how does life come from death?
- How did Jesus answer the problem of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?
- How do you respond to the plan of God in the theme of trees we have studied?



Bring it full circle...

10. Read Revelation 22:1-5 and add the stone in front of the empty tomb. Decorate your Resurrection Garden with flowers or other ornaments gathered from your yard or around your home (or crafted by kids!).

.... on either side of the river, the tree of Life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him...



God's plan will not be stopped!

God intended for us to live in a perfect garden and eat from the tree of Life. When humans choose not to follow God's plan, God offers a way back to the tree of Life through the tree "on which the Prince of Glory died," the cross. How wonderful to see God's plan carried out and expressed to us so consistently and clearly in the theme of trees running through the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation!

11. Questions:

- Based on this devotional, finish this sentence: God's Will for your life is...
- Which tree was the most meaningful to you from today's lesson and why?

12. Pray and take Communion while reading Matthew 26:26-29

- Did you notice "the fruit of the vine" in v.29? From the Tree of Life!

13. Listen to "Easter Song" by Keith Green; "Up from the Grave he Arose!"; "Alleluia! What a Savior!"; and "Crown him with Many Crowns" on YouTube

Additional Ideas for Kids

PRE-ACTIVITY: EASTER EGG HUNT

- Include the verses used in this devotional in the eggs for the egg hunt
- On the next page, you will find a list of the scripture verses that you can cut into strips and put in eggs to hide
- Once the kids find the eggs with the scripture, put the pieces on the middle of the table so they can be used along with the devotional
- Option: hide one egg with one scripture in a different room of the house. Have the kids search for one egg at a time as the scripture comes up in the devotional (a good way to break up the times of sitting still!)

GENESIS IDEAS (#1-4)

- Ask your child to draw the tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How do they imagine these trees?
- Ask your child to draw or tell you about their ideal garden. What kind of garden would it be? Flower, vegetable, stone, water? What kinds of activities could they do there? How would they relax there?

ISAIAH IDEAS (#5-6)

- Have your children make a family tree. Depending on their ages, include grandparents, aunts/uncles/cousins and do forth. Use the family tree to explain the scripture: the Bible tells us that our family tree got cut down by sin. The family tree was dead but then God brought it back to life when Jesus was born!

CROSS IDEAS (#7-9)

- Watch “The Parable of the Lily” on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbHG-_K75Eo

REVELATION IDEAS (#10-13)

- Ask your kids to draw the Tree of Life with its 12 kinds of fruit and the other items described in the scripture passage
- Have your kids make a chain of paper rings (from strips of paper) to hang over the crosses or across the tomb in the Resurrection Garden. Have them write kinds of fruit or words from the verse on each ring.

For additional online material, check out the Park Street Church Kids Channel (PSC Kids) on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB12WDvoncKuXnpjI-Saarg>

Scriptures to Add to Easter Eggs Hunt/to make Paper-Ring Chain for the Resurrection Garden

1. Genesis 2:8-9

8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

2. Genesis 3:22-24

22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^[a] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

3. Isaiah 11:1-5

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

4. Acts 5:30-32

30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

5. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

6. Revelation 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

7. Matthew 26:26-29

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the ^[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."