



Living the Seasons at Home - August 2020

A Devotional Resource for Individuals and Families

The church refers to the Season after Pentecost as “Ordinary Time.” It is the longest season of the church year, beginning with the Sunday after Pentecost and ending with the Reign of Christ Sunday in late November.

The liturgical colour for “Ordinary Time” is **green**. Green is a gentler and quieter colour and seems to fit how the Holy Spirit is at work in the ordinary things of life – words of encouragement, daily prayers, nutritious food, meaningful jobs, caring friendships, and the gifts of Creation.

The scripture readings during the Season after Pentecost remind us that the Spirit is at work in ordinary, everyday ways.

In July you received the ‘Living the Season’ devotionals for July & August, but in case you misplaced those 😊 here are the ones for each Sunday in August

- though you can choose to use them at any time, on any day, in any place you choose - each devotional is arranged in this way:

S – Scripture readings from the lectionary, with the focus text in **bold**

P – Prayer suggestions

I – Interactions to help people connect

R – Reflecting on background information on the text

I – Idea for enjoying life together

T – Thought for family reflection to take with you through the week.

♥ August 2 – *Face to Face*

Scripture Readings

Genesis 32: 22–31

Psalms 17: 1–7, 15

Romans 9: 1–5

Matthew 14: 13–21

Prayer

Gather in a circle, face to face. Repeat each line after it is read. In this way, everyone is offering the prayer to each other.

May God be with you in the struggle,
with the love you need, with the strength you need,
with the hope you need.
And we will be here, too.
We are here for you. Amen.

Interaction

Choose a place together, outside if possible. Bring along a full watering can. Everyone who wants to do so takes a turn (or two or more) pouring out troubles. Begin by thinking of something you are struggling with right now, such as getting along with someone, learning a new skill, or dealing with a challenging situation at work or school. Pour water onto the ground and say aloud or think silently of a specific struggle.

Reflecting on the Word

Read Genesis 32: 22–31 in an age-appropriate Bible or story Bible.

Idea for enjoying life

“Magic Chef Night” is when people come home and there are no plans for dinner. Work together and see what solutions you can invent with what is in the cupboard or the refrigerator. After dinner, express gratitude for the food and each other as you clean up the dishes together.

Thought to take with you

What troubling relationship or decision is worrying you right now?
Spend a few minutes each day talking with God about this struggle.

♥ August 9 – Dreaming Big**Scripture Readings**

Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28

Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b

Romans 10:5–15

Matthew 14:22–33

Prayer

Joseph goes through some extreme highs and lows in life, from affirming dreams to discouraging pits. Try holding up your hands, lifting up your eyes, or even standing around the table as you share positive prayers as a family – talk to God about your hopes, dreams, and affirmations.

Then on another day, sink down low by sitting down, hold your head in your hands, or even lay your head on the table – talk to God about your hurts, fears, conflicts, and losses.

Interaction

If you like to sing, try learning the song, “I Want Jesus to Go with Me.” (Some hymnals have “I Want Jesus to Walk with Me.”)

Sing the blues.

Sing it with your own expression or tempo.

Then go for a walk as you sing your favourite rendition of this song together.

Reflecting on the Word

Read Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28 in an age-appropriate Bible or story Bible.

Idea for enjoying life

Make your own game of life. Take small squares of paper and have each family member write down six good things that have happened in their lives and six bad things. Make more or less, depending on how many people are playing. Mix and glue these happenings on a large piece of paper to create a journey of life. Then roll one die and take turns moving. After each turn, consider how you are feeling and reacting given the situation you find yourself in.

Thought to take with you

Write this message on a small note and place it for others to find – such as lunch boxes, backpacks, wallets, coat pockets:

“Do not be afraid, God is always with you in the ups and downs.”

♥ August 16 – Subversive Forgiveness**Scripture Readings**

Genesis 45:1–15

Psalm 133

Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32

Matthew 15: (10–20), 21–28

Prayer

Talk together about what you may want to say sorry to God for as individuals, as a family, as a community, and as a nation. Offer simple prayers, such as, “For the time we don’t consider the other, sorry, God.”

Then talk about the good things within individuals, your family, community, and the nation.

Offer simple prayers such as, “For the ways we care for one another, we are blessed, God.”

Interaction

Partner with a family member and talk about someone with whom you are angry or haven't seen for a while because of a disagreement or hurt. Take turns describing your situations and listen to each other: What is one thing you could do to extend forgiveness to him or her?

Reflecting on the Word

Read Genesis 45:1–15 in an age-appropriate Bible or story Bible.

Psalm 133 sings about brothers living in unity, but we utter so many harsh words that unity seems to be a rare moment. Consider the story in Genesis 45:1–15. After years of bitter separation, Joseph and his brothers find that moment of unity, and it is sweet. What feelings do you see in the story? How do their feelings toward each other change? How would you describe their feelings when they embrace?

Idea for enjoying life

Psalm 133 compares unity to precious oil running down the head. This anointing oil would have smelled nice and also conditioned hair. If people in your home do not have skin allergies, try making your own fragrance of sunscreen or hair conditioner. Each family member can suggest his or her addition to the mix. Start with a non-scented base and add a little fragrance using a spritz of cologne, a dab of vanilla, a sprinkle of cinnamon, or a rose petal, and “voila!”

Thought to take with you

If unity smells like perfume, what do grudges smell like?

♥ August 23 – *Cunning, Compassion, and Courage*

Scripture Readings

Exodus 1: 8–2:10

Psalm 124

Romans 12: 1–8

Matthew 16: 13–20

Prayer

Look through a recent newspaper and note stories of children, or stories where children might be affected by a particular story. Share a prayer for these babies and children.

Interaction

Visit someone who has helped or rescued someone, such as an agency worker or emergency responder, school nurse.

Ask questions about their training, difficult situations, how they stay calm, and so on.

Let this be a way of discovering a local “hero” and opening your eyes to some courageous possibilities.

Reflecting on the Word

Read Exodus 1: 8 – 2: 10 in an age-appropriate Bible or story Bible.

The courageous midwives are named, but the pharaoh is not. Moses is given a name, “drawn out of the water,” but the princess who drew him out is not. Many people must have talked about the midwives Shiphrah and Puah – women who went against the Pharaoh’s orders. Do you know any similar stories of courageous people who resisted the influence of the powerful in order to follow God’s way?

Idea for enjoying life

Play a variation of A. A. Milne’s “Pooh Sticks.”

Scrape a section of the bark off a small stick. With a permanent marker, write a courageous message such as, “Live the challenge” or “Take Courage.” Find a bridge over a body of water and send your message on its way. Shout, “Here’s to Puah!” as you drop your sticks.

Thought to take with you

Write the phrase, “Speak and act with courage” on pieces of paper.
Hide the messages in lunch boxes, coat pockets, backpacks, briefcases, and other places.

♥ **August 30 – Holy and Humble Curiosity**

Scripture Readings

Exodus 3: 1–15	Psalm 105: 1–6, 23–26, 45c
Romans 12: 9–21	Matthew 16: 21–28

Prayer

Take off your shoes as you pray....

“God, we have taken off our shoes because we want to slow down and listen for your guiding Spirit.”

Then welcome some silent listening.

When you put shoes back on say...

“God, I’m putting on my shoes. Now may your Spirit guide my steps.”

Interaction

Draw an outline of a bush – a trunk and two or three boughs. Separate the boughs into several individual branches.

With a red marker, write what individuals are concerned about on the branches. Write issues that are shared by two or more people on the boughs, such as “caring for the environment.”

Finally, write an issue that is shared by all on the trunk. Place the bush where all can see.

How are you responding to these issues? How might you respond more deeply?

Reflecting on the Word

Read Exodus 3: 1–15 in an age-appropriate Bible or story Bible.

God says to Moses, “I am who I am” or “I will be who I will be”. Now come, and I will help you be an instrument of care and freedom.” Moses’ reluctance suggests that he was thinking that he was nothing special. But God persists until Moses puts on his sandals and follows the guidance of the voice.

Do you think Moses started to think of himself differently as he walked in a different direction? What would it mean for Moses to say, “I will be who I will be, and see where this calling takes me”?

Idea for enjoying life

Make a crayon-resist picture of a burning bush.

If you did the burning bush described above, you might start with that. Press crayons hard. With very wet watercolours and a broad, soft brush, fill the page with a “night sky.”

Watch the colours of the bush come alive.

Wonder together what helps your sense of calling come alive.

Thought to take with you

At the end of each day, think back through the day and the signs of God’s presence that you saw around.

