

heartfelt Newsletter

April 2010

SCRIPTURE: John 21:1–19

THEME: Celebrating Earth Day!

family
'round
the
table

EATING TOGETHER



Decorations:

As a centerpiece for the table, arrange flowers, twigs, leaves, a desktop water fountain if you have one, and maybe a few stones, etc.

MENU

Crockpot Lentil & Vegetable Stew, Whole Grain Dinner Rolls & Butter, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

If you are unfamiliar with lentil soup, check out <http://www.recipezaar.com/101942> for a hearty no-meat recipe. Since it is Earth Day, check for organic veggies at your supermarket. They are generally more expensive, but not always prohibitively so, and they are often more flavorful. This stew (organic veggies or not) with crusty bread or fresh biscuits will make a nice one-dish meal.

Blessing:

We bless You, O Lord our God, Ruler of creation, for you have given us Earth as our home, to cherish and care for, and you bring forth food from Earth, that we may be well and give you honor. Amen.

PLAYING TOGETHER



Activity One: Planting the Earth

Materials: seeds or bedding plants, potting soil, pots or garden plot.

Directions:

1. Plant flowers in your garden, in porch or window box containers.
2. Plant some veggies or herbs in your garden, or in pots.
3. Make arrangements to plant some trees in your yard or a nearby park.

Activity Two: : Cleaning the Earth

Materials: trash bags and work gloves

Directions:

1. Go out around your neighborhood with garbage sacks and pick up as many discarded and/or recyclable items as you can.
2. Wear work gloves if you can, and watch for traffic.
3. Be sure to take it all to a trash/recycling center if you do not have curbside trash/recycling pick-up.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

· Share that this story tells about the miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee, here called by its Roman name, the Sea of Tiberias. It also tells about the three-fold restoration of Simon Peter. Jesus asks Simon (not calling him “Peter”) three times if he loves Jesus and Simon’s three responses represent a second chance for each of the three times Simon denied Jesus before the crucifixion.

- The original language reveals more: In Greek there are several words that we translate as love. Jesus uses the word for **unconditional love** (*agape*), but Simon replies with the word for what we might call **brotherly love** (*fileo*). This happens twice. “Simon, do you love (agape) me unconditionally?” “Of course I love (fileo) you like a brother, Lord!” The third time Jesus asks, “Simon, do you love (agape) me like a brother?” Simon still replies, “Lord, you know I love (fileo) you like a brother!” Jesus tries to push Simon to a higher understanding, but ends up meeting him where he was, which seems to be as far as Simon could go at that time.
- Choose a family member to read aloud John 21:1–19, while the others listen or follow along in their own Bibles.

Reflection Questions for the Family

1. Can you think of a time when you hurt or disappointed someone else? How did it make you feel about yourself? What happened the next time you saw that person?
2. When he saw Jesus, Simon didn’t exactly apologize for denying Jesus, but Jesus gave him the chance to say he loved Jesus. Were you able to apologize or make peace with the person you hurt?
3. Jesus asks Simon to feed his lambs, tend his sheep, and feed his sheep. Do you think Jesus was talking about the animals or someone else?
4. A shepherd leads sheep out to pasture where they can graze safely. If Simon looked after Jesus’ followers, how would that be like feeding sheep?
5. Simon had probably grown up fishing and had done it all his life until he met Jesus. How do you think he felt getting back into the boat and throwing the nets? How do you suppose he felt when they didn’t catch anything all night? I wonder if he felt like a failure as a disciple and then a failure as a fisherman? What do you wonder?
6. How do suppose Simon felt after Jesus gave him a good catch of fish and then told him he would be a faithful follower?
7. Which part of this story do you like best?
8. What do you think Jesus would say to you when you don’t feel good about yourself? If you aren’t sure, how could you find out?



PRAYING TOGETHER

· Place a lighted candle near the open Bible.

· Alternate readers as you read together the following selection from Psalm 8:1, 3-9 [CEV]:

You let your glory be seen in the heavens above.

I often think of the heavens your hands have made,
and of the moon and stars you put in place.

*Then I ask, "Why do you care about us humans?
Why are you concerned for us weaklings?"*

You made us a little lower than you yourself,
and you have crowned us with glory and honor.

*You let us rule everything your hands have made.
And you put all of it under our power--*

the sheep and the cattle,

and every wild animal,

the birds in the sky,

the fish in the sea, and all ocean creatures.

Our LORD and Ruler,

your name is wonderful everywhere on earth!

· Sing the first verse of one of these hymns: "This Is My Father's World", "All Things Bright and Beautiful", "God of the Sparrow" or "For the Beauty of the Earth".

· Invite family members to share their joys and concerns then close with this prayer
O God, We thank you for the earth, for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the ocean and streams, for hills and trees and green grass. We thank you for our senses by which we hear birds and animals, see the landscape, taste the harvest, play in the snow, and smell spring flowers. Help us to remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that calls us to love you, to love one another, to be open to the beauty of the earth and to take good care of all of your creation. Amen.