

Friday, 5th December

Blessing

'I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

Genesis 12.2,3

God calls Abraham to journey from his home to a new land. It's a journey of much wandering. God's purpose is not simply to bless Abraham, but that, through Abraham, all nations might be blessed.

Reflection

- How would you describe the purpose of your life? What are your priorities?
- What are the blessings you have been given? What are the ways in which your life is a blessing to others?

Prayer and more

- Thank God for a blessing that has touched your life.
- Make a gift, say a word, or take some time for someone else—be a blessing today.

Saturday, 6th December

Presence

Jacob was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

Genesis 28.17

Abraham's grandson Jacob is also on a journey; he dreams of a ladder of angels reaching up to heaven and down to earth. It is a powerful image of the presence of God among us; a presence which is constantly breaking through to us.

Reflection

- Where, on earth, have you found the gate of heaven?
- How do we get better at recognising the presence of God among us?
- What does this verse say to you about the world?

Prayer and more

- Take time to and find a place to stop and be still and to know you are in the 'house of God'
- Bring to mind and pray about the connections with others, the world and with God you have thought about this week.

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Advent 2014 *Connections for Life*

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Week 1 Sunday 30th Nov to 6th Dec

Living

Connections for Life offers an opportunity to **stop** each day, to **reflect** and **pray** along with a **challenge** to bring God's love and life to another person or situation.

These leaflets take you on an **Advent** journey through the Bible exploring different ways and places in which we can **make connections for life**.

For more information and to post pictures and videos visit www.livethechallenge.co.uk

Advent Sunday, 30th November

Life

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. *Genesis 1.1,2*

This week takes a brief look at the book of Genesis. On this Advent Sunday, the start, a powerful image of the presence of God in creation. A wind begins to blow, over chaos and emptiness, challenging the depth of darkness, bringing the gift of life.

Stop and Think

- Imagine the scene Genesis describes; reflect on the power and wonder of God's creative life.
- What does this say to you about God's engagement with the world today?

Prayer and more

- Pray for God's light and life in a place or situation where there is chaos or darkness.
- Open your eyes to the life that is all around you today. Treasure it.

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Monday, 1st December

Goodness

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
Genesis 1.31

God's creation is not simply the birth of energy and life, not just order emerging out of chaos. God's creation is good, it is very good. Goodness speaks of the beauty, the virtue, the value at the heart of creation. Do we see it?

Reflection

- How would you describe goodness? Where have you seen the goodness of the world?
- What hides the goodness that God saw when he made the world? How might we see it more clearly?

Prayer and more

- Thank God for something that is 'very good' in the world and in your life.
- Do something to celebrate the goodness you encounter today.

Wednesday, 3rd December

Struggle

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken.
Genesis 3.19

Part of what we experience in this world is pain and struggle. The creation stories in Genesis see this as the outworking of sin, or what is sometimes called the Fall. Goodness and struggle, beauty and pain, two strands intertwined together - a part of life's reality.

Reflection

- How are goodness and struggle intertwined in your life? Does one dominate?
- Is it possible to lose sight of beauty in the midst of pain? Is it possible to become blind to the pain and struggles of others?

Prayer and more

- Bring to God areas of your life in which you experience pain and toil.
- Take time today to pray for others who suffer. Do something to bring them goodness or beauty.

Tuesday, 2nd December

Companionship

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone'.
Genesis 2.18

At the heart of the creation story is this haunting phrase; it is not good 'to be alone'. Companionship is both a need for humanity and a gift of God in creation. We are made for community. It is in relationship that we find our true self; because we are made in the image of God, the Trinity, who is community.

Reflection

- What's the difference between solitude and loneliness?
- Who are the companions in your life who give you your sense of identity?

Prayer and more

- Thank God for the gift of relationship and community in your life.
- Pray for all who are lonely or who do not know the gift of community.
- Be a companion to someone today.

Thursday, 4th December

Promise

God said, 'when the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.'
Genesis 9.16

Covenant, or promise, is a central theme in the Bible. The first covenant a faithful God makes is not with a single group of people, or even all humanity, it is with all living creatures, it's with life itself. The rainbow, shown to Noah, is the sign of this promise.

Reflection

- What does it say about God that his 'first' promise is so wonderfully big?
- How do we reflect God's promise, God's priority, in the way we live? How might this shape our lifestyle and our priorities?

Prayer and more

- Thank God for the amazing beauty and intricacy of life. Thank him for his covenant with all living creatures.
- Do something today to protect and treasure life.