

# Companions on the Way



## Worship Resources

# Lent Year B The Perennial Path



## Overview

### Introduction

Is it really a year since we last prepared ourselves for the Lenten journey? In some ways this last year has been an unrelenting time of wilderness testing and paring back of life as we thought we knew it. In many ways Lent is the perennial path, the spiralling spiritual journey that we are always stepping onto or sitting down beside the path to rest for a moment, before rejoining. It is perennial in that we acknowledge it every year within the traditional church; we acknowledge the teaching, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus every Sunday or time we gather as faithful; and at various times our personal and communal life is very Lent like as suffering and change take us out of our normal comfortable zone into a place of trial and desolation.

Whatever struggles there may be along the way we believe that ultimately it is a journey of renewal and deepening our faith. It is the great descent into the death out of which life comes. Let us travel together even as we know that we must each walk alone for some of it.

In Year B we follow the gospel of Mark's account of Jesus time of formation in the wilderness and the ministry of his last days. In its sparseness of detail and urgency of language it is hauntingly right for where so many of us find ourselves as individuals and faith communities at this time. In many ways Mark's account does not distract us with great detail and in so doing also leaves room for us to explore our own particular experience on the path.

This course is designed to be used by worship leaders **and** by individuals wanting to journey with Jesus the Christ and his companions on this life through death into new life experience.

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Each week of Lent we will daily reflect on one of the readings for the coming Sunday according to Year B of the lectionary, or the gospel of Mark (and some of the readings from John's gospel) building to an integrated reflection on the theme of that week. There is also an outline for a group discussion included for use by those communities studying together. This will help us engage deeply in the wisdom and life changing power of this journey and help worship leaders be ready for leading others on the journey while also having their own spiritual encounter.

(Indeed the materials will be available a few weeks earlier than the actual dates so that leaders can feel confident in their roles and still have their own deep experience of journey by travelling a week or two ahead of others.) If you would like to get a flavour for how I work with the seasons of the church please feel free to look at the Sample material that was used in Advent.

## Overview of Course

On Ash Wednesday we reflect on our mortality. This is both humbling but also encouraging as we contemplate that we share the mortal experience with the one who took on human flesh and forever enlivened us with his divinity which graces our struggles and yearnings.

## Week One

We begin our journey being reminded that everything we are about to experience in the company of Jesus is as people covered under the overarching rainbow of the Covenant of God's promise to all creatures and the declaration that we are Beloved. So all the testing and trials of life happen within the embrace that already and always surrounds us. It is only that we need to learn to discern that embrace and trust its enormity and immediacy when we are in need.

## Week Two

Only week two and already we find ourselves confronted with the image of the cross and the challenge that we too must take up our cross; that we are not here just to watch Jesus make his way to the cross but that it is the path of losing and gaining our life. The image of the cross is the image of life and love to be found in the midst of suffering and death and therefore we can

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be assured that no experience is outside of God's love. This is the confronting and mysterious invitation of taking up one's cross.

### Week Three

This week we are reminded of the rightness but impossibility of the laws of God. We are also confronted by the need to overturn the religious practices that have built up and become a stumbling block to true worship. We need to have the tables of our own hearts overturned so that we are free again to worship in truth and beauty, free to allow the good news of grace and freedom to enter in, and free to grow in that grace into the wholeness of who we were born to be.

### Week Four

We explore the image of the serpent of bronze being lifted up so that those who are being bitten might be saved. We begin to explore that in Jesus life is snatched, won, from the jaws death and so we too are to find life in the presence of death.

### Week Five

Jesus speaks his truth that life comes out of death just as a grain of wheat must die in order that many grains grow.

### Week Six

We companion Jesus into the holy city and his last tumultuous days and reflect on our hopes and false hopes that are aroused by these events.

### Week Seven: Holy Week

We then mark the days of Holy Week and companion our Beloved Lord through adulation, the Passover, abandonment and betrayal, and the trauma of the trial and the cross and with his shattered and scattered disciples we wait for the life giving news that he is risen.

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Even though we know how the story unfolds and ends it is a story best lived and deeply reflected on for it is not only the story of what Jesus did for us but it is the story of our soul's journey and when we travel it deeply we are restored and recreated. Year by year, season by season, we are refined and remade by the story of how life comes out of death. It is the story of long ago and it is the story of us now. It is forever contemporary and life giving.

Come, let us be companions on this perennial path to life.

### More information

-  Website: [www.companionsontheway.com](http://www.companionsontheway.com)
-  Blog: [www.companionsontheway.com/blog](http://www.companionsontheway.com/blog)
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