

LENT 1 B

Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1: 9-15. Rec. text - NRSV.

Additional resources for Lent 1B: Copies of contracts - see below 'A word to children/young people; *REACHING FOR RAINBOWS*. Ann Weems, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1980; *A SINGING FAITH*. Jane Parker Huber, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1987; *SCRIPTURE IN SONG*, CMC Australasia, Grovedale, Victoria 3216; *BE OUR FREEDOM, LORD*, Terry C Falla, Openbook Publishers Adelaide, 1994.

CALL TO WORSHIP : *based on Psalm 25*

We come, trusting in God's mercy and love, longing to know and to learn more about God's ways.

We come, to be guided in the ways of God's truth - to experience the joy of God's salvation.

We come, at the beginning of our Lenten journey, aware of God's steadfast love helping us to overcome the trials and temptations which can descend on us at any time.

Lead us, O God, to do what is right in your eyes and teach us to follow the humble way of Christ, your beloved Son, our crucified and risen Lord.

TIS 14: "To you, O Lord, I lift my soul..." (Psalm 25)

TIS 564/AHB 49: "O God of Bethel"

TIS 593: "Lord, take my hand and lead me"

PRAYER OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

The prayer "Reaching for Rainbows" page 15f. from the book of the same name by Ann Weems - or

God of storms and rainbows, God of rain and sunshine, God of all creation we worship and adore you. We gaze in wonder at the beauty of your creation and marvel at stormy skies transformed with the vibrant colours of a rainbow. Like Noah and his family, we praise you for this everlasting sign of your love and care for the whole creation in your desire to preserve and not destroy life. And at Jesus' baptism, the sky again revealed your love when you identified him as your beloved Son, strengthening him with the same Spirit who empowers and strengthens each of us. For all these assurances of your love for us and for the whole creation, we praise and worship you, O God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 9: 8-15

A WORD WITH THE CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE Bring along one or more 'contracts' which you may have (Church, home, car insurance; rental contract etc.) Explain what a contract is - an agreement between two or more people regarding the doing or not doing of some definite thing. When a contract is drawn up the people involved all have to sign it. If I rent a property or a car I have to sign an agreement that I will take care of this property which belongs to someone else. Point out how there is always a lot of 'fine print' on a contract - the fine print usually relates to the conditions of the agreement. The car will be in the same condition when returned as when hired; the property will not be damaged in any way during the time it is rented etc. etc. (use your own ideas!). In our reading, God establishes a covenant, which is another word for a contract, with Noah and all his descendants, with every living creature - every single animal and bird that exists. There was no signing of this contract by Noah or anyone else because God was saying that there was no 'fine print' in this contract. God was making it simply out of love for all creation. God set no conditions on this contract being kept. God said that the rainbow was the sign of the covenant between God and all the earth - the sign of God's love for everyone and everything God had created. The rainbow is like God's signature on the contract. And although there were no conditions demanded by God, when someone loves us deeply, we want to respond with love and the best way we can do that is by our love for God being able to be seen through our love for people and our care for this world we live in.

TIS 146/ AHB 82: "God, who made the earth...cares about me"

TIS 188: "Where wide sky rolls down and touches red sand"

A SINGING FAITH 63: Verses 3-5 "Your love formed us, God of rainbows"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, as we begin our Lenten journey, we do want to follow Jesus but we confess our reluctance to face the stress and temptation that the journey might hold for us. We confess that we are sometimes tempted to wish for miracles which would make life easier rather than more stressful. We admire the difficult and risky journey that Jesus took, challenging systems which put conditions on God's love, but confess that we want our journeys of faith to be devout but not too daring; comfortable and not too threatening. We cherish the faithfulness and humility of Jesus, yet we confess our fear of treading Jesus' way of obedience - the way of the cross.

A time of silence for personal confession

Lord Jesus Christ, save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

Forgive us our sins and fill us with the joy and peace of your salvation, and strengthen us during this Lenten season to follow you wherever you choose to take us. Amen

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news. "For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God." (1 Peter 3:18) And so I declare to you: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

EPISTLE: 1 Peter 3: 18-22

GOSPEL: Mark 1: 9-15

SERMON

TIS 250: "Christ, when for us you were baptized"

TIS 194/ AHB 6: "O love, how deep, how broad, how high!"

TIS 252: "When he was baptized in the Jordan"

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Give thanks for the assurance of God's love for humanity; expressed so fully in Jesus and his ministry; give thanks for the creative and re-creative power of God visible in the beauty of this land in which we live. Give thanks for the fact that Australia is a nation of "rainbow" people - of many different colours, racial and cultural backgrounds. Intercessory prayers could flow from there - pray for freedom from the temptation of judging others because of the colour of their skin etc.; pray for freedom from the temptation of putting profit before care for people and the environment; pray for freedom from the temptation of manipulating others for our own benefit etc... "Vision and mirage" Page 306f. of *BE OUR FREEDOM, LORD*

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Living God, as we embark once more on this journey through Lent, we give thanks for the assurance of your presence with us in Jesus Christ, Saviour, Redeemer and Friend. We offer these gifts and our lives with the prayer that they will be used to proclaim the story of his sacrificial love in word and deed. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

TIS 497/AHB 418: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence"

TIS 510/AHB 432: "My God, your table now is spread"

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

Living God, we do give you thanks and praise. At the very beginning of time, you spoke the word which replaced the darkness of chaos with life-giving light. A light which has nurtured generations of people, and plants and creatures, great and small. A light almost destroyed when engulfed by people's corrupt and faithless actions. But you, O God, taking the initiative once more, painted the sky in rainbow colours as a sign of your everlasting relationship with all creation. And so, with all the company of heaven and earth we praise your holy name saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest

Holy God, you brought a new relationship to birth in Jesus Christ to bring your unconditional love into even greater focus. He graced lives with healing and hope, with compassion and power and as if that were not enough, he gave his very life for us. On the night of his betrayal, as he sat at the table and broke bread with his friends, he said: 'Take and eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Remember me each time you do this.' After they had eaten, he took the cup, and said: 'Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you - the beginning of a new relationship with God.'

God of all power, breathe your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the life of Christ and that we may make that life visible through our faithful witness to the gospel. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING THE BREAD

We break this bread and take this cup so that we can all share in the life of Christ.

God's gifts for God's people.

LAMB OF GOD

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Most gracious God, source of all blessing, we give you thanks for inviting us to share this meal as your family. Strengthen us to be a blessing to one another and to all people, glorifying you in everything we do and say, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TIS 545: "Shout for joy! The Lord has let us feast..."

TIS 496/AHB 417: "Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands..."

TIS 684: "Love will be our Lenten calling" Try singing this to Westminster Abbey TIS 672(2)

TIS 609/ AHB 537 : "May the mind of Christ my Saviour"

BENEDICTION:

Go, secure in the knowledge of God's presence,
empowered by the love of Jesus Christ,
energised by the stamina of the Holy Spirit.