

Lenten Candle Lighting Liturgy (Generic)

(There are six candles, one to be lit each week).

Week One: Resistance

Reader 1: There are many temptations we face in our lives together. We face the temptation of putting our wants above another's needs. We face the temptation of ignoring problems such as hunger, poverty, war, and disease, with the false hope that they will go away without our intervention. We face the temptations of wealth and consumerism. We face many temptations to stray from the path of our faith.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol our faith in Jesus Christ to help us resist the temptations of the world.

Prayer: Lord, help us to keep our feet moving, our hands outstretched, and our hearts open to you. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, keep us from temptation and help us to do Your work in our world. Amen

Week Two: Responsibility

Reader 1: Jesus has called us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but all too often we let the social boundaries and borders of the world divide us. We build up walls rather than bridges; we keep people out who need to be invited in. We have a responsibility to care for one another as Christ cares for us, and yet we often fail to do it.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of our hope in Jesus Christ to teach us again how to love, how to break down walls and to build bridges.

Prayer: Creator God, remind us again of our responsibility to care for one another, and to watch out for each other. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, help us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

Week Three: Trust

Reader 1: God has proven trustworthy throughout history, but at times we question and doubt, and even deny, God's presence in our lives. We forget the larger picture at times and focus only on that moment, that period of time, when we experience God's absence. We worry and fret about what is happening and what will happen next, rather than trusting in our Savior.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ that his presence is with us, and that we are not alone.

Prayer: God of hope, help us to remember the promise that you will never leave us or forsake us. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, remind us of your presence, and help us to remember to trust in you. Amen.

Week Four: Repentance

Reader 1: We have been born into a world of sin. We try to do the right thing, but at times we fail, and temptation seems to win. At other times, we seem to drown in our failures, believing nothing good can come from us. We forget that God has called us to repent, and that God remembers our sins no more.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of our trust in Jesus Christ that our sins are forgiven, when we repent and turn back to God.

Prayer: Loving God, help us to turn back to you when we stray. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, help us to repent from where we have gone wrong. Amen.

Week Five: Forgiveness

Reader 1: Jesus has taught us that we must forgive, but at times we find this too hard to do. We have been hurt, and we have hurt others. At times we have become angered by the actions of another to the point that we carry a grudge, and sometimes, this grudge can define who we are.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of our faith in Jesus Christ to help us to forgive as we are forgiven, to help us love as we are loved.

Prayer: Faithful God, forgive us for our shortcomings and help us to forgive others. As we journey towards the cross this Lenten season, help us to let go of our grudges and to forgive, and to seek forgiveness where we have gone wrong. Amen.

Week Six: Faithfulness

Reader 1: We are nearing the end of our Lenten journey, and as disciples of our Lord we remember the events of long ago, when the twelve disciples entered Jerusalem with Jesus, but then deserted him a few days later. We remember that in our own lives, when things go well we often know God is with us, but when we are afraid, when we are at risk, we may abandon our faith.

Reader 2: We light this candle as a symbol of our trust in Jesus Christ that God will always remain faithful, even when we lack faith.

Prayer: Holy One, you have journeyed with us through the valley of the shadow, and will see us through to the other side. Help us to remain faithful to you, even in times of deepest doubt. Amen.