

REFLECTION GUIDE

OCTOBER 25



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REFLECTION GUIDE

FOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, & SMALL GROUPS

REFLECT.

1

As we reflect on life and death, and grief and loss in this season, what have you lost?
For what do you grieve?

2

Mary and Martha don't give into numbness, but honestly express their real thoughts and grief to Jesus. Even when we have faith, we may still wonder if we've been forsaken, or why there is such a delay. When is the last time you took a moment to honestly confess your struggles, doubts, and worries about where God is during this time of grief and loss?

3

Jesus cries beside and with Mary and Martha at their loss. Psalm 46:1 says that "God is our ever-present help in times of trouble." What are your thoughts about the idea that even though Jesus might not keep us from experiencing hardship, he does come along side us, and that even through the tears, Jesus promises that we will come back to life after going through struggle?



IMAGINE.

*"It is **through** the tears that Mary and Martha see the promise of faith.
Through the tears, they see that God is real.
Through the tears, they see that God is trustworthy.
Even through the tears, they see that God is a friend...
that God is with them in everything"
Bishop Wright*

1

Imagine that Jesus is right next to you right now, is present with you, is deeply moved by what's troubling you, is crying with you as you grieve. What do you imagine Jesus might say to you right now in this moment?

2

Imagine that Jesus is speaking to you now, saying "[Your name], you will rise again. Come!" Imagine that Jesus is now calling the tired, weary, dead parts of you back to life. What areas of your life is Jesus talking to? What might those areas look like when they are brought back to life?



EXPRESS.

*Don't give into numbness.
Express your **grief**.*

*Through the tears, remember the promise.
Express your **hope** in new life.*

Light a candle.

Many have lost much in this time, both things and people. Spend some time remembering them, and thanking God for putting those lights in your life.

Wash something.

Wash your hands or your face. Wash a dish, or bathe your toddler, or wash someone's feet, or wash a plant by watering it. As you do this task, let the water remind you of your grief and tears, and also of baptism, and the promise of new life. All life needs water. Think of your tears (whether they are physical or internal) as watering the new life that God has promised through Jesus.

Pile up some rocks.

In the Old Testament, whenever God acted in their lives, the Israelites piled up stones to mark, remember, and help them tell the story about the good things God had done (see Joshua 4:18-24, 1 Samuel 7:12).

For each of the things and people you have lost and are grieving, pile up a stone/rock/pebble/piece of gravel, even a pile of sand or dirt. You can also write something on each rock with a marker.

This can serve as a way to mark your grief AND as way to express your hope in the promise that God transforms death and sadness into new life. Maybe God hasn't turned your pile of rocks into a memory of God's mighty acts YET, but as Bishop Wright tells us, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' story reminds us not to confuse God's pace with God's trustworthiness. The stones can serve as a statement of hope and faith that resurrection, transformation, and new life are coming, even if they haven't come yet. "Move the stone," says Jesus at Lazarus' tomb. The stones that once were a burial ground can become the marker of resurrection. Each time you look at your rock pile, reflect, looking for ways God has been transforming your losses into new life.

