

SECOND SUNDAY after the EPIPHANY

Directions: Read the scripture selected from the Revised Common Lectionary, perhaps before bed, in the morning, or during a family meal. Move through the discussion questions in one sitting or answer one a day to help reflect on the scripture throughout the week. End your time in prayer. This could be a simple ritual to incorporate into the week.

PSALM 139:1–6, 13–18

You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there something you know a lot about?
What is it like to know so much about it?
2. What are some things you want people to know about you?
3. Have you ever built or created something? How did you feel after you were done?
4. Who makes you feel special just for being yourself?
5. How does it feel knowing God knows you so well?

AFFIRMATION JAR

Materials: Paper, scissors, pencils, pen, and/or crayons, stickers (optional)

This week's Scripture reminds us God sees us, knows us, and loves us. Just like God teaches us to love others, we must show love and compassion to ourselves. Here's something you can make to help you with that:

1. Cut paper into ten or more strips that are a few inches long.
2. Think about some attributes you like about yourself. Maybe you're funny or calm. Maybe you're skilled at puzzles, excellent at drawing, or give amazing hugs. Maybe you really like your eyes, hair, or freckles. Write or draw these attributes on a few strips of paper.
3. What are some words people use to describe you that make you feel loved and celebrated? Maybe it's when you hear, "you're great," "you're so talented," or "you're made in the image of God!" Use a few strips of paper to write these phrases or draw pictures reminding you of them.
4. Use the rest of your strips of paper to write or draw things reminding you of God's love. When you reflect on God's love, maybe you think of a rainbow or a heart or even a picture of you. It can be anything you like!

Fold the strips of paper containing your affirmations and place them in your jar. Put the lid on (if your jar has one), decorate the jar with stickers if you want, and place your jar in a visible space. Whenever you need a little help showing love and compassion to yourself, open your jar and pull out one of the strips you made. As you look at what you wrote or drew, you can say your own prayer or pray this: "I love God and God loves me. Thank you, God, for this reminder."

When you're done, re-fold your strips, put them back in the jar, and return to it whenever you need to feel affirmed.

PRAYER

Wonderful God, you know everything about us and see everything we do. You love us exactly as we are and we love you, too. Help us love ourselves because we are your beloved creations.

Amen.

