

RESOURCE PREVIEW



SUMMER SERIES
IN A BOX

VOLUME 1 | 2024



CONTENTS

- 03 THEME OVERVIEW
- 04 SERMON PROMPTS
- 05 SAMPLE LITURGY
- 06 SAMPLE MUSIC/HYMN IDEAS
- 07 SAMPLE CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY RESOURCES
- 08 SACRED STORY ENGAGEMENT
- 09 MEET OUR COLLABORATORS
- 09 EQUIPPING EVENT
- 10 GRAPHICS FOR WORSHIP & SOCIAL



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THEME OVERVIEW

The Bible can be a barrier for a lot of people of faith. It's large, intimidating, and can be confusing! Many people are wary to read these texts, carry bruises from their upbringing, or simply don't have enough information for the stories to make any sense. This summer, we invite you to spend time reclaiming the "good" in The Good Book - learning and relearning how ancient stories relate to our stories here and now. You will receive a free copy of Anna Carter Florence's newest book, *A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture*. Building from these contemporary invitations into scripture, congregations will invite people to reflect on, write, or tell their own stories that interact with our ancestors in faith found in the Bible.

Leaders can choose from an Old Testament or New Testament track, or jump back and forth between the two and build your own summer series of any length to fit the needs of your unique context. Perfect for congregations in transition, without a leader, or managing vacation schedules, this worship planning virtual "box" will provide all the tools needed to lead every piece of the worship experience from sermon suggestions, interactive worship ideas, graphics, social media, liturgy, and music suggestions. Help people find renewal in scripture throughout the summer.



SERMON PROMPTS

DEVELOPED BY:
REV. DR. ANNA CARTER-FLORENCE

Old Testament Track:

S is for Salt

- Theme: Empathy and Compassion
- Scripture: Genesis 19:15-17, 24-26

I is for Israel

- Theme: Wrestling with faith (and God)
- Scripture: Genesis 32:24-28

J is for Joseph

- Theme: Reparations
- Scripture: Genesis 50:15-21

P is for Puah

- Theme: What it means to help things be born
- Scripture: Exodus 1:15-22

New Testament Track:

G is for Growing up

- Theme: Growing into God
- Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

L is for Laodecia

- Theme: God at the end of the world
- Scripture: Revelation 3:15-16

S is for shipwreck

- Theme: Telling the truth about what is happening
- Scripture: Acts 27:1, 9-11

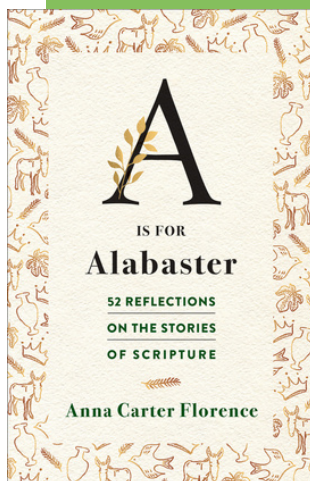
N is for Nicodemus

- Theme: At any age, there is always something new to learn
- Scripture: John 3:1-10

Sermon prompts developed for a series based on Old Testament readings, New Testament readings, or a combination of the two.

In addition to the series outline, you'll receive a copy of Rev. Dr. Carter Florence's book, A is for Alabaster: 52 Reflections on the Stories of Scripture.

Each week's theme is highlighted in a chapter of the book and will give you plenty of food for thought and inspiration.



SAMPLE LITURGY

BY: REV. ANDREA ROSKE-METCALFE

Week 1 Old Testament Track **S is for Salt**

Call to Worship

Come. Wrestle with God, who receives us and welcomes us just as we are.

Come, let us worship!

Come. Look around with questions, look around with wonder, turning your head in every direction you can find.

Come, let us worship!

Come. God calls us into renewed relationships with one another.

Come, let us worship!

Come. God invites us into new beginnings.

Come, let us worship!



Prayer of the Day

O God, we look backward all the time, for every reason under the sun. We make assumptions, too – about Lot's wife, about other people's wives, about other people, about ourselves. Grant us a new curiosity, a measure of gray in our black-and-white thinking, a crack in everything we thought to be true. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

This table is set for you – you who wrestle with God and you who would rather not, you who stand tall in the face of fear and you who turn away, you who are misunderstood and you who are understood all too well. Come. Share in God's meal of new beginnings.

This resource includes a Call to Worship, Confession and Forgiveness or Thanksgiving for Baptism, Prayer of the Day for each week, Offering Prayer, Invitation to the Table, Prayer after Communion, Blessing, and Sending.

Confession and Forgiveness

Gathered into one by God's Spirit,
we are bold to confess our sins, our shortcomings, our failures,
right here in the open,
in the presence of God and of one another.

(silence for reflection)

God of grace,

We confess that we have failed you, failed ourselves, failed one another.

**We assume the worst about those around us,
rather than giving anyone the benefit of the doubt.**

**We do the same to ourselves,
and sometimes, even, we do the same to you.**

We are stubborn and determined to hold a grudge.

**We fail to exercise our imaginations,
fail to recognize your works waiting to be born,**

**if only we would step up to help,
or sometimes, if only we would move out of the way.**

Forgive us, O God, and show us another way forward. Amen.

Hear the good news of the risen Christ:
God is making all things new!
Your sins are forgiven.
God's invitation is to another way of living.

Thanks be to God!



SAMPLE MUSIC IDEAS

BY: PAUL KOOPMAN

S is for Salt

Traditional

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (ELW #631)

There Is a Balm in Gilead (TFF #185)

Now It Is Evening (ELW #572)

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing (ELW #807)

Modern

By Thy Mercy (Indelible Grace, songwriters Greg Thompson and John James Cummins)

Trisagion (Ryan Flanigan)

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY IDEAS

BY: JESS GULSETH

Week 1: S is for Salt

Theme: Empathy and Compassion

Scripture: Genesis 19:15-17, 24-26

Genesis 19 recounts the dramatic and traumatic story of Lot and his family fleeing the city of Sodom before its destruction. It's a story of escape, faith, and the heartache of looking back.

Imagine the scene as Lot and his family hurry away from the city, warned by angels of its impending destruction. They are told not to look back, but Lot's wife cannot resist the temptation. In that moment of hesitation, she turns into a pillar of salt.

Story opportunities:

- A moment when you didn't have the whole picture and were asked to trust nonetheless. Lot and his family are warned and told to flee from the incoming danger. With a little back and forth, this seems to be an easy direction to follow. They're also told not to turn back, this direction? Not as much. This story can spark discussions about trust in God's guidance, and the guidance of trusted individuals around you.
- A time when letting go was really hard and how it turned out in the end. Truthfully we're more likely to be like Lot's wife. Suddenly we're asked to run from our home, our family and to never look back? That would be difficult for just about anyone. Sometime's life is like that, where we have to let go and not look back. There is a lot of grief and worry in moments like that. Children can relate to the idea of leaving something behind, whether it's a favorite toy or a familiar place, and learn about the value of embracing new beginnings.



SACRED STORY ENGAGEMENT

BY: DEACON MICHELLE WALKA AND DEACON ERIN POWER

This resource series invites particular attention to story, both within the biblical narratives and in our own faith stories (individually and as community). How do these stories come alive for us today? How is the Holy Spirit inspiring us as we encounter sacred stories? Inside you'll find prompts to engage story within a time of worship. Each idea is imagined to be about 10-15 minutes in length and highly adjustable for your leadership and context. These ideas are rooted in the understanding that we can all share our faith stories. Who might be invited into this sharing within your community?

We've divided this resource into three sections: Dwell, Look, Connect.

- The Dwell section gives you prompts to explore the scripture stories in a deeper and curious way.
- The Look section invites you to consider faith stories through imagery in both ancient and current contexts.
- The Connect section draws out more creative and embodied engagement; allowing space for communities to interact and play within our sacred stories.

Within each section we have provided variations on the theme to scale the level of community involvement:

- One: Just the leader is involved with the story sharing. The community is invited to listen and ponder.
- Two: The leader engages the community with questions and invitations. No supplies are needed.
- Three: The leader facilitates space for community interaction. Some basic supplies are needed.

We know that worship styles, spaces, and those who gather are different for each faith community. We hope that you experience these offerings as simply ideas to encourage meaningful connection with sacred stories within the biblical text and within your community. If you are using this resource as a weekly series, consider selecting one idea for the entire series as a way to have a consistent rhythm in your story sharing practice -or- experiment with a different story sharing practice each week to help expand the imagination of the worshipping community -or- some combination that connects with your community context.

May you be inspired to dwell, look, and connect in new ways as our faith narratives come alive!



MEET OUR COLLABORATORS



REV. DR.
**ANNA
CARTER
FLORENCE**



REV.
**ANDREA
ROSKE-
METCALFE**



**PAUL
KOOPMAN**



DEACON
**MICHELLE
WALKA**



DEACON
**ERIN
POWER**



**JESS
GULSETH**



EQUIPPING EVENT

MAY 8 ONLINE OR ON-DEMAND

Engage with our content collaborators to gain deeper insight into the resources and learn how to set-up your summer series to inspire fresh imagination for these Bible stories and rich engagement in your worship life.

*Join us live on May 8 from 10am - 12pm central time
or watch the recording anytime after May 10.*

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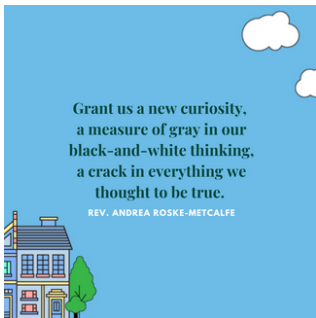
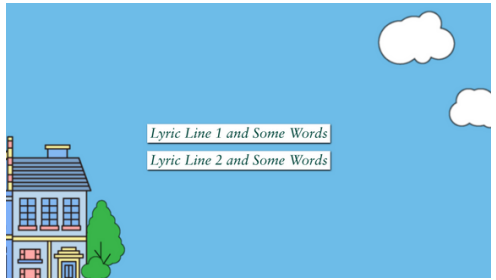
GRAPHICS FOR WORSHIP & SOCIAL MEDIA

BY: COMMON GOOD CREATIVE



WORSHIP GRAPHICS

Including weekly title graphics, sermon note templates, and song backgrounds. Plus access to the Canva files for complete customization.



SOCIAL GRAPHICS + CONTENT CALENDAR



We will create the content for you and share a planning calendar with email and social post ideas to keep your community engaged online!



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