

Book of Faith Lenten Journey: Beyond Question

ERIC BURTNES

These worship helps are provided to congregations shaping their Lenten Wednesday worship services around *Book of Faith Lenten Journey: Beyond Question*. The book's weekly themes explore questions Jesus asked. Take a look at the six devotional readings for each week from *Beyond Question* before you begin planning the midweek worship. Better yet, read through *Beyond Question* in its entirety before you begin this planning. Then pick and choose from the ideas and suggestions in these worship helps—and add your own if you wish—to build worship experiences that speak to your congregation's context and relate to those who are working through *Beyond Question* as a personal or small-group Lenten discipline.

The following items are available in each set of worship helps.

■ Introduction to the Day

Introduction to the book's weekly theme and its connection to the worship experience and Scripture readings for the day.

■ Prayer of the Day

A prayer connected to the day's theme.

■ Readings and Psalm

Scripture readings that connect to the worship theme and help set the direction for the worship service.

■ Prayer Prompts

Suggested thematic prayer petitions to guide the prayers of the community in worship.

■ Hymns and Songs for Worship

Music from multiple sources to use in building the worship experience.

■ Ideas and Images

Suggestions for using media, activities, and images in creative ways to enhance or expand the worship experience.



Worship Helps for Ash Wednesday *What Are You Looking For?*

■ Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

Lent is a time of spiritual introspection. It is a time to pause in the midst of a busy life, a challenging world, and a searching faith. It is a season to exercise the disciplines of repentance, fasting, prayer, and works of love.

Beyond Question is a transformative Lenten journey through questions from Jesus. Jesus asked questions of individuals and groups to lead them into transformation and deeper discipleship. This journey starts with the open-ended question—“What are you looking for?”—and ends with deeper questions that get at the heart of what it means to follow Jesus and give our lives for him.

Introduce the *Beyond Question* theme using the Ash Wednesday lectionary readings for Year C. With the imposition of ashes on each individual’s forehead, Ash Wednesday’s focus is on self-examination, personal prayer and piety, and repentance. Throughout this Lenten journey, Jesus’ questions will invite those who gather into deeper faith and transformation, as individuals and as a community of faith.

Preaching might focus on one or more of the following ideas:

- Describe how the things we look for generally change as we go through life.
- Pose questions: “What are you looking for? What are your expectations during this Lenten season? How might your Lenten journey be spiritually meaningful to you?”
- Consider using silent guided meditation and reflection to engage the question “What are you looking for?”
- Compare some empowering questions with limiting questions.
- If the Imposition of Ashes will be part of this worship service, explore the meaning of the practice and what it means to repent and return to the Lord.

■ Prayer of the Day

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (LBW, p. 153, Evening Prayer)

Readings and Psalm

JOEL 2:1-2, 12-17

The prophet Joel calls the people to lament before the coming Day of the LORD.

PSALM 51:1-17

This lament psalm is deeply personal, moving back and forth between repentance and promise.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B–6:10

Challenges and hardships are part of life, just as they were part of Paul's ministry. God's presence, however, enables Paul to be joyful even during suffering.

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-21

Jesus warns against being hypocritical and trying to impress others with the way we practice our faith. What is our motivation for sharing with others, praying, or fasting? What are we looking for?

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- Gracious and living God, be with us as we begin our Lenten journey. Guide us closer to you and renew us with your Spirit.
- On this Ash Wednesday, help us to remember who we are, and even more, who you are.
- Gracious God, you command us to pray and promise to hear us. Open our hearts and minds and lives to you. Help us to see ourselves as we truly are—sinners in need of your grace and forgiveness.
- Redeeming God, by your Spirit guide us to be faithful in all that we say and do, for the sake of knowing Jesus.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

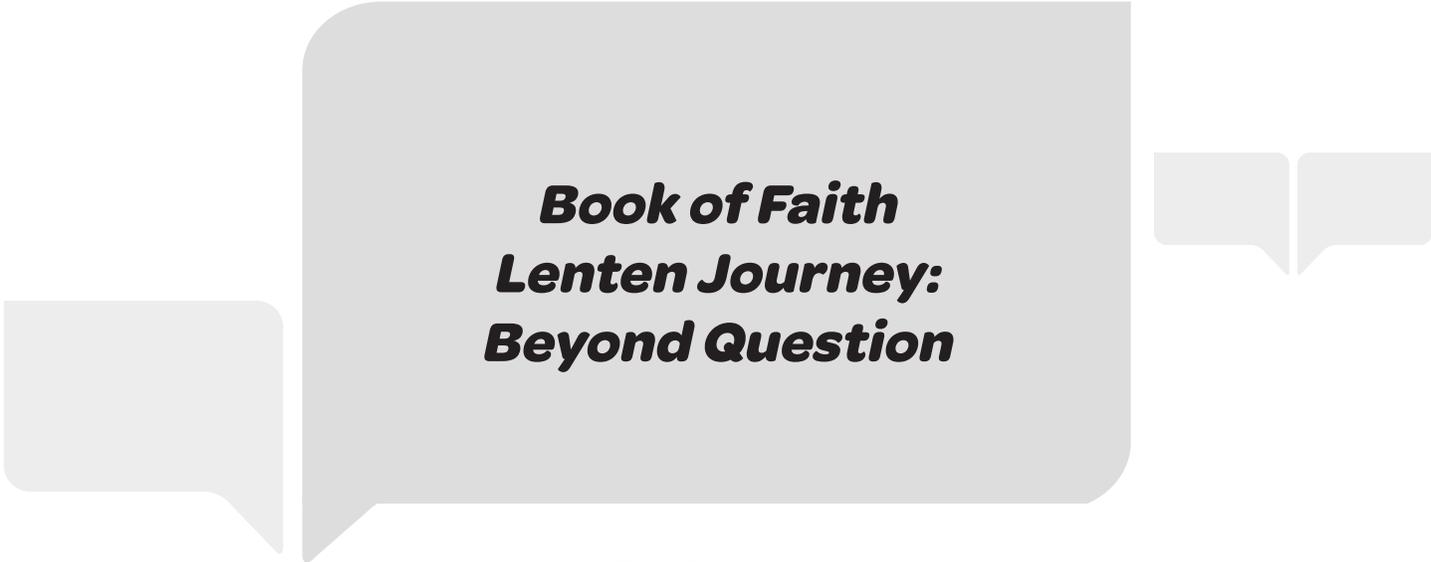
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- Beneath the Cross of Jesus, ELW 338
- O Lord, throughout These Forty Days, ELW 319
- The Glory of These Forty Days, ELW 320
- Create in Me a Clean Heart, ELW 185–188
- Bless Now, O God, the Journey, ELW 326
- I'm Going on a Journey, ELW 446
- Who am I?, Mark Hall (EMI, 2003)
- How Many Kings?, Jason Germain and Marc Martel (Centricity Music Publishing, 2006)
- What Faith Can Do, Scott David and Scott Krippayne (Word Music, 2008)
- Shout to the Lord, Darlene Zschech (EMI, 1993)
- I Can Only Imagine, Bart Millard (Music Services, 2002)
- The Wonderful Cross, Isaac Watts, arr. Jesse Reeves and Chris Tomlin, refrain lyrics by Chris Tomlin and J. D. Walt (EMI, 2000)

■ Ideas and Images

Use any of the ideas below, as well as your own, to enhance worship. Images could be projected, printed in the bulletin, or incorporated in the sermon. Where required, make sure you have the proper permission to reproduce or project items you use.

- Highlight the theme of a journey by projecting relevant images or setting up props such as suitcases and travel guides.
- Place the baptismal font at the sanctuary entrance, if possible. Invite worshipers to reflect on their baptisms and faith journeys by dipping their fingers in the water, making the sign of the cross, and saying, “In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”
- The Imposition of Ashes is a powerful way to show that repentance is part of this Lenten journey and a life of discipleship.
- Project several questions or place them in the worship bulletin. Read through the questions one at a time and ask worshipers to indicate which ones are empowering and which ones are limiting.
- Create your own logo or bulletin cover design for the theme *Beyond Question*.



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Worship Helps for the Second Wednesday in Lent *Where Is Your Faith?*

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

Where do you place your trust, hope, and faith? If you were to lose just about everything in your life, what possession, attribute, or belief would you want to still have?

The boat skid/life skid analogy (Day 7) provides a starting point for considering what we focus on in our journeys through life. The disciples in the boat were focused on the wind, sea, and waves, and not on Jesus, who was able to bring them to safety.

“Where is your faith?” is a fundamental question. Faith in Jesus brings calm and peace amid the storms in our lives. Jesus used questions like this one to deepen discipleship and bring about new and creative possibilities for personal transformation.

Preaching might focus on one or more of these ideas:

- Share an example or personal story illustrating that what we focus on is often where we end up.
- Contrast what it is like to focus on our fears rather than focus on Jesus.
- Suggest several possible responses to these questions: Who or what do we rely on most? In what or whom do we place our faith?
- Compare placing faith in power, status, money, education, and so on to building a house on sand, and placing faith in Jesus to building a house on rock. Faith in Jesus is strong, secure, and lasting.

Prayer of the Day

O loving God, to turn away from you is to fall, to turn toward you is to rise, and to stand before you is to abide forever. Grant us, dear God, in all our duties your help; in all our uncertainties your guidance; in all our dangers your protection; and in all our sorrows your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (ELW, p. 87; a prayer of Augustine of Hippo)

Readings and Psalm

GENESIS 3:1-10

The story of the first sin shows what happens when we take our eyes off God. The man and woman try to hide, but God calls out, “Where are you?”

PSALM 107:1-3, 23-32

The psalmist sings of God’s deliverance, which stills the storm and hushes the waves of the seas.

ROMANS 8:31-39

We can be confident in the promise that nothing will ever separate us from God’s love.

LUKE 8:22-25

Amid the chaos of a storm Jesus asks the disciples, “Where is your faith?” For those who follow Jesus, this is still an important question.

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- God of wisdom, help us to keep our eyes on Jesus, on the cross, and on the needs of our neighbor. Strengthen our faith and keep us focused on you.
- God of peace, when storms rage around us, calm our hearts, ease the storms, and let us find our rest in you.
- Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with gratitude for all the blessings you give to us.
- Empowering God, give us strength and confidence to tell others about your transforming love.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

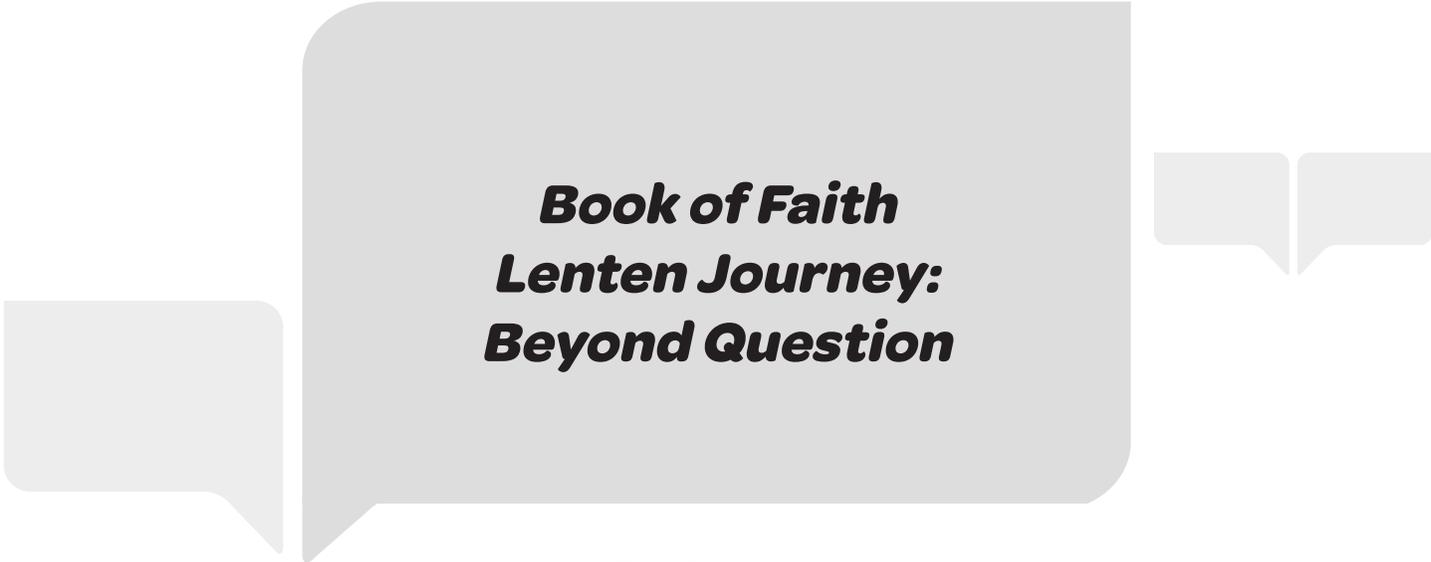
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- In the Cross of Christ I Glory, ELW 324
- Thy Holy Wings, ELW 613
- Jesus Calls Us; o’er the Tumult, ELW 696
- Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me, ELW 755
- Just As I Am, without One Plea, ELW 592
- Blest Are They, ELW 728
- God of Wonders, Marc Byrd and Steve Hindalong (EMI, 2000)
- Why?, Michael Card, *Joy in the Journey* (Sparrow, 1994)
- Indescribable, Laura Story, lyrics by Laura Story and Jesse Reeves (EMI, 2004)
- Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone), John Newton, John P. Rees, and Edwin Othello Excell (EMI, 2006)

Ideas and Images

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- Search for online videos and images showing that what we focus on often determines where we end up.
- Do a dramatic reading or children’s sermon on the Gospel text, encouraging listeners to play the wind, seas, disciples, Peter, and Jesus.
- Distribute slips of paper and pens. Invite worshipers to write down some of the things people place their faith in. The slips of paper could be collected and read aloud during the sermon.
- Provide index cards for worshipers to complete this sentence: “One thing I will learn, do, or share during Lent is _____.” Worshipers could take the cards with them as reminders. Another option is to collect the cards during the offering and list responses in the church newsletter or in next week’s worship bulletin. (Let people choose whether to add their names to these cards or remain anonymous.)
- Provide opportunities for people to spend time working with a social ministry team, local service organization, homeless shelter, or nursing home. As the weeks go by, ask volunteers to share what they’ve done and how their faith has grown.



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■ Hymns and Songs for Worship

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Worship Helps for the Third Wednesday in Lent *Who do you say that I am?*

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

“What are you looking for?” was the question from Jesus that we explored in the first week in Lent. The following week we focused on the question “Where is your faith?” Jesus’ questions dig deeper and deeper as we continue this Lenten journey.

When Jesus asked the disciples “Who do you say that I am?” he was looking for personal confession and commitment. Today this question calls us to go beyond saying we believe in Jesus to serving and following him as our Lord.

Preaching might focus on one or more of these ideas:

- Give examples of how other people see Jesus today (for example, as a revolutionary, religious zealot, moral leader, great teacher, religious sage, loving friend, or someone to pray to as a last resort). Compare these with Peter’s response that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ.
- Talk about several titles for Jesus and what is distinct about each.
- Invite a few members of the congregation to prepare brief responses to the question “Who is Jesus for you?” Play audio or video clips of these responses.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you inspired Simon Peter to confess Jesus as the Messiah and Son of the living God. Keep your church firm on the rock of this faith, so that in unity and peace it may proclaim one truth and follow one Lord, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (ELW, p. 55, Confession of Peter)

Readings and Psalm

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

God alone is our God. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength.

PSALM 63

The psalmist longs for God’s presence and promise. God alone can quench our spiritual thirst.

ROMANS 10:5-13

Paul proclaims that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

MARK 8:27-30

People have many ideas about who Jesus is, but here Peter is the only one to state the truth that Jesus is the Messiah.

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- Holy Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. In everything we do, everything we say, and everything we are, let us show that you are the Lord of our lives.
- Passionate God, help us to see Jesus for who he truly is, that living for him we may also live for others.
- Jesus, name above all names, keep us ever and always close to you.
- Holy Spirit, enlighten our hearts, turn us to Jesus, and direct your church to be a compassionate community of witness and service.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

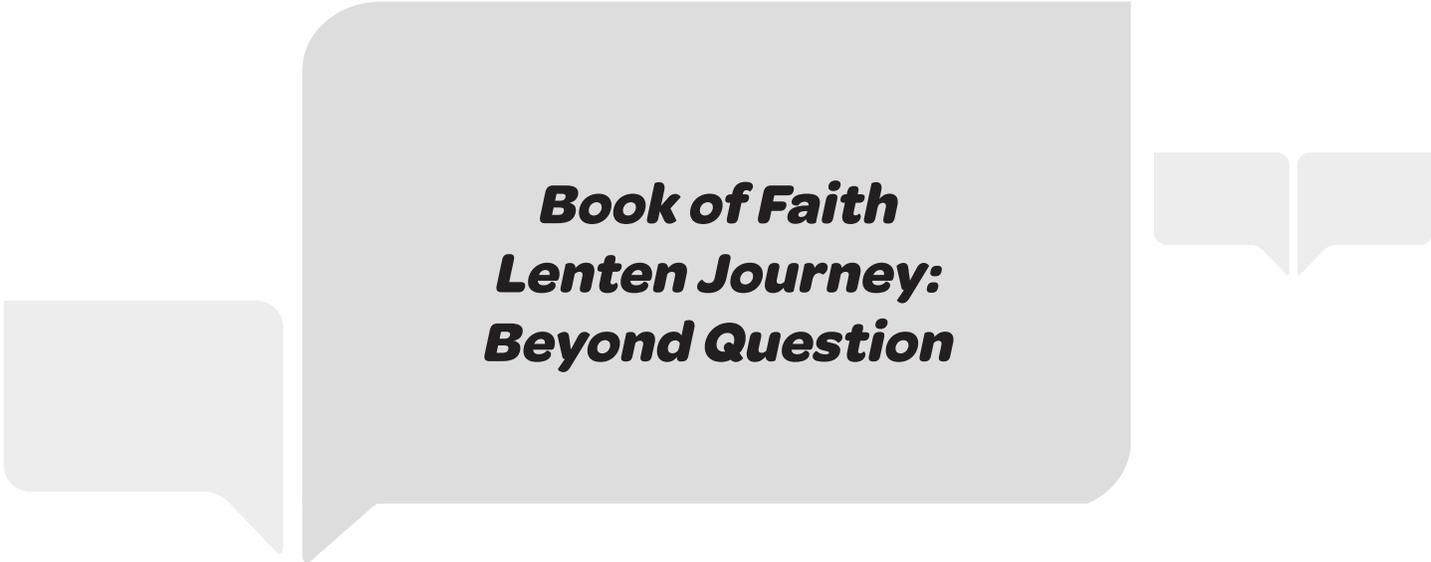
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- Blessed Assurance, ELW 638
- O Savior, Precious Savior, ELW 820
- How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds, ELW 620
- Jesus, Still Lead On, ELW 624
- Beautiful Savior, ELW 838
- Savior, Again to Your Dear Name, ELW 534
- Carry Me to the Cross, Jason Walker, Mark Stuart, and Nick Departee (EMI, 2012)
- Remember Me, Laura Story (Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, 2008)
- Born Again, Third Day, lyrics by Mac Powell (EMI, 2008)
- Before the Morning, Ben Glover and Josh Wilson (EMI, 2009)
- I Lift My Hands, Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, and Matt Maher (EMI, 2010)

Ideas and Images

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- Provide paper and pens for worshipers to write down questions they would like to ask Jesus.
- Send out a video team to ask people on the street, “Who would you say Jesus is?” (bring along forms to get permission from individuals who are interviewed). Have the video edited and show it during the worship service. YouTube also has video clips (“Who is Jesus? Street Interviews”) that you might use.
- Display images of Jesus created by people from different times and places (an online search will produce many possibilities). There may also be images of Jesus displayed in your church building. What do different images say about Jesus?



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Worship Helps for the Fourth Wednesday in Lent *What Do You Want Me to Do For You?*

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

The next question on our Lenten Journey is the one Jesus asks most frequently in the Gospels. This question shows not only God's desire to help and heal us, but also God's wish to serve us. We are like blind beggars by the side of the road, but God comes to us with boundless and immeasurable grace. God gives us sight, and we see and experience God with open and fresh eyes. This God is not a "God of the gaps," active only in areas that defy human explanation. This God wants to be front and center in our lives and hearts.

Preaching might focus on one or more of these ideas:

- Our response to Jesus' question "What do you want me to do for you?" is based in what we believe Jesus is capable of doing. The blind men believe that Jesus can heal them.
- God can use and transform the ordinary into the extraordinary: water and the word into salvation and life, stable and straw into the birthplace of the incarnate Child of God, mere mortals into saints of God.
- Jesus' question "What do you want me to do for you?" invites us to share needs and concerns from the depths of our hearts. Often we want God to answer these prayers by simply filling our requests. Notice, however, that the two men in the Gospel text receive not only their sight but a relationship with Jesus. God's response is not limited by our request.
- What kind of limits do we try to put on God and God's activity? You may want to explore Dietrich Bonhoeffer's use of the term "God of the gaps."

Prayer of the Day

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In your love, give us all this, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (LBW, p. 50, General Intercession)

Readings and Psalm

JEREMIAH 29:10-14

God promises the people who are exiles in Babylon that they will return to Jerusalem. They will have "a future with hope."

PSALM 139:1-4, 13-16

God knit us together in our mothers' wombs and knows us completely.

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

Christ's love is immeasurable and God's power at work within us is beyond our imaginations.

MATTHEW 20:29-34

Jesus has compassion for two men and touches their eyes. Their sight is restored and they follow him.

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- Eternal God, you know the desires of our hearts and you know what is best for us. Give us what we need to follow your will and way for our lives.
- Bring us wholeness, loving Jesus, that we may experience the immeasurable riches of your love and mercy.
- Holy Spirit, teach us to pray. Help us to pour out our needs and concerns, as well as our thanks and praise.
- Lord Jesus, empower us to see and respond to the needs of others with your compassion and boundless love.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

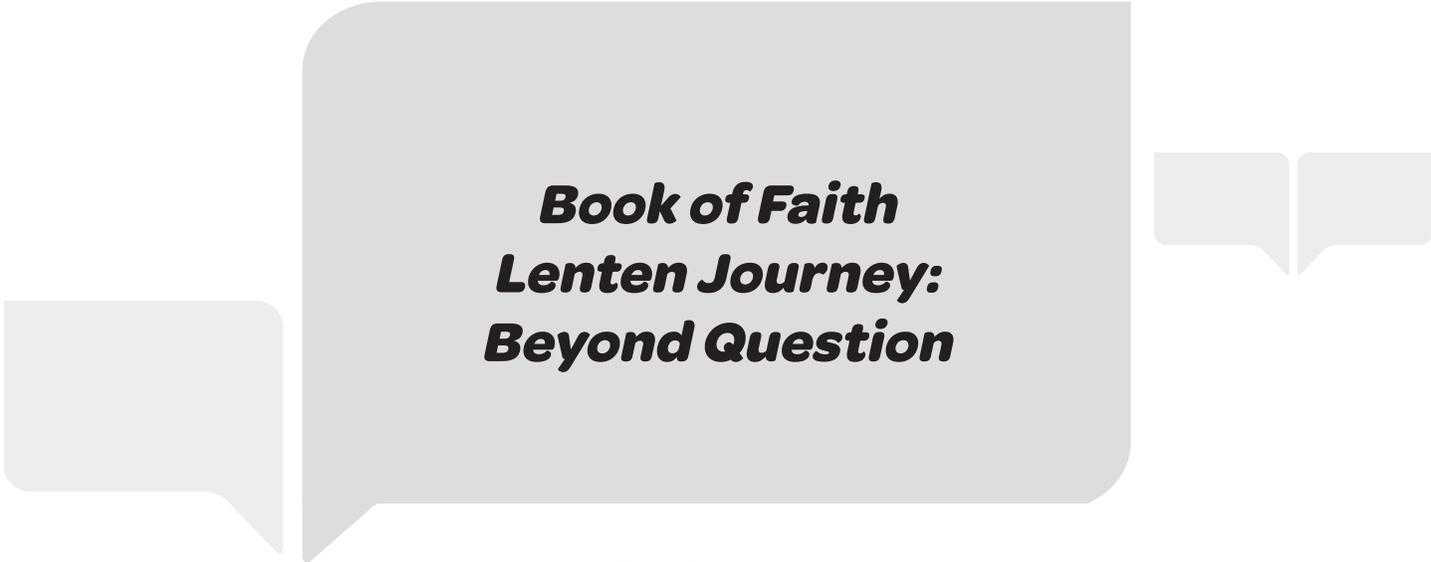
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- Take My Life, That I May Be, ELW 583, 685
- I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say, ELW 332, 611
- Morning Cry, ELW 732
- Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound, ELW 779
- Listen, God Is Calling, ELW 513
- Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart, ELW 800
- Indescribable, Laura Story, lyrics by Laura Story and Jesse Reeves (EMI, 2004)
- Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone), John Newton, John P. Rees, and Edwin Othello Excell (EMI, 2006)
- Open Our Eyes, Lord, Robert Cull (Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, 1976)
- The Potter's Hand, Darlene Zschech (EMI, 1997)
- You Are More, Jason Ingram and Michael Donehey (Sony/ATV Music Publishing, 2010)
- Lifesong, Mark Hall (EMI, 2005)
- How Great Is Our God, Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, and Ed Cash (EMI, 2004)
- Remind Me Who I Am, Jason Gray and Jason Ingram (Centricity Music Publishing, 2011)

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- Include images of transformation and growth (eggs, cocoons, or children, for example) in the worship bulletin or slides for projection. Whatever our age, status, or situation in life, Jesus calls us to grow in our discipleship.
- Ask someone trained in drama to act out the words of Ephesians 3:14-21 as the text is read. Another option is to project images that depict words and phrases in Ephesians 3:14-21.
- Have pens and slips of paper available. Ask worshipers to write down what they want Jesus to do for them. Invite them to take home the slips of paper as reminders of their requests.



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Worship Helps for the Fifth Wednesday in Lent *Do you love me?*

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

In the post-resurrection appearance in John 21, Jesus asks Peter the tender and loving question “Do you love me?” Peter discovers that love is a decision and a commitment more than an emotion or feeling.

There are two key points in the text. First, the different words for *love* show that Jesus was looking for an *agape* kind of love from Peter. Peter was unable to offer this, but when Jesus asked about a *phileo* kind of love, he was able to answer affirmatively.

Second, Jesus loved Peter just as he was, unconditionally and without reservation, and came to him at his level of commitment and love. At the same time, Jesus invited Peter into a life of *agape* love.

Preaching might focus on one or more of the following ideas:

- Jesus loves us with an *agape* love that sacrifices everything. He accepts where we are on our journeys and calls us to live toward the same kind of love that he shows to us.
- Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” In doing this, he forgives Peter for denying him three times. Peter is restored to new life in Jesus. (The number three signifies wholeness and completeness here and elsewhere in the Bible.)
- *Agape* love means taking up our cross daily and serving others. Give concrete examples of this from within your congregation or community.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, but always to your glory and the welfare of your people, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 86, Commitment)

Readings and Psalm

GENESIS 4:1-9

The story of Cain and Abel involves jealousy, anger, and murder. It culminates in God asking Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

PSALM 103:1-5

The psalmist gives thanks for God’s goodness and love.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

New life in Christ means clothing ourselves with love and doing everything in Jesus’ name.

JOHN 21:1-19

After the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples on the beach. Three times he asks Peter, “Do you love me?”

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- O God, teach us to know you, love you, and serve you all of our days.
- Gracious God, open our eyes. Loving Jesus, open our hearts. Holy Spirit, open our hands. Help us to love you and serve you with joy.
- God of love, thank you for loving us unconditionally. Direct our hearts and lives to draw closer to you in all we say and do.
- Lord Jesus, build up your church to serve others and share your love in the world.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

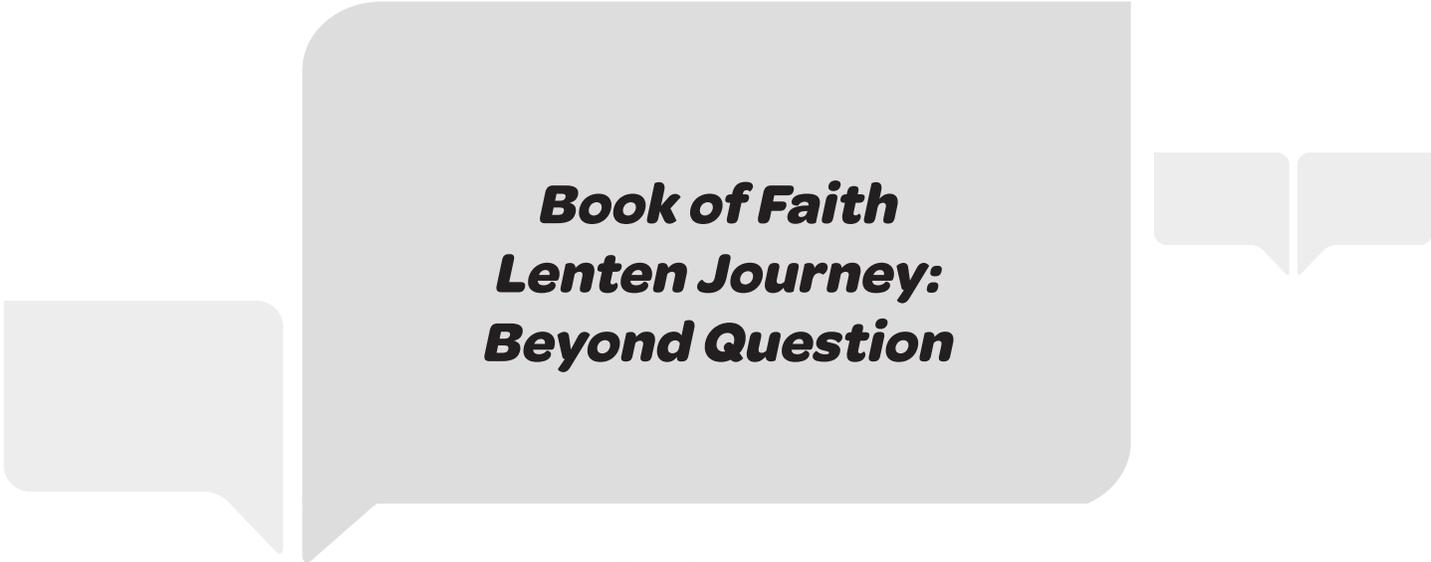
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- Oh, Love, How Deep, ELW 322
- You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore, ELW 817
- Give Me Jesus, ELW 770
- Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love, ELW 708
- Take, Oh, Take Me as I Am, ELW 814
- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, ELW 631
- Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church, ELW 321
- At the Cross, Reuben Morgan and Darlene Zschech (EMI, 2006)
- You Raise Me Up, Rolf Lovland and Brendan Graham (Peer International, 2002)
- Does Anybody Hear Her?, Mark Hall (EMI, 2005)
- You Are My King (Amazing Love), Billy James Foote (EMI, 1999)

Ideas and Images

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- As worshipers enter, distribute index cards with the words “love of a good friend” on one side and “sacrificial love” on the other. Ask them to write words on the cards describing each type of love. Collect the cards and use some of the words written on them to compare and contrast *phileo* and *agape* love.
- Use dramatic readings, reenactments, or projected images to bring to life the parables of the lost sheep (Day 27) and the good Samaritan (Day 28).
- Project images of *agape* love being shared in your congregation and community.
- Use images of parents helping children learn and grow to illustrate that God helps us to learn and grow in love and faith.



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These worship helps are provided to congregations shaping their Lenten Wednesday worship services around *Book of Faith Lenten Journey: Beyond Question*. The book's weekly themes explore questions Jesus asked. Take a look at the six devotional readings for each week from *Beyond Question* before you begin planning the midweek worship. Better yet, read through *Beyond Question* in its entirety before you begin this planning. Then pick and choose from the ideas and suggestions in these worship helps—and add your own if you wish—to build worship experiences that speak to your congregation's context and relate to those who are working through *Beyond Question* as a personal or small-group Lenten discipline.

The following items are available in each set of worship helps.

■ Introduction to the Day

Introduction to the book's weekly theme and its connection to the worship experience and Scripture readings for the day.

■ Prayer of the Day

A prayer connected to the day's theme.

■ Readings and Psalm

Scripture readings that connect to the worship theme and help set the direction for the worship service.

■ Prayer Prompts

Suggested thematic prayer petitions to guide the prayers of the community in worship.

■ Hymns and Songs for Worship

Music from multiple sources to use in building the worship experience.

■ Ideas and Images

Suggestions for using media, activities, and images in creative ways to enhance or expand the worship experience.



Worship Helps for the Sixth Wednesday in Lent

How will you believe what I say?

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

The disciples responded to Jesus' death with disappointment, grief, doubt, and disbelief. Was Jesus really the Messiah? Were his words true? Could he be trusted? Could they believe what he said?

This week focuses on five questions Jesus asked when he appeared to his followers after the resurrection. Here we find two disciples on the road between Jerusalem (tragedy and loss) and Emmaus (escape and denial). All of us have been at this point in life at some time or another. Many people are there right now. Jesus is on this road with us, even when we don't recognize his presence. Later, Jesus appears to all of the disciples. As "in their joy" they are "disbelieving and still wondering," he asked them, "Have you anything to eat?"

Preaching might focus on one or more of these ideas:

- Questions and doubts are part of a lifelong journey of faith.
- Jesus is, indeed, who he says he is. He is worthy of our trust and commitment.
- Jesus is with us in the midst of tragedy, loss, fear, doubt, and denial.
- The disciples on the road to Emmaus eventually recognized Jesus when he broke bread with them. How does Jesus make himself known to us in water, bread, and wine?

Prayer of the Day

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread, open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (ELW, p. 32)

Readings and Psalm

EXODUS 13:20-22

In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, God led the Israelites out of Egypt.

PSALM 23

This psalm reminds us that even in the worst of times God's presence is with us and comforts us.

ROMANS 5:1-5

God's love has been poured into our hearts, and hope in God does not disappoint us.

LUKE 24:13-43

Two disciples on the road to Emmaus don't recognize the risen Christ until he breaks bread with them. Then Jesus appears to all of the disciples.

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- Lord Jesus, sometimes we feel lost and alone as we go through life. Teach us to look for signs of your presence during these times, trusting that you are always with us.
- Precious Lord, take our hands. Guide us through each day and keep us close to you.
- God of all hope, help us with our doubt, disbelief, and uncertainty. We put our hope in you, and this hope will not disappoint us.
- Faithful God, empower us to witness to others and the world, confident that nothing can separate us from your love.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

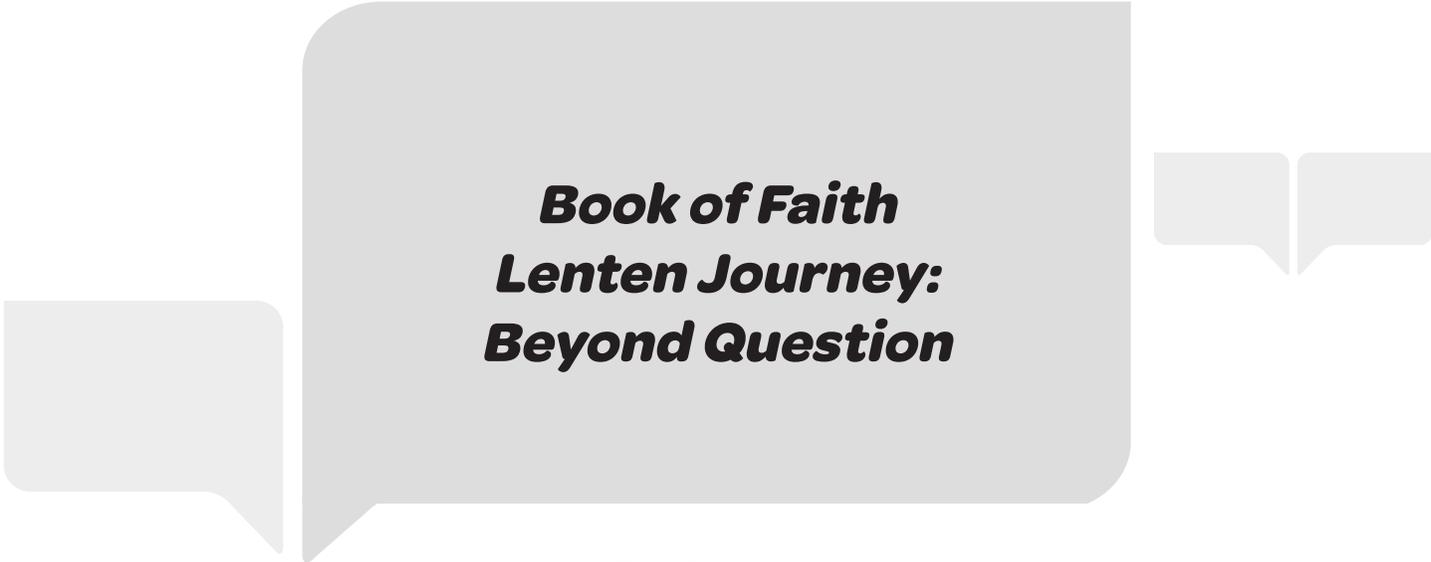
These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me, ELW 325
- Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow, ELW 327
- I Bind unto Myself Today, ELW 450
- Bless Now, O God, the Journey, ELW 326
- If You But Trust in God to Guide You, ELW 769
- Precious Lord, Take My Hand, ELW 773
- Open the Eyes of My Heart, Paul Baloche (Integrity Music, 1997)
- Hosanna, Michael W. Smith and Deborah D. Smith (EMI, 1983)
- Unfailing Love, Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash and Cary Pierce (EMI, 2004)
- I Am New, Jason Gray and Joel Hanson (Centricity Music Publishing, 2009)
- You Love Me Anyway, Ben McDonald, Dave Frey, and Mark Delavergne (Word Music, 2009)

Ideas and Images

Use any of the ideas below, as well as your own, to enhance worship. Images could be projected, printed in the bulletin, or incorporated in the sermon. Where required, make sure you have the proper permission to reproduce or project items you use.

- Use visuals, dramatic readings, and projected images to illustrate the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus—preparing for a journey, feeling lost along the way, and meandering through life.
- Invite someone in the congregation to tell how Jesus was with them during a difficult time. He or she might share this story during worship or write it up to be printed in the bulletin.
- Have a small group create and present a dramatic reading or video on living in an “if only” world (Day 33).
- Focus on the sacraments and Jesus’ presence with us.
- Search online for images of hope and hopefulness.



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Worship Helps for the Seventh Wednesday in Lent *Whom are you looking for?*

Introduction to the Day

To be used as a sermon starter and springboard into the worship service.

Note: The Worship Helps for this week focus on John 20:11-18. If you will be using John 20:1-18 (the alternate Gospel text for lectionary years A, B, and C) in your Easter Day worship, you may want to make adjustments to the Scripture texts, prayers, and suggestions in these helps.

This week we return to a form of the question that began this Lenten journey: What/whom are you looking for? Until Jesus speaks her name outside the tomb, Mary has no idea that the one for whom she is looking is standing right in front of her.

Preaching might focus on one or more of the following ideas:

- The question “Whom are you looking for?” is the culmination of this transformative journey through Lent. Review the themes of the previous weeks to help worshipers reflect on where they began this journey and where they are at now.
- Jesus comes face to face with us and speaks our names in Baptism and Holy Communion.
- Jesus, the one we are looking for, looks for us and calls us by name.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ’s blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (ELW, p. 32)

Readings and Psalm

GENESIS 12:1-4

God called Abraham to go to a different land, and he went. This Lenten journey is coming to an end, but God calls us to keep going in our walk with Jesus and deeper discipleship.

PSALM 148

This hymn of praise declares God’s dominion in all the earth, in all places and times.

HEBREWS 11:1-3

Faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord brings assurance and confidence.

JOHN 20:11-18

Mary doesn’t recognize Jesus, who has been raised from the dead, until he says her name. He tells her to go and tell the disciples what he has said.

Prayer Prompts

Use these prompts to help shape the prayers of the community.

- Loving Savior, help us to look for you, hear your voice, and answer your call.
- Creator of the world, redeemer of your people, and hope of the earth, free us from our fears and fill us with confidence in all you have done and will do.
- Eternal God, guide the church to be with you, to know you, and to proclaim you. Help everything we do and say to give clear witness to your love, made known in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Hymns and Songs for Worship

These hymn and song suggestions complement the weekly theme and the readings.

- I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light, ELW 815
- The King of Love My Shepherd Is, ELW 502
- Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross, ELW 335
- Shout to the Lord, ELW 821
- Great Is Thy Faithfulness, ELW 733
- What Wondrous Love Is This, ELW 666
- Mighty to Save, Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan (EMI, 2006)
- He Knows My Name, Tommy Walker (Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, 1996)

Ideas and Images

Use any of the ideas below, as well as your own, to enhance worship. Images could be projected, printed in the bulletin, or incorporated in the sermon. Where required, make sure you have the proper permission to reproduce or project items you use.

- Project images or lists of names, including people in the Bible and members of the congregation.
- At the baptismal font, make the sign of the cross on people's foreheads as you say their names.
- Create and present a drama depicting the Lenten journey and our walk with Christ.
- In advance, invite one or two people to summarize this Lenten journey, what they have learned, and how they have grown.
- Display a variety of images of Jesus with the heading "Whom are you looking for?"