

Learning Together Easter 5 Covid-19 God Rocks

Have some painted rocks and photo of rocks arranged into word or picture

Two of our Bible readings for this week use the image of God making us a stone fortress. Now it is important to know that when the Bible says things like God is a fortress, God is a rock, it doesn't really mean that God is an actual rock or that there is a big stone castle somewhere where God lives. The writers are just using something we know about – we all have seen rocks – to try and explain something bigger and harder to understand, something we can't see, like God and love.

In the first reading, which is from the Psalms, they say God is like a rock, giving us a solid foundation and protecting us. We can rest easy inside the walls of God's strength and love, knowing we are safe there. God will help us through any trouble we may find. The second reading is from 1 Peter, which is a letter written as a message from the Apostle Peter to the first churches. In this part, they talk about God building a spiritual "house" using Jesus as the cornerstone at the bottom and all of us as living stones that make up God's walls.

I really like these two images. Yes, God is our fortress, giving us shelter and protection when times get tough. And guess what the walls of God's fortress are made of? You and me – helping each other, protecting each other, being strong and kind when another person needs help, and resting on the strength of one another when we are the ones who need help.

Our church building is important to us. I am glad that it is here, with its strong foundation, solid walls and protecting roof. It is a place to gather and do many special things together, but if there is one thing this time of staying at home has taught us, is that the real church is not a building. Church is the people. God's work happens everywhere we are and everywhere we go.

There are many ways you can be God's strong and protecting walls for other people every day, like helping each other when things get tough. As an extra little thing this week, I invite you to do something kind and encouraging for other people using rocks – actual rocks. I read that the town of Medicine Hat, Alberta has a group called "Medicine Hat Rocks" where people decorate rocks and hide them all over town for people to find. I challenge you to find some rocks near you and use them to spread messages of love and hope for people in our community.

You can paint pictures or write words like "peace" and "blessings" on some rocks to share with people walking around outside. (*Show your sample rocks*) You can use washable paint or chalk and know that the decorations will disappear in the next rain. That would be okay. If you need the words or decorations to be more lasting, cover the rocks with clear spray paint or varnish after you decorate it, or decorate them with a permanent marker like a Sharpie, or house paint or nail polish. Then when they are dry,

go for a walk, leaving them in places people might see them as they pass by, without them having to touch the rocks and also places that won't be in their way.

Or if you don't want to do the decorating, you can use a bunch of rocks to spell out a word or make a picture somewhere where people can easily see it. (*Show the photo*) Maybe you even want to do this somewhere where someone you know who is stuck completely inside can see it from their window. The idea is just to share some encouragement with others during this difficult time and hopefully to get outside a little to do some moving of our bodies collecting rocks and then placing them back outside again.

In this time where we don't get to see or talk to other people, this is a small way we can share God's love in our community.

Pray this echo prayer with me:

Dear God...thank you for being like a rock...and a fortress,...strong and protective....Help us to be there...for one another...like rocks in your fortress walls,...listening to each other,...sharing and caring,...wherever we can....Amen



