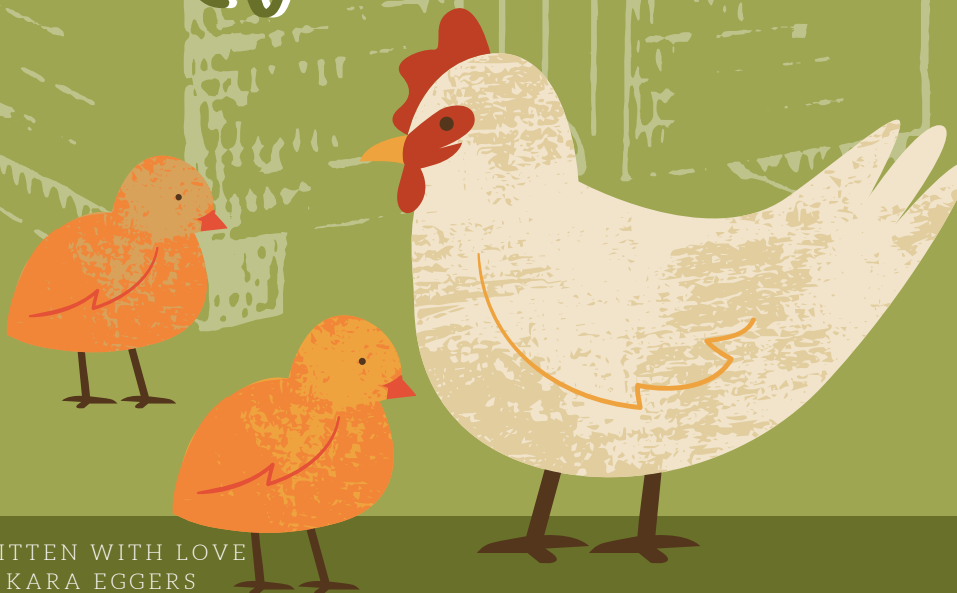


DEVOTIONAL FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES

lessons learned from
raising chickens

Easter tide Reflections



WRITTEN WITH LOVE
BY: KARA EGGERS
Church of the Cross

WELCOME

Happy Easter Friends!

Easter is what our faith is all about, Christ died and rose, conquering death and granting us new life. In John 10:10 we hear good news right from Jesus, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." This devotional booklet encourages us to live out of God's promises, gifts to us as believers, hope for now and hope forever. Spend time reading and doing the activities included to soak in these truths. There is a verse to focus on each week, consider making the effort to memorize that scripture.

This booklet was written by our dear friend, sister in Christ, member of COTC vestry, leader on the worship team, and school teacher - Kara Eggers. She, like many people, took on the adventure of a new pet during her covid quarantine year and is raising a flock of chickens in her backyard. This collection of stories comes out of the learning she has gained from tending to her girls.

*God's creation calls us to himself.
May all creation sing his praise!*

KARA EGGERS
Church of the Cross



THIS WEEK'S THEME: OUR SAFE HIDING PLACE

Open with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for being a safe place for us when we are afraid. Amen.

Read the following verse aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

God is our protection and strength. He always helps in times of trouble.
Ps. 46:1

Someone asks:

When I am afraid, to whom can I go?

Someone responds:

When I am afraid, I can run to God and be safe!

Listen up:

Maybe you've heard someone unkindly call someone else a "chicken!" if they are acting afraid or wimpy. I've learned how chickens live up to their name and become easily afraid.

My hens are so happy when they get to wander in the backyard and have free time out of their coop! When they are out of their coop, it is fun to watch them pecking in the earth looking for treasures like bugs and worms, and trying out their wings for small little flights (maybe it is more like ten foot jumps 😊).

It happens almost every time the chickens are out of their coop enjoying their backyard time that something spooks them or makes them afraid. The smallest thing, like a robin flying over or a noise from the alley, can cause all of them to make a mad dash into their coop! They all sprint and cannot get to their coop fast enough! They know where to go when they're afraid and sense danger even if the thing they're afraid of can't hurt them.

I wonder about you. When you're afraid, do you know that you can quickly run to Jesus and He will protect you? He wants to protect you from things you're afraid of. This week's verse says that God is our protection and strength in times of real trouble or imagined trouble. Remember the next time you feel afraid like the chickens, run to your hiding place, Jesus.

Conversation starters:

1. When are times you feel afraid?
2. When you're afraid, what are things you can do to find help from God?
3. Imagine what God would say to you if he saw that you were afraid.

Sing together: A Mighty Fortress

Activity to do together:

To remember God is your safe hiding place when we're afraid, build a really large, cool fort. (When I was a kid I liked making forts in my living room using blankets, couches and chairs, but you make it however you would like!) Once your shelter is completed, go inside of it and say a simple prayer thanking God for being your shelter and hiding place when you feel afraid.

Close with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for being my safe place of shelter when I am afraid. Amen.

Chicken Joke:

Q: Why did the chicken cross the playground?

A: To get to the other slide!



Chicken Trivia:

Chickens have their own unique language with over 30 different sounds used to communicate!

THIS WEEK'S THEME: GOD SEEKS THE LOST

Open with a simple prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for seeking and finding the lost! Amen.

Read the following verses aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

Then Jesus told this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheet until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Luke 15:3-7

Someone asks:

What does God do when the lost are found?

Someone responds:

When the lost are found, God celebrates with all of heaven!

Listen up:

Just like you and me, when the weather gets warmer, chickens like to leave their coop and get outside for some fun! They romp around in the backyard eating bugs and grass. Recently, I let the hens out in the backyard and went inside for a few minutes to get some work done. Because my backyard isn't fenced in, I regularly check to make sure all of the chickens are in the yard and safe. This time when I checked, my favorite chicken, Amelia*, was missing! (*Amelia is my favorite chicken because she lets me hold her like a baby! Also, she was the first one to fly when she was a baby chick.) When more and more time had passed and I couldn't find her, I envisioned her being carried away down the alley in the mouth of the neighbor's dog! Or I pictured her wandering too far from home and not knowing her way back. I knew that I needed help to look for her, so I phoned my neighbor, Lindsey. She apologized explaining that she couldn't help me look because she was getting a haircut. A bit more panicky, I hunted and paced quickly down my alley, roaming all over my yard and my neighbors' yards.

I felt scared and sad, realizing that I had probably lost my dear Amelia! Then, a handful of minutes later, my heart quickly leaped with joy as I found her in my neighbor's yard, hiding in the bushes! I was thrilled! The lost had been found! I immediately picked up Amelia and brought her home. Next, I shared the good news with Lindsey! We rejoiced together!

The parable of the lost sheep shows how heaven celebrates when the lost is found. The Bible also says that we are sometimes like wandering sheep (and chickens!) and we stray away from Him. He patiently keeps searching for us because He loves us and wants us close, free from danger. He gets excited when He finds the lost ones and brings us home! That is good news because I was once lost, but now I am found!

Conversation starters:

1. What is something special which you lost and then found?
2. Describe what it felt like when you found it!
3. Imagine what those celebrating in heaven do and say when lost people are found!

Sing together: Amazing Grace

Activity to do together:

Have your mom or dad hide one of your favorite things, maybe a toy or stuffed animal. Then, look for it until you find it. (When I was little I liked playing the hot/cold game. When you're getting closer to the hidden object, your parent(s) say "You're getting warmer." If you're moving away from the object they say, "You're getting colder.") Once you find it, celebrate!

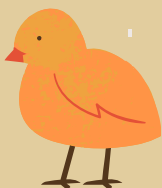
Close with a simple prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for finding me when I was lost. Help me rejoice like heaven when the lost are found. Amen.

Chicken Joke:

Q: How do chickens get away in a hurry?

A: They scramble away!



Chicken Trivia:

There are more chickens in the world than any other type of bird—about 20 billion! There are only 7 billion people in the world, so chickens far out number us!

THIS WEEK'S THEME: BE ALERT!

Open with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that you help us stand in faith against our enemy. Amen!

Read the following verse aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9a

Someone asks:

What should we do when our enemy prowls around like a roaring lion?

Someone responds:

We should stand firm in our faith!

Listen up:

Recently the chickens were enjoying their backyard time when suddenly I looked out the kitchen window and saw a red tail hawk perched on my neighbor's fence. He was practically drooling over the chickens, deciding which one to eat for lunch! The girls were busy pecking in the grass so they didn't even know they were in danger. As fast as I could, I dashed out the door and ran towards the red tail hawk frantically waving my arms and yelling, "Get out of here and leave my chickens alone!" It flew a few feet away only to perch on an electrical wire in my alley. I then picked up two handfuls of rocks and threw them at the hawk. Finally, it flew away and the girls were safe again!

We also need to be alert because just like those chickens, we have an enemy that wants to do us harm. Our enemy is the devil. Just like that hawk, he prowls around us, looking for ways to attack our faith. Unlike the chickens, we need to be alert and ready to fight off our enemy. He wants to put ideas in our head like 'do and say whatever you want,' 'God doesn't really love you or have a plan for you', or 'you'll be happier if you keep your things to yourself-no need to share,' When you feel tempted by the enemy in these or other ways, fight back. Just like I picked up those rocks and hurled them at the hawk, use the truths of God, and speak them out loud to your enemy. He will have no other choice than to flee and you will be safe.

Conversation starters:

1. Explain a time when you realized you were being tempted.
2. What is one way the enemy might tempt you or tell you a lie?
3. What is a truth you could say out loud when the enemy is tempting you?

Sing together: Be Bold! Be Strong!

Activity to do together:

Practice fighting temptation. Using art supplies, create a target. Write or draw a picture of someone being tempted or just write the word "temptation". Next throw some soft objects at the target while speaking out truths against the enemy's temptation. For example, I could say "Jesus will give me power to be patient and loving!"

Close with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, give me wisdom to know when my enemy is tempting me and how to defeat him with your truth. Amen.



Chicken Joke:

Q: Why did the chicken join the band?

A: She had drumsticks!



Chicken Trivia:

Chickens can fly well enough to make it over a fence or even up to a tree, but not well enough to migrate!

Open with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for preparing a place for us in heaven! Amen.

Read the following verse(s) aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Heavenly Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:1-2

Someone asks:

Why should our hearts not be troubled?

Someone responds:

Because we know one day we will be with God in the place He's made for us!

Listen up:

My dad loves me a lot! Not only is he a good dad but he is also a good builder. You can imagine how happy I was when he said he would build me my very own chicken coop! When the time came for him to start the project, he decided he didn't want to use someone else's building plans. He designed it especially for me! For example, I'm a bit tall, so my dad designed the coop with a tall enough roof so that I could stand inside of it without hitting my head. Also, he epoxied or glued (see photo) every joint so the wood would not rot when it rained. Finally, I wanted the color of the coop to match the color of my house and garage. After many months, my dad was finally finished building the coop! I was so happy, and all my friends and neighbors were amazed with how perfectly it turned out!

Did you know that just like my dad built me my own chicken coop, Jesus is building a perfect place in heaven just for you because he loves you? It's true! Our reading today says that we should not worry too much about things here on earth and simply trust in God because we will one day be with Him there. There is enough room for all of His followers, including you! Let's rejoice because we have a place awaiting us in heaven, made by Jesus! What a great party and celebration that will be when we get to heaven!

Conversation starters:

1. What is a space in your house where you feel the safest? Imagine feeling safe and cozy in God's house.
2. Churches help us think about the majesty of heaven. What is something about where we meet for worship that helps you think about God?
3. Imagine one thing you'll do in heaven with God.

Sing together: We will Feast in the House of Zion

Activity to do together:

Sometimes I daydream and wonder how Jesus might design my heavenly place. Maybe, it'll be a beautiful log cabin overlooking a prairie and a river. What about you? What kind of house would you want God to design for you? Design your dream house with no limits! You could sketch it out on paper or build it with Legos or playdough!



Close with a simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving us so much that you died on the cross so that we can enjoy eternity with you in the place you've prepared. Amen.



Chicken Joke:

Q: How do chickens bake a cake?
A: They start from scratch!



Chicken Trivia:

Chickens in the wild eat mice, insects, and grain! Also, chickens can taste saltiness, but not sweetness.

THIS WEEK'S THEME: STAY CLOSE!

Open with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the rich blessing of being together with your people. Amen.

Read the following verse aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Someone asks:

Should we stop meeting together as some have done?

Someone responds:

No! More and more we should meet together and encourage each other!

Listen up:

Do you know what a group of chickens is called? A group of chickens is called a flock. Chickens want to stay close with their flock. My chickens are no different. They even stay close together in their flock when they sleep! When my girls go to bed at night, they get nice and close on their roost or perch. (See photo). Why do you think this is? Chicken researchers say chickens roost together because when chickens sleep, they are more vulnerable or helpless against their predators. If they are alone, they are at greater risk to be attacked. They also flock together when they explore the backyard. The more the chickens stay together, the safer they are.

Remember how sad it was when we couldn't get together at church because of the pandemic? We tried to stay connected the best we could with Zoom, but now we can actually be together in person which is wonderful! You can imagine that now there might be some people who say 'we don't need to go to church anymore.' That is exactly what this verse is talking about! It is encouraging us to not stay at home on Sunday mornings, but rather get together and encourage one another! Here's why! When we meet together, we learn more about God, and are encouraged in our faith. The other great part is that just seeing our friends in church helps strengthen our faith in Jesus. How cool! And as your faith in Christ gets stronger, you will be able to fight off your spiritual enemies better. So, be like my chickens. Stick together with your flock of Jesus followers. Your faith will get stronger and you will encourage another's faith too!

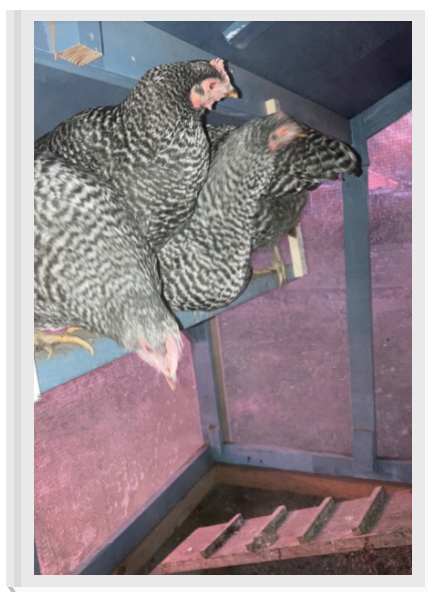
Conversation starters:

1. During the pandemic, what is something you missed about not being able to go to church?
2. How does our church flock help strengthen our love for God?
3. Think of a way you could encourage someone in the flock this Sunday.

Sing together: The Church's One Foundation

Activity to do together:

By forming the letter shapes with your bodies, spell the word f-l-o-c-k (or c-o-m-m-u-n-i-t-y if you're up for a challenge 😊) with your family. Multiple family members can form one letter at a time or some letters may be spelled by just one person. After one letter is made, designate someone to take a picture of it. After all the letters have been made and photographed, print out the pictures and hang it up on the wall in a prominent spot in your house to remind you of the importance of gathering together with the flock. Consider posting on the church Facebook page.



Close with a simple prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for teaching us the importance of our flock. May we continue to gather together to encourage one another. Amen.

Chicken Joke:

Q: What do you get when a chicken lays an egg on top of a barn?

A: An egg-roll!



Chicken Trivia:

Chickens have egg-ce-lent memory! Chickens can remember over 100 faces of people or animals!

THIS WEEK'S THEME: THE CHICKENS HEAR MY VOICE

Open with a simple prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for not leaving us alone, but rather for speaking to us in your Word. Amen.

Read the following verse aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. John 10:27

Someone asks:

What happens the more we hear Jesus' voice?

Someone responds:

The more we hear Jesus' voice, the more we follow Him!

Listen up:

If you had five different people calling your name and one of them was your mom, do you think you would recognize her voice? Of course you would! She's your mom! You've heard her voice a million times! My chickens know my voice too! When my hens are wandering around in my back yard, all I have to do is say in an energetic voice, 'Hey girls, girls, girls, girls!' and they start running to me! They know my voice because they are used to it. When they were little baby chicks, I would hold each one at night and talk to them. They got used to hearing my voice. They also now know that my voice is the one who feeds them good things, so this helps them trust my voice too. So now when I call them, they usually all run to me because they know they're going to get their favorite treat: dried worms! They know this also because I've done this a hundred times before. They are trained to hear my voice, come to me and then receive good things!

Jesus talked about His voice in the Bible too. He said that people who knew Him would also know His voice just like a sheep would know its shepherd's voice. How do you think Jesus' followers knew His voice? They probably knew His voice because they spent a lot of time listening to it. Jesus' voice was trustworthy and always led them to the truth. Well, do you know that you can become familiar with Jesus' voice too? Well, maybe not Jesus' actual voice, but you can become familiar with Jesus' words and teachings. The more you know

Jesus' words, the more you'll know His love and how He wants to help direct you in your life. So take a little time, maybe even right now, ask Jesus to speak to you. He might speak to you through a Bible verse or a friend's hug. He might also speak to you directly through the Holy Spirit. So listen closely!

Conversation starters:

- 1.If you have a pet, when you call its name, does it know your voice?
- 2.Ask your parents about a time they felt Jesus speaking to them.
- 3.Can you think of a time when you've felt Jesus speaking to you?

Sing together: I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say

Activity to do together:

Have your mom or dad call a good friend or relative on the phone, but don't have them tell you who they are calling. Next, have them put that close friend or relative on speaker phone. Have that person say a few words to you and see if you recognize their voice. If you don't recognize it at first, have them say a few more words until you recognize them.

Close with a simple prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you that the more we spend time with you and hear your voice, the more we will know your love and leading in our lives. Amen.

Chicken Joke:

Q: What day do chickens hate most?

A: Fry-day!



Chicken Trivia:

A healthy chicken lays about 265 eggs each year. That's a lot of omelets! The record number of eggs laid by a chicken in one year is 371. The record for egg yolks in one egg is nine yolks.

THIS WEEK'S THEME: BE HAPPY WITH JESUS!

Open with a simple prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you that having you is more than enough! Amen.

Read the following verse aloud (You could try to memorize it too ☺):

For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. Phil. 4:11

Someone asks:

When can we be content?

Someone responds:

We can be content with whatever we have because we have what we need most, Jesus!

Listen up:

Have you ever wondered what animals would say if they could talk? I have! "Give me that!" "Hey, that's mine!" "I found it first!" is what I imagine my chickens are saying when they are fighting over a treasure they find in my backyard. They will run after one another, trying to grab what the other one has. Often the things they are fighting over are useless however. Frequently they find a piece of trash that has blown into my yard. Or, maybe one of them finds a little stick and they're temporarily convinced it's a real find and they hoard it! Now, obviously, you and I know that a piece of trash or a stick is no great treasure, but it takes the hens a couple of minutes of pecking at it to figure that out. Are you ever like those chickens? Do you ever want something someone else has only to find out it really isn't that great after all?

There is a famous man in the Bible named Paul. At one point in his life he was like my chickens. He struggled with wanting things that other people had. But with time he said that he "learned to be content" or happy and satisfied with whatever he had. He learned that having Jesus was what truly made him satisfied and happy. When he had too much food or not enough food he said he was equally happy simply because he knew Jesus. He knew Jesus was much more important than even the best food. Jesus must be pretty amazing for Paul to say that! The more time we spend with Him, the more we'll learn to be happy and satisfied no matter what we have or don't have.

Conversation starters:

1. Have you ever wanted something someone else had? If so, what?
2. How could Paul be content and happy even when he was hungry?
3. Think of someone who is very content. What's their secret?

Sing together: Trust and Obey

Activity to do together:

Part of contentment is being happy for what you have and not being envious of what you don't have. So, start a family poster where you draw or write about things you're thankful for. Draw or write Jesus in the middle!

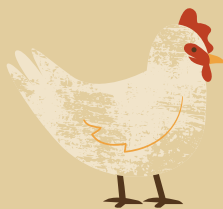
Close with a simple prayer:

Heavenly Father, teach us like you taught Paul that when we have you, we have more than enough. Amen.

Chicken Joke:

Q: How did the eggs leave the highway?

A: Through the eggs-it!



Chicken Trivia:

Did you know that people have been raising chickens for over 7,000 years? The first people to raise chicken were from India and China.

NOTES

