Lenten Prayer Baskets

 By: Leanne Hadley

Lenten Prayer Baskets are one of the most successful tools we ever used while I was at FUMC, Colorado Springs. Since then, they have been used by so many churches with the same response.

Message:

I wanted the children to understand that they are loved and that Jesus’ death proved his great love.

Here is what we did:

I created a sacred moment to be used each week at church… I introduced it as our Family Ash Wednesday Service and then I did it before SS and before Children’s worship. It was the same ritual each week. I thought maybe it would get repetitive or boring, but instead, it became deeper and richer.

We also made a Lenten Prayer Basket for each child that was a small version of what I used at church on Sundays.

I am also sending a PP with pictures of what we (actually my beloved AdMin an friend, Angela, did all of the painting of the rocks etc.)

**THE ACTUAL SACRED MOMENT: The story of Lent**

 I decided to tell the story using symbols painted on rocks. Angela made the rocks look lovely and holy!

 1) I quietly laid a holy cloth on a table.

 2) I lit a holy candle.

3) The rocks were in a very large prayer basket and one at a time I took our a rock, held it up, said the script below and them placed it on a table.

**First Rock (12):** Jesus loved his 12 disciples. They traveled with him and he taught them many things. He loved his 12 Disciples.

**Second Rock (BFF):** Jesus loved his BFF’s, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He ate at their home and would visit them. Just like you Jesus had his BFF’s and he loved them.

**Third Rock (Mountain):** Jesus loved the people who came to see him. There were so many that he had to sit on a mountain so that everyone could see him. He didn’t even know their names, but he told them all about God. He loved the people who heard him speak.

**Forth Rock (Coins):** And Jesus loved the people that no one else loved. He ate dinner with tax collectors, bad people and sinners. Jesus loved the people others did not like.

**Fifth Rock (Crown of thorns):** And Jesus even loved the people who hated him. They arrested him, beat him, made him wear a crown made our of thorns and … he loved them! Jesus loved the people who hated him and killed him.

**Sixth Rock (Heart… I did not use a rock but found a sparkling heart).** Jesus loved the 12 disciples. Jesus loved his BFF’s. Jesus loved the people who came to preach on the mountains. Jesus loved the people no one else loved and… (dramatic pause)… Jesus loves you!

**Prayer:** Then we sat in silence for about 1 minute basking in that love.

**Blessing:** Then each child was blessed saying, “Never forget that Jesus loves you.”

**On Easter,** we did the same thing and had each child come one at a time, kneel, and get a small heart to place on their sacred cloth at home. And blessed them saying: Easter is the day when we celebrate, not only that Jesus loves you, but there is nothing you can do to ever make Jesus stop loving you!

Then we had a BIG party!

**The Lenten Easter that the children took home had:**

A sacred cloth (small bandana sized cloth).

A small electric Holy candle to light.

The bag of stones with symbols on them.

A tube of blessing balm (chap stick with a label taped on it).