

# LETTING GO

LENT 2024 | DIOCESE OF ATLANTA

## WEEK 1: LETTING GO...OF THE FAMILIAR

These reflection guides are designed to supplement the videos, for use in a small group Bible study. They are created for the leader's ease of use, and with links to free web-based resources.

### REFLECTION

The familiar should come with a warning label! The familiar can become a rut and a rut can become a grave. If we're not careful, we can adventure-proof our lives and make them memorials to who we and God formerly *were*, rather than living testimonies to who we and God *are* right now.

What the unfamiliar, disorienting, and even fearful patches of life can teach us, is the time is always right to trust God anew.

What is unfamiliar to us isn't unfamiliar to God!

~Bishop Wright

### SCRIPTURE

Read one or more Scriptures about how the unfamiliar was a place of growth and adventure with God.

**Read Mark 1:9-15.** The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness, away from the familiar.

**Read any of the following wilderness experiences.**

- **Ex. 3:** Burning bush was a new experience of God for Moses in the wilderness
- **Ex. 16:1-7, 21:** God provided for needs in the wilderness
- **Gen. 16:** God met Hagar in the wilderness in her time of distress and isolation
- **1 Kings 19:1-18:** Elijah experienced God in a new way in his time of desperation

How did the unfamiliar create space for new experiences of God's presence and new trust?

### DISCUSSION

- What are the areas in your life right now where you feel stuck in a rut?
- When you think about your life with God and the times where you've experienced the most growth or felt the closest to God, what were the circumstances? What's your experience been: do you see a connection between unfamiliar wilderness times and profound experiences of God's presence, trusting God more, or new growth?
- On the continuum of "memorial to past experiences" to "living, current testimony", where would you put your life with God? Asked another way, what experiences with God are current? What is God doing in your life lately?
- What are some ways you might try embracing the unfamiliar, getting away, or getting into the wilderness, that can spark new adventures and experiences with God?

### ARTICLES

For a research about the benefits of getting away from the familiar, see here:

<https://www.realsimple.com/how-to-get-out-of-your-comfort-zone-7559829>

### PRAYER

*Ever-present God, You call us on a journey to a place we do not know. We are not where we started. We have not reached our destination. We are not sure where we are or who we are. This is not a comfortable place. Be among us, we pray. Calm our fears, save us from discouragement, And help us to stay on course. Open our hearts to your guidance so that our journey to this Unknown place continues as a journey of trust. Amen. —The Rev. Canon Kristi Philip, A Prayer for Transitions*

### TAKE-AWAY

Try some new experiences this week. Try a new food, listen to new music you wouldn't normally choose, attend a different style of worship than you normally would. Learn something new. Do something unfamiliar. Approach it with a sense of adventure and openness. Reflect on that experience and how it might spark growth and trust.