

Each Wednesday in Lent, we opened our sanctuary from 7 am until 10 pm for an open house prayer station. The stations were self-guided, varied from week to week, and suitable for people to come and go as they had time. I always had candles burning, nice lighting, clearly displayed instructions, any supplies needed and Bibles ready the night before. Many of the stations were simple enough that elementary age and up could participate.

Each week had a different theme, centered on the next Sunday's lectionary readings. I usually prepared about 1 page of larger font text with my train of thought leading people through the readings and the prayer focus for that week. For example, the first week the readings were



about Abram being called into the unknown and the Psalm was about God's presence and provision for us. On the table was a purple cloth. In a basket were about 500 scrabble tiles. We were invited to make a word that summed up something God is calling us to that we don't feel we are capable of. We then made another word representing God's promise

of presence with us as we endeavor toward the "impossible." By the end of the night we had a beautiful crossword creation of prayers and promises! Another week the lectionary lead us to Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones and Lazarus in the tomb. On a strip of paper we wrote something dead in our life we want revived and planted them beneath flower bulbs as an act of faith that with Jesus there is hope even for things in our life that seem dead. Each person took home their flower pot and every time they watered it were encouraged to pray about the dead things in their life they want to be awakened.

There are lots of resources online and in book form for finding prayer station ideas. I would recommend keeping the specifics of the night "secret" from the congregation because part of the fun is in the surprise of discovering it for the first time. We really felt God's presence as we made our plan before Lent started and God used the stations to do beautiful work in our congregation! Have fun, be free, ask God for inspiration, and keep it simple!